



# PATH VOICE

A wellness newsletter promoting healthy, happy lives for Vermont educators

"The concept of total wellness recognizes that our every thought, word, and behavior affects our greater health and well-being. And we, in turn, are affected not only emotionally but also physically and spiritually."

Greg Anderson - Author:  
"The 22 Non-Negotiable  
Laws of Wellness"

## What's Happening...

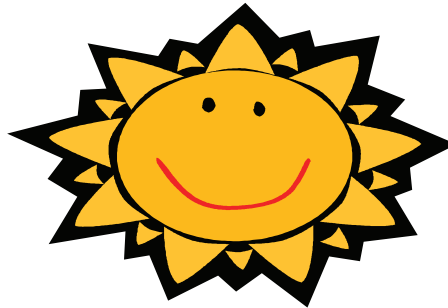
**PATH 2008  
Calendar  
Photo Contest**  
Ending date for  
submissions  
**August 27, 2007**  
(details on page 4)

## Did You Know?

Eating breakfast can raise metabolism by as much as 10% and it can give you a jumpstart with energy you need to perform at your best during a demanding school day.

## Two New Voices Join the PATH Squad!

For ten years Gillian Pieper and Amy Gilbert have been two lone rangers responding to your wellness needs. With the introduction of more new tools designed to assist faculty, staff and their families in increasing the quality of their lives, assistance was needed! Mimi Benedict, RN, MPH, joined the ranks at the Vermont Education Health Initiative (VEHI) on October 1, 2006, moving from the Vermont Department of Health as previous Director of Coordinated School Health (CSH).



A definite connection exists between the worlds of VEHI and CSH – each promotes healthy school environments with collective and individual responsibility for making healthy choices. Mimi is thrilled to be onboard with the VEHI mission, assisting school faculty and staff develop both healthy life styles and work environments where all can thrive. Along with Mimi comes this new bi-monthly newsletter -- the PATH VOICE -- geared toward wellness for all Vermont K-12 faculty and staff.

## Making Healthy Choices Just Got Easier! Introducing PATHpoints...

This summer over 3000 individuals will be keeping a watchful eye on their mailboxes to see when their checks will arrive from the Vermont Education Health Initiative's (VEHI) new PATHpoints program (expect your check by August 6th). In it's first year of a two year pilot, PATHpoints has offered faculty and staff from thirteen Vermont supervisory unions the opportunity to earn points -- which translate into dollars -- for engaging in specific health initiatives. A hefty 51% of those who are eligible participated during the 2006/2007 school year. And, the good news is that if you're one of the 49% who did not participate, you can still enroll this September for year two of the pilot! So, you too can earn up to \$150 for your wellness efforts.

In the making for ten years, the PATHpoints program brings you, as VEHI participating members, a multitude of tools to assist you in making everyday healthy choices and decisions. The menu of services and resources -- research-based and confidential -- offers tools to meet the needs of every participant.

By taking the Healthy Life Survey (HLS) individuals are offered on the spot, personalized recommendations and support.

For those participants who have two or more behavioral risk factors identified on their Healthy Life Survey, Harris Health Trends – a nationally and internationally recognized team of life style behavioral professionals -- offers individualized telephonic lifestyle coaching. Blue Health Solutions, on the other hand, offers disease management coaching to all VEHI health plan beneficiaries with a chronic disease. Both coaching components have been shown to successfully assist people in changing their lives for the better.

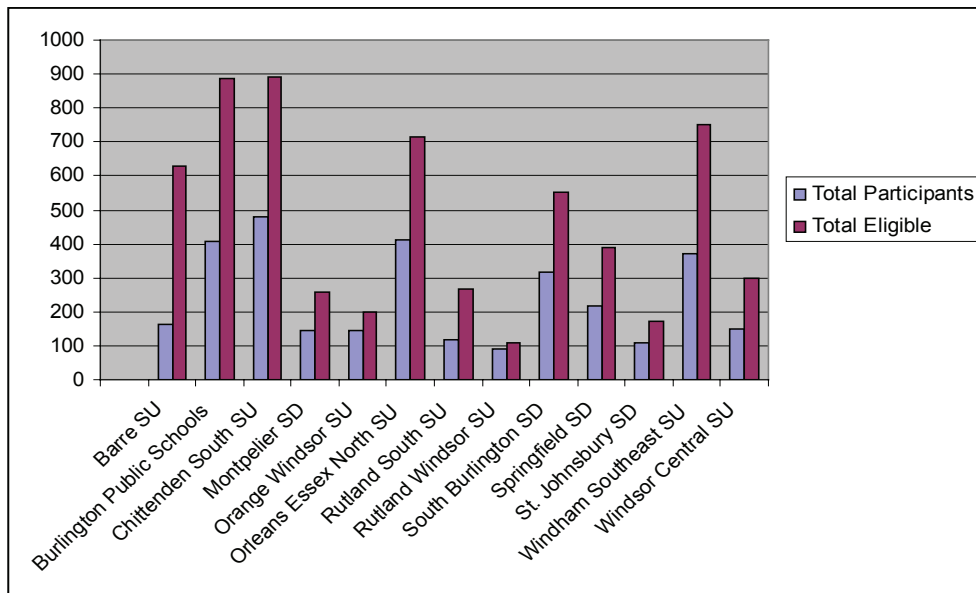
Also available is easy access to a local Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for all PATHPoints participants, as well as to anyone in their household. Topics that can be addressed with EAP counselors include, but are not limited to: health issues, work related problems, financial or legal questions, mental health issues, and drug and alcohol counseling.

