

YOU GO, GIRL Rosary School Manning, Alberta, Canada

Rosary School belongs to an organization called Ever Active Schools, which promotes daily activity and healthy lifestyles. As a result of the school's affiliation with this organization, and the constant research that indicates children are more inactive and overweight, the Action Team for Partnerships decided to add a goal to their action plan addressing the health of girls. In partnership with Health Promotions, the Action Team created a one-day event for girls, grades six through twelve, which stressed daily activity and healthy living.

The Action Team's specific goal was to increase physical activity among girls in grades seven to nine by 10%. The hope was that participants would take information from the one-day event and include it in their everyday lives. To get started, the Action Team used a setup manual from the Ever Active Schools to create the format for a one-day event that included two morning sessions, lunch, and two afternoon sessions. In addition to joining forces with the community's Health Promotions division, the Action Team partnered with the other two schools in town. A committee with one person from each partner met to plan the event.

You Go, Girl was held on a Friday teacher-release day from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm. Nutritionists from the local hospital created an interactive lunch menu and snacks. They

ordered and prepared all of the meals with parent volunteers. Each girl was required to register and pay a \$5 fee. The committee expected about 30 girls, but ended up with 79. The girls chose from the following activities:

- From Couch Potato to Hot Tomato;
- Tae Bo;
- Tae Kwon Do;
- Core Body Strength;
- Like the Skin You're In (Body Image);
- Resistance Training;
- Qigong;
- Lessons from the Heart; and
- Weight Training.

Towards the end of the day, a group of community members helped the girls set goals. This group, known as the Sisters of Schmooze, consisted of two bank tellers, three local business owners, two stay-at-home moms, a nurse, and a teacher. The Sisters of Schmooze mentored the girls by contacting them monthly with calendars and helpful information for the remainder of the school year.

Before the girls left for the day, they received a toolbox to help them reach their goals and work on a daily activity. The toolbox included suggestions of what to do, a worry rock, mental health contacts, non-smoking stickers, toothbrush, skipping rope, perfume, sugarless gum, and a photo album. All of the items were donated by local busi-

nesses. As a final activity, the girls completed a survey about what they found useful about the day and what could be improved.

You Go, Girl was publicized through the local media, school newsletters, and posters in town, and each school was visited to promote the day to the students. The cost for the event was \$1000 and funded by community business donations, the local FCSS Foundation, and registration fees. The biggest challenge was to get knowledgeable presenters. Partnering with Ever Active Schools and Health Promotions was a great solution.

Participant surveys and a wrap-up meeting between the sponsoring partners at the end of the day helped evaluate the success of You Go, Girl. The girls were introduced to easy and fun activities that could be done individually or as a group. They also learned how to set goals for themselves and connected with a mentor from the Sisters of Schmooze. Many participants thought the day was “positive,” “fun,” and that they “learned a lot.” Mothers wanted to know when a similar day would be planned for them.

You Go, Girl will take place every three years. Improvements will include more work on goal setting.

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