



## **Central School**

### **Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 1**

### **Brooks, Alberta**

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#### ***BEFORE School Makeover***

Central School had many initiatives already in place to ensure nutritious foods were available to all students. The school has offered a breakfast/healthy morning snack program for more than eight years, ensuring that these foods are available to all students. Healthy food items such as applesauce, crackers and cereals are made available by a partnership with the local food bank and funds from school budget. Frozen sandwiches are kept available to supplement school lunches for those students in need. Help from the parent council allows healthful food to be served for special occasions and hot lunches. In addition, healthy beverages such as milk and 100% fruit juices are made available. The school often serves milk and milk products below cost and participates in the Club Moo milk program to encourage students to increase their consumption of dairy products. Monthly school newsletters provide nutrition and healthy living information to families.

#### ***AFTER School Makeover***

##### **DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT:**

Central School has implemented a new program called *Food for Thought* after a successful three-month pilot project. The *Food for Thought* program provides fresh fruit or vegetables to all students three to five times per week. This program is supported by corporate donors and the school budget. This program encourages students to incorporate a variety of vegetables and fruits into their daily diets.

##### ***Getting the Messages Across to the Students:***

Central School has implemented the *Power to Play* program, a Kindergarten to Grade 3 healthy eating and activity program that is sponsored by Alberta Milk, Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency, and Alberta Sport and Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation, into their classrooms. The students love to see what the main characters of the program, Brock Lee and Coco Lait, are up to and how nutrition and activity messages are incorporated into the games and activities. The school nurse visits classrooms during lunch time to reinforce these healthy eating messages. Healthy eating and activity messages are further reinforced through a partnership with a

neighbouring junior high school. These junior high students join the students on the playground once a week.

### ***Overcoming the Roadblocks:***

The main road block Central School has encountered was funding for the *Food for Thought* program. This roadblock was overcome by donations from their very supportive community (local IGA, Elks and their parent advisory committee).

### **RESULTS:**

Although formal evaluation of the program has not occurred, the staff can see the clear benefit in their students: children are not complaining of hunger in the morning and are eager to try new fruits and vegetables provided. The students can be heard talking in the classrooms about their snacks and if they are “power to play” snacks. Parents comment how their children are identifying healthy snacks when they are shopping or preparing meals or snack at home. Staff are eating healthier lunches and have made other positive lifestyle changes.

### **Examples of student, parent and teacher quotes:**

- \* *“Chips are not healthy snacks, they don’t give you power to play!” Madyson*
- \* *“My Mom doesn’t know about the power to play, so I’m teaching her.” Alyssa*
- \* *“The kids are really learning a lot about healthy foods and being active. When we shop my son can tell me what would be some healthy foods to eat at home or pack in his lunch. They really like the Power to Play program!”*
- \* *“It’s really cool how the community is supporting the nutrition programs at Central. The Food for Thought program is a really good idea because many of our students wouldn’t get fresh fruit or vegetables unless they have them here. It is expensive to eat healthy.” Teacher*
- \* *“My daughter and her friends love to play being Brock Lee and Cocoa Lait! You can hear them talking about the power to play and how healthy food, like fruits and vegetables, and milk are good choices to give them energy to play.” Jackie*

This year, the school staff formed a Healthy School Community professional learning community focus group that will help to lead and maintain nutrition initiatives in the school.

### ***FUTURE Plans***

Central School has full plans to continue their innovative nutrition initiatives in their school. The school Parent Advisory Association and local community are very supportive of these initiatives and along with their support, Central School has confidence their initiatives will be sustained and enhanced.

To formalize healthy initiatives for years to come, a recent strategic planning session was held between school jurisdiction stakeholders and their local Board of Education. This session highlighted how staff and parents want healthy living initiatives for students and staff made these a priority.



Left to Right: Susan Chomistek, School Board district superintendent;  
Christy Turgeon, school nurse; Kirsten Edwards, student;  
Alyssa Horn, student; Nathalie Stock, teacher assistant;  
Debbie Pietsch, RD Alberta Milk, Nutrition Innovation Award Project Coordinator;  
Jody Rutherford, Principal

Healthy Growth Through Nutrition

1303 - 91 Street SW • Edmonton, AB • T6X 1H1 • Phone: 1-877-361-1231