*PATHpoints continued on page 2*

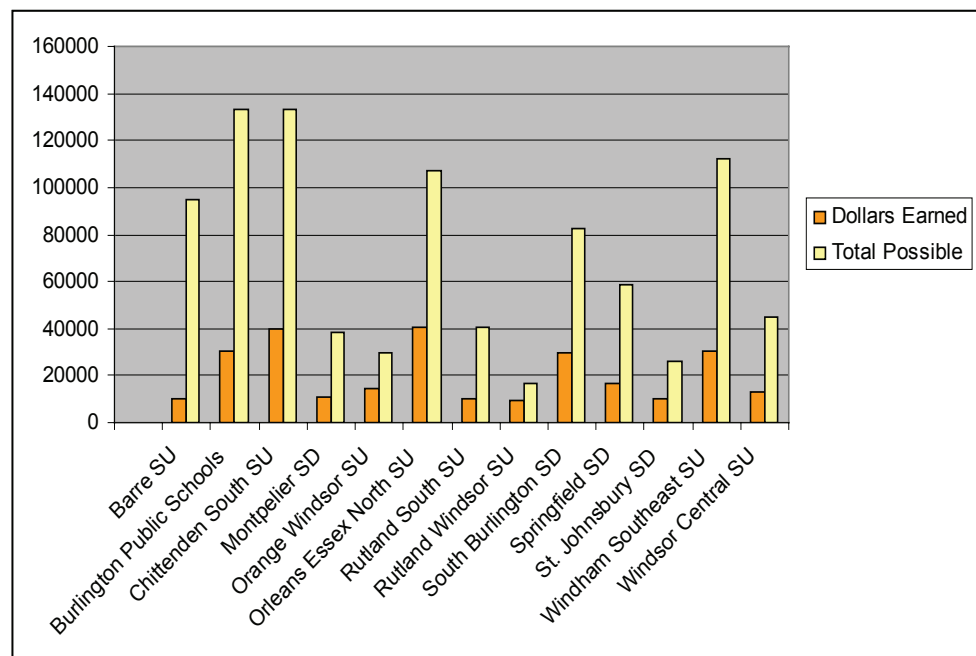
Should you need a little extra incentive to make changes in a particular behavior, PATH Peer Coaches is a guided program to encourage and motivate you toward your goals with the help of a colleague or friend.

For every component of PATHpoints, points are awarded (hence its name), and those points translate into dollars – one point equals one dollar in your pocket. And, if that isn't incentive enough for individuals to participate in making healthy lifestyle choices, every point earned by a staff or faculty member through PATHpoints services or resources is money also in the pocket of the supervisory union to spend on district-wide wellness initiatives. So, for every 100 folks earning \$100 that's a nice tidy \$10,000 to your supervisory union to make healthy life changes in your school environment. PATHpoints participants have already earned over \$500,000 for their supervisory unions this year. That's a staggering amount of revenue that will be put to good use while highlighting the wellness taking place right here in Vermont schools. If you haven't already enrolled how about a commitment to open your own wellness account this fall at [tomypath.com](http://tomypath.com). Join the 51% of current PATHpoints participants as they assist their schools while promoting their own good health!

