



## HWCF Sponsored PTA Healthy Lifestyles EB101 Grant Winner: Grafenwoehr Elementary School

HWCF and the PTA conducted two training webinars on September 5 with the 25 winners of the HWCF sponsored 2013 PTA Healthy Lifestyles Grant. One of the grant winners is Grafenwoehr Elementary School (GES), a Department of Defense School (DoDDS-E) located in Grafenwoehr, Germany.

Linda Scheuermann is the PTA Leader who championed the grant application is a former School Nurse who now serves as a parent volunteer. GES's PTA serves the military community by fostering family and community engagement, facilitating art and music opportunities (PTA Reflections program and annual school musical), creating health and wellness programs, facilitating educational programs (National Spelling Bee and Annual Science Fair), coordinating school pictures, yearbooks and book fairs in addition to assisting the school with the purchase of much-needed supplies. The PTA also helps build a sense of community for their students, staff and families. As a Department of Defense Dependent School, they serve a community that is far from home and a student body that often has to cope with the stress of deployments and frequent moves on top of the usual business of childhood. Because of this, one of their major goals is to foster a safe, supportive, and fun environment for the very special families whom they serve. With the transient nature of the military, the school and the PTA are always changing. Students and their families are moving in and out of the community on a daily basis.

To introduce the Healthy Lifestyle EB101 Grant to the school, Scheuermann visited every grade 1-5 classroom to introduce core energy balance concepts through a "positive energy" initiative, inviting every family in the school to pledge to have at least three meals together per week. A wall is being built using the pledges (which look like bricks) to show everyone who visits their commitment to becoming more energy balanced.

Recess is limited to 20 minutes per day weather permitting and most of the students only have PE class once a week. Additionally, GES does not have an indoor space available for recess; therefore, due to adverse weather conditions in the Bavarian region of Germany that include high amounts of rain and snow, outdoor recess is not always feasible. On days when the weather does not permit recess, students are kept inside in the library and watch a DVD. Because GES was originally built as a WWII German Army Hospital, there is one multipurpose room that is used for both PE and lunch. GES has focused their program on increasing physical activity and encouraging students and families to participate in physical activity outside of school to get the recommended 60 minutes per day.

### Promoting Positive Energy Balance:

- Encouraging Regular Family Meals
  - o GES's principal is providing a special opportunity for parents to eat one-on-one with their students at school during the lunch period. Due to military work hours, many soldiers are unable to eat dinner with their child or family; therefore, GES is providing a special room available via reservation for a parent to each lunch with their child. The PTA plans to partner with the school to provide volunteer assistance. This will enable active-duty military families to accomplish their pledge of eating regular family meals together.
- Encouraging teachers to incorporate movement breaks throughout the day
  - o Help sustain students' focus, concentration and could help prevent discipline problems
- Creating an after school "PT" (physical training) program
  - o Most students are dependents of active-duty military personnel with fitness requirements and daily "PT", this will create a PT program for the students to participate in as well
  - o Two teachers are sponsoring the program



- Enlisting the help of the school's supporting Army unit to aid with activities
- The community's Youth Service Director is engaged to help plan activities (soccer drills, relay races, etc.)
- Family Fun Run scheduled at the on-post Community Fitness Center September 14<sup>th</sup>
  - A non-competitive event that will offer prizes for the silliest costume or running outfit
  - Being promoted on the Armed Forces Network (AFN)
- Grafenwoehr Community Volksmarch in early October
  - A community off-post event hosted in partnership with their German town
  - GES participates annually as part of their host nation curriculum
  - Each grade participates at varying levels along with their parents (Kindergarten – short walk in town, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5km walk, 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> – 10km walk)
- Energy Balance Evening Event November 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Stations set up for exercise (basketball, jump rope, yoga, etc.) and making healthy snacks
  - Students will receive a “passport” that will be stamped throughout the evening at each station
  - PTA will provide information to students and parents about the Energy Balance 101 curriculum
- Students have requested a bike event that is tentatively being planned for the Spring
- Monthly newsletter with a health and wellness article each month
  - [First newsletter](#) for the school year was distributed via email to parents August 30 and included an article about the benefits of eating regular family meals together
- Healthy lifestyle education information will be posted on the [GES PTA Facebook page](#)
- Promote events on the Armed Forces Network (AFN) for advertising exposure in the community
- List events in the community newspaper, websites and community social media

*“This grant is very important to the school and community because we want to help our students and families have a better understanding about making healthy lifestyle choices, we want to help encourage stronger family connections, and we want every GES student to be successful. I want students to have the opportunity to realize that physical activity is fun and important to being a healthy person. I explained to students this week when I made classroom visits that when their bodies are healthy, their brains are healthy. Being healthy will make better students, and we all want each student to succeed at Grafenwoehr Elementary School!” - Linda Scheuermann, School Volunteer and PTA Leader*

### Learn more about our PTA Grant Program

<http://www.pta.org/programs/content.cfm?ItemNumber=3655>

<http://www.togethercounts.com/at-home>