



commit to be fit

SY 2023-2024 Report

Year 7: A Broader Scope

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About Us

Commit to Be Fit is a grant funded, school supported program in a rural Virginia county that is geared towards creating a culture of wellness in three key areas:

classroom
cafeteria  community

Realizing that academic performance is strongly correlated to healthy minds and bodies, wellness and healthy lifestyles have become an integral part of our educational culture at Rappahannock County Public Schools. **The Commit to Be Fit program is funded by the generosity of the PATH Foundation.**





cafeteria

Year 7: A Broader Scope- This year's focus concentrated on bringing together the big ideas and successes of the previous years to enhance the cafeteria to accommodate major changes with new healthy cafeteria items, add a greater emphasis on literacy in our established Action Based Learning Lab, and create greater impact of staff wellness. **For our cafeteria prong, this included an emphasis on scratch-based meals while amplifying the students' voice in nutritious cafeteria options.**

Cafeteria Highlights



Rappahannock County Public Schools was a recipient of [FNS' Healthy Meal Incentive Initiative](#) grant for small and rural school food authorities. The HMI grant was established to improve the nutritional quality of school meals through food systems transformation, school food authority recognition and technical assistance, and the generation and sharing of innovative ideas and tested practices.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Administrator Cindy Long traveled to Rappahannock County for National School Lunch Week on Friday morning, October 13, to visit Rappahannock County Elementary School. Additional guests from the USDA joined Administrator Long: Dr. Patty Bennett (Regional Administrator, Mid-Atlantic Region), Erin Kesler (Senior Administrative Specialist, Office of the Administrator), and Julena Campbell (Director, Regional Communications &

Partnerships, Mid-Atlantic Region). Special guests from the Virginia Department of Education School Nutrition Program included Bee Thorp (VDOE SNP Farm to School Specialist) and Callie Nickles (VDOE SNP Training and Marketing Specialist). Additionally, RCPS welcomed Tannia Talento, Regional Director, from the office of U.S. Senator Mark R. Warner. Rappahannock County's Assistant Administrator Bonnie Jewell, Board of Supervisors Debbie Donehey (Chair) and Keir Whitson (Vice-Chair), and School Board Vice-Chair Larry Grove were present to welcome the guests to Rappahannock.

After touring the gardens, Administrator Cindy Long joined the cafeteria staff to serve scratch-based pizza to the 3rd-grade students in the lunch line. Once everyone was served, she had an opportunity to visit with the kids, hear the students' perspectives on school meals, and speak with the cafe staff. The special guests enjoyed dining in the cafeteria and eating the delicious school lunch, including scratch-based pizza, fresh veggies, and locally sourced apples from Thornton River Orchards.

Check out a few of this year's scratch-based menu items prepared by RCES and RCHS cafeterias!





Harvest of the Month

Commit to Be Fit welcomed Ms. Mallory Grady, the new Regional Farm-to-School Associate, to share the Harvest of the Month with the elementary and high school students. The students enjoyed sampling the tasty recipes each month.

- September 2023- Bell Peppers with Hummus
 - October 2023- Overnight Oats with Apples and Cinnamon
 - November 2023- Mexican Coleslaw
 - December 2023- Grinch Spinach Smoothie
 - January 2024- Roasted Sweet Potatoes
 - February 2024 Butternut Squash Soup (pictured)
 - March 2024- White Bean and Orzo Kale Salad
 - April 2024- Cava-Inspired Mediterranean Salad*
 - May 2024- Chocolate Chia Pudding and Fresh Strawberries and Mint (pictured)*
- *Incorporated ingredients grown by Farm to Table students*



Battle of the Blenders- Student Choice Smoothie Showdown



Commit to Be Fit and Chef Volmrich kicked off a March Madness-themed smoothie competition, Battle of the Blenders, on March 25th. Approximately half of the students in the elementary school sampled the first two competitors, Lemony Lemur (lemon and apple) and Busy Blueberry (blueberry, banana, orange), and voted for their favorite flavor. While it was a close race in the first few lunch shifts, the Busy Blueberry won with **68%** of the vote and will move on to the final round. The students enjoyed tasting the refreshing, nutritious drinks, with many asking for seconds.

On Thursday, March 28th, the rest of the elementary school sampled two new flavors, Green Gorilla (pears and spinach) and Fla-Mango (strawberries and mango). Ultimately, the Fla-Mango won, securing **78%** of the vote.

