

Maine 2005 3-A-Day of Dairy Grant Final Report

3-A-Day of Dairy in York Schools

This 3-A-Day project brought knowledge and attention to the problem of inadequate calcium intake in York, Maine schools. Students noticed and tried new healthy dairy food choices that were part of the school lunch and ala carte programs. School staff got involved in the classrooms with presentations on the importance of dairy foods.

Students K-8 were involved in many activities, including Maine Dairy Day, and Healthy Heart Day where special dairy menus and dairy snacks were provided, as well as activities, information and presentations on the importance of dairy foods in a child's diet. School staff at elementary schools were very cooperative in joining in the activities and doing activities of their own to help support the project. Following is a summary of activities that took place throughout the school district as part of the grant program.

Village Elementary:

Sharon Cole, school food service manager, went into all kindergarten classes and worked with the teachers. She read a story to the class, asked questions about bones, talked about dairy and where it comes from. The school nutrition program provided them with milk and yogurt for snacks which were packaged in a great "Milk" lunch bag from Mello-Smello. Big cheese glasses were handed out as a prize for being smart about healthy choices! The kindergarten teachers also had an entire unit they did with the kids which included a visit to a dairy farm. For her work with the program, she was awarded the School Nutrition Association's Louise Sublette Award of Excellence.

First Graders had special snacks and milk bookmarks handed out at lunchtime. The principal, Ruth Dealy, read the students "A Cheesy Tale" at lunchtime. (see letter below from Principal Dealy.)

Second Graders were involved both in their gym classes and at lunchtime. Cynthia Sovetsky, food service assistant, provided them with information including the new MyPyramid, nutrition games (Nutrition Go Fish), worksheets, cheese taste testing, and more. Andy Gray, the gym teacher was great in providing us time to do the project.

Coastal Ridge Elementary:

In the computer lab, students explored dairy nutrition websites.

Gara Sanborn, manager, went into the 4th grade classes to talk about the importance of a healthy breakfast which includes milk & dairy.

Healthy Heart Day was held on Valentine's Day and provided the whole school with a healthy dairy snack: blueberry or strawberry yogurt & toppings.

As a result of this initiative, dairy consumption has increased considerably at all schools. Village Elementary alone has increased 97% from September to February. Breakfast at Coastal Ridge elementary has increased 165% since September and overall dairy consumption has increased 75%. Middle and High School lunch participation has increased 10%, primarily due to the 10oz. plastic milk bottles and increased choices at mealtimes. Students have more knowledge about the benefits of dairy in their diets due to program awareness and activities. Parent communication has improved through newsletters and PTO meeting presentations.

An oral presentation on the project was conducted at the University of Maine Cooperative Extension 2006 Nutrition Symposium and the Maine School Food Service Association's Spring Directors' Meeting. There are also plans to create a book of the project that could be distributed to other schools.

Sample Newsletter articles at York Elementary School for the 3-A-Day of Dairy Project

October 2005 DAIRY DAY in the CAFETERIA

Students at Village celebrated the goodness of dairy foods and learned how important it is for growing bodies to get enough calcium in their diet. Tuesday, October 25th was Dairy Day and our School Nutrition Program featured special foods on the menu to promote good nutrition. Breakfast menu was "make your own yogurt parfait" where students were able to add nut-free granola, a variety of fruits, and sunflower seeds to yogurt to make a healthy breakfast treat. Lunch featured macaroni and cheese and a 10 oz. bottle of milk in place of the 8 oz cartons for that day's meal. The Maine Dairy and Nutrition Council representatives visited our schools as children learned and enjoyed the food and activities of the day. Our Nutrition Center in the cafeteria is loaded with information on how children can get their 3-A-Day, so make sure to visit the center when you come in!

December 2005 YORK SCHOOL NUTRITION NEWS

"3 a Day" has been our focus in York school cafeterias this year. Nutrition experts agree that children need at least 3 servings of dairy foods each day to help them get the calcium their growing bodies need. With the busy winter holidays ahead, it's often difficult to make sure our children eat right. York's School Nutrition Program offers several dairy food options along with regular and flavored milks at lunch each day. Students can choose from a yogurt & string cheese lunch, or a tasty chef salad, topped with turkey and cheese, both served with a roll or crackers, fruit, veggies and ice cold milk. Children have enjoyed these new choices! Below are some tasty snacks that can help moms get more dairy foods into their children's diet.

PEACHES & CREAM SMOOTHIE

Makes 2 servings

2 cups frozen unsweetened peach slices (170 g)

1 3/4 cups reduced fat milk (214 g)

1-2 tbsp honey (11 g)
1 tsp vanilla (2 g)

In a blender combine frozen peach slices, milk, honey and vanilla. Cover and blend until smooth. Pour into glasses.

STRAWBERRY YOGURT SMOOTHIE

Makes 4 servings

1-1/2 cups cold fat free milk
1-1/2 teaspoons strawberry, low calorie soft drink mix
1 container (8oz.) vanilla lowfat yogurt
1 cup frozen strawberries

Place all ingredients in blender in order listed; cover. Blend on high speed until smooth. Serve immediately.

February 2006

The National Dairy Council reports that less than 4 out of 10 school age children get the calcium they need each day. Sharon Cole, VES kitchen manager has made it her mission to help students understand the importance of calcium in a child's diet. Second grade students got to taste test different cheeses in the cafeteria, while learning about calcium and their bodies' needs. Kindergarten students in Mrs. Whelan-Roy's class worked with Sharon to learn about their bones and teeth and how to keep them strong. On February 14, students who take milk with their lunch or purchase milk for snack will receive an added surprise.

Letters of Appreciation

Thank you so much for providing the opportunity for Sharon Cole to come visit our classroom during snack time to teach the children about the importance of calcium. The question and answer period helped spark the children's interest in the topic and also to focus on some important information. The children really enjoyed the special dairy snacks (yogurt, cheese and milk) which also reinforced the kinds of foods that are essential for these young snackers to learn to eat regularly! And of course they loved the fun cheese glasses! Sharon's program was developmentally appropriate for this kindergarten age group and had just the right mix of information, participation, and yummy materials!

We appreciate the time and effort that went into her excellent lesson plans!

Sincerely,
Pam Whelan-Roy
Kindergarten

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To Whom It May Concern:

It is with pleasure that I recognize the efforts of Mrs. Sharon Cole, Food Service Manager of Village Elementary School, to foster an awareness of the importance of dairy products and, in turn, to increase their consumption. Dairy products are a critical source of calcium which promotes healthy teeth and bones, and as such, are extremely important for the growth and well being of young children. Mrs. Cole's work supports York's Health Curriculum for kindergarten through grade two and provides developmentally appropriate learning experiences for our primary age students.

The lessons Mrs. Cole developed to promote dairy products are interactive and hands-on. Students are introduced to a variety of real dairy products, encouraged to sample them and given information about their nutritional value and importance in the diet. The activities made meaningful connections with other curricula, such as, the presentation of milk, cheese, and yogurt to the kindergarten that prepares the students for their spring trip to a working dairy farm and the creation and interpretation by second graders of a cheese preference graph. As a viable member of our staff, Mrs. Cole works collaboratively with the school nurse who shares the responsibility for the implementation of the health curriculum and also advocates for healthy eating through her communication with staff and parents. We at Village are fortunate to have a food service manager like Mrs. Cole who actively works to bring York's Food Service Department message of good nutrition and wellness to the Village School Community.

Yours in education,  
Ruth Dealy, Principal

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