



Get Healthy Ottawa

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

OCTOBER 2009

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

For Crying Out loud, Get you Flu Shot! 1

Never Let Physical Activity Go Out of Season! 1

Sowing Community Seeds in Southwest Ottawa 2

Georgetown Community Garden Grows Much Success! 3

The Outdoor Discovery Center of Wildlife Unlimited 4

For Crying Out Loud, Get Your Flu Shot!

Influenza, commonly called the flu, is a contagious respiratory illness that usually strikes our population from December through February. This year, a new strain of influenza is circulating called “novel H1N1.” This strain of influenza began circulating in April and is likely to cause many more illnesses this fall. So far, the novel H1N1 flu has been mild. The best action you can take to prevent the flu from affecting you and others is getting your flu vaccine. The seasonal flu

vaccine is recommended for everyone. In addition, a vaccine for novel H1N1 will be available for certain priority groups. The vaccine greatly reduces your risk of getting the illness. While no vaccine is 100% effective, even if you do get the flu, your symptoms will be much milder than they would have been without the vaccine. And if you don’t get the flu, you don’t run the risk of spreading it to the people who are vulnerable to complications.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.MIOTTAWA.ORG/FLU OR FACEBOOK.COM/FLUGRANNY.



INFORMATIONAL FLU LINES:
SEASONAL FLU 616 494-5575
NOVEL H1N1 616 393-5632

Never Let Physical Activity Go Out Of Season!

As the days become shorter and the weather gets cooler, it is easy to get out of the habit of being physically active on a daily basis. Listed below are some tips for staying physically active during the fall and winter seasons. Remember, your health is worth it!

1. Choose activities like housework to incorporate physical activity (while getting your house clean too!) Any type of activity is going to burn calories; the more activity, the more calories burned.
2. Consider holiday shopping as a way to exercise. The mall is a great place to walk; even if the weather is bad outside you can still get a good workout inside.
3. Find fun ways to make snow your ally. There are many activities to choose from to enjoy the winter weather AND keep active too.
4. Use an exercise ball. These are great for stretching, toning and strengthening. You can even burn calories while simply sitting on them and maintaining your balance.
5. Remember walking is the simplest and easiest way to burn those extra calories. From a casual stroll to a power walk, you’ll burn calories & keep off extra pounds.
6. Join a holiday run/walk. Get some exercise while doing a good deed for others.
7. There are 1440 minutes in every day....schedule 30 of them for physical activity. Either do it all at once or break down 30 minutes of exercise per day into three 10 minute intervals.
8. Play, play, play! Take advantage of play time with kids or pets. This way everyone wins.
9. Take fitness breaks at work – walking, doing desk exercises, etc. instead of taking a coffee break. Make time for fitness... even at work
10. Keep physical activity fun. Choose activities that you will enjoy and that you will want to continue doing. You will gain the most benefit in an activity you stick with.

Sowing Community Seeds in Southwest Ottawa County

Two wonderful community gardens are serving citizens of Southwest Ottawa County in healthy, delicious ways. Garden Heights at Calvary Reformed Church and a new community garden at Lakewood Elementary School are offering a wealth of mind and body nutrition for all ages.

Garden Heights is located on 8th Street in the Holland Heights neighborhood and invites all members of the community to cultivate more than just tasty food. Krista Klein and Kerri-Sue Smits spearheaded the garden to not only provide healthy food, but also strengthen education, nutrition and relationships in the area.

Now in their second year, the two ladies partnered with MSU Extension, Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) and the Ottawa County Wellness Coalition Southwest Action team (SWAT). The partnership enabled Garden Heights to significantly expand the garden and offer programs for children and adults. The more than 60 children attending the church's Blacktop extension program participated in nutrition education based on state curriculum. In addition, children were welcomed to the garden Thursday mornings for a one-hour nutrition class that featured guest speakers, crafts, tasting and, of course, cultivating fresh vegetables.

Adults were welcomed to the garden Monday evenings and Thursday mornings for Garden Club. Members of the community enjoyed working together almost as much as the fruits of their labor. Special events included a food tasting, a salsa party and numerous guest speakers presenting on topics from fun ways to get active to preparing healthy meals on a budget.

"I never got tired of watching the excitement on the faces of the children and even the adults when they discovered something new in the garden," noted Krista Klein. "Everyone got so excited to find a new vegetable ready to be picked."

Garden Heights proves to be an excellent model for all community gardens, including the new salsa garden at Lakewood Elementary school. Jacquelyn Del Raso, principal, says she hopes "our community garden will foster opportunities for 'hands on' experiences associated with the cycle of plant life from seed to compost nutrition; and will assist in our educational goals of becoming critical thinkers, having a global perspective leading to informed action. The Lakewood community garden is an avenue toward building community through service learning opportunities, as well as establishing and maintaining healthy food options for students."

The school was contacted by SWAT members in spring of 2008 as a result of the Nutrition and Environmental Assessment Tool (NEAT) results for the city of Holland and Zeeland. Lakewood Elementary already had programs in place to support the \$1,000 grant from OCWC.

