



North Vancouver Recreation & Culture

MEDIA RELEASE

March 6, 2015

NVRC provides free program to empower children and their families to become healthier

North Vancouver, B.C. – North Vancouver Recreation and Culture (NVRC) is offering a free program that empowers children and families to become fitter and healthier. MEND (Mind, Exercise, Nutrition...Do It!) is a fun, healthy living program for children aged 7-13 who are above a healthy weight. The program facilitates safe, effective and lasting lifestyle changes by improving children's physical activity levels, nutrition and self-esteem. It runs two sessions per week for 10 weeks, April 8 – June 14 (Wednesdays 5:45-7:45pm & Sundays 3:00-5:00pm), at John Braithwaite Community Centre and will be facilitated by recreation fitness professionals trained in the MEND programming.

Families take part in fun 2-hour sessions that combine active living (physical exercise), healthy eating and behaviour change. The first hour is interactive discussions and activities about nutrition and behaviour change for the family. The second hour involves continued discussion for the parents while the children engage in fun, physical activities. By attending MEND:

- Families learn about all aspects of nutrition, including how to make healthy food choices.
- They learn how to read food labels, understand fats and sugars and the difference between refined and unrefined foods and how to prepare a healthy balanced meal.
- They learn how to change their eating and exercise habits through mind exercises such as setting goals and rewards and how being active can be fun.

MEND is not a weight loss program, rather it is about empowering children and their families, and uses a practical interactive learning approach to teach children and parents skills for healthy living. "One of the most important outcomes of MEND is that it educates family members on healthier choices for both food and activities to do as a family," reports Samantha Morrison, Programmer at North Vancouver Recreation & Culture.

MEND was developed and tested by some of the UK's leading experts in child nutrition, child behaviour and exercise. Independent research shows that the MEND program helps children reduce their Body Mass Index (BMI), increase their physical activity levels and self-esteem and reduce sedentary behaviours.

MEND has been adapted to align with Canadian dietary and policy guidelines. The program is one component of the Childhood Healthy Weights Intervention Initiative, a new initiative launched by the Childhood Obesity Foundation in partnership with the BC Ministry of Health.

Families interested in participating in the program can contact the MEND Programmer at 604-983-6401 or wakalukt@nvrc.ca) and they will conduct a short screening to determine if this program is right for your child. *Please note space is limited.* For more information visit www.nvrc.ca.

NOTE: Photos are available.

For more information, contact:

Anne Rodgers, Communications Specialist, North Vancouver Recreation & Culture

T: 604-983-6346 E: rodgersa@nvrc.ca
