



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE MIKE HEIN



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COUNTY EXECUTIVE TO JOIN DR. DEBRA KARNASIEWICZ AT NEW PALTZ MIDDLE SCHOOL TO COMMENCE THE “HEALTHY STEPS TO ALBANY” FITNESS CHALLENGE

Kingston, NY - County Executive Mike Hein will be joining Dr. Debra Karnasiewicz, his Special Advisor for Healthy Ulster County and Director of the Women’s Health and Fitness Foundation, Justin Ihne, Associate Executive Director of the YMCA of Kingston and Ulster County and the students, faculty and staff, of New Paltz Middle School, at the New Paltz Middle School, this Wednesday, April 21st at 7:30 AM, to commence the “Healthy Steps to Albany” School’s Challenge. Highlights of the morning’s event will include group exercise activities, such as Zumba, Hula Hooping and Hip Hop.

The “Healthy Steps to Albany” School’s Challenge is a 6-week, health and wellness competition, created by First Lady of New York Michelle Paige Paterson to combat the epidemic of childhood obesity in New York. The obesity rate is more than three times higher among children ages twelve to nineteen than it was a generation ago.

All totaled, there are over 1600 students, from 4 schools, enrolled in the Health Steps competition in Ulster County. Participating schools include Bailey Middle School, in Kingston; BOCES in Port Ewen; Miller Middle School, in Kingston and New Paltz Middle School.

“I would like to recognize Dr. Karnasiewicz for her extraordinary effort in bringing the Healthy Steps program together in Ulster County. I would also like to thank all of the school administrators, staff, faculty and students who agreed to participate. My administration

shares a goal with the Women's Health and Fitness Foundation to have Ulster County become the healthiest county in all of New York State and it begins with educating and involving our young people. This program is a great way to get them motivated," said County Executive Hein.

In developing this fitness challenge, the First Lady created a program that is fun for kids, easy for teachers and inexpensive to carry out. During the "Healthy Steps" challenges, teams from classes throughout Ulster County and New York State will collectively earn steps for the amount of exercise they can get and healthy foods they eat. Each week the students fill out an activity log and keep track of the minutes of the exercise they get each day and convert in into steps using an on-line tool. At the end of the 6-week competition, the 6th, 7th and 8th grade teams that record the most steps will become winners of the challenge. Ulster County awards will be conferred at the Women's Health and Fitness Expo, to be held on Saturday, May 1, at Tech City, in Kingston.

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