

healthy hood river

The Pulse of Prevention

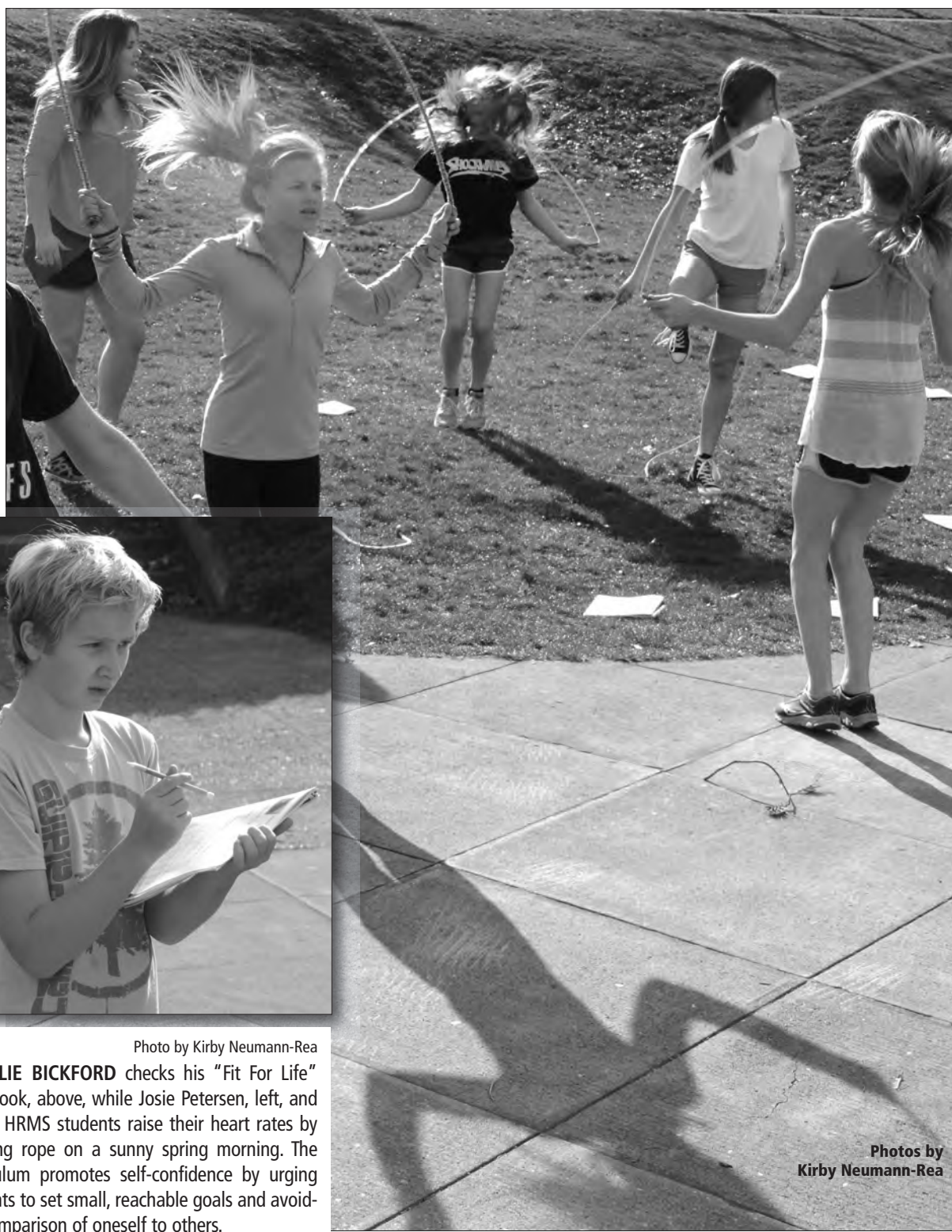


Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

CHARLIE BICKFORD checks his "Fit For Life" workbook, above, while Josie Petersen, left, and fellow HRMS students raise their heart rates by jumping rope on a sunny spring morning. The curriculum promotes self-confidence by urging students to set small, reachable goals and avoiding comparison of oneself to others.

Photos by Kirby Neumann-Rea

Local kids learn tools for health monitoring and lifelong wellness

By **KIRBY NEUMANN-REA**
News staff writer

How hard do I need to work? That's one question among many in the "Fit for Life" class at Hood River Middle School, a curriculum developed by health and wellness teacher Stacy Claus over the past 14 years, and now vigorously presented to students by teacher Kyle Turner, with assistance from parent volunteer Marge Gale.

