

Get ME Active

"Promoting Healthy Lifestyles Through Physical Activity"



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Mainely Fitness

Wanted: Children who enjoy outdoor activities and care about natural habitats and public lands.

Sounds strangely like one of those wild west "wanted" posters nailed up outside the sheriff's office in some remote, dusty town south of Dodge City, doesn't it? The only problem is that this cow-town isn't in the wild west at all: it is a small town called Obesityville, USA, and the face on the poster looks remarkably like your son, daughter, nephew, niece or the lonely child down the street.

Well, the marshal and his deputies are coming to town and they have your Billy or Anabelle in their sights. A posse has been formed and it's aiming to roust your kids off the couch, away from the computer/video game and into the woods.

President Bush initiated the "President's Great Outdoor Challenge" in May. The President's "Challenge" is an incentive program that encourages parents to share the outdoors with their children. The duality of activity and fitness go hand in hand. The idea is to stimulate interest in nature and allow our children to join the recreational segment of our population who hike, bike, snowshoe, kayak, and fish in our beautiful mountains, streams and animal habitats. The impetus has the power to motivate children (and adults) to become more active and fit. Naturally, the President and his fitness council are banking on our children falling in love with America's great outdoors through the program.

The coupling of outdoor activity for children has potential because it promotes education, curiosity and exploration with physical fitness as a by-product. The U.S. Forest Service was so enthused with this idea that it also

developed a 1.5 million dollar grant program called "Kids in the Woods" earlier this summer. Keenly aware of the trends toward obesity in our young people, the Forest Service realized that this is the time to mobilize our youth. The organization of youth for recreative pursuits in the woods will give young people healthy, purposeful activities that promote healthy lifestyles and may cultivate a new generation of wardens, environmentalists, and forest caretakers at the same time.

More locally, Governor Baldacci has introduced the "Take it Outside" program as Maine's initiative to get our youth out of the house and into Maine's forests. Clearly moved by an expedition up to Mount Katahdin with his son this summer, our Governor understood the power and sheer beauty of time spent exploring Maine mountains with loved ones. Governor Baldacci's initiative is a solid reminder for us all to take time with family and friends and enjoy Maine's landscape.

So, now that we know what the marshal and his deputies are after, one key question arises: Is there a reward? Is there a price on Billy's or Anabelle's head? In a word, yes.

The price is health, wealth and happiness. Health because outdoor activity can help reverse the trend toward obesity in our youth. Childhood obesity has been linked with numerous diseases including diabetes and heart disease. Fit youngsters are less likely to have high absentee rates in school which translates into better performance and scholarship. Happiness is spending time doing



Mainely Fitness

(continued from front page)

something that one loves. What is not to love about climbing an exhilarating mountain, kayaking across a marsh at sunset, snowshoeing through a wintry woods or exploring a Maine stream in waders?

You are encouraged to join the posse. Turn your boy or girl in right now and reap the reward of health, wealth and happiness.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

February 14, 2008
Legislative Wellness Day

May 7, 2008
All Children Exercising Simultaneously (ACES) Day

May 21, 2008
National Employee Health & Fitness Day

May 22, 2008
Contest for Communities Award Celebration

For more information on any of the above events, go to www.maineinmotion.org.

For more information 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.

PE4ME Involves Council

During the most recent legislative session in Maine, the joint legislative Education Committee voted down a proposed bill that would have required all K-8 students to participate in physical education programs that meet the National Association of Sports and Physical Education (NASPE) standards. NASPE recommends a minimum number of minutes based on age for students, with students being active at least half of the class time, and that PE classes be taught by certified PE teachers. Rep. Lisa Miller of Somerville and partners from the American Heart Association, Maine Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (MAHPERD), and the Health Policy Partners of Maine successfully requested that the PE Bill be brought back to the Committee for reconsideration. In addition, they presented a Resolve, which was approved and signed by the Governor.

