

**RYE YMCA AWARDS GRANTS TO SOUND SHORE SCHOOLS  
TO PROMOTE HEALTHY KIDS INITIATIVES**

The Rye YMCA and their Activate America coalition has awarded six grants totaling \$6,000 to schools in Rye Neck and Rye City. The Activate America effort is a National YMCA community health initiative that was formed in 2004 to combat the nation's growing obesity, declining fitness and chronic disease crisis. The Rye YMCA is one of 48 Y's in the country selected to form a community coalition of key leaders to better promote healthy living.

The \$1,000 grants were given to schools to implement initiatives that will encourage school communities to focus on establishing healthy eating and active lifestyle behaviors among children and their families. "Schools are at the forefront of educating children about good health and nutrition and encouraging physical activity," said Gregg Howells, Rye YMCA Executive Director. "The Rye YMCA plans to award more grants in January and encourages all schools in Harrison, Mamaroneck, Rye and Rye Neck to apply."

The Rye Neck Middle School and Rye Neck High School were each awarded a grant to send a staff member to a fitness instructor certificate program at the Cooper Institute in Dallas, Texas. Following the training, the staff members will be qualified to provide students, faculty and staff with an individualized health and fitness program and teach students the necessary skill set to lead an active and healthy lifestyle.

Two other schools in Rye Neck also received funding for their school wellness efforts. The Daniel Warren Elementary School will create a series of student and teacher workshops including Yoga, Jumping & Jump Rope, Hip Hop Dance, and Power Walking & Running to be held on Fitness Fridays. The F.A. Bellows School was granted funds to purchase the award winning *Exemplary Physical Education Curriculum*, which provides a comprehensive sequential approach to physical education and will be used in P.E. classes with the school's approximately 700 students.

The Midland Elementary School in the City of Rye was awarded a grant to implement a unit on Innovative Aerobic Dance. The dance unit was devised to encourage lifelong activity and reach students who may not enjoy other forms of fitness activities. Osborn Elementary School in Rye was granted funds to support the Osborn Committee for Better School Health which seeks to increase awareness of healthy lifestyle choices amongst faculty, students and families.

Because of the success of this first round of grants, the Rye Y's Activate America coalition will offer a second round of grant opportunities to public schools in Rye City, Harrison, Mamaroneck, and Rye Neck. Grant proposals may be submitted at any time up to January 15, 2007. Twelve additional \$1,000 awards will be available for the remainder of the 2006-2007 school year. Preference will be given to funding initiatives that have a long-term impact to improve the fitness and health of school children, rather than one time events. In order to apply for grant funding, schools must first register to participate in the Fit Kids program sponsored by the Westchester County Department of Health. Grants will be evaluated within four weeks of submission by the Rye YMCA Activate America Coalition. Please contact Gregg Howells at the Rye YMCA at 967-6363, ext 200 for more information about Activate America. For more information about the Fit Kids Program, please contact the Westchester County Department of Health at (914) 813-5231.