The Battle of the Blenders championship round was held during the PTO Fun Run event in April, with each grade level voting on their favorite smoothie. To add to the fun, students had an opportunity to blend the smoothie ingredients on a student-powered blender bike! With students racing against one another, it was a true 'battle of the blenders.'

While it was a close race throughout the day, the Busy Bluebird (blueberry, banana, and orange) narrowly won the student choice championship, beating out the Fla-Mango (strawberry and mango) by only FIVE votes! Since it was such a close match-up, both smoothie flavors were available for students to enjoy during breakfast the following day.



BATTLE of the BLENDERS

- Lemony Lemur
- Busy Bluebird
- Busy Bluebird
- Green Gorilla
- Fla-Mango
- Fla-Mango
- Busy Bluebird
- Busy Bluebird





Cafeteria Highlights

Panther Palate

Sixth and seventh-grade farm-to-table classes, with guidance from Chef Volmrich, were given a project to create a tasty recipe that incorporated several of the herbs that the students had grown this spring. Ultimately, the students selected a ranch-based dip incorporating dill, thyme, and basil. After making their dip from the freshly harvested herbs, the 6th class served it with cucumbers to younger grade levels to see if this should be a menu item next school year. The results are in, and the younger students would like it to be served in cafeteria!



Staff Farmer's Market

Commit to Be Fit hosted its highly-anticipated Farmers Market for RCPS staff in November and May. All staff members were provided with a market bag and tickets to exchange for food as they shopped among the local farmers' tables. This year's assortment included vegetables, herbs, protein, bread, fruits, apple butter, honey, jams, jellies, seasoned salts, and more!



POP Bucks Market Bags & Tokens

POP Bucks Market Bags continued to be a hit with RCPS families during the 2024 farmers market. Students received bags filled with protein, bread, local produce, and two \$5 tokens to shop at participating vendors.



Healthy Snacks

RCES held its annual Trunk or Treat for elementary students on Friday, Oct. 27th. Commit to Be Fit joined in the fun, along with many other amazing volunteers, and passed out tasty homemade orange cranberry granola and "pumpkin" oranges filled with blueberries and bananas. The granola baggies included a QR code for parents to make the recipe at home.



Nutrition Trivia

March was National Nutrition Month! To celebrate, we created a friendly, month-long trivia competition for RCHS students and staff. Each high school seminar class had to work together to answer a daily nutrition question and record the answer on a google form. The class with the most correct answers won a smoothie party.





classroom

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Classroom Highlights

Brain STAR Action Based Learning (ABL) Lab

During the first semester of the school year, the BrainSTAR ABL Lab continued to challenge students to engage in purposeful movements designed to build stronger, healthier bodies and promote academic success in the classroom.

While the lab has been used successfully to review academic content, in January 2024, the BrainSTAR (Strengthening Through Action Repetition) took the concepts of the lab a step further and focused exclusively on **movement-based literacy activities**. In collaboration with Ms. Katherine Todd, RCES Reading Specialist, the stations were fine tuned to further promote literacy growth and cement reading concepts learned in the classrooms.



Student-Led Mindfulness

At the conclusion of each ABL class, students have been practicing mindfulness activities, such as deep breathing and mindful listening. Once the students were familiar with the exercises, they had opportunities to lead their class in this calming routine. Mindfulness helps to regulate the body by providing a peaceful environment and bringing attention to the body and senses. It's the perfect way to conclude the movement-based activity stations before heading back to homeroom.

Additionally, C2BF offered short mindfulness-centered push-ins in the classrooms to help all students learn easy calming techniques for students to use throughout the day.



Strength, Fitness, and Personal Health Electives

This year, Commit to Be Fit taught two Strength, Fitness, and Personal Health courses at the high school. This class is designed to prepare students with knowledge and skills to lead an active, healthy lifestyle now and throughout their lifespan. Students acquired knowledge of physical fitness concepts, learned the influence of lifestyle on health and fitness, and worked towards developing an optimal fitness level. Additionally, students worked to improve their cardiovascular system, muscular structure, and overall agility through weight training and plyometrics. Also, students explored a variety of physical activity modalities to help them discover their active lifestyle preferences. Finally, this upper-level course included various topics related to personal health to better prepare students for optimal health through their lifetime. The class was primarily taught by Jermey Gates with assistance from the rest of the team.





