

Get ME Active

"Promoting Healthy Lifestyles Through Physical Activity"



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WinterKids Helps Children Get Outside and Be Active

by Fran Mullin, Executive Dir., WinterKids

Do you remember the fun you had playing outside in the snow when you were a kid? I sure do.

Today, most children are not sledding or skiing or skating in the winter. They are inside and they are inactive. One out of every three kids in America is overweight or obese. It's not just unfortunate, it's a public health crisis.

Inactive kids are at a higher risk of developing serious health problems and they are missing out on the opportunity to have a lot of FUN by participating in outdoor activities.

We need to help children discover the joy of outdoor winter activity so they will want to get outside and play for hours. Not just so they'll build awesome memories, but so they will build stronger bodies and healthier habits for the rest of their lives.

WinterKids helps children develop healthy lifelong habits through fun, outdoor winter activity. Over the past decade, WinterKids has evolved from the popular 5th grade Passport program to an array of active, outdoor educational programs expected to reach over 7,500 children this winter. We make winter fun for families, schools and communities, and give opportunities for health and joy to those who need it most.

Maine WinterKids Passport

WinterKids began in 1997, with the 5th grade Passport that offered kids free lift tickets at 11 downhill skiing areas. We expanded the WinterKids Passport into 6th and 7th grade and added opportunities

for kids to try cross-country skiing & snowshoeing, ice skating, snow tubing and even dog sledding. **Now we offer free and reduced price tickets for all Maine kids and their families at over 50 outdoor winter recreation areas, all over the state.**

Maine WinterKids FunPass

This winter (2008-2009), we are piloting a new WinterKids FunPass. Now children from preschool through 4th grade can try snowshoeing and cross-country skiing with their families at over 20 Nordic skiing areas. This is free for every child in Maine.

Welcome to Winter

WinterKids wants to make winter fun for ALL Maine kids. Our community outreach program called Welcome to Winter introduces outdoor winter fun to everyone, regardless of income, background or experience.

When we were working in the Portland and Lewiston schools, we heard stories about immigrant and refugee families from sub-Saharan Africa who were terrified of our cold Maine weather. They were afraid of the cold and snow and ice, and they were keeping their children inside all winter — to keep them



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Calendar of Upcoming Events

February 12, 2009

Legislative Wellness Day - this year's event will take place at the State House Hall of Flags from 9:30 am to 2:00 pm and will follow the theme - *Step Up to the Plate*. We will be asking legislators to take a close look at their physical activity and nutrition habits and to look at new ways we can bring physical education/activity back into the schools. Free health screenings will be offered throughout the event.

May 6, 2009

All Children Exercising Simultaneously (ACES) Day

May 20, 2009

National Employee Health & Fitness Day
www.physicalfitness.org

For more information on any of the above events or about the Maine Governor's Council, check out our web page at www.maineinmotion.org; email us at info@maineinmotion.org, call us at 207-622-7566, ext. 230, or write us at 11 Parkwood Drive, Augusta, ME 04330.

Winterkids Continued from front page

safe. When we saw children who were wearing sandals with no socks to school in January, we knew WinterKids had to do something to help.

Together with the local multicultural centers, we created fun "Welcome to Winter" festivals that taught new Mainers about winter health and safety and introduced their children to sledding, snowshoeing, and hot cocoa.

WinterKids school programs are designed to train teachers and get kids moving.

Guide to Outdoor Active Learning (GOAL)

Our WinterKids school programs provide teachers with training, resources, and motivation to get students physically active in the winter. Our WinterKids Guide to Outdoor Active Learning (GOAL) is a resource that makes it easy for teachers to meet the Maine Learning Results standards, while making learning fun and active.

Active Academics Workshops

Last winter, we reached 50% more kids than ever before with our Active

Academic Workshops, which are on-site trainings that show teachers how to incorporate physical activity into their daily lessons.

What can you do to make a difference?

