

# School Nurses—a Good Health Resource

Students don't have to be sick to have a good reason to visit the nurse's office at school. The nurses at all schools are most willing to dispense a healthy dose of preventative medicine in the form of education, as well as cures for things ailing students.

The nurse's office is designed to be a resource for parents as well as students.

There are licensed nurses at each of the schools in the Winter Park consortium of schools—Winter Park High and its elementary and middle public feeder schools. In addition, there are two nurse practitioners—able to provide more advanced care—such as physicals and writing prescriptions—available at Winter Park High School (WPHS), and two more based at

Glenridge Middle School. The WPHS nurse practitioners serve only WPHS students. The nurse practitioners at Glenridge, serve students attending all consortium schools.

The Winter Park Health Foundation provides funding for the nurse practitioners and to enable the schools to hire licensed nurses.

To make it easier for nurses to reach parents in case a student gets sick, parents each year are asked to fill out an emergency form. These usually come home with students the first day of school, and they are vitally important, said Chris Watson, nurse at Winter Park High School. Parents sometimes don't realize the forms need to be updated each year, she said. But

it is important for nurses to have the most up-to-date medical information on students. And if there are changes mid-year, Mrs. Watson urged parents to let the nurses know.

Parents also need to sign a consent form to enable their children to visit the nurse practitioners.

In addition, if children need to bring medicine to campus, parents need to fill out an authorization form that the school nurse keeps on file. Students can't carry their own medication on campus, it needs to be kept in the nurse's office.

*continued on back page*

## Healthy School Teams Are Back to School

Healthy Schools Teams are getting primed for a year of fun activities promoting good health in the belief that Healthy Kids Make Better Students. Better Students Make Healthy Communities.

The teams, established at each of the schools in the Winter Park Consortium, which includes Winter Park High and its eleven elementary and middle feeder schools, will continue to advocate the benefits of children drinking water, eating healthier lunches, bringing healthier snacks, and keeping physically active, and many will be hosting school health fairs, according to Jana Ricci, Healthy School Teams Coordinator.

Made up of faculty, staff, parents and sometimes students, Healthy School Teams (HST) are supported

financially by the Winter Park Health Foundation. Each team consists of individuals representing all areas influencing a child's health, including comprehensive school health education; school counseling, psychological and social services; health services; nutrition services; physical education; healthy school environment; health promotion for staff and parent/community involvement.

You'll be hearing more about the Healthy School Teams, CHILL counselors and nurses and nurse practitioners serving the schools in the consortium in a series of Parent Education Nights to be held this fall. And parents will learn how they can play a role in ensuring their children are as healthy as possible and ready to do their best in school. Stay tuned.

To find out the name of your school's HST leader, contact your school or go to [www.healthykidstoday.org](http://www.healthykidstoday.org).

## School Nurses

from previous page

Nurses and nurse practitioners also actively promote health and wellness. For example, last year, Mrs. Watson and Jessica Irvin, nurse practitioner, conducted a series of Healthy Lifestyle classes for 15 teenage girls. The students, who had a median weight of 214 pounds, met during lunchtime and were served healthful

lunches while Mrs. Watson and Mrs. Irvin provided information on issues like healthy eating, fad diets and making healthy choices in life. They also offered to draft some personalized plans for participants.

For more information on the nurse practitioners and school nurses, you can go to the Healthy Kids Today website sponsored by the Winter Park Health Foundation. Go to [www.healthykidstoday.org](http://www.healthykidstoday.org)

## Take a Pledge to Get Healthy!

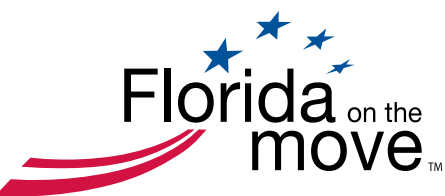
Participate in America on the Move's Day of Action on September 28 by pledging to take an additional 2000 steps and eat 100 fewer calories a day and you could win great getaways and other prizes.

To participate, go to [www.healthykidstoday.org](http://www.healthykidstoday.org) and click on the Florida on the Move logo, and then click on the America on the Move logo to learn what you need to do to pledge to be a little more active and eat fewer calories.

Florida on the Move (FOM) is an affiliate of America on the Move. It is a fun, free, family-friendly program designed to help people young and old get healthier by making small lifestyle changes. FOM groups are forming at each school. When you sign up for the program, be sure to use the code from your child's school. To find out your school's code, go the site mentioned above.

Teachers and staff at various schools already are challenging one another to see who will be most active.

