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## HEALTHY SNACK PROGRAM

### St. Stephen's Catholic School

### Valleyview, Alberta, Canada

A healthy lifestyle is one of the improvement goals at St. Stephen's, which educates students in kindergarten through ninth grade. The staff recognized that not all children came to school with enough lunch to provide them with a mid-morning snack. The snack program hypothesized that if students received better nutrition, they would stay on task, pay more attention, produce neater work, and complete more assignments in class. Through partnerships with family and community members, the snack program provided nutritious snacks for all students every Monday.

To implement the snack program, the Action Team for Partnerships first solicited funding and donations from community organizations and businesses. Six local companies donated money, and different grocers donated food. These community partners included: Rio Alto, Hopkin Oilfield Enterprises, Ray W. Oilfield Maintenance, Kel's Wellsite Supervision, Royal Purple, and Schnider's Meats, among others.

Next, the Action Team sent home notes to recruit parent and grandparent volunteers to assist with the snack program, and they promoted the program at Parent Council. The parent and grandparent volunteers helped prepare the variety of snacks such as apples, carrot sticks, dried fruit, granola bars, meat and cheese, strawberries, yogurt, mini bagels, and crackers and cheese. Every Monday morning between 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. the volunteers distributed the snacks to students. It is important to note that students were surveyed to find out what kind of snacks they would enjoy. About ninety percent of the students enjoyed the weekly snack selections.

The weekly snack has helped educate students about healthy eating. It also has had a positive impact on behavior. The Action Team plans to continue this strategy next year and increase community support so that snacks can be provided more than once a week.

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