



News Release

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HEALTHY BUDDIES PROGRAM EXPANDS QUICKLY

St. Joseph, Mo. —March 6, 2003—A partnership between Missouri Western State College and the St. Joseph School District, the Healthy Buddies program, has grown significantly since it began last spring.

Healthy Buddies began one year ago when students from the nursing department paired with 33 students at Lindbergh Elementary School to teach the elementary school students about healthy choices and behaviors. In the fall, 107 Western students from five departments were involved in the program, and this spring semester, the program has expanded to include approximately 150 college students and 180 elementary students.

The program went so well originally with the nursing department students and Lindbergh that other elementary schools became interested in the program, according to Dr. Evelyn Brooks, nursing professor and coordinator of the program. So she began spreading the word to other academic departments on campus. “Last semester was so successful that school nurses were asking for even more Western students to be healthy buddies to the elementary students.”

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In the program, college students visit one-on-one with the elementary students about 20 – 30 minutes each week, playing games as they teach about good health habits. A special activity is planned for all healthy buddies at mid-semester, and the elementary students join the college students on campus for lunch at the end of the semester.

“The project is a wonderful learning experience for the Western students,” said Dr. Brooks. “They often say they have as much fun as the kids do. It is a heartwarming experience to see how much the Western students are learning from the children as well as to hear how much the children are learning from the Western students.”

Healthy Buddies is funded this year by a grant of approximately \$8,000 from the Heartland Regional Community Foundation Outcomes for Kids.

Missouri Western State College is a four-year public institution providing a blend of traditional liberal arts and professional degree programs. The college offers student-centered, high quality instruction that focuses on experience-based learning, community service, and state-of-the-art technology. Western is located in St. Joseph, Mo. and is committed to the educational, economic, cultural and social development of the region it serves.

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