



DIOCESE OF DES MOINES

PRESSRELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: May 24, 2011

Contact: Darcie Tallman, Marketing Specialist: 515-237-5088, 515-441-6329 (cell)
Dr. Nancy O'Neill Dowdle, St. Augustin Principal: 515-279-5947

St. Augustin School meets the HealthierUS School Challenge

St. Augustin School in Des Moines and its food lunch program is making national news by receiving the HealthierUS School Challenge award. USDA's Katrina Klatt, USDA Mountain Plains Region Representative, along with several representatives from the Iowa Department of Education will visit the school on Thursday, May 26 at 1:00 p.m. to present the official award. St. Augustin will also be receiving an award from the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Nutrition.

As part of St. Augustin's effort, healthy items are featured on their menus and education and physical activity are emphasized. St. Augustin School went above and beyond the minimum requirements to qualify for the Silver Award.

Pam Moore, Food Service Director at St. Augustine School, says educating students and getting them excited about eating healthy all while providing nutritious food in a creative way is a passion of hers.

Moore worked with students on how to read food labels. Moore explained that with the Healthy Kids Act, there are new guidelines for the a-la-cart food items with less fat, sodium and sugar. She met with the students and using a Smart Board, showed the students how to read food labels and use a food calculator. Using the calculator tool, they entered the nutrition information for their previous a-la-cart items to see if they were healthy options. If the items did not meet the

guidelines, the students picked healthier options to be featured on the a-la-cart line. In addition, it allowed students to use the calculator at home when they pack their lunches.

The school cafeteria is decorated with colorful posters and plates that are made into planes hang from the ceiling to go along with the motto, “Flying High.” Moore has a section of the cafeteria that features a bistro table. Each day, students can participate in a trivia game about food nutrition. The students who win get to sit at the table the next day for lunch and be served restaurant style. Moore and school Chef Joy Liebfried also prepare new foods and prepare them in a fun way for students. For example, Moore made a race car out of a cucumber and used a zucchini for its wheels. This school year, they provided students with a different variety of apple each month for students to taste and learn about its origin.

“Parents are thrilled when their children come home and teach them what they have learned about reading food labels,” says Moore. “The HealthierUS School Challenge award is recognition for the whole school for all of the healthy foods, nutrition education, health activities, and physical education provided to students at St. Augustin.”

The HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) is a voluntary national certification initiative for schools participating in the National School Lunch Program. It supports First Lady Michelle Obama’s Let’s Move campaign by recognizing schools that are creating healthier school environments through their promotion of good nutrition and physical activity. Sponsored by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), the initiative encourages all schools take a leadership role in helping students to make healthier eating and physical activity choices that will last a lifetime. Schools, such as St. Augustin School, that champion the HUSSC work hard to make changes to their school nutrition environment in order to (1) improve the quality of the foods served, (2) provide students with nutrition education, and (3) provide students with physical education and opportunities for physical activity.

“I applaud Pam and the entire food service staff here at St. Augustin. They work hard to assure our students are provided with nutritious food and education that will benefit the rest of their lives,” said Principal Dr. Nancy O’Neill Dowdle.

Ultimately, FNS would like to see all schools receive a HUSSC award at any one of the four levels of superior performance: Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Gold Award of Distinction. Schools awarded receive a monetary incentive (Bronze \$500, Silver \$1000, Gold \$1500, and

Gold Award of Distinction \$2000), an award plaque signed by a USDA official, a banner to display in their school, and their name listed on the Team Nutrition Web site.

To qualify for the award, St. Augustin submitted a formal application and met criteria set forth by the FNS. The HUSSC criteria reflect the recommendations of the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) published recommendations (April 2007) for foods that should be served in schools, outside of the organized school lunch meals. HealthierUS Schools must also have a local school wellness policy, as mandated by Congress. Schools receiving a HUSSC award commit to meeting the criteria throughout their four year certification period.

###

*The Diocese of Des Moines Catholic schools serve more than 6,400 students through its 17 schools.
For more information, go to www.dmdiocese.org and click on "Catholic Schools".*