The fourth grade students have maintained and improved a compost bin and reduced waste from the lunch program by collecting fruit and vegetable excess to compost. Recycling, re-using and reduction of waste are values integrated into the curriculum. In addition, the school recently was awarded certification as a Michigan Green School. Lakewood Elementary looks to three goals for their salsa garden:

1. To educate the school community about the benefits of consuming fresh garden produce
2. To increase the inclusion of fresh vegetables in the school lunch program
3. To increase consumption of fresh vegetables by the local community through the maintenance and harvesting of the garden.

Like Garden Heights, Lakewood Elementary is not planting on its own. In addition to the OCWC grant, the school has partnered with MSU Extension Master Gardeners, the Center for Women in Transition, Fellowship Church of Holland and their active Parent Teacher Association to begin construction this fall.

SWAT is pleased to help these two fabulous gardens flourish in our community.



"I never got tired of watching the excitement on the faces of the children and even the adults when they discovered something new in the garden,"



Georgetown Community Garden Grows Mich Success!

Can you picture it? Four and five year olds working together in a garden! This is exactly what took place this year at the Jenison Early Childhood Center (ECC.) The ECC was selected by the Southeast Action Team of OCWC to receive funding to expand Georgetown Community Garden, which is located on the school's property.

The funding, provided by the Ottawa County Health Department, was used to purchase seeds, potting soil, starter plants, plant boxes, gardening tools, and fencing. Students and staff were involved with the garden, including 120 pre-k students, 60 kindergarteners, and 60 summer campers. The students assisted in the garden with planting, weeding, watering, and harvesting.

The garden was extremely successful. To date, students at the ECC have harvested over 70 pounds of produce, including tomatoes, corn, bell peppers, eggplant, cucumbers, green beans, and hard squash. ECC Staff incorporated some of the produce into snacks that were consumed at school. The ECC helped the Georgetown Seniors by providing seedlings for a garden at the Senior Center. In addition, the garden at the ECC was able to provide free fresh produce for local families in need!



The rewards from the garden were many. Gardening is a great way to learn new skills, make healthy food choices, and be physically active. Lee Westervelt, ECC Principal, noted that at the beginning of the project, many students were "hesitant to get dirty." Over time, the vast majority became brave about not only getting dirty but also trying new fruit and vegetables. "Young children are not as connected with the earth as previous generations and this appears to be successful in getting that connection established", Westervelt added.

There were other successes from the garden that Westervelt noticed as well. "Trying new foods became quite a topic with staff and parents. Most children not only tried new foods, but enjoyed them. They even went home and made requests to their parents to start purchasing more fruits and vegetables."

The ECC staff will continue the garden next year. If grant funding is available, they would like to expand the garden to provide more produce to those in need. Can you picture it? A farmers' market in Jenison where kids are the vendors! Stay tuned!





Ottawa County Wellness Coalition
12251 James Street
Holland, MI 49424
Phone: 616 393-5770

The Ottawa County Wellness Coalition (OCWC) is a collaboration of local agencies, hospitals, businesses, schools, area residents and other organizations within the community working to address the issues of overweight/obesity and unhealthy lifestyles in Ottawa County.

Check out www.gethealthyottawa.org

The Outdoor Discovery Center of Wildlife Unlimited

The Outdoor Discovery Center of Wildlife Unlimited is a 501(c)(3) non-profit outdoor education facility located on a 120-acre nature preserve. Located on the south side of Holland, the site is a thriving wildlife preserve which is home to hundreds of species of animals and plants. Through programs, demonstration areas and interpretive exhibits, the Outdoor Discovery Center (ODC) provides students and community members with up-close views of nature and learning opportunities about the West Michigan environment.

The Center features several ecosystems including ponds, remnant dunes, wetlands, meadows, remnant prairies, and lowland hardwood forests.



This unique and ecologically diverse area offers the community and schools a place to experience and enjoy nature. Four miles of walking trails and boardwalks wind through the grounds and provide access to the various ecosystems. A half-mile Sensory Trail is handicapped accessible and features interpretive areas along it that allow all visitors, regard-

less of their abilities or disabilities, to enjoy and learn about nature. The *Imagination Forest*, a nature play area located near the trailhead, is very popular with young visitors. Founders Hall, the education building at the entrance of the property, houses wildlife displays and serves as a visitor's information center. Unique to the Outdoor Discovery Center is an extensive birds of prey program which features live raptors in a specially built education facility. The site also includes a historically accurate Native American Ottawa Summer Village.



The mission of the ODC is to provide the people of West Michigan with outdoor learning opportunities that illustrate the benefits of nature and encourage stewardship and conservation of the natural world. The ODC encourages visitors to go outdoors, appreciate and enjoy nature, and develop a lifestyle that includes outdoor activity.



The Ottawa County Wellness Coalition is excited to promote the wonderful programs that the ODC has to offer! The ODC provides snowshoe rentals for visitors to explore the 120 acre nature preserve. For a \$5 per pair donation, you can hike during business hours exploring the woods, meadow, dune and lowland hardwood forest. Children under 16 years of age are FREE but must be accompanied by an adult.

For more information about the Outdoor Discovery Center, visit www.outdoordiscoverycenter.org.