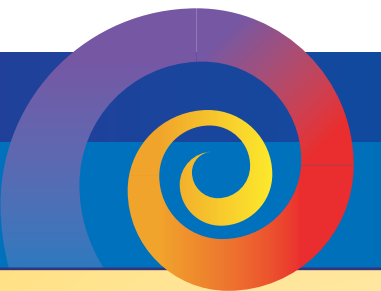
Put on your pedometer, parents, and mount a challenge!



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Healthy Kids Today

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# Healthy Kids Today



## Middle and High School Edition

August 2005

Make Good Mental Health a Priority

Early Warning Signs of Suicidal Thinking

Peak Performance Tips

Health Fair Update

School Nurse Services

Healthy School Teams

Take a Pledge to Get Healthy!

**Healthy Kids Today** is published by the Winter Park Health Foundation especially for students and families affiliated with schools in the Winter Park Consortium of Schools—Aloma, Audubon Park, Brookshire, Cheney, Dammerich, Hungerford, Killarney, Lake Sybella and Lakemont elementary schools; Glenridge and Maitland Middle schools; Winter Park 9th Grade Center; Winter Park High School and Winter Park Tech.



## Make Good Mental Health a Priority

Fitting in, making friends, getting good grades—these are the type of issues that can seem overwhelming to some middle and high school students.

Most students find healthy and appropriate ways to cope. But a very small, though significant, percent can't seem to handle these problems. They may take drastic steps to call attention to their psychological pain, such as attempting suicide.

This makes it all the more important for parents to tune in to their children at the beginning of the school year to find out how they are coping, and to stay connected the rest of the year, according to Darcy and Paul Granello, Counselor Education professors at Ohio State University. They recently provided Suicide Prevention, Assessment and Treatment training for the CHILL program mental health professionals. (CHILL counselors, based at Winter Park High School and each of its elementary and middle feeder schools, provide free, confidential

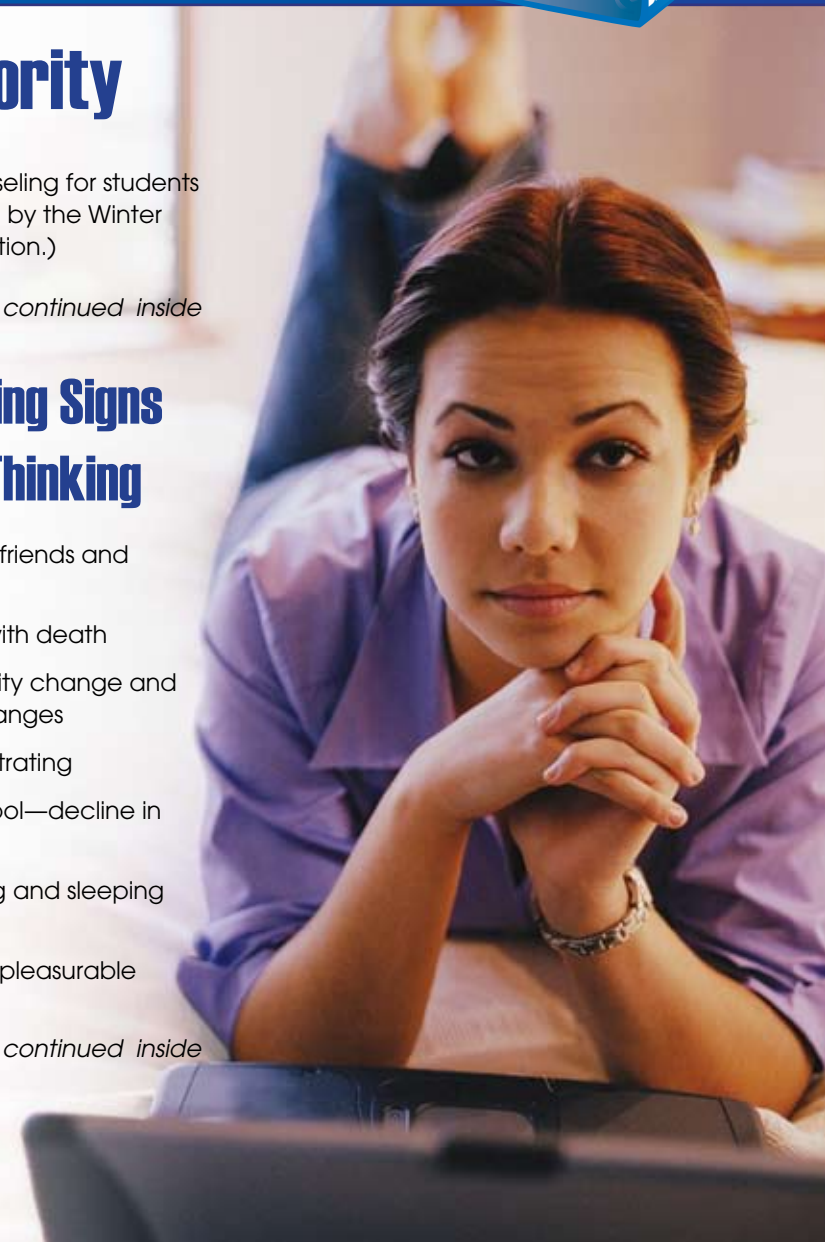
school-based counseling for students and families funded by the Winter Park Health Foundation.)

