

Maine Youth in Government *continued*

Delegates serve as Representatives, Senators, Lobbyists, Newspaper Staff, and Governor and learn how to make positive changes, a practice that they can bring home to their schools and communities.



Senior Sarah Lewis at the Statehouse.



Erskine's Model State students participating in the Maine Youth in Government program at the Statehouse.

All is Well(ness) at Erskine

Healthy employees and students make for a great work environment and school, and Erskine's Wellness Team makes sure there are plenty of healthy options available for teachers, staff, and students. There have been successful wellness initiatives over the years at Erskine—exercise and weight loss programs; sending teams to the annual Maine Schoolsite Health Promotion Conference at Sugarloaf USA made possible through grant funds; and healthy eating guidelines. School nurse Diane Dow, R.N. has put many of the initiatives into action and been advisor to a student Wellness Club that began the very successful annual Walk to Cure

Breast Cancer to raise funds for the MaineGeneral Breast Care Center, which remains an annual event.

The campaign to maintain and continue to improve Erskine's wellness efforts has picked up speed. Two years ago, the team of teachers and staff from Erskine that attended the Annual Maine Schoolsite Health Promotion Conference returned to campus with a vigorous wellness action plan. Last summer's team carried the plan forward, which focuses on the six dimensions of wellness: occupational, physical, social, mental, spiritual, and emotional:

Gain leadership support. The Erskine administrators have wholeheartedly supported wellness initiatives and have actively participated personally in many of the programs.

Educate and create awareness. The Maine State Employee wellness newsletter is forwarded via e-mail to all staff; the cafeteria director has introduced healthier food options and labels and highlights healthy cafeteria options and calorie counts; cold and flu campaign.

Increase physical activity among teachers, staff, and students. Successful completion of the Maine Association of Independent Schools six-week Walking Program Challenge with over 90% participation culminating in a celebration breakfast at the completion of the program; Active Study Halls program approved by the headmaster with a description added to the Student Handbook*; fitness classes offered by various staff members on an ongoing basis such as "fitness boot camp" and group walking and biking excursions, with students included as appropriate; a team-based eight-week physical activity program "Couch to 5K", which concluded at the senior

class's fundraiser Walk/Run Like An Eagle 5K race.

Improve nutrition and weight management for faculty, staff, and students. Healthier food cafeteria options with labeling and highlighting healthy cafeteria options and calorie counts; weight management programs, one that coincided with the MAIS Walking Program Challenge that offered blood pressure and weight monitoring and the "Maintain Don't Gain/Choose to Lose" six-week program; an "Eating Healthy over the Holidays" low fat, low calorie Dessert Social, when employees brought healthy desserts to sample and shared recipes; a "Wellness Wednesday", when fruit and healthy baked goods were provided in the teachers' room; "Fruity Fridays", when fresh fruit is made available in the teachers' room once a month; a "Soup Sharing" event was held in the teachers' room during Winter Carnival week for which volunteers prepared healthy soups and stews for staff members to sample; other events are offered as wellness funds permit.

Team development/maintenance. Increase resources, members, and support.

Advocacy for health education. Every student is required to take two trimesters of health education and one year of physical education.

Healthy campus environment. Smoke-free campus; drug policy; replacement of outmoded school water fountains with ones that have better filtration, sanitation, and the capability to fill water bottles.

Health promotion programs. Nutrition workshops and/or consultations; consumerism and self care workshops; stress management workshops for staff; accelerated exercise programs for students by the athletic trainer; the Active Study Hall is available for students; each trimester a different wellness topic/program; weight room orientations.

Connecting with other school's initiatives. Walking program competition and 5K road race.