School Health Project Grant Proposal

Introduction

Executive Summary
My company seeks $36,500 to fund an innovative dietetics and healthy living program for children K-2. The program will serve 150-200 students every six weeks for a year, teaching low-income children the importance of making healthy food choices early in life in order to prevent childhood obesity.

My company’s mission is to teach children that eating healthy and treating their bodies well can be fun and is important in order to live a long, healthy life. The school health program will equip children with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to make smart choices when it comes to eating and taking care of their physical health.

Description of Program
Our team of four Registered Dietitians will travel to low income schools in Michigan to educate K-2 students about nutrition and healthy living. The program lasts six weeks and the curriculum will involve discussions and activities that teach children how certain choices will affect their health in the future, and why it is important to start caring and learning about their physical health as early as possible. Children will have the opportunity to explore new food items throughout the program. This program will be implemented for one year. Information for analysis and evaluation will be collected for one year after the program year is complete. The total length of this project is two years.

Statement of Need
Obesity rates have reached a magnitude of epidemic proportions in the United States. According to the Center for Disease Control, approximately 17% (12.5 million) children and adolescents aged 2-19 years old are currently obese, and obesity prevalence among children and adolescents has almost tripled since 1980. It is almost hard to believe that less than 15% of elementary students eat the recommended five or more servings of fruits and vegetables every day. Three out of 10 elementary students eat less than one serving of vegetables a day—and one quarter of the “vegetables” that are eaten are french fries. The need for assistance is as clear as can be, Americans need help in the form of intervention and education now more than ever before. Obesity is even more prevalent in low income households, with one in seven low-income, preschool-aged children obese. According to the Office of the Surgeon General, 300,000 deaths each year in the United States are associated with obesity; it is vitally important to take preventative measures by teaching kids how to live a healthy lifestyle as early as possible. Being overweight and/or obese is associated with, and can lead to heart disease, some forms of cancer, fatty liver disease, acid reflux, type 2 diabetes, stroke, joint and musculoskeletal issues, breathing problems, such as asthma, and psychological disorders, such as depression. In one study, 70% of obese children had at least one cardio vascular disease risk factor, and 39% had two or more. Obese children are at higher risk of becoming the target of bullying, teasing, and social isolation that may eventually lead to poor self-esteem, lower grades, drug and alcohol abuse, depression, eating disorders and in rare cases, suicide. On top of all of these reasons that demonstrate the need to take preventative measures when it comes to nutrition and physical health, obese children are more likely to become obese as adults which is not only costly to their bodies, but
it’s costly for our wallets. The economic cost of obesity in 2000 in the United States was $117 billion. It will take a minuscule portion of that cost to put this program into action for the sake of preventing this obesity epidemic from becoming more atrocious.

**Objectives**

To raise awareness about obesity and to teach children how to prevent themselves from becoming obese.

To increase the number of fruit serving’s children K-2 eat at school each week by three and to increase the number of vegetable servings eaten by four and a half.

To show the teachers how to incorporate program material into their curriculum so they can reinforce the material covered and more once a week.

To educate the families of K-2 students by getting parents involved and sending flyers home with the children to put on their refrigerators as a reminder to make healthy choices.

To provide parents with the information they need to understand that eating healthy doesn’t have to cost more and how to apply for government assistance if they are in the position to receive it.

**Methods**

**Program Details**

One dietitian will be assigned to each school for the length of the program. The dietitian will teach classes of no more than 50 students at a time. For example, if a school has 150 K-2 students, the children will be split up into three groups and the dietitian will spend three hours at the school total each day (spending one hour with each group).

Students will learn what obesity is, the health problems associated with obesity, and how to take preventative measures in order to stay healthy. This section will be stressed at the beginning of the program so that the children will understand why they should care about, and pay attention to the material. The details of the health problems associated with obesity will not be covered, but an age appropriate overview will cover the important facts children should know about obesity. The focus will be how to grow up to be strong and healthy by getting the proper nutrition and staying active.

The program will introduce children to different fruits and vegetables and the different forms they come in (banana bread, canned peas, yogurt, smoothies, soup, etc.) in order to change the negative connotations some kids associate healthy food with. The program will provide students with the opportunity to explore new foods throughout the six weeks so they can begin to reshape their views on getting their daily fruits and vegetables. It is important to teach children at an early age that getting their daily servings of fruits and vegetables does not necessarily mean eating them raw, and different combinations can be quite tasty.

