

## **PFA Kid Fit Program**

Vickie and Chris co-teach the Kid Fit program at Pershing Elementary. Here is their take on the program that they run together.

Teaching different curricula our teaching philosophies are bound to be slightly different. The one place that our philosophies come together is the value of exercise, health and well being of children. We share a common vision in that all kids need the opportunity to exercise and improve their muscular strength and endurance in a safe environment. We both believe that children are looking for something to belong to, or be a part of. Thank goodness Pershing School has the Project Fit Center. We are two teachers that want to make a difference in the lives of children, academically, emotionally and physically.

Five years ago, we saw the need for children to have time to exercise. We started a before-school fitness class. The class had to be limited due to the large number of children that wanted to take part. We began looking for funding for exercise equipment to create an exercise center at Pershing School. A parent survey showed that our parents felt the need for a safe exercise environment. As grants were written and rewritten the Heartland Regional Community Foundation approached us about the possibility of collaborating and creating that center. Our exercise program called Kid-Fit now had a home. The center and program is in its fourth year.

Each day children arrive before school (usually parent drop-offs or children walk to school) to be a part of the Kid-Fit program. It is a fitness program that boasts an enrollment of about 80 children between the ages of 8-12 (we have approximately 170 enrolled at Pershing School in grades 2-6). We greet each student with much enthusiasm as these kids begin to work on their own goals. Some 12 parent volunteers help the students count the number of repetitions they do at each project fit station. Our job is to keep track of the number of laps each student performs and add the miles. Students workout for about 45 minutes when we shout that it is breakfast time and a few students put their workout cards away and head for the building. Many students remain for approximately 15 more minutes. The school bell sounds announcing the beginning of school. Usually we have approximately 35-40 students remaining. They gather up their belongings (backpacks thrown on the side of a hill) and enter the building for a day of work. Khris has 22 first graders ready to greet her at her classroom door. She takes the miles record and the punched out cards and records all the information on a spreadsheet. She then elicits a 6-year-old to take this information down to "Ms Brownell." The students gladly do this errand and become very familiar with the program that they are eligible to begin in second grade. What a wonderful way to introduce children to our exercise program. Khris also answers phone calls inquiring about the data of Kid-Fit. Each year when the school year ends, Khris compiles all the data for the school year for Kid-Fit and prepares it for presentation.

Vickie takes this information and updates a special bulletin board logging the miles and punched cards of each student. She then writes out a "daily PFA news" that is taken to the office and read by the principal over the intercom. Many days students ask if their name is going to be read over the intercom. Usually the high number of repetitions or the number of miles a students completes makes the "list." Vickie completes a log sheet for the parent volunteers and the number of hours they work at PFA. Each year, Pershing School is awarded a school district award for achieving a high number of

volunteer hours within our school. Parent volunteers are anxious about volunteering in the PFA center because it is a less threatening environment than an academic assignment.

Vickie begins her day teaching physical education. When she begins a class she often has PFA students be the "taggers" in a warm-up game or ask them the total number of miles and cards they have completed and constantly publicizes the program. As Vickie and Khris meet students in the hallway a common topic of conversation is the goals the kids have achieved that day during PFA. Vickie has a school board approved curriculum to teach but she does incorporate the Project Fit America into some activities and some of these lesson plans are listed on this web site.