



Students JAM To Better Health

Program Brings Health Education, Daily Activities To Classroom

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CARMEL, Ind. -- Before they hit the books, students at Cherry Tree Elementary School start their day JAMmin'.

"I like the basketball exercise. I think it's just fun to go up and down and shoot," fifth-grader Kelly Warren said.

It's one of several workouts Kelly and her classmates do every day of the school week.

"It's a good idea, because it helps everybody get more exercise," 10-year-old Manda Warnock said.

"We should stay fit and get exercise every day," chimed in 10-year-old Ann Easten.

Students at the Carmel Elementary School started the JAM (Just-a-Minute) School Program two years ago. The program aims to get students more active and combat childhood obesity.

"It's important to exercise because it makes you feel good about yourself and you have energy to last through the whole day," fifth-grader Halley Harris told Staying Healthy reporter Stacia Matthews.

The program was founded by Patti Howell, a California mom who originally developed the concept for the workplace to get employees more active.

Now JAM is reaching 1.5 million children in 48 states, including Indiana.

Students follow a one-minute exercise routine that they can do while standing up or sitting down regardless of their fitness level.

Howell said the exercises can be performed by students who have a disability or other impairment that limits their ability.

The workouts are limited to 60 seconds.

"But remember, that one minute done multiple times throughout the day over the course of the day and the course of the week, 25 minutes can add up to 3 pounds for a child that may be overweight in one year," Howell said.

Howell and international fitness instructor Tracey Mallet were in Indiana on Tuesday as part of a nationwide tour to promote the program.

Both were impressed by what they saw at Cherry Tree.

"We take health very seriously," said Teggie Roger, a school administrator.

Fifth-grade teacher Ross Miller put JAM into the curriculum in the hopes of teaching his students a lifelong lesson.

"It's very important, especially moving on when they are going to make their own decisions about health and what they're going to do in middle school, high school and college," Miller said.

Students say the mini breaks help them refocus on their books and re-energize.

"I'm getting good grades and lasting the whole school day without being tired," Harris said.

Ten-year-old Brian Dickenson summed it up like this: "Its fun."

To keep it fun, students learn a new set of exercises every week.

Rosa Parks Elementary School in Indianapolis is the other central Indiana school following the JAM program.

The program is free. For more information, visit www.JAMschoolprogram.com