

Rome Middle School Teachers Participate in Wellness Walk

Recognizing the need to focus on the health of teachers, Rome Middle School Assistant Principal Dr. Christy Epps developed a three-pronged wellness program for Rome Middle School called Wellness Walk.

The Wellness Walk movement has a specific focus each month that will incorporate an educational component, a monthly step count challenge and an exercise group. Throughout the month of August, Wellness Walk encouraged teachers to think about the impact of stress on their well-being. This month it is focusing on the importance of adequate sleep. Each aspect of Wellness Walk is also sponsored by a local community partner as well.

“The desire for Wellness Walk is to be a leader in teacher health, providing teachers the support and resources they need on their journey to overall wellness. If teachers are healthy, they are stronger in the classroom, and ultimately stronger teachers lead to stronger students,” explained Dr. Epps.

Floyd Medical Center partnered with Rome Middle School to educate participants on how to incorporate exercise in daily living, plan for nutritious snacks and meals and make healthy lifestyle decisions.

Dr. Epps appreciates the help she has received from Floyd Medical Center and Chris Butler, Floyd’s director of Corporate Health, as she continues to strategize ideas to incorporate throughout Wellness Walk. “When I began planning for the Wellness Walk, I knew an educational component was necessary, and Chris Butler and his staff were able to provide the materials needed with ease,” explained Dr. Epps.

“These visually appealing materials are simple, yet highly effective as they focus on key points and offer realistic tips on how teachers can make small changes but experience big gains in their overall health,” said Dr. Epps.

Accompanying the educational aspect is the physical aspect of Wellness Walk, where all Rome Middle School teachers were invited to participate in a monthly step count challenge, sponsored by the Rome Athletic Club. Derek Waugh with BSN Sports is also planning to provide a free pair of shoes to the step challenge winner as well.

“Teachers are encouraged to keep track of all of their steps – in and out of the school building, during the week and on the weekends. At the end of the month, teachers report their steps to RMS School Nurse, Angie Hudson,” said Dr. Epps.

Kristin Hall came out on top for the month of August, as she earned ten free passes to the Rome Athletic Club, as well as a T-shirt.

Dr. Epps explained how a daily routine that incorporates exercise is so important to one’s health.

“Too often individuals have negative thoughts associated with exercise,” said Dr. Epps. “When you find an activity that you enjoy and friends that share this similar interest, exercise becomes fun. For



example, running is my preferred activity, but for others it might be tennis, swimming or basketball. The type of exercise doesn't matter... what matters is that an individual is moving and having fun!" said Dr. Epps.

Jay Stephenson of GoGo Running shared his tips for teachers just beginning their exercise routine.

"I try to encourage teachers to make exercise a part of their daily routine while realizing that everyone – no matter the level of fitness – has challenging days," Stephenson said. "What is most important is that a person persevere and be a cheerleader for him/herself."

With these strong partners throughout the community such as Floyd Medical Center, Rome Athletic Club, BSN Sports and GoGo Running, Dr. Epps' initiative in Wellness Walk has a strong future that will help to get teachers active while keeping them healthy to better themselves and the students at Rome City Schools.