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MEDIA ADVISORY

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KIDS CLIMB THE WALLS AND DUMP THE JUNK
County Executive Recognized Rye Neck School for Fit Kids Creativity

County Executive Andy Spano visited the Daniel Warren Elementary School in the Rye Neck School District today, **at 10 a.m.** and watched second-graders climb the walls and Zumba dance in a workshop led by the Rye Y.

It was part of their Fitness Fridays festivities for completing a week of eating healthy snacks and moving more as part of the county's No Junk Food Week celebration. Along with the **Daniel Warren School, at 1310 Harrison Avenue in Mamaroneck**, at least 50 Westchester schools are participating in March, which is National Nutrition Month.

To congratulate the school community for its commitment to Westchester County's Fit Kids program and to No Junk Food Week, Spano presented a proclamation to Rye Neck Schools Superintendent Peter Mustich, who was accompanied by Daniel Warren Principal Joan Babcock.

"The whole Rye Neck school community is very enthusiastic about our Fit Kids Program and is to be praised for the creativity they've demonstrated through hip hop, Dance Dance Revolution and Zumba, to get their students off to a fit start," Spano said. "This is the best way to help children learn that fitness is fun."

"We hope that children who give up junk food for a week will find out that healthy foods taste good and will continue to eat a healthy diet and exercise more throughout the years," said Dr. Joshua Lipsman, the Westchester County Health Commissioner. "These are two of the best ways to reduce the risks of heart disease, stroke and diabetes, which are associated with being overweight."

At the Daniel Warren Elementary School, children have walked or biked to school on Walking Wednesdays. They have jumped rope, hip-hop and Zumba danced, power-walked and run on Fitness Fridays

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and participated in after-school playground parties. Tonight, there's a Zumba dance workshop celebration where kindergartners through second graders and their parents will get their Latin groove on. The children also have planted, tended harvested and eaten vegetables they grew in a school garden, and they hope to do that again this year. The administration, teachers, staff and parents also have walked the walk by developing policies for healthy student snack and lunch choices.

“This has really been a community effort to start our children out on the right path by encouraging them to exercise more and eat healthy foods, ” said Babcock. “We're thrilled our district is being recognized. We believe in healthy bodies and healthy minds!”

No Junk Food Week is sponsored by Fit Kids, a Health Department program that encourages schools in Westchester to fight childhood obesity. Since Fit Kids was introduced in 2003, the Westchester County Department of Health has worked with 53 Westchester schools to develop programs that promote healthy eating and exercise for more than 29,000 children. In addition, 111 Westchester schools with nearly 67,000 students have participated in Fit Kids activities. School districts such as Rye Neck have planned activities and offered healthy food alternatives, helping students to make better choices. To learn more about Fit Kids, go to www.westchestergov.com/health/FitKids.htm.