**Number of people eligible to participate in PATHpoints vs. number of actual participants in each supervisory union/school district**



**Actual dollars earned by PATHpoint participants vs. possible dollars earned in each supervisory union/school district**



# Wellness Policies in Vermont Schools

**D**id you know that the Reauthorization Act of 2004 required every school with a federal free and reduced school lunch program to have a wellness policy in place by the beginning of the 2006/2007 school year? Yes, it's true! What does this mean for you and your school? It could mean a healthier school environment, where healthy snacks and meals are the name of the game instead of pizza parties or "Sundae Monday". It could mean that the sale of candy bars is no longer the norm for raising money for class trips. Perhaps it could mean that everyone starts speaking the same healthy language – for example, recognizing the importance of taking short physical activity breaks in the middle of a lesson to get energized and become more focused on the task at hand. It could mean that kids and adults work together to create an atmosphere where it's easy to choose healthy behaviors. Ask who wrote the policy in your school district, and see what you can do to promote it in your classrooms and in your own life.

For more information call 802-223-5040 or email [Mimi@vsbit.org](mailto:Mimi@vsbit.org).



## Highlights from the Field

Have the faculty and staff in your school done something exceptional to promote their own health and well-being? Have you worked to create the infrastructure that builds a healthy school culture for all? If so, we want to hear about it. Please share your story in the **PATH Voice** for others to learn from. Send your story to [Mimi@vsbit.org](mailto:Mimi@vsbit.org).

## Why Coordinate School Health?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has promoted the Coordinated School Health (CSH) approach as far back as the 1980's. Vermont has been in the forefront in bringing this systemic change to public schools for over twenty years. It's a simple concept – coordinate all school health initiatives within a school, district or supervisory union – but, it's not always easy to institute. The CSH approach means pulling together a school health team which takes time, commitment and coordination. But, the results of this sometimes challenging and ongoing work can make the effort worth more in positive outcomes than could possibly be imagined!

Coordinated School Health is an approach that promises a safe and healthy school environment, healthier food, opportunities for students and staff alike to be physically active, delivery of coordinated health services and health education to all. Sounds great, you think, but how can it possibly happen with everything else that is on the plate for faculty and staff?

By bringing together faculty, staff and students who are interested in health outcomes, and introducing this CSH holistic approach, each issue can find agreeable solutions, and the enthusiasm and motivation to implement them. Change happens more quickly when the brain-power of many is at work.

And, finally, why does this matter to each of you? A healthier environment makes it easier for you to make and keep making healthy choices for yourself every day. A healthy member of the faculty and staff not only enjoys the benefits of feeling great, looking forward to each work day, and being more productive, but also serves as a role model to every student and colleague that crosses his or her path. It is much easier to promote a healthy lifestyle if the environment and school culture also promote it. And, the great news is, you can be a champion and part of the solution in your school.

So, be the change you want to see, starting with your role as a healthy role model, making visible healthy choices every day in your work setting.

For more information on how to start a school health team, call 802-223-5040 or e-mail [Mimi@vsbit.org](mailto:Mimi@vsbit.org).

*They say that time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.*

ANDY WARHOL

## Do you know your numbers?



Chances are you've been told these number at one time or another – blood pressure and cholesterol, HDL and maybe blood sugar. What do all those numbers mean and why should you care? Research shows that if people know their numbers and understand what they mean, and if their numbers are out of sync

with the normal range, individuals are more likely to make changes in their own behaviors that bring those numbers closer to the healthy zone.

According to our Healthy Life Survey aggregate data for the 2006/2007 school year, 66% of school employees don't know one or more of their numbers. We want to give you the incentive to find out and remember what those numbers are and what they mean to you. So, in the 2007/2008 school year we will give you **25 wild card points** just to visit your primary health care provider and find out your important numbers. Simple as that! Make an appointment today and watch for more information on being awarded your wild card points in September!

## We're looking for your great photo...

Enter your favorite digital photo of Vermont for a chance to have it appear in our 2008 PATH Calendar, which is distributed to 20,000 Vermont faculty & staff! Anyone with an online [tomypath.com](http://tomypath.com) account is welcome to participate. Email an attached photo file to [Gillian@vsbit.org](mailto:Gillian@vsbit.org) (submit one photo per email). Photos must be JPG files that are at least 5" X 7" at 300 DPI/PPI.

Clearly identify when and where you took your photo and include your full name, address, email and phone contact information, and your school/worksite.

Sorry, no photos with identifiable people or animals will be accepted (in the back ground is fine). Be sure to keep a copy of the email you send in case it doesn't make it to us for some reason. To be certain we received your file, follow up with a phone call to (802) 223-5040.

Photos will be judged by Vermont professional photographer Karen Pike and the VSBIT Staff. VEHI PATH will reserve the right to use your photo(s) in any capacity and will retain copyright.

Photos must be submitted by August 27, 2007.

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**Vermont Education Health Initiative**  
**2 Prospect Street, Suite 5**  
**Montpelier, VT 05602**  
**(802) 223-5040**

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