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MEDIA ADVISORY: FEATURE STORY/PHOTO/VIDEO

March 25, 2008

HERE'S THE SCOOP: NO JUNK FOOD – BUT A LITTLE ICE CREAM IS OKAY

Wednesday, 10:50 AM at the Richard J. Bailey School, 33 W. Hillside Avenue, White Plains

Students at the Richard J. Bailey School have pledged not to eat chips, candy or french fries – at least for a week. Tomorrow, these Greenburgh students will learn that turning down the extra sugar, fat or salt found in junk food doesn't mean giving up fun.

Edy's Ice Cream has donated enough slow churned ice cream for the whole school to enjoy a tasty treat tomorrow. The slow churned ice cream is lower in sugar, fat and cholesterol than regular ice cream. And none other than County Executive Andy Spano will deliver the scoop, and congratulate the kids for their efforts during their first lunch period.

“You've taken steps toward a healthier you by choosing healthier snacks and adding more physical activity into your day,” said County Executive Andy Spano. “I hope that you will continue to snack smart and keep moving.”

All month, children at this Greenburgh school added extra activity into their day and learned about healthy eating. As part of National Nutrition Month, they brought in recipes for healthy snacks, designed food labels and participated in taste tests, and created a cookbook. They pledged to eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day. They participated in Walking Wednesdays and learned about portion control.

They were among 51 schools and nearly 30,000 students who pledged to participate in No Junk Food Week. No Junk Food Week is part of County Executive Andy Spano's Fit Kids Program, which works with parents and schools to help kids eat healthier and exercise more so they can start good habits that can last a lifetime. No Junk Food Week was developed in response to the growing concern nationally and locally about childhood obesity and has been promoted in Westchester County since 2004.

“Many health problems are associated with being overweight or obese,” said Dr. Joshua Lipsman, Westchester County Health Commissioner. “These include an increased risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes. A healthy diet can help you feel better and improve your quality of life. We hope that the habit of

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healthy eating will take hold, and children who give up junk food for one week will continue to eat more nutritious snacks and meals throughout the year.”

At the R.J. Bailey School, their extra efforts started last year, after the Westchester County Health Department conducted a survey to estimate the extent to which kindergartners, second-graders and fourth-graders are or are at risk of becoming overweight.

When the study was completed, parents and staff at the school learned that 45.5 percent of their fourth-graders were considered at risk of a number of serious health problems due to being overweight, as compared to 36.1 percent in Westchester and 38.1 percent nationally, among children 8-10 years old.

A school task force worked with the Westchester County Health Department to address the problem. The school improved the nutritional content of its lunches, added more organized play into recess and cut the lunch line in half to give children more time to play outside. Kids also now get each Wednesday off to a moving start by walking a half-mile loop through the halls.

To enroll your school in the County's Fit Kids program and for more information on preventing childhood obesity, please contact Westchester County Department of Health Division of Community Health at (914) 813-5227 or log onto the Fit Kids webpage at: <http://www.westchestergov.com/health/FitKids.htm>

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