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## Early Warning Signs of Suicidal Thinking

- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Preoccupation with death
- Marked personality change and serious mood changes
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulties in school—decline in quality of work
- Change in eating and sleeping habits
- Loss of interest in pleasurable activities

*continued inside*



Healthy Kids Make Better Students. Better Students Make Healthy Communities. [www.healthykidstoday.org](http://www.healthykidstoday.org)

According to the Granellos, although numbers are small, the rate of suicide among 15- to 19-year-olds increased by 11 percent between 1980 and 1997. The rate among those aged 10 to 14 jumped 109 percent during the same time frame. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among 10- to 14-year-olds, and the second leading cause of death among 15- to 19-year-olds.

In Orange County in 2003, there were 82 suicides, six of them by persons age 24 and under.

The increases are linked to issues like depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, substance abuse and aggression, as well as greater access to handguns and changes in the nuclear family or a lack of family support, the Granellos said.

Though some think students who talk about suicide won't attempt it, they said that is a myth, explaining that students who threaten suicide should be taken seriously, listened to and given help. Dr. Darcy Granello said that most adolescents try to talk to someone before they attempt suicide. It doesn't happen without warning.

"Suicidal people don't really want to die," she said, explaining they don't see any other way to eliminate the psychological pain.

They discussed other myths surrounding suicide, noting that

- Talking about suicide does not encourage students to attempt it. The more you get people to talk about it, the more likely students are to talk about their problems and get help dealing with them.

- Adolescent suicide occurs among students from all economic backgrounds, not just low economic ones.

- Parents may think they would know if their child planned to attempt suicide, but studies have shown that more than three-quarters of parents weren't aware of their child's suicidal behavior.

- Some think drug overdose is the most common method of suicide for adolescents, but guns are used more frequently.

- Adolescent females are much more likely than adolescent males to think about and attempt suicide. Males tend to complete suicide much more often than females.

One of the best things people can do is to teach children how to cope, negotiate and see various solutions to problems, Dr. Darcy Granello said. Just because an issue isn't a big thing in an adult's world, it can be a huge thing in the world of a child, she explained.

The Granellos also spoke of the importance of encouraging children to speak up when their friends are

having problems. They said only 25 percent of adolescents say they would tell an adult if they knew a peer was suicidal. Kids need to know that they must speak up and they need to know who to tell.

In addition, Dr. Paul Granello suggested parents keep tabs on a child's mental health as carefully as they monitor physical health. It is a good idea to take time to sit down with a child and have a conversation about what he or she is doing and feeling and the friends he or she has.

And, he added, it is good to normalize mental health discussions at home, to make it clear that is okay to talk about feelings.

For more information, you can contact the CHILL counselor at your child's school. In addition, visit the website provided by the Winter Park Health Foundation - [www/healthykidstoday.org](http://www/healthykidstoday.org) where you will find details about the CHILL program as well as links to a variety of helpful sites with information about the emotional health of youth.

Other internet resources include:

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

[www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)

American Association for Suicidology

[www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)

# First Back to School Fair a Success

The Winter Park Health Foundation's first Back-to-School Health Fair—held in July at Glenridge Middle School—was a great success resulting in 93 children getting free back-to-school physicals and more than 50 getting free immunizations.

The event was open to all students in need attending schools within the Winter Park Consortium—Winter Park High and its elementary and middle feeder schools. All services were free.

In addition to getting the shots and medical screenings needed to be able to return to school, students and parents had the opportunity to visit health exhibits stocked with informational handouts and food and drink samples. Sponsors included Whole Foods Market, the Central Florida YMCA, Crystal Springs Water, the American Lung Association, the Florida Bicycle Association, the Primary Care Access Network (PCAN), Orange County Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, Winter Park Health Foundation (WPHF), and Florida on the Move. Those who visited the booths, were eligible to enter a drawing for two tickets to Universal Studios, a free three-month adult

membership to the YMCA and a \$40 gift certificate for a bike tune-up at the Loco Motion bike store.

