

JUNIOR OFFICER ADVISORY GROUP (JOAG)
Public Health and Community Service Committee
UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE



Date: April 22, 2013

To: Office of the Surgeon General

Through: JOAG Executive Committee

From: LCDR Mitchel Holliday
Chair, Public Health and Community Service Committee

SUBJECT: Proposal for *Let's Move!* Standing Project: MyPlate Relay Race --
ACTION

Purpose/Rationale:

The purpose of the MyPlate Relay Race is to create an educational, physical activity for children that is implemented by officers and supports the objectives of the *Let's Move!* campaign. Through use of a brief teaching session along with a fun game format, children will learn about and/or reinforce their knowledge of the MyPlate food guide and its suggested intake of certain foods and food groups.

This initiative will promote health and wellness in communities by providing officers with a tool that gives parents, caretakers, and children helpful information to foster environments that support healthy choices.

Background:

Since 1980, obesity rates have more than tripled in children. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, obese children are more likely to have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, increased risk of type 2 diabetes, and breathing problems. Obese children are also at a greater risk for developing social and psychological problems, such as discrimination and poor self-esteem.

To combat these surging rates of obesity among children, First Lady Michelle Obama, with the support of Surgeon General, VADM Regina Benjamin, has launched the *Let's Move!* Campaign. *Let's Move!* is a comprehensive initiative dedicated to solving the problem of obesity within a generation, so that children born today will grow up healthier.

“MyPlate” is the current recommended food nutrition guide created by the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, under the U.S. Department of Agriculture. MyPlate was launched in 2011, replacing the “Food Pyramid.” It serves as a simple, conceptual tool

that Americans can use to visualize the relative amounts of each food group they should consume on their plates daily.

Examples of MyPlate relay activities that have been used to teach children under the age of 12 can be found at the following sites:

- <http://norwalk.dailyvoice.com/events/kids-family/286674/my-plate-relay-ages-5-12>
- <http://www.eatlearnlive.com/TeacherResources/downloads/MyPlate%20Lesson%20and%20Relay%20for%20NNM%20Promo%20March%202012.pdf>
- http://www.ousd.k12.ca.us/cms/lib07/CA01001176/Centricity/Domain/117/My_Plate_Relay_Game_2-5.pdf

Goals:

The objective of this initiative is to encourage and support Commissioned Corps officers in actively promoting health and wellness within their communities by leading activities that accomplish one or more of the following *Let's Move!* Campaign objectives:

1. Creating a healthy start for children
2. Empowering parents and caregivers
3. Providing healthy food in schools
4. Improving access to healthy affordable foods
5. Increasing physical activity and encouraging healthy eating choices

For the activity itself, the goal is to provide verbal instruction followed by active modeling that will reinforce the need for a balanced diet and appropriate food choices.

JOAG Involvement:

The Public Health and Community Service Committee (PHCS), Officer Health and Wellness Promotion Subcommittee's (OHWPS) goal is to act as a liaison in helping volunteers to administer health and wellness programming to their communities across the nation. Therefore OHWPS created this proposal for a *Let's Move!* standing project for officers to implement in their own communities. Participation in an OHWPS *Let's Move!* project is open to all Commissioned Corps officers, provided that a JOAG member serves as the Project Lead. As with other types of community service projects, officers will volunteer to implement this activity at a local school, daycare, after-school program, church, or other appropriate venue, under the guidance of the PHCS & OHWPS. OHWPS will also promote the availability of this service opportunity to JOAG members.

Operation:

The MyPlate Relay is a lesson that can be implemented in many different locations, including a school gym, cafeteria, hallway, large room, or playground. The activity is usually designed for children ages 5-12 (or grades K-5) and aims to teach kids about the MyPlate guide and healthy eating. It also models and promotes physical activity.

The activity will begin with the officers having a short lesson about the MyPlate diagram and its components. Officers will discuss healthy eating tips and how to categorize different foods according to MyPlate guidelines. After the lesson, the officers will facilitate the relay race portion of the activity to reinforce what was taught during the discussion. Finally, officers will summarize the main points of MyPlate again after the relay race. Volunteers should encourage active participation from the children. The lesson and activity should last no longer than 30-40 minutes.

Officers are responsible for ensuring the activity is safe at all times, particularly anticipating and addressing potential slip or fall hazards in the relay race area. Officers are expected to use good judgment when implementing this activity.

MyPlate Lesson

Officers should discuss the MyPlate food guide in detail, using educational resources from www.choosemyplate.gov that are described in Appendix A. Officers are encouraged to print out and utilize visual aids to facilitate their discussion and to elicit the children's participation of the children. Officers may also provide the presentation using audio-visual equipment, though they are responsible for arranging equipment access at the chosen site. The lesson portion of the event should last no longer than 10 minutes, due to the short attention span of children.

