



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Sept. 18, 2012

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Healthy Futures and DHSS to continue successful partnership

Agencies work together to challenge children to be physically active; Kikkan Randall hosts assemblies

ANCHORAGE — Thousands of children in Alaska schools will have the chance to challenge themselves to be physically active and win prizes along the way due to a continuing partnership between Healthy Futures and the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services.

In September, DHSS signed a new contract to continue working with Healthy Futures to support the department's Play Every Day campaign and organize physical activity challenges in Alaska schools teaching elementary-age children for the next three years.

Kikkan Randall, Olympic skier and Healthy Futures supporter, will kick off the fall challenge at a special assembly at 2 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 20, at Kincaid Elementary in Anchorage. She will attend assemblies later this fall at Chugach Optional Elementary, Homestead Elementary, and Kasuun Elementary. To find out if your child's school is participating in the challenge, visit playeveryday.alaska.gov or <http://healthyfuturesak.org>.

The department began its partnership with Healthy Futures in 2011 and saw participation rise significantly in the Alaska-based organization's challenges — from 36 Alaska schools and 1,342 individual students in spring 2011 to 110 schools and almost 7,000 students in spring 2012.

“We know that three out of 10 children in Alaska are overweight or obese. One of our department's goals this year is to promote the health of Alaska children, and that includes helping them maintain a healthy weight,” said Dr. Ward Hurlburt, Alaska's chief medical officer. “Being physically active as a family helps children build in more time for daily activity, which promotes healthy weights. It also provides a fun way for families to spend more time together.”

This year, Healthy Futures will organize two three-month challenges in schools — one in fall and one in spring. To participate each month, children must complete at least 30 minutes of activity three days a week for four weeks. The children win prizes that encourage them to be active.

Healthy Futures supports many events in Alaska communities that encourage families to be active together, often at low or no cost. A schedule for Anchorage events is below.

Bonny Sosa Tuesday Night Races for Fall 2012

Come run for fun at the annual Tuesday Night Race series in Anchorage. Children of all ages, and adults, can run through the woods on courses that range from about 1 to 2 miles long for the youngest racers to longer courses for recreational and competitive runners. Families can pre-register at <http://www.active.com/10k-race/anchorage-ak/bonny-sosa-tuesday-night-race-series-2012>. No registration will be allowed at the event location the day of the race.

- **Sept. 18** — Service High School
- **Sept. 25** — Kincaid Park
- **Oct. 2** — Kincaid Park
- **Oct. 9** — East High School
- **Oct. 16** — Bartlett High School
- **Oct. 23** — Service High School
- **Oct. 30** — Kincaid Park Costume Run
- **Nov. 6** — Kincaid Outdoor Center – Awards celebration potluck

Cross Country Jamborees for September 2012

Children in kindergarten through second grade run one-half mile, and children in third through sixth grade run one mile. Children must pre-register, which can be done at their schools. On-site registration will be available at each Jamboree. Parents must sign the registration and waiver form. Kids from South Anchorage schools have already run in one Jamboree, but three more Jamborees remain in September. To find out which Jamboree your child's school is participating in and race times for those events, visit www.healthyfuturesak.org.

- **Beach Lake Trails Cross Country Jamboree**
Thursday, Sept. 20, 2012, Chugiak High School soccer field and trails
- **North Anchorage Area Cross Country Jamboree**
Friday, Sept. 21, 2012, Bartlett High School soccer field and trails
- **Second North Anchorage Area Cross Country Jamboree**
Saturday, Sept. 22, 2012, Bartlett High School soccer field and trails

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