

## Healthier Meal Options Capture Students Interest *and* Promote Good Nutrition - Valley City ACHIEVE

### Public Health Issue

- A longstanding partnership of 13 organizations in Valley City, North Dakota advanced many health behavior change programs for individuals but recognized the need to move toward policy, systems and environmental changes to have a greater impact on resident's health.
- Schools are a center of the community in rural areas like Valley City and promoting access to healthful foods and beverages in schools can impact not only the students but the wider community by raising awareness and increasing knowledge of everyone involved.
- Promoting breastfeeding is another community strategy which helps prevent obesity, protects infants from infections and may reduce the rate of certain breast and ovarian cancers.

### Program

- The National Association of Chronic Disease Directors provides Action Communities for Health, Innovation and Environmental Change (ACHIEVE) grants and technical assistance to selected communities with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- The Valley City ACHIEVE funding allowed an existing partnership to go in a new direction and aided in creation of a community action plan that is raising awareness of the School Board, local officials and the public about effective health policies and healthier environments.
- An existing *Fuel Up To Play 60* group was engaged to design and implement a Smoothie Bar project including a recipe contest and sampling by the student body to promote acceptance and encourage breakfast consumption. Athletic Meals-to-Go was created to help athletes eat healthier by offering a nutritionally balanced meal.
- The CHART assisted in implementation of federal and state laws related to breastfeeding by promoting the "infant-friendly" designation to worksites throughout the community.

### Impact

- Almost 100 high school students who normally wouldn't eat breakfast at school are now consuming a nutrient-rich smoothie, as indicated by monitoring of cafeteria and classroom breakfast numbers. Adolescents who eat a healthy breakfast perform better in the classroom.
- Students are gaining real-life marketing, production and sales experience through the smoothie bar effort, using it to fulfill a requirement for a state and national DECA project.
- Athletic Meals-To-Go is helping athletes eat healthier/save time by offering a nutritionally balanced meal for pre-game energy or post-game re-hydration and quick muscle recovery.
- Nine work places are now designated as 'infant-friendly,' a voluntary state designation signifying that workplaces adopted breastfeeding support policies. (Valley City State University, Chamber of Commerce, St. Catherine's Elementary School, Sanford Clinic, City of Valley City, City County Health Dept., Central Ave. Health Mart Pharmacy, Barnes County Courthouse)
- ACHIEVE team members started *On The Move*, an exercise incentive program, which influenced the school superintendent to begin walking to work, encouraged the office staff to become more active and led to arranged educational sessions for the local Kiwanis and 30

employees of the school bus company on becoming more active – demonstrating the cascading benefit of raising awareness about health through community initiatives such as ACHIEVE.

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