



St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

Office of Public Affairs
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St. Augustine, Florida 32084

MEDIA ADVISORY

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After-school Program teaches Healthy Habits to Kids *Weekly program begins Wednesday in Hastings*

Hastings, FL – (February 2, 2008) – The St. Johns County Recreation and Parks Department has partnered with the St. Augustine Elks Lodge 829 and the St. Johns County Health Department to offer a free “Kids Fit Club” at the Hastings after-school program. The program, which is being made possible through a \$10,000 grant from the Elks Foundation, begins this Wednesday, February 4, at 2:30 pm.

The Kids Fit Club will consist of 30 minutes of physical activity and 30 minutes of seminars on healthy eating and lifestyles, offered one day a week for ten consecutive weeks. The goal is to give the 89 children in the after-school program tools to make healthy choices and educate them about the importance of choosing wisely. A personal trainer hired through the grant will instruct the participants, who will each receive an exercise chart, gym bag, soccer ball, jump rope, exer-band and t-shirt. The children’s physical progress will be tracked by doing body mass index (BMI) and weight measures on the first, fifth and tenth week of the program.

Wil Smith, Assistant Director of St. Johns County Recreation and Parks, worked with Recreation Superintendent Betsy Clarkson to write the award-winning grant to target childhood obesity. “This program allows children to learn about the importance of healthy eating and exercise in a fun and relevant way, and it comes at no cost to our taxpayers,” said Smith. “As we continually work to provide services in a cost-effective way, we are grateful to the Elks Lodge for suggesting this grant and to the Health Department for helping implement the program. We anticipate positive results with the kids.”

The Hastings after-school program is offered through the Recreation and Parks Department at the Walter E. Harris Center located at 400 East Harris Street in Hastings. For more information about the Kids Fit Club, contact Betsy Clarkson at (904) 209-0335.

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