

For Immediate Release  
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### **Northwest Strong Joins Ontario's Healthy Kids Community Challenge**

The City of Kenora in partnership with the Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) has successfully secured funding through the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to run the Healthy Kids Community Challenge in Northwestern Ontario.

"I am excited to launch this program. The idea is to get kids to learn healthy habits from an early age. Good habits learned in childhood will serve them well throughout their lives."

— Dipika Damerla, Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

The Healthy Kids Community Challenge is a three year project that aims to promote healthy living among families, children and youth across Ontario. A total of up to \$525,000 will fund the project, which will operate under the banner of 'Northwest Strong'. The City of Kenora will take the lead in financial administration, while the NWHU will be the host agency for the Project Manager for the duration of the Healthy Kids Community Challenge.

The Healthy Kids Community Challenge is based on the principle that working across sectors will increase opportunities to promote healthy behaviour. These sectors will work together to achieve the greater goal of the program – healthy, active children and youth. Local activities will be implemented across Ontario based on specific themes related to healthy eating and physical activity, as determined by the Ministry. The project will receive support from the province including funding, training and marketing tools to support local programs. Mayor of Kenora, Dave Canfield states, "We are excited to be among the 45 communities in Ontario chosen to take part in the Healthy Kids Community Challenge. This project will give us the resources to bring community groups and organizations in Northwestern Ontario together to help families get on the path to more active and healthy lives."

Many community partners in the region were involved in the development of the original project proposal. Moving forward, a Northwest Strong Steering Committee will be established to coordinate the planning and implementation of the project. The group will be made up of representatives from across the region from a variety of sectors such as education, First Nation organizations, health, media, municipalities, the private sector, recreation and those serving youth. If your group or organization is interested in being part of the Steering Committee, please contact Saralyn Semeniuk at [ssemeniuk@nwhu.on.ca](mailto:ssemeniuk@nwhu.on.ca) or 807-223-3301, ext. 3518.

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### **QUICK FACTS**

- The Healthy Kids Community Challenge is based on the [EPODE \(Ensemble Prévenons l'Obésité des Enfants – Together Let's Prevent Childhood Obesity\)](#) methodology. EPODE began in France and has been recognized by the World Health Organization as an international best practice in obesity prevention.
- Communities applied to participate in the Healthy Kids Community Challenge between January and March 2014. They were selected based on clear evidence of need among local children and youth, the community's ability to establish strong partnerships with local businesses, schools and health organizations, and a demonstrated ability to deliver programs for children and youth.
- Adult obesity is associated with an increased risk of chronic disease. Currently 75 per cent of obese children grow up to become obese adults.
- Supporting community-based activities to promote healthier living is a key recommendation of the [Healthy Kids Panel report](#).

### **LEARN MORE**

- Ministry website: [Healthy Kids Community Challenge](#)
- [Ontario's Healthy Kids Strategy](#)