

## School nutritional programs

A school nutrition program benefits students, classrooms, families and communities.

*"The Breakfast Program makes me a lot better now that my tummy is not growling anymore. My tummy won't have to hurt anymore plus the breakfast program gives us a healthy heart and makes us live."*

Student

*"The program provided adequate nutrition to student who otherwise may arrive at school nutritionally unprepared for the academic day. The program further enhanced the overall health of the children and ensures a lasting legacy by providing nutritional guidance for parents."*

Teacher

*"The program has been a tremendous success in the school, bringing the students together in a social setting over a nutritious breakfast, while simultaneously reinforcing what are healthy foods."*

Public Health Nurse

*"When I'm hungry I love coming into the school."*

Student



The Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba (CNCM) is a non-profit organization whose mandate is to improve the nutritional health and well-being of Manitoba school children through education, funding and promotion of Best Practices. The council has distributed over \$1.25 million to nourishment programs in Manitoba since 2001.

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# Kids Eating Well

A newsletter from the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba

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## Snack Program a Winner

Each week, principal Debbie Beach-Ducharme loads her van full of food, buying cases of fresh fruit and vegetables for the nearly 300 students who attend Winnipeg's William Whyte Community School.

Every weekday morning around 10:00 a.m., the school's food coordinator travels from classroom to classroom, offering students a healthy snack. A grant from the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba makes this snack program possible.



"Broccoli, cauliflower, carrots...those disappear really quickly," says Beach-Ducharme. "In my school in particular, kids do not have access to fresh fruits and vegetables on a daily basis, so we make it available. The kids love it."

William Whyte is a nursery to Grade 8 school in Winnipeg's core area. The morning snack usually consists of a fruit, vegetable or food containing protein, like egg-on-a-bun.

"All the research shows when kids have healthy food in their stomachs, it helps them to concentrate in class better," says Beach-Ducharme, who sees the snack program as a major contributor to her ultimate goal of educating parents about nutrition.

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## Make a great snack

EatRight Ontario has some ideas for parents and schools planning snacks for children. You can think of snacks as a mini-meal that includes more than one food group. Some simple nutritious snack ideas include:

- Whole grain crackers with a cheese stick
- Fresh cut fruit with a yogurt dip
- Nut-free trail mix, including dried cranberries, raisins, dried apricots and apple rings along with a cold cereal like Cheerios.

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At William Whyte, parents are a key part of shifting childhood eating habits. Last year, several parents attended an intensive course called CHIP, or "coronary heart improvement program," at the Wellness Institute at Seven Oaks General Hospital. The payoff has been seeing



parents and staff give up their own Slurpee-a-day habits in order to focus on eating healthier foods.

Beach-Ducharme hopes this comprehensive approach to nutrition, including the mid-morning snack and the weekday-morning breakfast program serving about 80 children, will lead

to children acquiring lifelong healthy eating habits.

"In this day and age, families are very busy, so people are compromising and taking short-cuts with food preparation, which means processed food or fast food," says Beach-Ducharme. "I think every school would benefit from a snack program like ours. If you're not sure, take a look at what kids are eating in their lunches. Most people would be surprised to see how much processed food there is."

In the meantime, the snack program at William Whyte guarantees every child at school has at least one healthy snack each day.

*"I think every school would benefit from a snack program like ours."*

- Debbie Beach-Ducharme

## Best Practices at William Whyte

The snack program at William Whyte Community School follows several best practices in nutrition programs, including:

- offering the snack to all students at the school,
- offering the program five days per week during the school year,
- employing a food coordinator on staff,
- ensuring people handling food are trained in safe food handling practices,
- providing nutrition education support.

Congratulations to everyone at William Whyte Community School for helping to create lifelong healthy eating habits!

### Grant Deadlines

The Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba awards grants each year. The deadline to apply for nourishment program funding is April 15, but November is not too soon to find out if teachers, students and community volunteers are keen on completing an application. Schools that have received grants for the 2010-11 school year are required to submit an interim report by Feb. 15, 2011.

### Thank you

Thank you to all our funders, especially the province of Manitoba and the Winnipeg Foundation through the Moffat Family Fund.

### New newsletter

This is the first issue of the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba newsletter. So many schools have creative, innovative ideas about childhood nutrition that we want to be able to share them with you. Together, we can build on our successes to make healthier choices the easiest choices at school.

# Get Your Fruits and Veggies

Thousands of children across Manitoba have been eating their fruits and veggies, thanks to a pilot program coordinated by the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba and supported by the governments of Manitoba and Canada.

"One of our goals was for students to try a variety of vegetables and fruits at school," says project coordinator Maxine Meadows. "We were happy to see that students ate the food, with minimal waste."

In the pilot program, more than 2,000 students in a dozen different schools were served a variety of vegetables and fruits three times a week for two 12-week periods. In September 2010, phase three of the pilot got underway with at least another 1,000 students participating.

"Over the past two years, we've learned that schools need to have some flexibility around delivering the snack program," says Meadows. "Each school is different, so we can't expect one program delivery model to meet the diversity of needs."

Although each school discovered its own way to deliver the snack program, all of the participating schools made a commitment to provide nutrition education to the students. In addition, they all tried to engage families and community members in at least one nutrition-focused activity.

The pilot program will eventually lead to recommendations for a sustainable program model that will increase the amount and variety of vegetables and fruits consumed by school children in Manitoba.

"Evidence suggests that increasing vegetable and fruit consumption can have a positive impact on

risk for major chronic diseases such as cancer, coronary heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes, so this is more than just a snack program," says Meadows. "We're creating habits today that may contribute to improved health 10, 20 or even 30 years from now."

### Dear Diary

Participating schools record each week's snack in a food diary. This menu is taken from one of the participating schools.

#### Monday recess

107 fresh apples

#### Wednesday recess

107 fresh oranges

#### Friday recess

54 cups of fresh carrots

*"I'm not a big vegetable person, but since we are doing this, I've been eating more vegetables."*  
Participating Student

