

NEWS RELEASE

September 17 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Free 10-week program helps children and families live healthier lives

Chilliwack, BC- The Chilliwack Division of Family Practice's Healthy Kids Initiative supports the same Live 5-2-1-0 message as MEND, a potentially life-changing program that empowers and inspires children and families to lead healthier and happier lives. Grounded in current scientific evidence and best practices in helping children and families reach or maintain a healthier weight, MEND works with families to change unhealthy attitudes about food and activity (Mind), stay active on a regular basis (Exercise), learn how to choose foods that are both, tasty and healthy (Nutrition), and take action to maintain a healthy lifestyle - for life (Do It!).

This free 10-week program, funded by the Ministry of Health, is available to children between 7 and 13 years old who are above a healthy weight and their families. In Chilliwack, MEND 7-13 is facilitated through the Chilliwack Family YMCA. The program runs for 10 weeks, twice a week and is held at the Chilliwack Neighbourhood Learning Centre. The next program is scheduled to start Thursday, October 2, 2014. Participants in the program will receive a free 3-month Family Membership to the Chilliwack Family YMCA to encourage their healthy lifestyle changes along the way.

By helping a child and their family take control of their health, MEND 7-13 can bring positive change to a child's life. In fact, the program can potentially help a child prevent the onset of Type 2 diabetes and other obesity-associated life-threatening and chronic medical conditions. During the program, families learn about healthy eating and mealtime habits, understanding food labels, serving sizes and building self-esteem. Other topics include positive parenting, healthy growth, active play and behavior change strategies.

MEND is proven to work; programs delivered in North America show statistically significant results. Children who participated saw improvements in body image and self-esteem as well as eating behaviors and greater understanding of nutrition including eating more fruits and vegetables and drinking fewer sugar sweetened beverages. Other positive changes included increased cardiovascular fitness and weekly physical activity and a reduction in "screen" time and sedentary behavior. It is evident that the program can make a difference in the lives of families in our community who otherwise may have nowhere to turn to deal with obesity and its serious health consequences.

For local information and registration, contact Andrea Gieselman, MEND 7-13 Program Manager at the Chilliwack Family YMCA, at 604-799-3732 or at agieselmanymca@gmail.com. For media inquiries, contact Leah Robertson, at 1 - 250 - 216 – 7893 or at leah@childhoodobesityfoundation.ca. Attached below are images for media use.

For more information about the Chilliwack Division of Family Practice, please contact:
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Chilliwack Division of Family Practice

A GPSC initiative

Chilliwack General Hospital
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