



America's Promise School Project • Illinois State University

# Partnering for Children's Health

This project is made possible in part by a generous donation from State Farm.

## New Years Resolution Reboot

While we usually feature articles related to the health of our children this issue has several articles we hope you find interesting and helpful for YOU. Happy 2016!

It is that time of year, time for new starts. Many of us do this by deciding to make a New Year's resolution. The practice of making New Year's resolutions dates back to Babylonian and Roman times (Wikipedia). Fast forward to 2015 and the top 5 resolutions in the United States ([www.statisticbrain.com/](http://www.statisticbrain.com/)) were:

If you are like most of us who choose to make New Year's resolutions, it lasts for about....a month. Sound familiar? The sobering news is most people report never reaching their resolution goal (less than 8% with those in their 20s (34%) and over 60s (14%) reporting more success) This doesn't mean resolutions are inherently a bad idea. There are some things we know from those who are successful. What does it take to stick to the resolution you've made?

1. Lose Weight
2. Get Organized
3. Spend Less, Save More
4. Enjoy Life to the Fullest
5. Staying Fit and Healthy

You are more likely to be successful if you state your resolution in behavioral terms – what behavior is most likely to lead to success? Let's take a look at the number 1 resolution adults in the US make, to "lose weight". What we know about what leads to long term success with weight loss (losing it and maintaining it) might surprise you. Data collected at the National Weight Control Registry ([www.nwcr.ws](http://www.nwcr.ws)) reveals this information:

- A little less than 1/2 the people lost the weight on their own and a little over half lost weight with the help of some type of program
- Most modified their food intake in some way
- Most eat low calorie, low fat diet
- Most eat breakfast every day
- Almost all exercise, on average, about 1 hour per day (reality check!)
- Most increased their physical activity
- More than 1/2 watch less than 10 hours of TV per week
- Most use home equipment or walk
- Most weighed themselves at least once a week, if not daily
- Most took corrective action when gaining even a little weight back after losing it.

So a more effective resolution might be something like this, "I resolve to eat a healthy breakfast every day, to walk XX minutes each day and to weigh myself every Saturday." Notice there's nothing on the list about joining a gym or buying new workout clothes. This doesn't mean these are bad ideas; they just might not lead to the weight loss you seek. One helpful resource for planning for success is a book published by Vital Smarts "Change Anything: The New Science of Personal Success" available in paperback for around \$12.00. You can find lots of the information from this book in a google search as well.

If you are one of the 45% of all adults in the U.S. and you made a resolution and find yourself faltering take heart, it may be as simple, and as difficult, as restating your resolution in behavioral terms after learning more about what we know leads to success! Wishing you luck in reaching your goals!

## Project Goals

•Caring Adults – Illinois State faculty, staff and students will partner with the Bloomington/Normal schools to focus on healthy role models. Interested children/youth will be engaged in learning about the health professions.

•A Healthy Start – Priority health issues are addressed through prevention education and services to ensure students are able to participate in school, sports and other important activities.

•An Effective Education – Illinois State faculty and nursing students will work closely with school nurses and teachers to develop innovative education strategies focused on prevention, designed to build competency in managing personal health.

•Opportunities to Help Others – Explore the development of a model using older students to coach and mentor younger students with common chronic health problems.



## Meet District 140 School Nurse Teresa Block

Teresa Block, BSN, RN is a 'rookie' with the America's Promise School Project (APSP) as fall semester 2015 was her first time working with MCN-ISU students in the Community Unit School District #140. She is, however, a veteran school nurse, with 14 years of experience in the district. As the school nurse for the entire district she works with administrators, teachers and students in 3 elementary schools, a middle school and a high school. Overall, she is the school nurse for approximately 1600 students. While working in the school district she is one of four schools nurses employed by Advocate Eureka Hospital. The school nurses report directly to the Chief Nurse Executive, Nancy Allen, MPH, RN. Ms. Allen is a strong supporter of school nurse involvement with America's Promise believing it is important for student nurses to learn about how health care needs are met in rural communities.

