

Manchester School District, Nutrition Connections Collaborate for Second Year

The Manchester School District and UNH Cooperative Extension's Nutrition Connections program are now in their second year of collaboration, bringing UNH dietetic interns to Manchester elementary school children to provide nutrition and physical activity education.

UNH dietetic interns work with Sue Sheehy, RD from the Manchester School District and Extension Program Associate Heidi Bennett from Nutrition Connections. Four schools hosted interns both years. Interns work directly with staff at the schools to provide hands-on teaching in nutrition and physical activity. Two groups of interns (nine total) worked last year and the first group from this year (four total) just finished their rotation with the schools. Over 1,300 youth were reached through this collaboration. Some schools in Manchester also are participating with the NH Dept. of Education to provide the National Fresh Fruit and Veggie Program. Schools purchase fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the school year and offer them to students three to five times a week during the school day as a snack. The interns have done taste testings with the kids, including foods like pea pods, grape tomatoes, black berries and cranberry relish. Many children are trying these fruits and vegetables for the first time.

They have also developed games, lesson plans, bulletin boards and fact sheets for the schools to use to continue the nutrition and physical activity ideas throughout the school year. Interns also work on parent education pieces, track the nutritional value of school lunches and work with Sheehy to develop and implement other unique educational opportunities for parents and youth. UNH dietetic interns have contributed over 1,400 hours to help in this effort.

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