



## *Third Way Center/ Joan Farley Academy Wellness Policy*

Since Third Way Center's Joan Farley Academy works in conjunction with Denver Public Schools on scheduling and guidelines, Third Way Center's Wellness Policy reflects the policy instated by the district already.

In order to contribute to student, residents and staff performance potential, Third Way Center and Joan Farley Academy promote healthy schools and residential treatment living by supporting student, resident and staff wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity as part of the school environment.

The Third Way Center Nutrition Task Force will monitor the implementation of this policy, evaluate progress on the policy goals, serve as a resource to schools, and recommend revisions to this policy, as the Task Force deems necessary and/or appropriate.

### **Goal #1**

Third Way Center and Joan Farley Academy will provide a learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors.

The school and residential environment will be aligned with healthy school and dining goals to positively influence a resident's understanding, beliefs and habits as they relate to good nutrition, regular physical activity and physical health. These points are imperative to Third Way Center's youth working towards independent living skills. Such an environment will teach students to use appropriate resources and tools to make informed and educated decisions about lifelong healthy eating habits and beneficial physical activity.

This goal shall be accomplished by:

- Offering nutrition education in the school cafeteria/classroom as well as with Third Way Center's nutritionist. Third Way Center's nutritionist must sign off on all menus presented to her for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The meals are evaluated on several components including if they are well balanced and how many calories are going to be consumed.
- Actively promoting healthy eating and physical activity to students, parents, school staff, and the community at school activities, resident staffings, open houses and school field trips.
- Encouraging teachers to integrate nutrition education into curriculum areas such as math, science, social studies, and language arts, or to teach nutrition lessons whose content and delivery reinforce the standards for reading, writing, math or science as applicable. These educational opportunities may include, but not be limited to, the distribution of educational

and informational materials and the arrangement of presentations and workshops that focus on key nutritional concepts, healthy lifestyles, health assessments, fitness activities, and other appropriate nutrition and physical activity related topics.

A health and wellness class is held at the Joan Farley Academy and each class focuses on teaching independent living skills focusing on promoting health and wellness for themselves and their peers.

- Making available to residents, appropriate educational opportunities to inform them about nutrition and physical activity, including information about healthful foods and beverages to provide themselves (once they are on their own). These educational opportunities may include, but not limited to, education provided in the form of handouts, postings on the Denver Public School's District Web site, articles and information provided in school-generated handouts.

## **Goal #2**

Third Way Center and Joan Farley Academy will support and promote proper dietary habits contributing to students' health status and academic performance.

Foods and beverages available on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities shall meet or exceed the Denver Public School's District nutrition standards. Emphasis will be placed on foods that are nutrient dense per calorie. Third Way Center and Joan Farley Academy will comply with federal and state rules or regulations. Foods will be served with consideration of variety, appeal, taste, safety and packaging.

This goal shall be accomplished by:

- Continuation of age-appropriate portion sizes for school meals.
- Continuation of purchasing and preparation methods that limit the amount of fat and sugar in school meals and breakfast servings. The youth are responsible for shopping and preparing the meals with staff as part of their independent living skills training.
- Commitment to the inclusion of high quality protein, fruits, vegetables and dairy in both snack food and meals.
- Third Way Center hired a registered dietician to develop 2-week cycle menus that are in compliance with USDA regulations and support and promote proper dietary habits.
- Promoting increased consumption of fruits and vegetables through nutrition education, partnerships, special events and announcements.
- Foods cannot be used as discipline (i.e., withheld, forced, or modified as a form of punishment) in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs, including breakfast, lunch and snacks. Foods should not be used as discipline in classrooms or in Third Way Center's residential locations.
- Food should not be used as a reward for student accomplishment unless the reward is a n activity that promotes a positive nutrition message (guest chef, field trip to a farm or farmers market, etc); all foods used as a reward will meet the district nutritional standards (fruits and vegetables are great food choices). Staff are encouraged to use non-food items as rewards for student accomplishment; fund-raisers; school events or other purposes. Non-food alternatives can be found at <http://web1.msue.msu.edu/fnh/tn/foodrewards.pdf> and at [www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/constructive\\_rewards.pdf](http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/constructive_rewards.pdf).

- An assurance that the school dining and residential dining area are a pleasant eating environment.
- Operate all Child Nutrition Programs with USDA trained representatives who are properly trained and qualified according to current standards.
- Establish food safety as a key component of all foodservice operations and ensure that all HACCP and state and local health codes are strictly enforced. The health department conducts annual health inspections of all of Third Way Center's residential locations.
- Provide information regarding healthy choices at all points of purchase, including the store, lunchroom and dining table at the residential locations.
- Provide adequate time for the students and residents to enjoy their meals. A minimum of 15 – 20 minutes for breakfast and 25 – 30 minutes for lunch. "Time to eat" does not include standing and waiting for the meal.
- Establish a dining environment conducive to a positive dining experience, with socializing among students and between students and adults; with supervision of eating areas by adults who model proper conduct and voice level; and with adults who model healthy habits by eating with the students.
- Have nutrition information always available for the residents at the houses and at school so they can look into healthy choices and assessments.
- Food and Nutrition Services can provide assistance in identifying foods that meet the nutrition standards described in this policy.
- Faculty, teachers and treatment staff are encouraged to set the example for residents and students. Students and residents are not likely to believe that nutrition policies are beneficial if they see faculty, teachers and treatment staff consuming food and beverages that do not align with Third Way Center's policy.
- Most grains offered will be 100% grains if available.
- Third Way Center's nutritionist must sign off on all menus presented to her for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The meals are evaluated on several components including if they are well balanced and how many calories are going to be consumed.
- Students and residents will be an active part of menu planning through their weekly house group meetings and meetings with the nutritionist.
- It is suggested that any food brought into Third Way Center or Joan Farley Academy comply with the aforementioned nutritional guidelines and HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point by the FDA) guidelines. Fresh fruits and vegetables are excellent food choices.

### **Goal #3**

Third Way Center and Joan Farley Academy will provide more opportunities for residents and students to engage in physical activity.

A quality physical education program is an essential component for all students to learn about and participate in physical activity. Physical activity can be achieved through co-curricular activities and outings.

This goal shall be accomplished by:

- Encouragement of students to select physical education activities either during school or after school. The Third Way Center residential locations and the school will coordinate to give each youth ample opportunity to have physical exercise.
- Increased opportunities for physical activity through after school or weekend programs to help curb childhood obesity, reduce physical aggression, and improve pro-social behavior.
- Incorporation of physical activity into the academic curricula and classroom activities whenever possible. Basketball teams have become available to the youth of Third Way Center and sports are looking to be expanded to the program.
- An encouragement that Third Way Center and Joan Farley Academy follow the recommendations of the National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), which guide students through a process that enables them to achieve a high personal level of fitness.
- Encouragement of walking or biking to school for residents that our close enough to Joan Farley Academy and providing a safety course for them to follow before doing so.
- The availability of health-promotion activities and incentives for students, parents and staff that encourage regular physical activity, such as recreational demonstrations, walking clubs and climbing walls.
- 2 Recreation Coordinators were hired in 2023 to help assist agency wide recreation programming.

Additional activities that have occurred since the inception of the original wellness policy are:

- Adding gardens at the JFA Lowry school. Residents are encouraged to plant and harvest healthy seasonal fruits and vegetables to be utilized throughout the year and incorporated into the weekly menus.
- A fitness center to encourage and promote health and wellness has been added to our Lowry Campus. Lowry residents and staff utilize it regularly and other houses are trying to coordinate times to go.

Last modified: January 2024 by Erin Martin, Associate Director of Operations