The MyPlate food guide illustrates the five food groups that are the building blocks for a healthy diet by using a familiar image - a place setting for a meal. MyPlate identifies the following food groups: Fruits, Grains, Vegetables, Proteins, and Dairy. During the lesson, officers should focus on communicating MyPlate's key dietary messages as well as describing "what foods belong in each food group," "how much of each group is needed daily," and "what are the health benefits of eating foods in each group?" (see Appendix A).

Relay Race

Before the race begins, officers will thoroughly explain the rules and purpose of the relay race to the children, and they will ensure understanding by having the kids verbalize the instructions on their own. Officers will monitor and direct the activity at all times to ensure safety. Officers should repeat instructions and teaching points, as necessary, during the race.

1. Divide the total number of children participants into two or more groups (depending on the number of children involved). Ensure at least one officer is assigned to monitor and instruct each group of children.
2. Create (e.g. with string, paper, or chalk) or designate a start line. At the start line, place a basket (one for each designated group of children). In the basket should be either pictures or toys of different foods or food groups. No real food should be used. Ensure that a wide variety of foods are represented, but especially foods highlighted in the MyPlate guidelines.
3. At some distance away from the start line (e.g. 20-50 feet), place a large, poster-sized drawing of the MyPlate diagram with its designated food groups.

One MyPlate diagram should be made for each children's group. If the activity is being conducted outside, especially if wind is a concern, consider creating the MyPlate food group sections out of additional baskets, buckets, or bins.

4. Have the children choose someone in their group to start the race, then have the rest of the children line up behind the starter. When "Go!" is announced, each child should take turns pulling a food example out of the basket and running to place it on the correct section of the MyPlate poster (or in the correct MyPlate section basket). An adult volunteer should be standing at the MyPlate diagram to provide verbal coaching and ensure the child has placed the food in the correct section. Once one child has returned to the start line, the next child may go. This continues until all the foods in the group's basket have been placed in the correct section. The first team to put all their foods in the right section is the winner.
5. Have the children run the relay race 1-3 more times, as time permits. Officers can vary each race by: changing the foods in each group's basket; rather than running to the MyPlate diagram, having the children skip, hop, or walk backwards; having each child state their favorite food and indicate the correct MyPlate section that it would belong to.
6. Once all the runnings of the relay are done, officers should gather the children together again and briefly reiterate the main lesson points.

Resources:

There is a two officer minimum with no maximum number of officers to facilitate this activity. A volunteer to child ratio of 1:10 or smaller is preferable, though the Project Lead should defer to the event site's point of contact. The total event time should take no more than one hour (30-40 minutes of lesson/activity time and 20-30 minutes set-up/clean-up time). Officers are expected to bring age-appropriate visual aids of MyPlate for the lesson portion and for children to take home. For the relay, officers are expected to procure pictures or models of different types of food, baskets, buckets, chalk, string, posters, etc. Officers may purchase these items; however, they are encouraged to use already available and re-usable resources at the site. Officers may offer prizes to the children who win the relay race but must provide those prizes at their own expense. Prizes should be health or exercise-related in nature (e.g. jump rope, ball, etc.) but should never be food. JOAG will not provide any monetary funds for implementation of this activity.

MyPlate display posters are available free from USDA's Team Nutrition Website: <http://tn.ntis.gov/> (limit 2 per order). Alternatively you can draw your own diagrams/posters for the activity.

Additional Information:

1. Point of Contact(s):

Let's Move! Project Information

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LCDR Kelly Ngan
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MyPlate Relay Race USPHS Project Lead

To be determined when an officer volunteers to implement standing project in their community.

MyPlate Relay Race Site Point of Contact

To be determined by the chosen Project Lead for the event

- 2. Financial Costs:** Depending on the need to acquire new materials, it is estimated that this activity could lead to expenses between \$20 and \$50. JOAG does not provide funding for this activity. Officers are strongly encouraged to utilize any and all resources provided by the hosting site.
- 3. Consent Forms:** Consent forms may or may not be required by the site. If required, the hosting school or local organization will be responsible for providing the forms to the Project Lead to distribute to officer volunteers and to the children.
- 4. Project Location:** Local school, daycare, church or other organization of choice
- 5. Uniform of the Day:** Navy PHS t-shirt with civilian pants or shorts
- 6. Special Skills:** All participating officers should be familiar with MyPlate concepts and the relay race instructions. All participating officers must also be BLS-certified.

RECOMMENDATION

JOAG be approved to participate in the *Let's Move!* Project: The MyPlate Relay Race.

