



**Living in a Healthy School Environment 2009-2010**

Healthy Opportunities for Children: School Wellness Initiatives South East Alberta

Summary Report:

Through a grant (\$10,000) from the Alberta Healthy School Community Wellness Fund and Alberta Health and Wellness, the Healthy Opportunities for Children Committee (HOC) was able to provide one time funding for small projects that addressed school wellness. HOC is an ad-hoc committee of the Community Food Connections Associations, with membership from a variety of community organizations. The committee consists of 7 members, representing Moving & Choosing, City of Medicine Hat, Medicine Hat School District 76, and also represents the needs of both Prairie Rose School Division and Medicine Hat Catholic School Division. The Committee’s role was to plan, prioritize and distribute funding to schools for small projects.

Funds were distributed to schools that completed an application form outlining specific project and goals, and that met the requirements for school wellness grants. Some projects were new and others were in existence but required additional resources to expand or enhance their scope. The funding requirements were:

- address one of the Wellness Pillars: Healthy Eating, Active Living or Positive Social Environments (or a combination), and
- focus on sustainability, with current or planned partnerships that can assist in addressing need.

Due to the number of schools within the region, individual projects were limited to a maximum of \$800.00 from the HOC grant; however schools were encouraged to seek additional funding from other sources.

The Wellness Fund small grant was received in late November 2009. In December the HOC Committee began to receive applications from various schools from the 3 South East Alberta school districts. A total of 19 applications were received with 15 projects receiving funding. The follow chart is a breakdown of school districts and project focus.

School District	Healthy Eating	Active Living	Combination
MHSD76: 7	3	2	2
PRRD: 5	2	3	
MHCBE: 3		3	

Projects included the purchase of phys ed equipment, DPA room supplies, exercise equipment, activity kits, Positive Playground sets, fridge, freezer, kitchen supplies and garden box materials. Each project will assist in providing a healthy environment. Many are in the early stages of implementation.

This opportunity has been very successful for many reasons:

- Collaborative partnership, based on capacity building to provide resources to the school community at large.
- School districts were represented by one or more members of the HOC Committee, providing the opportunity for open communication.
- The Committee falls under the umbrella of an existing non-profit community organization.
- A central source of funding provided ease of application for schools.
- Local knowledge of projects and commitment allowed for prioritization of projects.

I have been pleased to have been a partner on this very worthwhile project. The benefit for schools within MHSD 76 is evident, and could not have been achieved without collaboration. Although the role of Healthy Schools Project with SD 76 is closing, the Healthy Opportunities Committee will continue to meet and to seek for additional resources for the South East Alberta schools.

Molly Hanson-Nagel  
Healthy Schools Facilitator  
Medicine Hat School District 76  
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