



Charlie Crist
Governor

Ana M. Viamonte-Ros, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary of Health

PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

May 4, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jeannine Mallory, Public Information Officer
Pinellas County Health Department
727-824-6908 (media only)

Steps to a Healthier Florida programs are Award Winners in Pinellas County Schools

The **Steps to a Healthier Florida** school program has achieved great success in promoting student health in Pinellas County. In fact, several projects have been recognized as success stories:

The Pinellas County Schools Food Service **Salad Program** was recognized by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (U.S.D.A.) and the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM). Pinellas County's public school lunches were ranked first in the state and tied for second in the country in promoting the health of children. This honor came from the PCRM as part of its fifth annual School Lunch Report Card. The Food Service department was a runner-up for PCRM's national 2006 Golden Carrot Award. This award recognizes school food service programs for "making major strides toward improving student health by serving more vegetarian meals and emphasizing fruits and vegetables."

The **Teen Cuisine "Quick Bites"** video is being recognized as a creative work with a Telly Award. This award honors excellence in local, regional and cable TV commercials, non-broadcast video and TV program categories. The **"Quick Bites"** video series promotes healthy eating habits using middle school students and professional chefs in a cooking show format. A companion **Teen Cuisine Cookbook** was published for the public. You can find this cookbook and several video clips from the 40 final productions on the **Steps to a Healthier Florida** website at www.pinellas.k12.fl.us/CI/STEPS.

The Asthma Project is a partnership between Pinellas County Schools, the Pinellas County Health Department, GlaxoSmith Kline and the Asthma/Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA). The goal of the program is to improve quality of life and reduce absenteeism for students with asthma. During the spring of 2006, the Project collected baseline data on the absenteeism of second, third and fourth grade students with asthma in 11 schools. School nurses learned how to collect student absenteeism data and how to measure students' daily usage of Peak Flow Meters. They also coordinated student asthma lessons with AAFA. In the fall of 2006, AAFA volunteers gave students lessons on managing asthma. GlaxoSmith Kline donated Peak Flow Meters and provided education for local physicians and office staff on the importance of Peak Flow Meters for preventing asthma attacks and the purpose of the asthma school project. The Project has seen a **33 percent reduction in student absences**, thus providing an improvement in the quality of life and academic success for the asthmatic student.

(MORE)



Charlie Crist
Governor

Ana M. Viamonte-Ros, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary of Health

PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

STEPS IN PINELLAS SCHOOLS – Page 2

Family Fun Nights for Diabetes Management is a Pinellas County Schools partnership with the Pinellas County Cooperative Extension Service, Kash-N-Karry Food Stores and Animas Corporation to promote a healthy lifestyle through education, improved eating habits, physical activity and emotional support for the diabetic student and their family members. A series of classes for diabetic students and their family members take place in the evenings at a middle school and focus on nutrition/cooking and physical activity. Preparing the provided dinner is a joint effort between the presenter, students and parents. While all delight in their healthy meals, they also receive education on managing their diabetes. Leaders use a pre- and post-lifestyle/behavior questionnaire to collect data on behavior changes for the diabetic student and the family members. There is follow-up to determine further needs.

Steps to a Healthier Florida is implementing many other wellness activities in Pinellas County Schools. To learn more, visit www.pinellas.k12.fl.us/CI/STEPS.

#

The Mission of the Pinellas County Health Department is to promote, protect and improve the health and safety of our community through public and private partnerships in an environment that respects diversity.