-signed-

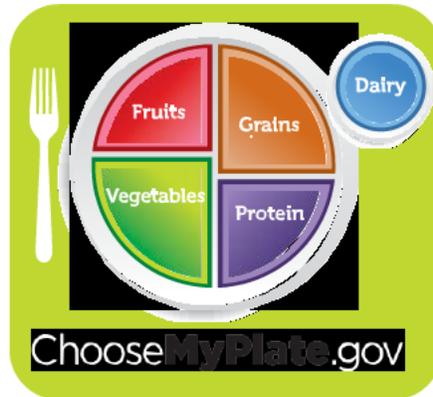
LCDR Mitchel Holliday
Chair, JOAG Public Health and
Community Service Committee

DECISION

Approved Disapproved Date: 09 July 2013

JOAG Executive Committee

APPENDIX A – MyPlate Educational Points



The official US Department of Agriculture MyPlate website is <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>. The site contains a wealth of information and available printable resources, including the following handouts that are in the public domain and can be freely distributed.

Example resources:

1. MyPlate Coloring Sheet (pre-populated and blank)
2. MyPlate Mini-Poster
3. Dietary Guidelines Consumer Brochures
4. Selected Messages for Consumers
5. MyPlate Graphic Resources
6. Children’s Whole Grain Lesson
7. 10 Tips Nutrition Education Series
 - a. Choose MyPlate
 - b. Build a Healthy Meal
 - c. Kid-Friendly Veggies & Fruits (great handout to have kids take home to their parents!)
 - d. MyPlate Snack Tips for Parents (great handout to have kids take home to their parents!)
 - e. Healthy Eating for an Active Lifestyle

Reference: Choose My Plate. (2013). Printable Materials & Ordering. Retrieved April 4, 2013 from <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/print-materials-ordering.html>

The US Department of Agriculture has created a “Team Nutrition” that is “an integrated, behavior based, comprehensive plan for promoting the nutritional health of the Nation's children. Team Nutrition's goal is to improve children's lifelong eating and physical activity habits by using the principles of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPlate.”

Example resources:

1. Teacher's Guide—Level 1
2. Teacher's Guide—Level 2
3. Teacher's Guide—Level 3
4. Eat Smart to Play Hard Poster

Reference: Team Nutrition. January 2013. Serving Up a Yummy Curriculum. Retrieved April 4, 2013 from <http://teamnnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/servingupmyplate.htm>

Key MyPlate Messages

(derived from resource materials described above)

- MyPlate identifies the following food groups: Fruits, Grains, Vegetables, Proteins, and Dairy
- What foods belong in each food group? Examples:
 - Fruits: oranges, pears, berries, watermelon, peaches, raisins, and applesauce.
 - Vegetables: Broccoli, lettuce, squash, pumpkin, tomatoes, potatoes, corn, asparagus, peppers, eggplant, corn, peas, carrots, beans, sweet potatoes.
 - Grains: Bread, toast, bagels, oatmeal, pasta, rice, tortillas, popcorn, cereal, crackers.
 - Protein: Peanut butter, nuts, beans, fish, chicken, pork, hummus, seafood, tofu, lentils, tuna fish, beef.
 - Dairy: Milk, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese.
 - “Sometimes Foods” (foods with added sugars, added salt, and added fats): pizza, sausage, bacon, hot dogs, cookies, cakes, ice cream, soda, and candy
- How much of each group is needed daily?*
- Make half of your plate each day fruits and veggies.
- Make at least half of your grains whole grains.
- Make your protein sources “small and lean.” A little protein goes a long way!
- Avoid over-sized portions. Remember the plate image!
- What are the health benefits of eating foods in each group?
 - Fruits & Vegetables: Have natural sugars to satisfy your sweet tooth! Full of fiber that helps you feel full. Full of vitamins to keep you healthy.
 - Grains: Full of fiber that helps you feel full. Have important vitamins to grow up healthy. Gives you quick energy for lots of play!
 - Protein: Helps you build and repair muscles, which makes you stronger.
 - Dairy: Gives you calcium to make your teeth and bones strong!
- Other tips
 - Fruits: Juice should be 100% from fruit, not concentrate. Fruits that are dried, fresh, frozen, or canned (as long as canned with no added sugar) all count. Use fruit as your snack and dessert. Add them to your cereal, yogurt, and salads.
 - Veggies: The more colorful the better (especially dark green and bright reds, oranges, and yellows!). Veggies that are fresh, canned, or frozen all count.
 - Grains: Choose whole-grain over “bleached grain” (anything with white flour or refined flour).

- Protein: Vary your protein sources each week. Try to eat protein with “≤2 legs” (e.g. beans, fish, chicken, tofu) as opposed to protein with “4 legs!” (e.g. pork, beef, lamb). If choose beef or pork, choose “lean” cuts.
- Dairy: Make it low-fat dairy! Switch to skim or 1% milk.
- “Sometimes Foods”: eat these occasionally rather than making them “everyday foods.” Choose water, 100% fruit juice, or milk over sugary drinks.

**Note: When teaching children, who often do not choose how much food they are served, would not advise that officers spend much time on portion sizes or how many servings of each group is recommended. Focus on what foods should be chosen over others and why.*