

# The Importance of Breakfast

From the Learning Connection, several documents were created. I've attached a few for your reference and to see if you have outreach ideas. This week, school breakfast week, seems a good opportunity.

I am sharing a report issued this month, *The Wellness Impact: Enhancing Academic Success Through Healthy School Environments*<sup>1</sup>, which reinforces the “learning connection” — the crucial link between quality nutrition, physical activity and academic performance. The report was released by the GENYOUth Foundation, National Dairy Council, American College of Sports Medicine and the American School Health Association.

Findings from *The Wellness Impact: Enhancing Academic Success Through Healthy School Environments* suggest:

- More than half (62%) of all teens say they do not eat breakfast every day of the week.<sup>2</sup>
- Breakfast eaters have better attention and memory than breakfast skippers.<sup>3</sup>
- Three-in-four high school students aren't active for the recommended 60 minutes each day.<sup>2</sup>
- Students who were more active during school performed better on standardized tests for reading, math and spelling.<sup>4</sup>

However, across the U.S., schools face challenges to meet economic, health and academic demands. Many schools lack the funds to execute school wellness policies or to start breakfast programs. And as pressures mount to improve standardized test scores, many districts are shortening or eliminating opportunities for physical activity, such as recess and physical education (PE) classes.

Proven school wellness programs such as Fuel Up to Play 60 — a program founded by National Dairy Council and the National Football League (NFL), in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture — encourage students to take charge in making small, everyday changes toward a healthy lifestyle at school. In partnership with GENYOUth Foundation, Fuel Up to Play 60 has provided schools with more than \$10 million in funds to help develop healthy in-school initiatives ranging from breakfast programs to walking clubs. Administrators and teachers have shared success stories indicating improved attention spans and increased attendance as a result of participating in Fuel Up to Play 60.

Everyone from community leaders to parents can work together to champion for improved child health and wellness in schools. To read the full report visit [www.GENYOUthFoundation.org](http://www.GENYOUthFoundation.org).