



Osteopathic Heritage Foundation
Osteopathic Heritage Foundation *of* Nelsonville

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Osteopathic Heritage Foundations Invest \$350,000 in School Wellness Initiative in Seven Area School Districts, including \$50,000 to Nelsonville-York City School District

Columbus, OH—Seven school districts in Athens (Nelsonville-York), Hocking, Meigs and Perry Counties in Ohio were awarded grants of \$50,000 each for a total of \$350,000 from the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation of Nelsonville through its School Wellness Initiative. The grants represent Phase II of the Foundations' multi-year, multi-phase initiative designed to prevent obesity and to improve the nutrition, physical activity and general health of students, staff and families, led by the seven area school districts.

“Support for and results from these progressive projects will contribute to the Foundation’s overarching outcome for the School Wellness Initiative, which is to increase the number of individuals who are physically active and who consume healthy foods, incorporating physical activity and healthy nutrition into their daily lives,” said Terri Donlin Huesman, director of programs for the Foundations.

One such grant for \$50,000 was awarded to the Nelsonville-York City School District to implement a walking trail, renovate a fitness center and create a school garden. The grant is targeted to improve physical activity and nutrition results for students, staff and the community by June 2010. Physical activity goals include: elementary physical education students will use the new walking trail as part of its physical education classes, elementary students will use the walking trail through a walking/running club and high school physical education students and staff will use the renovated fitness center as part of their physical education classes.

Improved nutrition goals for pre-kindergarten through fifth grade students include teaching about nutrition using the Community Foods Initiative curriculum and participating in planting, growing and maintaining the school garden during the late winter and early spring.

Becky Dalton, a third grade teacher and the wellness chairperson for the Nelsonville-York City School District, says adding the walking trail and fitness center helps create a more welcoming, community-minded school. She notes that when families are more active and participate in activities at the school, their children are likely to perform better in the classroom. The district conducts Family Nights to increase parent involvement, bringing in the Ohio University cheerleaders to demonstrate ways to become physically fit and generally healthier while having fun.

Studies show that children in the United States are becoming more obese, and Dalton said that during “the seven and a half hours we have the kids, we want to make a difference, and raise awareness of health and wellness. We look at the whole child, their social and mental health, and know that doesn’t end in the classroom.” Dalton said the grant provides, “a wonderful opportunity to touch the lives of these children and open doors to a healthier community.”

The school garden will be a new project for the district, which will include community groups such as the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts in its planting and cultivating. District students will take part in the nutrition curriculum, and will plant quick-growing foods such as lettuce, beans and cucumbers.

The one mile walking trail, which encompasses the recently built campus facility and which will be open for the community’s use, is expected to be completed late fall. The trail will be constructed of packed down gravel, and plans include adding equipment and stations over time. Dalton said community volunteers are needed to help spread the gravel for the trail.

The School Wellness Initiative grants are part of the Foundation’s \$1,501,764 investment in community health in central and southeastern Ohio. Information about each of the seven SWI grants follows:

- To implement a walking trail with stations, curriculum implementation, a new fitness center and improved district-wide nutrition policies: \$50,000 to Crooksville Exempted Village School District (Crooksville, Ohio).
- To establish two new wellness centers with fitness equipment and a climbing wall: \$50,000 to New Lexington City School District (New Lexington, Ohio).
- To implement a walking trail, renovate a fitness center and create a school garden: \$50,000 to Nelsonville-York City School District (Nelsonville, Ohio).
- To expand a community accessible district fitness center: \$50,000 to Southern Local District- Meigs County (Racine, Ohio).
- To expand a walking trail and institute curriculum improvements targeted to students, staff and the community: \$50,000 to Southern Local School District-Perry County (Corning, Ohio).
- To renovate a community accessible fitness center: \$50,000 to Eastern Local School District (Winchester, Ohio).
- To implement a fitness trail and add fruit/vegetable bars at elementary schools: \$50,000 to Logan-Hocking Local School District (Logan, Ohio).

About The Osteopathic Heritage Foundations

The Osteopathic Heritage Foundation and the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation of Nelsonville are pre-eminent in supporting community health and quality of life programs in central and southeastern Ohio as well as advancing, on a national scope, osteopathic medical care, biomedical research and osteopathic medical education. The mission of the Foundations is to improve the health and quality of life in the community through education, research and service consistent with the principles of its osteopathic heritage and the philosophy of osteopathic medical care. The Foundations advance this mission through a broad spectrum of funding awards, initiatives and funding methods.

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