

Fauquier County Public Schools News Release

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SMITH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS OPT TO MOVE

Head 'em up and move 'em out.

No, not the four-legged little dogies from the *Rawhide* days but instead the two-legged Road Runners from down Smith Elementary way.



Getting the P.B. Smith students moving is the idea behind a new initiative aimed at improving students' health and achievement by including movement in each day. Dr. Patricia Comstock, principal at Smith Elementary, was inspired to get the ball rolling when she attended a conference in Florida last summer that was associated with her being named the Fauquier County recipient of *the Washington Post's* 2012 Distinguished Educational Leader Award (DELA). Expecting to be involved in robust seminars and discussions among colleagues about becoming better principals, she was surprised the afternoon that conference attendees were told to wear exercise clothes the following day. She hadn't even packed any exercise clothes – or tennis shoes. Outfitting herself as best she could under the circumstances, she was pleasantly surprised by a presentation by fitness trainer Tina McIntosh, founder of Active Bodyworks.

“She let us choose how we were going to move that morning, and within 10 minutes my heart was beating so fast. She showed us how moving more makes our hearts healthier,” Dr. Comstock said. As part of her award, Dr. Comstock won consultation with Ms. McIntosh for her school including a simple, poster-directed walking fitness course to be set up inside the school for students and staff. The program is called “Opt 2 Move.” Smith staff underwent training in January, the course was set up in the school's hallways, and the majority of Smith Road Runners (the school mascot) are receiving training in physical education classes this week. Second through fifth-grade students gathered in the school gymnasium the afternoon of Feb. 11 for an assembly kicking off the new initiative.

P.E. teacher Donna Wilbur told the students that walking along the Opt 2 Move route was not intended to be a stroll. “It's not like walking to class,” she said. “When you go on the course, you walk fast to get your heart rate up. You walk with a purpose.” Dr. Comstock told the students why movement is so important: “Boys and girls who take breaks and move around for a couple minutes do better work,” she said.

Featured guest at the Opt 2 Move assembly was Ms. McIntosh, who visited Smith to inspire the students to get moving. She designed the Opt 2 Move school program, she said, in response to staggering childhood obesity statistics. She hopes the program will teach children to use their bodies as their available fitness tool, to take advantage of available space and to love physical activity for a lifetime.

After pumping the students up with cheers and exercises, she told them in all seriousness, “You can be an exerciser for a lifetime. You have to

Continued on the next page



make the commitment every day to get some form of activity. Every time you're on the playground, take a walk around before you begin to play," she suggested. Recalling how she and her now-grown son used to make a game of choosing between stairs or elevators in buildings they visited, she told the students any kind of similar movement will only benefit their bodies and their brains.

"You know what kings and queens are, right? And you know they sit on thrones. Your body is your throne, and your brain sits in your throne. You need to take care of your body so you can take care of your brain too," she said. She told the students their lives will be better simply by making movement part of it.

To end the kickoff initiative, students rotated briefly through Opt 2 Move stations set up around the gymnasium and then took to the hallways to follow the official Opt 2 Move course. Finally, Dr. Comstock and Ms. McIntosh cut a ribbon to open the Opt 2 Move course officially.

As part of the Opt 2 Move initiative – which Dr. Comstock said was the best part of the *Washington Post* award because she could share it with staff and students, the principal is encouraging her staff to wear clothes and shoes that allow for movement three days a week and to "do a couple laps with me."

"Ten minutes...half a mile...great benefits!" she said.



OPT 2 MOVE



Movement Station

Opt 2 Move

Balance Rock Station

- Stand on 1 or 2 feet position
- Stand on 1 foot position and hold for 10 seconds
- Stand on 2 feet position and hold for 10 seconds
- Stand on 1 foot position and hold for 10 seconds
- Stand on 2 feet position and hold for 10 seconds
- Stand on 1 foot position and hold for 10 seconds
- Stand on 2 feet position and hold for 10 seconds

Standing Bear Hugs

- Stand with feet apart with hands on hips
- Stand with feet apart

Crane Fly

- Stand with feet apart

Opt 2 Move is a program of Active Bodyworks

