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15 mini-grants to promote health awarded

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LISBON - Video gaming isn't considered a normal school activity, but one area school plans to encourage physical fitness among its students by using the popular Wii game system during recess, lunch and after school.

The purchase of a Wii was just one of 15 school proposals awarded a \$250 mini-grant by the Coordinated Action for School Health (CASH) Coalition Wednesday afternoon at the Columbiana County Educational Service Center. This was the third year for the mini-grants which focus on health improvement projects, such as increasing physical activity, disease prevention, enhancing nutrition and social/behavioral support.

Last year there were eight proposals funded, but this year there were more applicants and they all received funding, CASH Coordinator Danielle Dillon said. The grants were funded through the CASH Coalition, Salem Community Hospital, Zone 4 Action for Healthy Kids and the American Cancer Society.

"The hospital's very happy to be a part of this," CASH Coalition member Debbie Pietrzak of Salem Community Hospital said before handing out some of the checks.

She explained that part of the coalition's goal is to improve children's health at school, but also to teach them so they can take the behaviors home with them.

"Our goal is to lay a good foundation," she said.

Dillon said one change this year was to encourage the school districts to incorporate family time into their plans, which goes back to the idea of taking the behaviors home.

Some projects focused on physical fitness while others focused on social and behavioral issues, such as bullying prevention, reducing the spread of illness and dealing with incontinence in students.

School districts and their projects include:

Leetonia Elementary, Middle and High School (\$250 each), Wii/Wii Fit activities as alternative to indoor recess for grades K-4, for use by middle and high school students at lunch time and for wellness activities after school for students, parents and families.

Lisbon McKinley Elementary and David Anderson Jr./Sr. High School (\$250 each), purchase of magnets outlining the school's four rules against bullying, to be distributed to parents at the parent kickoff program for the school's bullying prevention program.

East Liverpool LaCroft (\$250), establish incontinence protocol to help families of children dealing with problem, such as written brochure outlining protocol and parents' role for students identified with chronic problem, also purchase clothing to use during school day and diaper wipes.

East Liverpool North Elementary (\$250), promote a bus safety campaign through purchase of video on bus safety to target children in grades K-5 and purchase of incentive materials for good bus behavior.

Beaver Local Rogers, West Point and Calcutta elementary schools (\$250 each), purchase of thermometers and promotional materials to help parents better monitor the status of their child's temperature, with newsletters to be sent to parents on how to request a thermometer.

Crestview High School (\$250), awareness campaign through speaker forums to involve parents and students regarding texting while driving, drinking and driving, underage drinking and hosting parties with alcohol and the laws regarding these activities, students can win admission to prom while parents can earn gas cards by attending forums.

East Liverpool Middle School (\$250), expanding physical activity program for eighth grade girls through purchase of Play Station 2 game system and Dance Dance Revolution game.

East Liverpool High School (\$250), increasing physical activity for students and community by purchase of signs to designate walking route inside school and also purchase equipment to expand after school exercise program to include step aerobics and stretch band exercises (already use Dance Dance Revolution).

East Palestine Elementary School (\$250), increasing physical activity by purchasing Fit Kid Classroom Workout DVD for use during indoor recess for students in pre-school, kindergarten and first grade, also send home Walk at Home family walk DVD with students.

East Palestine Middle School (\$250), increasing physical activity by using KAM Coach Activity Monitors with Accelerometer Technology for students to monitor caloric intake and their amount of activity, also for parents, for an interactive pilot weight program.

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