High School Neuronasium

The Neuronasium, a fully-functioning classroom, was open to all RCHS classes. This unique classroom is based on the latest brain research that shows a link between movement and learning by increasing attention span, strengthening memory, and boosting brain function. The room is outfitted with a variety of equipment such as pedal desks, glider desks, balance desks, wobble stools, standing desks, and more!



Classroom Push-ins

Throughout the year, C2BF continued to offer classroom push-ins at each school. During the lessons, teachers had an opportunity to take a break, run off papers, and even visit the RCES Reset Room (see below). Pictured: First grade students enjoyed a fun relay activity. Students were divided into teams and had to identify sight words by tapping them with fly swatters. The team that identified each word first celebrated with jumping jacks. The push-in concluded with a mindfulness lesson.



Sensory Pathway

The sensory pathway continues to be a hit with students! Spanning the length of two hallways in the elementary school, this path encourages students to engage in a variety of movement patterns: hopping, marching, heel-to-toe balance walk, hopscotch, crab walking, and more. Judging from the smiles in the photo, it's safe to say that it's fun too!



Reset Room for Students and Staff

For one hour each morning, the ABL Lab was transformed into a calming, serene environment. Soothing sounds and dimmed lights set the tone as a peaceful video featuring sea turtles play on the big screen. The room was open to all staff and their students who wanted to take a calming moment of deep breathing and relaxation. Several people reported that just a few minutes in the reset room can quite literally reset your mood.




































community

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LEADERBOARD SUPERINTENDENT'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CHALLENGE SEPT. 18TH- SEPT. 24TH

| | | |
|--|--|---|
|  Ms. H. Jenkins 621 mins. |  Ms. Page 325 mins. |  Ms. Newman 170 mins. |
|  Ms. Waters 605 mins. |  Ms. Taylor 300 mins. |  Ms. DiLello 165 mins. |
|  Mr. Wiese 586 mins. |  Ms. Midkiff 292 mins. |  Ms. Fincham 160 mins. |
|  Mr. Hummill 532 mins. |  Mr. Stockdale 241 mins. |  Ms. Zehr Rhodes 150 mins. |
|  Mr. Gates 505 mins. |  Ms. Estes 240 mins. |  Ms. Barron 150 mins. |
|  Mr. Long 425 mins. |  Ms. Goode 210 mins. |  Ms. Jennejahn 150 mins. |
|  Ms. Todd 425 mins. |  Dr. Grimsley 205 mins. |  Ms. Lowe-Barton 125 mins. |
|  Ms. White 390 mins. |  Ms. W. Jenkins 200 mins. |  Ms. Platt 100 mins. |
|  Ms. Robey 381 mins. |  Ms. Robinson 190 mins. |  Mr. Fullard 30 mins. |
|  Ms. Kapsa 379 mins. |  Mr. Seward 180 mins. | |
|  Ms. McCabe 345 mins. | | |


 Congratulations Team
 RCHS for winning the
 RCES vs. RCHS Challenge

Pictured Above: Sample of the Weekly Leaderboard – 12 Week Challenge

Pictured Right: Prize Drawing Winners from 8-Week Challenge

Pictured Below: Recognized Participants at the End of Year Celebrations

Community Highlights



Superintendent Physical Activity Award Challenges- 12 Weeks & 8 Weeks

Back in the beginning of September, Dr. Grimsley challenged all RCPS staff to participate in a fun, physical activity challenge to beat her total minutes at the end of the 12 weeks. Participants were encouraged to log and submit their total minutes of moderate physical activity each week. We had great participation from staff in this challenge, which was designed to create a routine of healthy movement habits. This challenge was so well received that we debuted a spring version that ran for 8-weeks.

Staff Wellness Rooms

Each school was outfitted with a staff wellness room. At the high school, staff had a fully functional gym with free weights, machines, and cardio equipment. The elementary school's wellness room included cardio, light dumbbells, resistance bands, and a couch for relaxation. The wellness rooms were made possible with additional grant funding.



Community Challenges

Our online Transformation Challenge returned with 107 participants. Each week, participants received a daily strength training routine and picture tutorials to assist them with their workouts at home. Other challenges included a stress reduction challenge called Just Chill, Hike Rappahannock, Turkey Trot, and 150 Challenge aimed to help participants achieve 150 minutes of weekly physical activity.



