

## 2.3 Physical Activity Success Stories



### Wellness Connection Activity Area

#### the people

MSAD #22 is a public school district consisting of seven schools encompassing the towns of Hampden, Newburgh, and Winterport. MSAD #22 employs close to 400 employees. The Wellness Team at MSAD #22 was established in 1991, organized under the Maine School Site Health Promotion and Wellness Program through the Maine Department of Education. The goal of the Wellness Team is to promote health and wellness throughout the school district and community with healthy activities, experiences, and programs.

#### the need

The Wellness Team surveyed all employees in October 2001 to determine ways to better meet their health needs. Seventy-eight percent of those responding to the survey indicated an interest in the district creating a fitness center for employees only.

#### the idea

The “Wellness Connection” is a work in progress to create an on-site fitness facility, located at a district building in Hampden. This facility will truly serve as our “Wellness Connection” to employees in providing new programs and opportunities to be physically fit.

#### the idea at work

The Wellness Team formed a task group to investigate the possibility of creating a fitness facility. Two main issues needed to be initially addressed: 1) Where to locate a fitness center within the district, and 2) How to raise the funds to create a center with cardiac and weight equipment. The School Health Coordinator also served on this task group and met with the Superintendent and administrative council to get feedback and concept approval. It was determined at this meeting that a grade 3-5 elementary school had locker rooms that could serve as the fitness facility. The school was applying for State renovation money that could be used to retrofit the existing locker rooms into a fitness center in the summer of 2002. Unfortunately, the district was not awarded the State funding and lost the opportunity to have the facility in place



for the start of the 2002-2003 school year. The Wellness Team was not discouraged and looked for alternative means to renovate these locker rooms. The High School Assistant Principal coordinates with the Penobscot Sheriff's department each year for an OUI community service weekend, and the Team will pursue getting "man power" from those attending this working weekend to construct the fitness facility.

At present, equipment and supplies have been ordered. Some of the equipment will include: a recumbent bike; treadmill; universal gym; dumbbells; benches; along with exercise balls; mats; flex bands; and other devices for flexibility. In addition, information on safe stretching, strengthening, and aerobic exercise routines will be provided on-site. Once the renovations to the facility occur, all MSAD #22 employees will have full access to this fitness facility.

### the costs

The school system received two health-related grants that have financially supported the purchase of some of the equipment and supplies for this fitness facility. Approximately \$4,300 has been spent in acquiring these items. In addition to these funds, private donations from staff and community members have helped with these equipment costs. The Wellness Team anticipates having a modest fee (\$20) in place for its staff in order to use the facility. This will pay for the cost to have a key issued to each employee and pay to have it maintained throughout the school year.



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### Wellness Connection (continued)

#### the results

Although not in operation, employees are eagerly awaiting the creation of this fitness center. Foreign language teacher Cecile Achey notes, “I can’t wait to have the Wellness Connection operational next fall. This will allow me to get my daily workout in right after school before I head home. When I get home from an exhausting day of teaching, squeezing in fitness often takes a backseat.”

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