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**SPANO VISITS LM KLEIN MIDDLE SCHOOL IN HARRISON FOR NO JUNK FOOD WEEK
County urges students county-wide to ditch junk food for one week to develop better eating habits**

In an effort to keep kids from becoming victims of what is fast becoming America's number one preventable cause of death, Westchester County Executive Andy Spano today kicked off No Junk Food Week in county schools.

Speaking before a school-wide assembly at the Louis M. Klein Middle School in Harrison, Spano told more than 800 6th-8th graders that obesity was fast becoming the number one preventable cause of death in this country and that students needed to change their eating habits.

"I know junk foods taste good, but they are not good for you," said Spano. "It's not a matter of giving up French fries today and then you're done. It's a matter of learning how to eat healthier, and changing your habits little by little. Once you get the hang of it, it's not so hard."

Spano was at the school to urge students to join others in 25 schools across the county who are giving up junk food for the week as part of a Westchester County-sponsored No Junk Food Week. The Westchester County Health Department's Fit Kids program to fight childhood obesity is running the competition during the month of March, which is national nutrition month.

Schools across Westchester (see attached list) have agreed to participate by asking their students to sign a pledge, promising to eat only healthy snacks for one week. Prizes provided by the county will be raffled off to those who sign up and the school with the most participants will be presented with a framed certificate from the county executive and the health commissioner.

Spano's appearance coincided with Harrison's Wellness Week, in which the school has planned a week's worth of events to underscore the importance of healthy eating and exercise.

(MORE)

The school held a health fair in the gym from 10 a.m. - 12 noon, following the 9 a.m. school-wide assembly. The fair featured displays and food vendors that offered kids healthy food alternatives from sushi to baked chips. Other presenters – including dance and martial arts schools and fitness clubs - will visit the school throughout the week.

Also speaking at Monday's event were Health Commissioner Dr. Joshua Lipsman and Harrison Superintendent of Schools Louis Wool.

The Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported last week that in 2000 there were 400,000 deaths related to poor nutrition and lack of physical activity, a 33 percent jump from 1990. This puts obesity only slightly behind smoking as the number one preventable cause of death in the United States. But while the number of deaths attributed to smoking is declining, those attributed to obesity continue to rise.

NO JUNK FOOD WEEK PARTICIPANTS

Croton - Carrie Tompkins Elementary School

Somers – Primrose Elementary School
Somers Intermediate School

Eastchester - Waverly School
Anne Hutchinson Elementary School

Tarrytown - Washington Irving Intermediate School

Harrison – Louis M Klein Middle School
Samuel Preston Elementary School

Valhalla – Virginia Road Elementary School
Kensico Elementary School
Valhalla Middle School
Valhalla High School

Lakeland – Benjamin Franklin Elementary School

New Rochelle – Jefferson Elementary School

White Plains – Post Road Elementary School
Mamaroneck Avenue School
White Plains Middle School

Ossining – Brookside Elementary School
Claremont School

Yonkers – Family School 32
Montessori School 27

Peekskill – Park Street Alternative High School

Rye – Midland School

Yorktown – Brookside Elementary School
Crompond Elementary School