Due to the increase in single parent families, and households where both parents work, there are less opportunities for children to learn about food from their parents. The registered dietitians will teach the students simple, healthy snacks they can make on their own, or teach their parents how to make. Through the activities and discussions, students will learn how to think of food in terms of the rainbow so they can have a fun way to understand the importance of eating foods of all the colors of the rainbow in order to get all of the nutrients their body needs to be healthy and
The children will color pictures of the food they tried for snack of the day, and will mark their favorite snacks with star stickers so they can remember which foods they liked best. At the end of each week, the children will get to show their parents the foods they tried and how well they enjoyed them to help bring new ideas home for healthy snacks and meals. The dietitians will also teach the children what one serving looks like, and easy ways to measure one serving. Students will learn how many servings of each food group they should eat everyday and they will learn how to recognize one serving so they will be able to count the approximate number of servings in front of them.

Another important topic that is closely tied to nutrition is being active. Every day of the program the children will play a game to practice different fun ways to be active. Throughout the program, teachers will have the chance to observe different ways to teach students about being healthy so they will have the tools necessary to achieve the objective of teaching about nutrition once a week.

To educate the families on how to be healthier, different material will be sent home with the children to give to their parents. Some of these materials may include flyers with tips on how to save money at the grocery store by shopping smart, coupons, simple yet nutritious recipes, facts about serving sizes and daily nutrition requirements, statistics and information about obesity, fun ways to stay active, resources for more information, and information about how to receive government assistance such as food benefits. Parents will also be invited to come to the classroom each Friday to experience what the program is all about for themselves. Fridays will be focused on summarizing and reviewing the material in order to reinforce the information for the children and to summarize the lessons throughout the week for the parents.

Length of program
The program will last six weeks for one hour each day of the week, over the course of one year. Although the program is one hour each day for each student, the dietitian may spend three hours each day at the school teaching different groups of children.

Evaluation
Teachers and lunch staff will be asked to check to see if each student has brought a fruit and vegetable for snack or lunch four times randomly per month for of the course of one year after the program is complete. If students met the goal on average, the first objective is accomplished. The second objective will be measured by having the teachers fill out surveys to answer questions about how they responded to the program and if they followed through with teaching about health once a week one year after the program is over. Surveys will be sent to the parents of the children who participated in the program to find out if they are receiving government assistance since the program, and to retrieve information about the impact the program had on the families’ eating habits, such as daily fruit and vegetable intake. The surveys will also ask questions to find out if parents have used any recipes provided by the program and to find out if the parents found the take home material to informative and useful.

Parents and teachers will be provided with space on the survey to leave comments and/or suggestions for how to improve the program.

Budget
The budget for this program grant is broken down into two sections: direct costs and in kind contributions.

Direct costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Funding</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overhead</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
<td>In-kind</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation of RDs</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper/Print Media/Crayons</td>
<td>$8,500</td>
<td>Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and Food Supplies</td>
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<td>Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time of RDs</td>
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<td>In-kind</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>Grant</td>
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</table>

Overhead: classroom space and utilities
Transportation: cost of gasoline it takes for each dietitian to get to and from the school five days a week for six programs
Print media: flyers, posters, coupons, letters to parents, survey paper, take home recipes, postage
Art supplies: coloring pages, stickers, crayons,
Food: wide variety of nutritious snacks
In kind contributions: time of registered dietitians,

Total direct costs: $20,000
In kind contributions: $16,500
Total cost: $36,500

Future Funding
Future funding will be provided by other government grants. Michelle Obama has been working to increase awareness about the importance of preventing obesity in future generations, so program grants related to this topic are not uncommon.
Future funding could also be provided by donations and/or fundraising events such as bake sales. Some funds will continue to be obtained via in-kind contributions from the schools visited.

Summary
Obesity is a growing epidemic in the United States, especially for low income families. This program will work towards preventing this epidemic from getting worse for future generations by having professional dietitians spend time with K-2 children at school to teach them about being healthy. It is important to teach children about physical health and wellbeing as early as possible in order to prevent the obesity epidemic to spiral even further out of control. Americans need to take action today to prevent obesity and all of the health issues that come along with it.