

Jamestown Schools receive health award

By Michaela Kennedy

The school nurse's office has always been the place to go for some comfort when a student felt sick or had an injury. "Can I go to the nurse?" has never been the question a teacher enjoys hearing. But, Jamestown School Nurse Renie Sullivan has helped to change that traditional image. Staff and students at the island's schools have embraced wellness awareness.

Sullivan, a veteran nurse in the local school system, has become a champion of the healthy lifestyle for students and staff.

Because of Sullivan's initiatives, the Jamestown School Department was honored May 28 with the Achievement Worksite Health Award, sponsored by the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island. Companies and organizations across the state were recognized at the awards event for their efforts in providing health awareness programs, policies and other health-related activities for their employees.

Sullivan explains that throughout the country Americans are switching from a practice of caring for illness to preventative health measures. "Policies at the district, state and national levels want health promotion," she says. "It makes me be more creative."

The change has been challenging, but rewarding. Some of Sullivan's creative initiatives include weight loss clinics, blood



Renie Sullivan
Jamestown School Nurse

pressure monitoring and a bike club for staff, to name a few.

Sullivan has the advantage of a strong network to help with ideas. As a member of the Certified School Nurses of Rhode Island, Sullivan meets with other school nurses four to five times a year. They brainstorm together, and share programs that have been successful. "We also get help from the Department of Education," she adds.

Bethany Costello of the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce explained the motivation for the recognition. "It means they (Jamestown Schools) are making real progress in today's economic climate, promoting wellness within each organization." Costello explained how tightening economic times have driven up hospital and insurance costs. Education and healthy ac-

tivities help to avoid doctor's bills.

The Providence Chamber has partnered with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island for a number of years, according to Costello. The awards committee, made up of representatives from the chamber and Blue Cross, reviews applications and evaluates company-sponsored activities that demonstrate a commitment to employees' well-being. "We recognize organizations that offer health management programs to their employees, provide a lot of health information and focus on the importance of a healthy lifestyle," Costello added. "We have a subset of criteria. We look for tobacco cessation or weight loss implementation." Weight lecturers and walking programs have become common. "Wellness awareness is growing," she said.

With prompting from the U.S. Department of Health back in the late 1990s, the Worksite Wellness Council was formed in the state in order to promote public health in the workplace. Last year, the Wellness Councils of America designated Rhode Island as the first "Well State" in the nation. This designation was earned when 20 percent of the workforce (101,000 people) was employed in award winning "Well Workplaces" at the end of 2006.

Jamestown Schools is now recognized as a proud contributor to the growing numbers of health-conscious communities in the state.

Council

Continued from page 1

plete, boats are often dirty, and part of their service is to return every boat to its owner after it has been washed and cleaned.

They contend that their cleaning equipment is extremely efficient and that they do not use as much water as restaurants, which are not being penalized.

Napolitano said, "I need the water to stay in business. If I have to pay extra for it, I'll do so. But don't leave me without water." Munger shared his sentiments.

Public Works Director Steve Goslee said that he had concerns about the town not having adequate potable water if a pump broke and couldn't be repaired, or some other disaster occurred that was beyond the town's control. Councilman Robert Sutton supported Goslee's position on the matter.

Council members Barbara Szepatowski and William Kelly sympathized with the boatyards and suggested that the new water tower was supposed to give the town the needed reserve in case of emergencies.

Goslee argued that although the town had water, it would not have the ability to treat adequate amounts during peak periods until the new water treatment plant is up and running, which wouldn't be until later this year.

Several people, including Jack Brittain, president of Jack's Electric, spoke in favor of not penalizing the marinas. Brittain suggested selling water to businesses if at all possible to lighten the burden of exorbitant water bills to subscribers if usage is low.

After lengthy discussion be-

tween the council and concerned parties, the matter was solved with two motions. The first motion passed the regulations as submitted with a unanimous 5-0 vote. The second motion called for a meeting of the council sitting as the Water and Sewer Board prior to June 30 to discuss Amendment 6, Section 7.

The discussion will be an agenda item at the June 23 Town Council meeting. The Council will be asked to vote on relaxing the restrictions covered in Amendment 6, Section 7 until they are needed. To impose the restrictions, the town must advertise the restrictions one week in advance of the date of implementation. The motion also passed 5-0.

Public Works report

In other sewer and water business, Goslee reported that wells JR-1 and JR-3 are back in service. The wells alternate and pump 50 gallons per minute. They run when the treatment plant is running to maintain consistent water chemistry at the plant.

Goslee also reported that the discharge from the Rhode Island Department of Transportation pump station has been sampled. His report said that the town is waiting for test results which should be returned in about three weeks.

The water treatment plant operated at 99-percent efficiency this month for turbidity removal. The report also said that the progress on the new water treatment plant is on schedule.

CRMC notice

A notice of violation for the installation of an unauthorized float at Conanicut Marina was sent to proprietor William Munger from the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC). The float is used seasonally to assist in the launching and hauling of boats at the beginning and end of the season.

Councilman Robert Sutton made a motion to authorize the town administrator to apply for a seasonal permit for use of the float. The motion passed with a vote of 4-0 in the absence of council woman Barbara Szepatowski, who was excused to attend another meeting.

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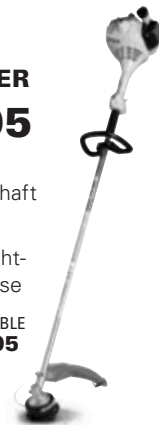
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