- Be a WinterKids ambassador! Promote WinterKids programs to people in your organization, and if you love winter and kids - volunteer!
- Encourage every pre-schooler through 4th grader to try snowshoeing or XC skiing. Parents can get the WinterKids FunPass for FREE on-line this winter.
- Get every family with a 5th, 6th or 7th grader to apply on-line for the WinterKids Passport. Every kid in Maine is eligible. There's a \$20 processing fee and scholarships are available.
- Ask teachers in your local schools to use the WinterKids Guide to Outdoor Active Learning (GOAL), which gets kids outside and makes learning fun.
- Go to www.winterkids.org for more information.
- Get outside, get active and have fun YOURSELF this winter. Be a role model for the WinterKids in your life.

Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

In October 2008, the US Department of Health and Human Services issued the first-ever Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. There are now specific recommendations provided for each of the following groups of people:

- Children and adolescents (age 6-17)
- Adults (18-64)
- Older Adults (age 65 and older)
- Pregnant and postpartum women
- Children and adolescents with disabilities
- Adults with disabilities

Highlights from the new Physical Activity Guidelines:

- Some activity is better than none.
- The more you do, the greater the health benefits and the better you'll feel.

- People of all types, shapes, sizes, and abilities can benefit from being physically active.

To get the health benefits of physical activity, include activities that make you breathe harder and make your heart and blood vessels healthier. These aerobic activities include things like brisk walking, running, dancing, swimming, and playing basketball. Also include strengthening activities to make your muscles stronger.

The Guidelines, tools and fact sheets can be found at www.health.gov/paguidelines. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has also created support materials that offer more details for each group of people - www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines.

Council Kicks Off Membership Campaign

Help make Maine the healthiest state in the nation by becoming a Supporting Member of the Maine Governor's Council on Physical Activity.

Your tax deductible membership dollars will help support:

- Advocating for health-related policies that will reduce barriers and create opportunities for Mainers to be more physically active.
- Creating model statewide physical activity programs that will

ultimately improve the health of Maine residents by reducing their risk for obesity and other related chronic diseases.

- Increasing public awareness of the importance of daily physical activity through media events, legislative advocacy, and collaboration with colleagues statewide.
- Help support current Council events and programs.

We hope you'll join us!

New Liaison Joins Council

Scott Krouse, Executive Director for the Casco Bay YMCA in Freeport, recently joined the Council as a liaison.

As Executive Director, Scott has provided leadership resulting in organizational growth for fundraising, community outreach, program development, and facility expansion. Previously, Scott served as Executive Director for the Greater Portland YMCA and was instrumental in the development of the Pineland YMCA in New Gloucester.

Scott attended Springfield College earning an undergraduate degree in Sports Management and a Masters in Administration. As part of his Masters program, he worked for the Boston Celtics, in the front office, focusing on public relations and marketing. Scott resides in North Yarmouth with his wife, Cindy. He serves on the Sports Done Right Board and is an active advocate on the Healthy Casco Bay Committee. Scott has many hobbies, but most of all enjoys getting outdoors participating in the numerous recreational activities the state of Maine has to offer.

2008-2009 Annual Supporting Membership Categories:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Junior - \$10 (under 18 years of age) | <input type="checkbox"/> Family - \$60 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time Student or Retiree - \$20
(qualification for student rate is 12 credit hours or more; Retirees must be at least 65 years of age) | <input type="checkbox"/> Business/Organizational - \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual - \$40 | <input type="checkbox"/> Exemplary Supporting Member - I
would like to further support the work of the Governor's Council on Physical Activity. Please accept my contribution of \$_____. |

Name: _____

Business/Organization Name (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Telephone: _____

This is my home business address. Year of Birth: _____

My check is enclosed. Please bill me.

Membership Benefits: (You will receive **ALL** the benefits below. If you do **NOT** wish to receive any of the below, please check on the corresponding box.)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Name listed on web site and annual report. | <input type="checkbox"/> Council bi-annual newsletter. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <i>Maine in Motion</i> e-newsletter. | <input type="checkbox"/> Invitation to annual business meeting. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Periodic announcements of Council events, programs, and physical activity news. | |

My interest is: (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Networking | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Council events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being a member of a committee (for more information on Council activities, go to www.maineinmotion.org) | <input type="checkbox"/> Current information on wellness and physical activity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

All contributions are tax deductible.

