

Starting the Day Off Right

– By Janice Llanes Fabry –

Daniel Warren kindergarteners are learning just how important it is to start the day with a healthy breakfast. During the week of May 3, kindergarten teacher Jane Schumer adopted a “Think Breakfast Week” program, sponsored by the New York State Education Department’s Child Nutrition Program Administration. Schumer is convinced, “Our goal is to have the children become aware of healthy choices and become enthusiastic enough to take it home. If you present it in a joyful way, they embrace it.”



This year’s circus theme, “The Greatest Meal On Earth,” certainly drives the point home and helps boost the district’s health and wellness school-wide initiative. All Daniel Warren kindergarten teachers received complimentary lesson plans, posters and rapping videos to share with their students. The kids and their parents were also given pamphlets, portion control cups for cereal, refrigerator magnets and bookmarks. The program was made possible through a grant obtained by Principal Joan Babcock through the Rye YMCA’s “Activate America.” “We have been conducting data analysis of what the kids have been eating,” said Babcock. “There has been a tremendous increase of awareness of good nutrition. The kids are actively participating and bringing in healthy snacks. It has become embedded in who they are.”

Schumer, a member of the health and wellness committee, attributes the remarkable change in student eating habits to the school’s positive approach, along with the nutrition and exercise workshops they run all year long. “The children have learned that there are ‘growing foods’, and that they need a healthy breakfast to jumpstart their bodies, much like a car needs fuel. It will give them more energy and help them perform better academically.”