The Resolve directs the Commissioner of Health and Human Services, the Commissioner of Education, and the co-chairs of the Governor's

Council on Physical Activity to convene a planning and oversight team, known as PE4ME. PE4ME is charged to examine national guidelines and develop standards including the minimum number of minutes of physical education per day or week and appropriate physical activities for PE in K-8. They must also develop an implementation plan to achieve those standards by the 2010-2011 school year. The Resolve requires that the team report to the Health and Human Services and the Education Committees no later than 12/31/07. It authorizes the Education Committee to submit legislation to the second regular session of the 123rd Legislature.

This outcome was far more than any of our policy partners had expected could be achieved with this first attempt to increase physical education in Maine's schools. The challenge is now to craft a plan per the Resolve, by the end of this year. The Governor's Council on Physical Activity is honored to be involved and contribute to the creation of this plan.

Governor Commits to Serve as a Role Model for Physical Activity

The Maine Governor's Council on Physical Activity held its Board of Directors Annual Meeting on August 28, 2007. Board members were pleased to have the honorable Governor Baldacci as a guest. The Governor committed to serve as a role model for physically active lifestyles, with his family. He and his son will be visiting Maine's parks and hiking its highest peaks. The Governor shared his intentions to take responsibility for his own health and hopes that Maine residents will do the same.

Governor Baldacci recently launched a program to get Maine's youth outdoors called, "Take it Outside." He

plans to hold a "Take it Outside" Summit in the Spring of 2008.

The Governor also expressed his continued support for the Council's activities and may consider tracking his hiking trips on the Maine in Motion web site at www.maineinmotion.org.



Council Member Profile

Paul Judkins

Paul Judkins joined the Governor's Council on Physical Activity in 2003 and has been involved with various aspects of health care for much of his career, both professionally and as a volunteer. Paul helped to establish Maine's first Health Management Organization (HMO), when HMO meant Health Maintenance, as an outgrowth of work with an experimental program called Rural Health Associates. The Council's current co-chair, Dr. Erik Steele, completed an internship with that group. Paul served as chairman of the Franklin Memorial Hospital Board and constructed the first stage of what has become one of the finest such units in rural America. Paul also chaired the National Health Service Corps Advisory Council, The (Maine) State Health Coordinating Council, the administrative group of the Governor's Taskforce

on Women and Children's Health, and the Maine Ambulatory Care Coalition.

Paul brings a wealth of expertise to the Council because of his experience with non-profits. He also brings a unique perspective on a personal level to bring the Council's attention to the unique health and fitness problems of Maine's growing elderly population.

Paul and his wife, Cynthia, are models for healthy lifestyles. They have paid close attention to their dietary needs and to staying physically fit. Paul and Cynthia raise many of their own vegetables, mow their own lawn, square dance, play tennis and bowl. Prior to their retirement to Florida for the winters, they also burned, and handled, five cords of wood per winter. And, still burn some in these cool Spring and Fall days.

Elanna Farnham Re-elected to NAHF Board

The National Association for Health & Fitness (NAHF) announced the election of its new Board members in Buffalo, New York, at their August meeting. Amongst the new members is one of our own from Maine, Elanna Farnham, who has previously served a term for two years as Secretary. The NAHF Executive Director, Phil Haberstro, commented that the Board had representation from all U.S. geographic regions and a blend of new and seasoned members. We are proud that Elanna is representing the geographic region in the Northeast.

The National Association for Health & Fitness (NAHF) is a non-profit organization that exists to improve the quality of life for individuals in the United States through the promotion of physical fitness, sports and healthy lifestyles. NAHF accomplishes this work by fostering and supporting Governor's and State Councils and coalitions that promote and encourage regular physical activity. For more information on NAHF, go to www.physicalfitness.org.