Transformation Challenge Rating



4.9 Out of 5 Stars

(According to Survey of Participants)

SY 23-24 Community Activities Timeline

September 2023

9.4.23- Superintendent's Staff Challenge Started
 9.18.23- Weekly Walking Group Started

9.4.23- 150 Minutes Community Challenge Started
 9.20.23- Art of Aging Lifestyle & Wellness Expo
 9.25.23- Community Meal Prep
 9.30.23- Community Event- Karen's Line Dancing
 9.30.23- 150 Minutes Challenge Ended

October 2023

10.1.23- Hike Rapp Community Challenge Started
 10.25.23- Community Meal Prep
 10.31.23- Hike Rapp Challenge Ended

November 2023

11.16.23- Staff Farmer's Market
 11.21.2023- Virtual Turkey Trot Started
 11.26.2023- Virtual Turkey Trot Ended

December 2023

12.3.23- Superintendent's Staff Challenged Ended

12.5.23- Community Meal Prep
 12.6.23- Family Engagement Night Activities

January 2024

1.8.24- Community Transformation Challenge Started
 1.18.24- Thursday Headwater's Dance Started

1.8.24- Superintendent's Staff Challenge Started
 1.20.24- Community Event- Karen's Line Dancing

February 2024

2.12.24- Community Sourdough Bread Workshop
 2.12.24- Community Sourdough Bread Workshop
 2.28.24- Family Engagement Community Activities

March 2024

3.3.24- Community Transformation Challenge Ended

3.10.24- Superintendent's Staff Challenge Ended
 3.19.24- Community Sourdough Bread Workshop

April 2024

4.1.24- Just Chill Community Challenge Started
 4.30.24- Just Chill Community Challenge Ended

4.5.24- Sup.'s Staff Challenge Prize Drawing Event
 4.23.24- Senior Line Dancing Workshop- Rapp at Home
 4.29.24- Community Autism Awareness Walk

May 2024

5.9.24- Thursday Headwater's Dance Ends
 5.20.24- Weekly Walking Group Ends

5.8.24- Community Mindfulness/Sound Bath Event
 5.22.24- Staff Farmer's Market
 5.23.24- Sup.'s Challenge Awards at EOY Celebration



Top Row (L-R): Headwaters Thursday Dance Class, Weekly Walking Group, Art of Aging Expo
 Middle Row (L-R): Rapp at Home Line Dancing Workshop (Photo by Carl Zitzmann), Meal Prep, Family Engagement Night
 Bottom Row (L-R): Meal Prep, Neurodiversity & Autism Awareness Walk, Sour Dough Bread Workshop

Community & Staff Feedback

- "This program is awesome and has done wonders for my mental and physical health."* - **8-Week Transformation Challenge Participant (Community Challenge)**
- "Thank you so much for providing programs like this! Commit to be fit has truly made a difference in my life and helped me to become a person that I love again! It has changed my life and I will jump on board to every program to continue to maintain and healthy lifestyle! You all rock!!"* - **8-Week Superintendent's Challenge Participant (Staff Challenge)**
- "This program allowed me to exercise at home when weather did not permit travel to and from a class. Also, the exercises could be modified to fit one's needs and abilities. The main instructor, Holly, was cheerful, positive and encouraging."* - **8-Week Transformation Challenge Participant (Community Challenge)**
- "This was super fun and certainly motivated me to work out more!"* - **12 Week Superintendent's Challenge Participant (Staff Challenge)**
- "This program has been very beneficial for me! After every workout, I am left feeling accomplished and confident. I have seen a difference and will definitely do these programs in the future! Commit to be fit is amazing and has been such a huge piece of my getting healthy journey."* - **8-Week Transformation Challenge Participant (Community Challenge)**
- "I enjoyed being part of the challenge. I have been needing to exercise more, but I always seemed too busy or found an excuse not to. Having accountability was vital, and once I started, I felt so much better; even if I didn't have a large amount of minutes. I still felt better overall and had a sense of accomplishment. It has encouraged me to continue to work on my health, by being more active, even if just taking a walk."* - **8-Week Superintendent's Challenge Participant (Staff Challenge)**
- "Honestly I loved it and thought it was very helpful and easy to follow."* - **8 Week Transformation Challenge Participant (Community Challenge)**

commit to be fit



The C2BF Team (L-R): Kayla Midkiff (Wellness Integration Specialist), Holly Jenkins (Wellness Integration & Promotion Specialist), Jermey Gates (Wellness Integration Specialist), and Jackie Tederick (Wellness Integration Coordinator). Not Pictured: Dr. Shannon Grimsley, Grant PI & RCPS Superintendent

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