



Live Well. Health Matters.

For Immediate Release

**CHILDHOOD OBESITY IN REDONDO BEACH DROPS TO RECORD LOW
THANKS TO HEALTH DISTRICT AND SCHOOL DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP**

LA, Statewide and National Obesity Levels are Three Times Higher than Redondo Beach

Contact: Eric Garner, Beach Cities Health District – eric.garner@bchd.org

REDONDO BEACH, Calif. (May 10, 2018) – In 2006, one out of every five students in Redondo Beach was obese, quite a bit above the national average of 16.8 percent. That year, Beach Cities Health District (BCHD), which focuses on preventive health, partnered with the Redondo Beach Unified School District (RBUSD) to launch LiveWell Kids, a nutrition and physical education program for kindergarten to fifth grade students.

Today, childhood obesity in Redondo Beach – part of Los Angeles County where 22.4 percent of students are obese – has shrunk to a mere 6.4 percent.

“Since the inception of our LiveWell Kids program, childhood obesity in the eight Redondo Beach elementary schools has plummeted,” says Beach Cities Health District Chief Medical Advisor Dr. William Kim, MD. “We know that what surrounds us, shapes us, so we’re making sure students are surrounded by healthy choices and an environment that encourages them to eat better and move more. By reducing obesity these children will be less likely to become hypertensive or diabetic, thereby improving their health and quality of life as adults.”

Recently released school-based “body mass index (BMI)” measurements, which analyze weight vs. height ratios, reveal that approximately 20 percent of children in the U.S. are obese. (See chart for specifics). These kids have a 70-80 percent chance of becoming obese adults and are more likely to suffer from depression and develop diabetes and other chronic conditions later in life.

“We incorporate multiple Live Well Kids programs – ranging from getting exercise by taking ‘the walking school bus’, to planting healthy gardens – that encourage physical fitness and proper diets for our students,” says RBUSD Superintendent Dr. Steven Keller. “Everybody has to see the light and engage, including teachers, parents and school administrators, and then the kids adopt this way of life. They see actual physical benefits from eating fruits and veggies instead of processed foods and sweets.”

BCHD’s LiveWell Kids curriculum is delivered by 400 trained parent-volunteers to Redondo Beach Unified classrooms and school gardens. It blends in-class exercise and nutrition lessons, mindfulness practices and garden education to introduce and enable healthy habits and lifestyles at an early age. Specifics include walk-to-school programs, eight minutes of daily morning exercises and salad bars during school lunch.

Research and clinical practice show that health habits develop very early in life and, once well established, are difficult to change.

“We focus on the whole child, all facets of our student’s mental and physical wellbeing,” said Keller, “which ideally helps them grow up to be healthier adults.”

About Beach Cities Health District

Beach Cities Health District (BCHD) is among the largest preventive health agencies in the nation and has served the communities of Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach since 1955. As a public agency, it offers an extensive range of dynamic health and wellness programs, with innovative services and facilities to promote health and prevent diseases in every lifespan. BCHD operates AdventurePlex, a health and fitness center where kids play their way to good health, and the Center for Health & Fitness, a comprehensive, medically based fitness center. Visit www.bchd.org or call (310) 374-3426 for more information.