

## School fair to teach students about healthy living



Cooking instructor Wendy Van Wagner will teach a cooking class at the health fair Friday. Pictured here, she prepares a meal for teens.

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Silver Springs High School in Grass Valley will host an all-day health fair Friday, giving students an opportunity to learn about the importance of fitness, food and building healthy relationships.

“We really want to create a positive environment where health is a top priority for the students,” event organizer Jennifer Winders said. “Giving them choices around physical fitness, health and wellness and that whole realm gives the teens a chance to make healthy choices.”

A social worker with the public health department who works with adolescents, Winders taught a yoga class at the school this year and got the idea of holding an all-inclusive health fair after the response she got from students.

“Doing that class kind of inspired me to do more,” Winders said. “These kids really liked it; they’re really responded to it. So the thought of doing an all-day health fair came up, and the school was really excited about it, so we said, ‘Hey, let’s go for it.’”

In collaboration with Twin Cities church, New Covenant church and the Nevada County public health nutrition education program, the fair will include a set of nine classes, offering students workshops which include yoga, hula hooping, cooking, healthy relationships, youth empowerment and self-defense.

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The event is supported by the county’s public health and social services departments through the Get Fresh program, which focuses on providing an environment where a healthy choice is an easy choice.

“One critical component of our effort is obesity prevention,” county health and wellness program manager Jill Blake said.

“So we work to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables and decrease the consumption of sugary beverages, and to create environments where it’s easier to make a healthy choice.”

While Nevada County ranks eighth out of 57 counties in the state in overall health, statistics show that 24 percent of children in the county, ages 2 to 4, are overweight or obese. As kids get older, the percentage increases as 32 percent of youth, ages 5 to 19, are overweight or obese, as well.

“Events like this health fair help us combat these statistics, to make sure the county maintains or increases the overall health of its residents.” Blake said.

The fair will also feature an outdoor experiential area, with fitness booths run by different local organizations, for students to participate in different physical activities. Groups participating with booths include Creating New Events and Opportunities (NEO), Sierra Harvest, Miners Clinic and the Tobacco Program.

Each student will have a passport that they must get stamped at five different booth stations in order to get their lunch and enter a raffle for prizes.

Following the booth activities, the health fair will have a barbecue and salad buffet for students and school faculty provided by public health program staff and church volunteers. A raffle will also give students opportunities to win donated prizes from local businesses like SPD Market, Safeway, BriarPatch, Wild Mountain Yoga, Grocery Outlet and The Wooden Spoon.

Principal Marty Mathiesen said that he thinks the fair will be a success, and he looks forward to making it an annual event at his school for years to come.

“We try to expose our kids to healthy choices that can provide them with a better life,” Mathiesen said.

“The healthy aspects of exercise, nutritional food and lifestyle are things that some of our students aren’t exposed to on a daily basis, and the health fair will do that for them.”

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