Please return completed form along with your check made payable to:
MCD Health Development Fund/MGCPA
11 Parkwood Drive
Augusta, Maine 04330

This form can also be found online at www.maineinmotion.org. Credit card payments are accepted online.

Youth Participants Enjoy Governor's Conference

More than 400 people took part in The Governor's Conference on Youth and the Natural World, held on Thursday, October 2, at the Augusta Civic Center.

Participants heard Larry Selzer, President and CEO of The Conservation Fund and a national leader in the movement to reconnect children to nature, and a panel of state leaders discuss the urgency of encouraging children and families to engage more in outdoor activities.

Gov. John E. Baldacci and Commissioner Patrick McGowan of the Maine Department of Conservation, which organized the event, also spoke to the issue. They discussed Maine's efforts in preserving land and supporting outdoor recreational activities. The state recently established "Take It Outside," an initiative led by Gov. Baldacci that provides information on year-round recreation opportunities in Maine.

"We are exceedingly pleased with how many people attended this unique event, shared their experience and expertise about outdoor education -- and simply enjoyed themselves," Commissioner McGowan said after the conference. "We intend to continue with

this significant movement, something so vital to the state and to the welfare and health of all Maine people."

Participants got to meet two Olympic gold medalists from Maine, marathoner Joan Benoit Samuelson and snowboarder Seth Wescott. Author Donn Fendler, who, as a boy, was lost in the Maine woods for nine days in 1939, also discussed his experiences. Fendler showed film footage from his rescue and reunion with his family.

A rock-climbing wall, various hikes - including birding and geocaching, and rafting, 3-D nature photography and bicycling demonstrations were some of the fun activities that conference-goers got to experience. More than 60 people took part in the geocaching demonstration and the birding group had 40 people.



Maine Conservation Corps member tries out the rock wall.

Maine's Declaration of OUT-Dependence

When in the course of human existence there comes a time when the virtual world has superseded the natural world in the lives of children and their families; when many children spend the equivalent of a full work week in front of an electronic screen; when parents are afraid to let their children outside to play; when it is the rare child that has climbed a tree; it is the obligation of those who reap and cherish the benefits of living, working and playing in the natural world to remedy this imbalance for the good of those so unjustly and unknowingly afflicted.

We hold these truths to be self evident, that the actual experience of fishing, picking blueberries, and catching a reptile or amphibian cannot be replicated on a video screen, that every child deserves the freedom to explore their local natural world, to find out what is under that rock, that the thrill of swimming in a lake or exploring a tide pool at the ocean is never diminished, that the danger of a sedentary lifestyle spent viewing the world through a car window or on a video screen is far worse than anything a child is likely to encounter out of doors, that it is only through an intimate relationship with the natural world surrounding them that a child comes to understand their own sense of place.

Given this understanding of Dependence on the Outdoors, we the undersigned pledge to improve our relationship with nature for the benefit of ourselves, our families and our neighbors by:

1. Opening the back door and going outside to play as a family for one half hour a day - rain or shine.
2. Going to a lake or beach at least 3 times a summer.
3. Taking my kids, and my neighbor's kids, or my best friend on a hike up the closest hill or favorite mountain each fall.
4. Sledding, snowshoeing, skiing, skating, ice fishing, building a snowman or making Snow Angels at least every other weekend Jan-March.
5. Encouraging friends and grandparents to take kids fishing if you can't.
6. Going on a family bike ride around the block. Reintroduce and encourage bikes as a form of transportation for all kids. Drive slower in the neighborhoods to make it safer.
7. Sitting outside to enjoy one sunrise, or one sunset a month.
8. Enabling my kids to go camping once a year, taking them myself if possible.
9. Lying down and just watching the clouds or the night sky for 15 minutes a week.
10. Go out for a short walk after dinner once a week.



Donn Fendler and Commissioner McGowan sign Maine Declaration of Out-Dependence.