The event, coordinated with assistance from the Orange County Health Department and Glenridge Middle School, featured the services available through the Coordinated

Youth Initiative to schools in the Winter Park Consortium of Schools. The programs featured, financially supported by the WPHF, included school nurses and nurse practitioners as well as the CHILL counselors.

You can read more about them in other stories in this newsletter and on the WPHF-sponsored website, [www.healthykidstoday.org](http://www.healthykidstoday.org).

Plans already are underway to make next year's Back to School Health Fair even bigger and better.



## Early Warning Signs from page 1

- Frequent complaints about physical symptoms, often related to emotions such as stomachaches, headaches, fatigue, etc.
- Persistent boredom
- Loss of interest in things one cares about

These early warning signs are provided in the Youth Suicide Prevention School-Based Guide; they are not meant to be used as an all-inclusive list of diagnostic criteria.

If a parent notices several of these early warning signs, it would be best to refer the child to a mental health expert for clinical assessment.

# Peak Performance Requires Healthy Eating

## What does it take to win a Tour de France?

For seven-time winner Lance Armstrong, it required fine tuning everything from body to bike. When it came to nutrition, his trainer Chris Carmichael prescribed a diet designed to help the super athlete reach peak performance levels. To complement his training regimen, Armstrong's diet was heavy on carbohydrates (65 to 70 percent), lighter on protein (13 to 14 percent) and included 16 to 17 percent fat. And when it came to fats, he stuck to unsaturated fats from olive and canola oils, as well as seeds, nuts and fish.

Students aiming for peak performance at school don't have to be that regimented. But they do need to pay attention to nutrition if they want body and brain to perform at Grade A levels in the classroom.

A good lunch can help student minds stay primed.

Students who buy lunch at school will see some significant menu changes. Orange County Public Schools staff members have been working all summer to design new menus with reduced fat and more whole grains and fresh fruit.

For parents of students who bring their lunches, Karen Beerbower, a Central Florida registered dietitian and author of the book, "Setting Places," a guide

to restoring order to family dining, offers a variety of healthy suggestions. Here are some of her dos and don'ts.

### Do:

- Use cool packs that can be chilled and put into insulated lunch bags so kids can safely take sandwiches with meat to school.
- Keep sandwiches interesting by using a variety of breads including whole wheat, pita pockets, English muffins or even corn bread. Tortilla wraps are a treat. Ms. Beerbower suggested spreading a wrap with a thin layer of cream cheese, adding vegetables and meat, and then wrapping it in plastic wrap and refrigerating it the night before school.
- Bring yogurt (if you use a cool pack).
- Because kids like to dip and spread things at meals, send some whole wheat crackers and a container of egg salad for spreading.
- Encourage students to get milk at school: many are not getting an adequate amount of calcium.
- Kids like crunchy foods, so send along trail mix or raw vegetables.
- Send in grape tomatoes rather than regular tomatoes.

to restoring order to family dining, offers a variety of healthy suggestions. Here are some of her dos and don'ts.

### Here are some of the don'ts:

- Pack fresh or canned fruit, rather than artificial fruit roll ups.
- Get creative with cheese. Stores now sell cheese cut in shapes like stars.
- Don't buy the popular prepackaged processed lunches from the grocery. Families are paying primarily for the packaging, she says. And some packages contain candy.
- Don't send in fruit drinks, unless they contain 100 percent fruit juices. Other fruit drinks have a lot of added sugar and dye.
- Don't send in other processed foods that are dyed, such as brightly colored chewy fruit snacks. The artificial coloring can trigger allergy problems.
- Don't send in granola-type bars thinking they are healthy. Most are basically cookies.

Students with after-school sports training need to bring along a snack to carry them through the day. Ms. Beerbower

suggested a half sandwich and some cheese, or a sports bar with at least 9 grams of protein. In a pinch, students can always run by a convenience store and get some milk and a piece of fruit.

For more information on nutrition and other health matters, go to [www.healthykidstoday.org](http://www.healthykidstoday.org), a website sponsored by the Winter Park Health Foundation. The website is a good place to find information about all of the programs in the Coordinated Youth Initiative, as well as the latest health and wellness news and nutritious recipes. Updated weekly, the site also features links to other websites with important health and wellness information. Please send your suggestions and comments to Lynn Carolan, [lcrolan@wphf.org](mailto:lcrolan@wphf.org), or call 407-644-2300 ext. 234.

