

## BIG RAPIDS ELEMENTARY STUDENTS “CATCH” HEALTHIER LIFESTYLES

February 20, 2020- Students from Brookside and Riverview Elementary Schools have partnered with District Health Department #10 (DHD#10) to take part in the Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) program.

CATCH is a comprehensive, national initiative aimed at reining in childhood obesity through healthier lifestyles. The goals of the CATCH program are to:

1. Create an enjoyable and safe environment that teaches, reinforces, recognizes and celebrates healthy behaviors.
2. Create an environment that provides motivation and opportunities for children, faculty and staff to adopt physical activity and healthy eating behaviors daily.
3. Teach children the knowledge and skills that support living a healthy lifestyle and provide opportunities for them to practice every day.

The CATCH program uses language and symbols that resonate with young students. For example: GO foods, SLOW foods and WHOA foods. This simple term—fashioned after green, red and yellow traffic signals—reminds kids that GO foods are nutritious and can be eaten every day, WHOA foods that are highly processed and sugary should be eaten sparingly and SLOW foods fall somewhere in between. These labels are communicated verbally in classrooms as well as written on posters in lunchrooms, cafeterias and hallways.

“CATCH terminology like “GO, SLOW, WHOA” are easy for students to learn, understand and brings clarity to practicing a healthy lifestyle” said Renee Kent, Riverview Elementary Principal.

Brookside and Riverview have also been hosting CATCH events during the school year to include families in healthy eating and physical activity learning, creating a culture of health.

In addition to implementing the CATCH curriculum, both schools are in the process of completing the School Wellness Award (SWA). This award recognizes schools that are making significant policy changes and improvements in their environment related to healthy eating, physical activity, and tobacco-free lifestyles. The SWA is sponsored by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, in partnership with the Michigan Department of Education, United Dairy Industry of Michigan, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, and Action for Healthy Kids. These partners want to honor schools that are working hard to create healthier school environments.

This program is supported by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund through funding awarded to District Health Department #10. The Health Fund works to improve the health and wellness of Michigan residents and reduce the cost of healthcare, with a special focus on children and seniors. You can find more information about the Health Fund at [mihealthfund.org](http://mihealthfund.org).



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**IMAGES BELOW:**



Elementary school students enjoy creating “Grinch on a Stick” a healthy snack out made of fruit during a CATCH activity.

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