



Department of Health  
Agency of Human Services



## St. Johnsbury School Wins “Most Improved” Wellness Award

*Celebrate National Public Health Week April 1-7  
Public Health is ROI: Saves Lives, Saves Money.*

### For Immediate Release:

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### Media Contacts:

Vermont Department of Health  
802-863-7281

ST. JOHNSBURY – St. Johnsbury School’s swim and gym after-school program, created by its Healthy Schools Team, started with 63 students and is expected to grow to as many as 300 students by the end of 2013. The program was initially offered as a pilot program for 5th graders, but students talk to each other and, by popular demand, the school now offers the program to all students in grades 1-8.

The school’s efforts to promote and expand physical activity programs is a key reason the school won the 2013 Most Improved Vermont Department of Health School Wellness Award of \$5,000. The school also implemented a “Fitness Gram” that assesses every student’s health, and strengthened connections with local farmers, which resulted in nearly triple the amount of locally grown produce purchased by the school’s food service.



“The Healthy Schools Team wanted all of our students to be able to access opportunities to exercise and have fun in an after school physical activity program, independent of cost,” said Stephanie Rowe, R.N., who believes that students who start exercise programs when they are young have a better chance of exercising throughout their lives. “We sat down and talked with officials at St. Johnsbury Academy, a private school nearby, which owns and operates the facilities, and they were very supportive. It has been a wonderful collaboration.”

The awards are given by the Health Department in partnership with the Agency of Education, New England Dairy and Food Council and the Vermont Health Education Initiative.

Twinfield Union School in Marshfield won one of three Gold wellness awards (\$3,000), which will fund equipment such as skates and ski boots, and help move forward plans for a hiking and fitness trail bordering the woods. While taking first in the high school category, Twinfield (K-12) applied for and placed well in all three categories (high school, middle school, elementary school), demonstrating a strong commitment to student and staff wellness.

“Parents, students, staff and the entire community have a shared vision of providing more opportunities to be active and get outside,” said Alice Day, RN, the school nurse. “Next month, for example, we have a bike rodeo during the school day where they can earn a license and learn about safety.”

### 2013 School Wellness Award Winners:

Most Improved (\$5,000) – St. Johnsbury School

#### Elementary School

Gold (\$3,000) – Northwest Primary School (Rutland)  
Silver (\$2,000) – St. Albans City School  
Bronze (\$1,000) - JFK Elementary (Winooski)

#### Middle School

Gold (\$3,000) – Edmunds Middle School (Burlington)  
Silver (\$2,000) – Coventry Village School  
Bronze (\$1,000) – Milton Herrick Ave. School (Milton)

High School

Gold (\$3,000) – Twinfield Union School (Marshfield)

Silver (\$2,000) – Burlington High School

Bronze (\$1,000) – Montpelier High School

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**###**

Vermont Department of Health | 108 Cherry Street | Burlington, VT 05402  
Voice: 802-863-7200 | In Vermont 800-464-4343 | Fax: 802-865-7754 | TTY/TDD: Dial 711 first  
Health Care Provider Infectious Disease Reporting: 802-863-7240 or 800-640-4374  
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