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YMCA grants go to 2 Rye schools

RYE — Two Rye schools have been awarded a \$1,000 Activate America grant from the YMCA.

The Milton School grant will go toward for the school's new health and wellness initiative, "Munch and Crunch." The program includes fruit for students attending after-school clubs; a Milton School community garden; a fruit and vegetable challenge; and participation in a "Run Across America Challenge" for students, parents and teachers.

Principal JoAnne Nardone expressed appreciation to school nurse Ninfa Fiocco and parents Lisa Urban, Lisa Faries and Jami Patterson for their creativity in developing the initiatives. She also thanked parent Lorraine Levinson for creating the program title, "Munch and Crunch," and the school district's director of health, physical education and athletics, Rob Castagna, for alerting the school to the grant opportunity. Nardone said the school would use the money to purchase new sports equipment for students to use during recess.

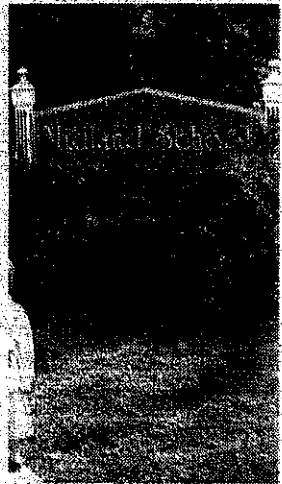
The Midland School grant will cover the cost of professional instructors who will implement an innovative aerobic dance unit for kindergarten through fifth-grade students that will be fun, creative and exploratory and will enhance the physical education curriculum, which not does have a dance unit.

The faculty believes aerobic dance will reach students who may not enjoy other fitness activities and will give all students a lifelong fitness habit and activity that will remain enjoyable.

Submitted by the Rye school district.

Milton Receives YMCA Grant

Milton School has been awarded a YMCA Activate America grant for \$1,000 for the school's new health and wellness initiative, "Munch and Crunch." Included in the program is the provision of after school fruit for students attending clubs; a Milton School community garden; a fruit and veggie challenge; and participation in a "Run Across America Challenge" for students, parents, and teachers. Principal, JoAnne Nardone expressed appreciation to school nurse, Ninfa Fiocco, and parents Lisa Urban, Lisa Faries and Jami Patterson for their creativity and inspiration in developing these initiatives. She also thanked parent, Lorraine Levinson for creating the program title, "Munch and Crunch," and the School District's Director of Health, Physical Education and Athletics, Rob Castagna, for alerting Milton School to grant opportunity. Dr. Nardone said the school would use the funds to purchase new sports equipment for students to use during recess.



The Milton Elementary school

Encouraging Kids to Get Active

The Rye YMCA and their Activate America coalition has awarded six grants totaling \$6,000 to Rye City and Rye Neck Schools. 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 Y 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 them 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.

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, Harrison and Mamaroneck, said Howells. Grant proposals may be submitted at any time up to Jan. 15. Twelve additional \$1,000 awards will be available for the remainder of the 2006-2007 school year. Contact Gregg Howells at 967-6363, ext. 200, for information.

Rye aims to become more pedestrian-friendly

Panel studying ways to improve city's sidewalks, trails

Liz Sadler
The Journal News

RYE — Parents who pine for the days of letting their children walk to school in the morning soon may be a step closer to realizing their dream.

The city is moving ahead with a plan to revamp its sidewalks and

walking trails to make it more pedestrian-friendly. A committee of residents is studying safety, traffic and recreation issues, with plans to develop a preliminary proposal for an improved network of sidewalks and trails.

The study comes in response to complaints from parents, recreational walkers and joggers about gaps in sidewalks and walking trails throughout the city.

"We want to design, with the help of the public, where trails are needed, where there are gaps and where it makes the most sense,"

Mayor Steven Otis said. "That is what this process is supposed to do."

A similar plan for a six-mile walking trail was developed in 2002 by the city's Recreation Commission but was eliminated after voters narrowly rejected a \$7 million recreation bond that included the trail.

Otis said he decided to resurrect the concept partly as an extension of an initiative by the Rye YMCA called "Activate America," which promotes healthy eating and exercise in Long Island Sound shore communities.

This year's city budget included \$150,000 for initiatives to improve pedestrian flow in the city and sidewalks between neighborhoods and schools. The residents' committee also will seek outside funding for the project.

Gregg Howells, executive director of the YMCA, said many children cannot walk to school because of the spotty network of city sidewalks and traffic. In October, the YMCA held a workshop on how to create a "fitness friendly" community by building safe routes to school and walking pro-

grams. Television host and fitness expert Mark Fenton spoke.

"The fact that Fenton was here and key people on the city staff were at the workshops, it began to suggest that these things make sense and were at the point where it was worth exploring them further," said Howells, a member of the new study group.

New sidewalks likely would encroach on front lawns. City property extends several feet beyond curbs, though the distance varies depending on when the road was

built, City Manager Paul Shew said. Property owners are usually responsible for maintaining the sidewalks in front of their houses, another possible sticking point.

Otis said property owners will get to weigh in on the sidewalk and trail proposal after the committee makes a recommendation in three to four months.

"There's no ordained results here," Otis said. "The idea is to develop a plan in the area where people have been requesting this, then take it to the public and see what neighbors have to say."

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