

Dear Parents,

Did you know that childhood obesity is a great concern in our country? These growing problems of childhood obesity are the result of numerous, complex factors including diet, sedentary lifestyles, genetics, environment, and culture. The result of these factors is that an alarming 16% of children and adolescents are overweight. This means that there has been a three-fold increase of childhood obesity since 1980. Due to this concern, Congress passed the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 on June 30, 2004. Recognizing the role schools can play in health promotion, this law requires local education agencies to adopt a Wellness Policy with the objectives of improving the school nutrition environment, promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity (PL 108-265, Sec. 204). In addition, the State of Illinois requires all school districts to have a Wellness Policy.

Koraes Elementary School believes that educating and caring for the “whole child” is imperative. Therefore, our school has continually made a Wellness Plan part of our curriculum. It is a school priority that in addition to having high standards for academics, that we keep our children physically fit and nutritionally healthy.

These are just some of the components of our Koraes Wellness Plan as it is integrated into our curriculum: physical fitness is taught by a certified teacher four times per week, the habits of good nutrition and healthy food choices are taught in PE and science classes, the systems of the body and how to keep them healthy is part of our health/science curriculum and outdoor recess is held each day as weather permits. Our school also takes part in the milk program and serves reduced-fat milk at all lunches. In addition, prekindergarten through eighth grade students are taken to the Robert Crown Center for further instruction on health related issues. Dental hygiene seminars have been held for our students in prekindergarten through second grade. We also support the American Heart Association by taking part in the *Jumprope for Heart* fundraiser. Finally, all of our students take part in the Presidential Fitness Challenge in our physical education classes. Extracurricular sports such as basketball, soccer and cheerleading are also offered to our children.

Good health habits begin in the home. Please support our efforts to keep your child physically and nutritionally fit by making healthy lifestyle choices. There is a growing body of evidence that supports the fact that nutritionally and physically fit children perform better academically and enjoy a healthier lifestyle.

Sincerely,

Mary C. Zaharis