Chapter 1

Introduction & General Information

Welcome to Power Panther Professionals!

As the Power Panther Professionals program facilitator for your school or child care center, you will provide an innovative 12-week health education program for your peers. The program is designed to:

- Increase consumption of fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy products, whole grains and water.
- Emphasize the importance of daily physical activity.
- Increase awareness of the impact made as a role model for students.
- Increase awareness of positive benefits associated with regular consumption of breakfast and healthy snacking habits.
- Increase awareness of the cumulative effects of healthy (and unhealthy) lifestyle choices in terms of a person's RealAge®.

How the Program Works

Everything needed for implementation of the Power Panther Professionals (PPP) program activities is included in the materials provided. There is an introductory presentation that will introduce participants to the concept of wellness. The introductory PowerPoint presentation will include:

- General information on nutrition, physical activity, stress management and wellness.
- An overview of Power Panther Professionals including program guidelines and requirements.
- An introduction to the concept of RealAge®.
- The importance of role-modeling.

Before giving the introductory presentation, you will need to determine how Power Panther Professionals will be implemented in your building. Each working environment is unique, therefore Kansas Team Nutrition has left this task to the Power Panther Professionals facilitator. You may choose to take this program in one of a number of directions. You can develop a scoring system and divide the staff into teams, have everyone work together in a supportive environment, or involve the entire school or child care center (including students). You may choose to use the two RealAge® books (provided) as prizes for the two individuals who achieve the most during the 12 weeks of the program or you may keep the books for your staff to use as a reference.

It is important that whatever you decide, you communicate that information to all participants. An example is provided for you in Chapter 5 of this manual, but you are encouraged to use the method that best suits the personality and environment of your school or child care center.

At the onset of the program…

- The introductory presentation will be presented to faculty/staff by the program facilitator.
- Each participant will take the RealAge® questionnaire and learn their RealAge®. Participants may choose to share their results, but it is not required.
- If needed, provide assistance with personal goal setting for each staff member (information on goal setting can be found on page 9).
- Divide participants into teams using whatever means you choose (grade-level taught, subject area taught, grouped at random, etc.).

During each week of the program…

- The facilitator will implement activities outlined in Chapter 3 of this manual. Each week the facilitator will send messages (provided) to staff via e-mail, verbal announcement, bulletin board display or written handouts.
- The participant log (provided) may be completed by each staff member.
- The facilitator will coordinate optional enrichment activities identified in each chapter as time and budget permits.

At the conclusion of the program…

- Incentives will be distributed as determined by the Power Panther Professionals facilitator.

Responsibilities of the Program Facilitator:

- Assume responsibility for distributing the materials provided to participants during each week of the program. Participant materials are provided in an electronic format; the facilitator may choose to email participants their materials or print and copy materials for each participant.
- Send out the provided motivational email messages each week to participants.
- Complete and submit the evaluation format at the conclusion of the 12-week period.

Responsibilities of the KSDE Team Nutrition Consultants:

- Provide technical assistance and answer all questions throughout the project implementation period.
- Team Nutrition Consultants can also visit your school or child care center and present one of the lessons to your staff. Contact your regionally-based Team Nutrition Consultant to determine availability.

Team Nutrition's Background Information:

Power Panther is…

the official spokes-character of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) **EAT SMART. PLAY HARD.** campaign. **EAT SMART. PLAY HARD.** is about making our nation's children healthier.

The purpose of Power Panther Professionals is…

to make school and child care center staff aware of the importance of enjoying healthful foods with particular emphasis on consumption of fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products and whole grains. Participants will also learn to enjoy daily physical activity through this program and will be encouraged to become a healthy role model for students. Additionally, topics such as stress management and healthy aging will be addressed.

Team Nutrition is…

a USDA school-based program that encourages children to make healthful food choices. Team Nutrition is a nationwide, integrated initiative designed to encourage children to eat a variety of foods; to eat more fruits, vegetables and grains; to eat lower fat foods more often; and to be physically active.

Other Kansas Team Nutrition Programs include…

- Power Panther Pals is an 8-week health education program for 4th, 5th, and 6th graders to help them learn to enjoy fruits and vegetables and to incorporate physical activity into their daily lives. For more information about this program, please visit: www.powerpanther.org.

- Power Panther Preschool provides fun, educational nutrition activities to promote fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity for preschool age children. For more information about this program, please visit: www.powerpanther.org.

- Body Walk is a unique educational walk-through exhibit for K-5 students to help them learn to **EAT SMART** and **PLAY HARD**. Power Panther is the Body Walk mascot. The exhibit travels to Kansas schools. For more information about this program, please visit: www.bodywalk.org.

Why Do We Need a Program Like This?

- A healthful lifestyle means small steps to eat smart and move more for long-term health benefits. By developing a "wellness-centered" attitude, you are moving toward a better you.
- The prevalence of obesity in the United States has doubled in the past two decades.
- Nearly one-third of adults are obese---a scary statistic!
- A high prevalence of overweight and obesity is a public health concern because excess body fat leads to a higher risk for premature death, Type 2 Diabetes, hypertension and many other diseases including some types of cancer.
- Even modest weight loss has been found to provide health benefits.
- In 2002, 25% of adult Americans did not participate in any leisure-time physical activity.
- Regular physical activity and physical fitness make important contributions to one's health, sense of well-being and maintenance of a healthy body weight.
- A minimum of 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most days of the week is recommended. This activity can be divided into intervals as short as 10 minutes each.
- Physical activity doesn't have to be a regimen of calisthenics, but can be active physical tasks as part of a daily routine (park further away from work and store entrances, take the stairs instead of the elevator, etc.).
- Weight can be controlled by energy balance. To maintain the weight you are now, you must balance the calories you consume with the calories you use during physical activity. If your goal is to lose weight, you need to consume fewer calories than you use.