Topics include the benefits of fitness (why we should do this?), assessing one's fitness, and, ultimately creating and implementing a personal fitness program.

"Fit for Life is essentially Personal Training 101," noted Claus, a long-time teacher in the Hood River County School District who is currently on maternity leave.

"Hopefully, kids learn what they can do to stay in shape once they are out of school or no longer have a coach prescribing their workout for them," Claus said.

On a typical afternoon, the students can be seen outdoors recording their at-rest pulse, then running or jumping rope or doing other heart rate-raising activities, followed by checking and recording their pulse in the heart rate lab in their notebooks. The lab asks questions such as, "how long did it take your heart rate to return to the original rate of beating at rest?" and "could you improve your physical condition? What type of exercise should you do?" The curriculum lists plenty of types of exercise, along with tips for stretching, weight control, and nutrition.

To answer the "how hard do I need to work" question, students can follow a chart that lists weight loss, anaerobic strength and lactate tolerance as benefits of expending higher and higher percentages of maximum heart rate for durations of an hour, 15-40 minutes, and 1-5 minutes.

Students learn that the "why exercise" is all about weight maintenance, better sleep, reduction of depression and stress, better academic performance, increased muscle mass, and the social benefits. Students learn about metabolism, weight management, and nutrition. They also explore some of the reasons behind common health-related diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and eating disorders.

"Students discuss healthy body image, as well as common fitness myths and outside pressures from the media to confirm to a certain size," Claus said.

The model for the class is half lesson/lecture and half physical activity.

"Some kids enter the quarter moaning about the written work, quizzes, and project, but, more than any other PE class I've ever taught, students thank us, year after year, for providing them with the tools to create a lifetime of health and wellness," Claus said.

Fit for Life is sort of like one big science experiment where an eighth grader gets to use his or her own body as the subject. "Students report that they are often surprised by how good they feel after participating in the 9-week course," Claus said.

Claus said the class "morphs into something greater each year." The curriculum is based on a high school FFL class developed by Human Kinetics, but "there was nothing on the market appropriate specific middle school audience that needs to move!" Claus said.

"Over the years, I have created a 40-page workbook that serves as a text for the class. It's always changing. I am very thankful to have Kyle as a new PE partner. Both of us have a background in exercise science and nutrition, and that is the foundation of every lesson we teach."

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Local resources for getting fit



Photo by Patrick Mulvihill

ACTIVE SENIORS join OSU extension health instructor, Lauren Kraemer, in a balance test, part of her lesson on osteoporosis prevention at the Hood River Adult Center in April.

Looking to get fit? Here is a list of local resources to get you started.

Classes

Mondays: Tai Chi for Balance, 1-2 p.m. in the Mount Hood Town Hall's Mount Hood Room. Classes are free and for any level. No experience necessary; donations accepted; summer schedule will be announced soon.

Mondays and Wednesdays: Walk with Ease program, 8:30-9:30 a.m. at Columbia Gorge Community College, Hood River campus. Join anytime. Sponsored by OSU Extension and the Arthritis Foundation. More info at 503-708-6469 or anndow@me.com.

Tuesdays and Fridays: StrongWomen Fitness Program class for men, too, 9:30-10:30 a.m. at the Mt. Hood Town Hall. Join anytime. Sponsored by OSU Extension. Work out with other strong women. More info at 503-708-6469 or anndow@me.com.

Wednesdays: Gentle Yoga

for beginning seniors 50 and over, 10-11 a.m. at the HR Care Center, 729 Henderson Rd. Free. Taught by certified yoga instructor Christine Shannon. Wear loose, comfortable clothing; bring yoga mat and water bottle; some mats available onsite. No experience necessary.

Clubs/centers

Curves Hood River, 1108 12th Street; call 541-386-6600
Flow Yoga, 118 Third Street; call 541-386-9642

Hood River Aquatic Center, 1601 May Street; call 541-386-1303

Hood River Sports Club, 1300 Brookside Drive. Call 541-386-3230

Inside Out Fitness, 15 Third Street; call 541-490-8717
Power Station/CrossFit Hood River, 1813 Cascade Avenue; call 541-436-2635

Root Down Yoga Hood River, 202 Cascade Avenue; call 541-399-7788

Snap Fitness Hood River, 2940 W. Cascade Avenue Suite 100; call 541-516-1706

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