

William J. Streur
Commissioner
P.O. Box 110601
Juneau, AK 99811-0601
www.hss.state.ak.us



Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 4, 2013

Contact: Dawnell Smith, 907-269-4541, Cell 907-903-9940, dawnell.smith@alaska.gov
Gregory Wilkinson, 907-269-7285, Cell 907-382-7032, gregory.wilkinson@alaska.gov

Healthy Futures, DHSS expect record participation in activity challenge

Kikkan Randall to host elementary school assemblies promoting physical activity

ANCHORAGE — The Healthy Futures Challenge to encourage physical activity in youth will start Sept. 8 with a record number of schools participating across Alaska. The Challenge invites thousands of children in 145 Alaska schools to get physically active and win prizes along the way.

The Department of Health and Social Services Obesity Prevention and Control program and Healthy Futures are collaborating in the department's Play Every Day campaign and the effort to organize physical activity challenges for Alaska elementary school students. The Play Every Day campaign encourages Alaska families and children to be physically active every day to maintain a healthy weight and sustain good health.

"Completing the Healthy Futures Challenge gets Alaska children closer to the national recommendation of 60 minutes of physical activity each day for good health," said Karol Fink, program manager for the DHSS Obesity Prevention and Control Program. "In Alaska, three out of 10 children are overweight or obese. Children who get out and play every day have a better chance of staying at a healthy weight, feeling good, and doing well in school."

Alaska Olympic skier Kikkan Randall continues her involvement with Healthy Futures this fall. She is featured in two television public service announcements and a radio announcement to promote the Healthy Futures Challenge. The TV PSAs are posted at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udgwW7BjsJs> and <http://www.liveunitedanchorage.org/ViewPage.aspx?Id=1cdafd58-de32-4ca8-9460-65a1650bbd2a>

Randall will kick off the challenge at four special assemblies in Anchorage elementary schools. (These assemblies are not open to the public, but people from the press are welcome.):

- Abbott Loop Elementary, 2 p.m., Sept. 5
- Williwaw Elementary, 2 p.m., Sept. 12
- Bowman Elementary, 2 p.m., Sept. 24
- Muldoon Elementary, 2 p.m., Sept. 25

The Healthy Futures Challenge includes three-month-long challenges at elementary schools in the fall and the spring. Children participate by keeping a log of their physical activity and doing at least 30 minutes outside of gym class three days a week for four weeks. Participants win prizes each month, with larger prize drawings held at the end of each challenge. A list of participating schools can be found at playeveryday.alaska.gov or healthyfuturesak.org.

The department began its partnership with Healthy Futures in 2011. Since then, challenge participation has jumped from 36 schools in spring 2011 to a record 145 schools in 30 Alaska school districts this fall. During spring 2013, almost 10,500 Alaska children completed the challenge.

Healthy Futures also partners with the United Way of Anchorage, Providence Health & Services Alaska, ConocoPhillips, the Alaska Kidney Foundation and other organizations in encouraging Alaska children to build the daily habit of physical activity.

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

Bonny Sosa Tuesday Night Races for Fall 2013

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 one to two miles long for the youngest racers to longer courses for recreational and competitive runners. For more information about the races and registration, visit

<http://www.muni.org/departments/parks/pages/tuesdaynightraces.aspx>

or the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Facebook page,

<https://www.facebook.com/AnchorageParks?ref=hl>. Races start at 6:30 p.m. on the following dates.

The locations may be subject to change:

Sept. 10 — Kincaid Park

Sept. 17 — Kincaid Park

Sept. 24 — Kincaid Park

Oct. 1 — Albrecht Fields

Oct. 8 — East High School

Oct. 15 — Service High School

Oct. 22 — Service High School

Oct. 29 — Kincaid Park Costume Run

Nov. 5 — Kincaid Outdoor Center, Awards celebration potluck

Cross Country Running Jamborees for September 2013

Children in kindergarten through second grade run one-half mile, and children in third through sixth grade run one mile. Participation is free, but children must 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. To find out more information and race times for these events, visit the Healthy Futures calendar at <http://www.healthyfuturesak.org/calendar.html>.

Beach Lake Trails Cross Country Running Jamboree

Thursday, Sept. 19, 2013, Chugiak High School soccer field and trails

North Anchorage Area Cross Country Running Jamboree

Friday, Sept. 20, 2013, East High School soccer field and trails

South Anchorage Area Cross Country Running Jamboree

Saturday, Sept. 28, 2013, Service High School soccer field and trails

###