



Franklin on the MOVE !!!

Physical activity, any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles, is known to improve health by helping control weight, reducing the risk of developing high blood pressure and diabetes, and reducing the risk of death from heart disease, among many other benefits. In addition to these health benefits, researchers are discovering that physical activity can also reduce the risk of cancer. Evidence indicates that physical activity is associated with a reduced risk of cancers of the colon and breast, and possibly also reduce the risk of prostate, lung, and endometrial cancers.

Franklin Elementary Medical Science and Wellness Magnet, Mississippi's only medical and wellness magnet school, has recently implemented a unique fitness program for students in grades K-4 for the 2008-2009 school year. Students are encouraged by the faculty to walk 10,000 steps a day, 50,000 steps a week, 100,000 steps every two weeks, for a grand total of 1,000,000 steps per student by the end of the first semester.

Documentation has been an ongoing process that began in the classroom. The teacher assisted students with step conversions of activities and calculations the first six weeks of school. In an effort to include the family, the responsibility for documentation of after school activities was then shared with the parents the second six weeks. Activity logs for documentation began as one log, then evolved into two, one for school activities, and one for at-home activities. In addition, students have the option to participate in a morning walking club before school.

The faculty was aware that an incentive program would be a significant factor in the motivation and continued participation of the students. Therefore, a reward system was established for not only short term accomplishment, but also ongoing for long term accomplishments. A neckchain was presented to each student with an athletic shoe charm attached for every 100,000 steps successfully completed. The goal for each student is to have 10 shoe charms by the end of the semester for a grand total of 1,000,000 steps. Students who successfully reach the goal of 1,000,000 steps will be recognized at a special assembly at the end of the semester.