

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Steps to a Healthier SE Alaska awards school grants

SITKA, Feb. 22, 2008 — The SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) Steps to a Healthier SE Alaska program recently awarded six mini-grants of between \$4,520 and \$18,717 to five school districts in Southeast Alaska. This is the third round of school grants awarded by the Steps to a Healthier SE Alaska program.

The grants were designed to help school districts develop school policy and programs that increase healthy food choices, increase physical activity, help prevent or cease tobacco use, better manage asthma or assess school wellness policies or programs. The grants of up to \$25,000 were open to school districts only, not individual schools. Activities must be implemented by the end of September 2008.

The six mini-grants went to:

- **Pelican City Schools** (\$8,752.50) to implement the SPARK PE program (SPARK, which stands for Sports, Play & Active Recreation for Kids, is an award-winning nationally recognized best practice curriculum for physical activity that can be implemented by anyone, not just a certified PE teacher);
- **Sitka School District** (\$4,520) for a yoga-based program for grades K-1 at Baranof Elementary School where teachers will be trained in yoga practices so they can promote yoga as a physical activity in the classroom;
- **Juneau School District** (\$18,717.04) to implement the SPARK PE program into their elementary schools and train the majority of their staff on the curriculum this summer;
- **Juneau School District** (\$12,300) to support the Girls On The Run program (GOTR), which is a nationally recognized program that encourages preteen girls to develop self-respect and healthy lifestyles through running;
- **Southeast Island School District, headquartered in Thorne Bay** (\$6,779.98) for a program that incorporates more fruits and vegetables into their school breakfast and lunch programs; and
- **Hoonah City Schools** (\$10,000) to offer a salad bar within their lunch program and incorporate nutrition education into their school classrooms by using visiting nutritionists or health educators.

The SEARHC Steps to a Healthier SE Alaska program targets three main focus areas — obesity, diabetes and asthma — by working with schools, worksites and other community groups to increase physical activity, encourage healthy eating and reduce tobacco use. The grant is part of a national Steps to a Healthier US program run by the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention.

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