

Cumberland County HONORED FOR IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF MAINE'S YOUTH

Let's Go! Cumberland Recognizes 56 Sites of Distinction

Cumberland County, Maine (December 30, 2014) Let's Go! Cumberland County is proud of the 179 sites dedicated to building a healthy community for children to live, learn and play by implementing the Let's Go! 5-2-1-0 program. Out of the 179 sites engaged, 56 sites received recognition for their commitment to excellence in healthy eating and active living for children and families. Let's Go! 5-2-1-0 is proud of the 9 schools, 7 out of school programs, 23 childcare centers, and 17 healthcare practices in Cumberland County who earned this distinction.

Established in 2012, the Let's Go! *Site of Distinction* certificate recognizes schools, out of school programs, childcare centers and healthcare practices for their commitment and dedication to creating healthy environments and policies for the children they serve. A total of 368 sites statewide earned this distinction, a 28% increase from last year. Cumberland County experienced an 8% increase of recognized sites from the previous year. Let's Go! encourages policy and environmental level change and recognizes sites at three levels: Bronze reflects a site implementing the program's top five strategies, Silver acknowledges a site that has written at least one strategy into policy and Gold, the highest level of distinction, is reserved for sites that have written all five priority strategies into policy and enforce the written policy.

Let's Go!'s top five strategies are as follows:

1. Provide healthy choices for snacks and celebrations; limit unhealthy choices.
2. Provide water and low fat milk; limit or eliminate sugary beverages.
3. Provide non-food rewards.
4. Provide opportunities for children to get physical activity every day.
5. Limit recreational screen time.

Healthcare sites are recognized for three practice specific, obesity prevention program components:

1. Providing consistent 5-2-1-0 messaging in offices
2. Calculating BMI for all patients aged 2 and older
3. Using the 5-2-1-0 Healthy Habits questionnaire to have a respectful conversation about lifestyles with their patients

To honor these hard working sites, the Let's Go! Cumberland County team hosted their second annual recognition celebration. This celebration brought together multiple sites from each setting to acknowledge and commend their commitment and dedication to children's health. Sites were able to network and meet other champions in different settings within Cumberland County. The evening was full of delicious, local, healthy food; movement, laughter and story sharing. Dr. Tory Rogers encouraged sites to share what they were most proud of and how implementing the *Let's Go!* 5-2-1-0 program has made an impact on their program or in their school.

According to a Windham childcare provider who saw value in the night says, "I learn more from talking with others than reading a book or taking a formal class." The night was full of "ideas focused on fostering wellness in children. It was a great evening."

"We are thrilled to honor sites across the state for their dedication to children's health. All recipients have embraced Let's Go!'s five priority strategies and many have written these strategies into policy" said Dr.

Victoria Rogers, Director of Let's Go!. "It's efforts like these that truly impact children's health and obesity rates".

All sites engaged in the program continue to impress the Let's Go! Cumberland County staff with their innovation and excitement to build an environment that promotes health and wellness within their community. Although sites gain resources from our program, they truly are the experts in making Let's Go! 5-2-1-0 a reality for the children and families they serve." Ashley Edmondson, Let's Go! Coordinator- located at the Opportunity Alliance.

Let's Go! Cumberland County plans to hold this event annually and is excited to work with more sites to create healthy environments for children to learn and play!

A list of all 2014 *Let's Go! Sites of Distinction* is available at www.letsgo.org/