

Printed from THE DAILY JOURNAL, dtd. 07/10/2010

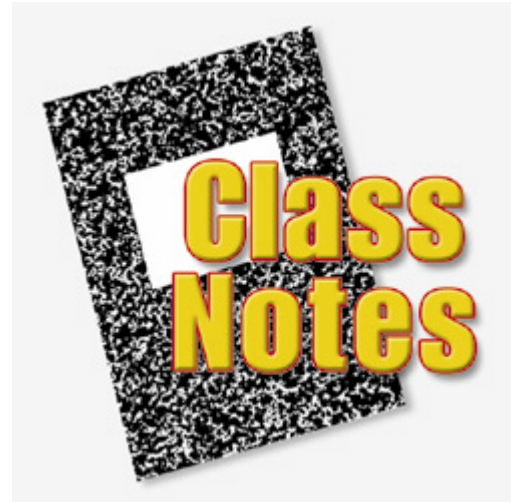
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## Class notes

July 10, 2010, 03:07 AM

In early February, the FitFun Program for Better Learning was rolled out to teacher champions from 15 schools in the Redwood City School District. The program empowers all kindergarten to fifth grade teachers to provide their students high-quality physical activity throughout the school day. The program will reach more than 6,000 children and more than 300 teachers.

According to Kidsdata.org, more than 30 percent of RCSD fifth graders are overweight, and 70 percent do not meet state fitness standards. Due to budget cuts of more than \$5 million, seven physical education teacher positions were eliminated this school year. As a result, district students receive less than half the physical education minutes that the state requires.



Without additional physical activity, these students are at greater risk of developing diabetes, asthma and other health issues related to obesity. Furthermore, schools that offer consistent physical activity and physical education programs report seeing positive effects on academic achievement, increased concentration and improved mathematics and language arts test scores. Teachers see reduced classroom disruptive behavior.

The Redwood City Education Foundation spearheaded innovative partnerships with Kaiser Permanente and Mills-Peninsula Health Services to fund the rollout of the FitFun program and with the Get Healthy San Mateo County Task Force to provide physical education equipment.

The focus of the FitFun Program for Better Learning is on activities that develop movement skills, social interaction and a positive self-image. The goals are to create healthier students with greater ability to concentrate on learning and to enable students to enjoy being FitFun.

The centerpiece of the program is the FitFun Game Guide that was created by members of the School District's Wellness Committee and Playworks (formerly Sports4Kids), with input from teachers, principals, students and parents. The 100-page guide contains short, enjoyable indoor and outdoor physical activities.

"There is a creative aspect as well," said Kathy McAdams, kindergarten through third grade teacher at John Gill Elementary School. "While moving as if we were walking through Jell-O recently, one of the kids said, 'I'm stuck.' Instantly, the other children created a new movement based on getting that child unstuck."

The FitFun for Better Living program is the culmination of three area hospitals — Kaiser Permanente, Mills-Peninsula, and Sequoia Hospital — working together for the benefit of children in the Redwood City School District. This year, Kaiser Permanente, Mills-Peninsula Health Services and the Get Healthy San Mateo County Task Force contributed a total of \$22,000 to fund the rollout of the FitFun program, which includes the FitFun Game Guide, a video program overview and materials to help train district classroom teachers.

Program outcomes, which include significantly improved student fitness and an increase in the quality and quantity of time spent on physical activity in the classroom, will be measured using the California Physical Fitness test results and school self-assessment survey results.

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"Can you spell jabberwocky, susceptibility or how about otorhinolaryngologist? These are words that Alpha Beacon students faced at the ACSI Spelling Bee held in San Leandro. Congratulations to all of the

participants, and to Alpha Beacon students who placed with ribbons: Bryan Tan (second place for seventh grade level), Adryan Chua-Dee (third place for sixth grade level), Emily Park (third place for third grade level), Kristin Chen (fourth place for third grade level), Samuel Pappas (second place for first grade level). Tan came in third place overall (competition between grade levels fifth through eighth ribbon winners) and will be competing in the upcoming Regional Bee in Sacramento.

Class notes is a twice weekly column dedicated to school news. It is compiled by education reporter Heather Murtagh. You can contact her at (650) 344-5200, ext. 105 or at [heather@smdailyjournal.com](mailto:heather@smdailyjournal.com).