Mentoring Program Update Funded by a Grant from the Davis Family Foundation

The Maine in Motion Physical Activity Mentoring Program has enrolled 39 participants from Bangor Internal Medicine, a primary care practice affiliated with St. Joseph's Hospital in Bangor, Maine. Participants recruited include those age 50 or older who live independently in the community and have been identified by their primary care provider as candidates for increased physical activity. Most of these participants have one or more chronic illnesses and will benefit from an increase in physical activity. Average body mass index is 32.6 with a range of 24 to 43 (BMI of 25 is considered normal weight).

Participants have been randomly selected into two groups, those who will receive physical activity mentoring and those who will not. The 12 month physical activity program used in this project is the "Maine in Motion"

program developed by the Maine Governor's Council on Physical Activity. The program uses a participant manual and consists of counseling, pedometer usage and self-monitoring. After baseline testing, all participants met with an exercise specialist to set up daily step goals, review pedometer usage, discuss procedures for keeping a step calendar and review tips for increasing daily physical activity. Participants in the mentoring group have attended group meetings for four months and will continue to meet through six months. Feedback was obtained from participants at three months and assessments will be completed at twelve months. Initial feedback from participants has been positive.

For more information, contact Elanna Farnham, Wellness Consultant and Project Manager, at ecfarnham@roadrunner.com.

Is Thin Really Thin?

New Findings About Obesity and Health

Obesity has become the consummate symbol of our culture's predilection toward unhealthy eating and inadequate physical exercise. By definition, one is considered obese if his or her body mass index (BMI) exceeds 30 kilograms per square meter or 120% above the desirable weight.

Whatever definition of obesity is used, the image of a large person, given his or her frame size, is identified with other significant health issues such as diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular and heart disease. So thin is seen as healthy and medically acceptable.

Not so, according to researchers at the Imperial College of Britain. According to Dr. Jimmy Bell in a recent A.P. article on health, MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) studies have revealed that thinness derived from dieting alone does not affect major fat deposits within the thoracic and abdominal cavities. In fact, internal fat patterns of (imaged) individuals who diet alone for thinness have revealed unhealthy levels of internal fat that, in many ways, could be construed as obesity. These patterns of internal obesity within a thin, unconditioned body has coined a new term in fatness. "T.O.F.I.'s" (thin outside, fat inside).

Like many health and nutrition experts, Dr. Bell recommends weight control through physical activity and proper nutrition. The road to health rests on regular periods of sustained exercise while eating healthfully and controlling caloric intake. Dietary fads and quick answers will not produce healthful results unless you wish to be counted upon as a "T.O.F.I."

The Governor's Council on Physical Activity invites you to visit our website at www.maineinmotion.org or www.wsemerson.com/maineinmotion to start your pathway to wellness which includes physical activity and proper nutrition.

National Employee Health & Fitness Day -- A Success!

The Maine Governor's Council on Physical Activity is pleased to report that 83 work sites in Maine took part in National Employee Health & Fitness Day on May 16, 2007. The estimated total number of participants in this event was over 6,000. Maine's participating work sites held walking and Nordic walking events, wellness fairs, massages, and a variety of active events. Many of these work sites also provided healthy breakfasts, lunches, and snacks for their employees.

National Employee Health & Fitness Day is administered annually by the National Association for Health & Fitness (NEHF). It is a national health observance created to promote the benefits of physical activity for individuals through their work site health promotion activities. Founded in 1989, National Employee Health & Fitness Day has enlisted tens of thousands of participants from employers around the world. Next year's event will take place on May 21, 2008 -- so mark your calendars!



NEHF Day participants at New England Rehabilitation Hospital get ready to take part in a Nordic walk.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Announces Major Grant Toward Fighting Childhood Obesity

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has announced it will commit at least \$500 million over the next five years to tackle one of the most urgent public health threats facing our nation: childhood obesity.

Dr. Risa Lavisso-Mourey, President of the Foundation, cited the direct relationship between poor health and obesity demonstrated in over 300 studies in the last 40 years. Dr. Lavisso-Mourey called pediatric obesity "one of America's greatest health problems."

The Foundation will focus on improving access to affordable healthy foods and opportunities for safe physical activity in schools and communities.