Teresa is dedicated to the students of these communities striving to meet their health needs, and keeping the students in school as much as possible. When she first started as a school nurse Teresa shared that she was more 'task oriented'. Since earning a BSN, she has gained a 'bigger picture' view of the role of the school nurse. Caring for children living with chronic health conditions is always a priority. For example, if a child is diagnosed with diabetes, Teresa establishes relationships and works collaboratively with the child and family to make the transition to school a smooth one including moving up from grade school, to middle school, and to high school. She shared, "We are seeing children with more health concerns, who are mainstreamed in the school. When I started, the EHS students didn't know that a nurse was really available as there was only a nurse one afternoon a week. Now I serve as a consultant to the school, working closely with administration when there are any communicable disease outbreaks, or students with special needs."

Working closely with other professionals in the school district, Teresa is a key resource for students experiencing stress, anxiety and mental health problems. Establishing trust and rapport with staff at each school in the district is essential to success. The school secretaries know she is just a phone call or email away if they have questions when she is not in their building.

Lynn Kennell, MSN, RN, expert clinical faculty member at ISU Mennonite College of Nursing, was able to provide a rich and meaningful semester long learning experience for a group of 8 senior nursing students in large part because Teresa was willing to actively support the experience using her knowledge of the district and school nursing to open doors and support student nurse learning. The combination of Lynn and Teresa and their commitment to partnering for student nurse learning and child health has proved to be a recipe for success. Both Teresa and Lynn look forward to a long term partnership. We look forward to continuing our relationship with the District #140 school system, and we thank Teresa for her dedication to advancing nursing education!



Teresa received this gift from the APSP students to adorn the nurse's office door at the Eureka Middle School.



MCN-ISU APSP students taught parents and children about 9-5-2-1-0 Zipcode for Health, at Parent Teacher conferences at Davenport Elementary and Eureka Middle schools in October.



## Dry Mouth, What it is and How to Prevent Side Effects

February is National Dental Health month and is usually associated with promoting oral health in children. Tooth decay or cavities are usually associated with childhood. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2014) tooth decay and cavities continue to be the most common chronic condition in school age children in the United States. Another potential contributor to dental decay is xerostomia or dry mouth, which is a common side effect of many prescription and over-the-counter medications.

Xerostomia or dry mouth is associated with medical conditions such as Sjogren's syndrome and cancer treatment and commonly seen in the elderly. The American Academy of Oral Medicine (2015) and the International Journal of Medical Sciences (2015) report there are more than 1,100 medications that may potentially cause dry mouth symptoms. Many of these medications are used to treat acne, anxiety, depression, hypertension, respiratory conditions such as asthma, as well as anti-nausea, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory, opioids, sedatives, antacids, and cold medications containing decongestants and antihistamines.

Some of these medications are taken for short periods and cause temporary side effects which resolve after discontinuing the medication. Other medications are taken for the management of many chronic medical conditions in daily medication regimens. These medications may increase the person's risk for dry mouth symptoms and complications.

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Common symptoms people experience with dry mouth include difficulty swallowing food without liquids, changes in the sense of taste, a burning sensation or mouth pain, and difficulty talking. Complications include cavities at the gum line or chewing surfaces of the teeth and a decrease in saliva production. Dry mouth is associated with an increase risk of cavities and periodontal disease.

The treatment for dry mouth usually involves decreasing the



symptoms and preventing complications such as tooth decay (cavities) and gum disease. Many medications have the potential to cause dry mouth symptoms.

Things you can do to prevent side effects and complications include:

- Brush using fluoride-containing toothpaste twice daily
- Floss daily
- Decrease or eliminate sugar and acid-containing beverages
- Chew sugarless gum between meals.
- Talk with your health care provider.



Every Child Deserves a School Nurse

**SAVE THE DATE**

**5<sup>th</sup> Annual  
School Nurse Summer  
Institute**

**Thursday June 2, 2016**

8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Illinois State University  
Bone Student Center  
Prairie Room  
100 N. University St  
Normal, IL 61761



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For More Information Contact:

Shelly Malin, PhD, RN  
America's Promise School Project Director  
Shelly.Malin@ilstu.edu

Illinois State University  
Mennonite College of Nursing  
Edwards Hall  
Campus Box 5810  
Normal, Illinois 61790