We receive a grant with the goal being for our staff members to become healthier by lowering their BMI, body weight or blood pressure by participating in group fitness classes, healthier eating habits and stress management techniques over the course of the school year. We started off the year by taking a Staff Wellness Survey which showed areas of need for our staff. We met as a school Health Team to talk about different ways to meet our goals. One of the ways was a Biggest Loser competition, which we started in January. We are not just using this competition for weight loss, but in decreasing BMI. To enhance the competition, the teachers received a note in the mail box or on their classroom door encouraging Healthy living. Examples of those things….DID YOU KNOW FACT about drinking water aiding in weight loss, 12 Healthy Benefits of Dark Chocolate, advise about apps you can use on your phone or iPad to encourage healthy eating or walking/exercise programs. Our school even started a GTMS Wellness Group Board on Pinterest.

As our Biggest Loser competition started, we started an After School Walking Club for staff. In February we started the AM Walking Club, those who can’t make it after school walk in the morning before school. In February we started a Cardio Drumming class to add to our cardio. We started this “class” one day a week. The class keeps getting better and better and due to popular demand, we have started a second drumming class during the week. Zumba classes are also offered by the FSA.

MARCH has been a big month. We started a Walking Challenge to see who can get the most steps per week, at the end of the week, the person with the most steps wins a Fitbit. This is a week by week challenge for the month of March. Staff members are also encouraged to wear sneakers on Wednesdays during the month of March and walk different paths throughout the school to add steps to their days. Blood Pressure Screenings have been given by the nurse to those staff members who wanted it.

As I look forward to the rest of the year, I see healthy Breakfasts, Smoothie Parties, another Biggest Loser completion and even more cardio classes. The impact that I hope all these things are having on the staff is that if they take the time to participate, it will help the climate of our school and help them to get healthier. If staff could see that the little things we have been doing should be stress reducers then they would be living a healthier life.

In addition to all this, a group of students have helped in spreading the word about living a healthy lifestyle. This group met after school on a weekly basis to design posters to be hung around the school. These posters have creative messages about drinking more water, reducing sugar intake, increasing physical activity, and choosing healthier snack options. These posters appeal to the students and staff alike in the school by bringing awareness to what exactly is in one’s beverage, how vital water is to one’s diet and how exercising/being active can contribute to living a longer healthy life.