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White House honors D-300

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CARPENTERSVILLE – School District 300 officials are heading to the White House this month for a reception celebrating the first lady's campaign to reduce childhood obesity.

The district's efforts to offer healthier meals and raise greater awareness of a healthy lifestyle has led to an invitation to the White House for a July 29 reception hosted by first lady Michelle Obama, whose Let's Move campaign aims to raise a healthier generation.

District 300 received the invitation from the White House last month. Officials attending will foot the travel costs on their own, according to the district's news release.

Representatives from other school districts throughout the nation will gather for the reception.

The first lady's campaign works in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's HealthierUS School Challenge. The initiative began in 2004 to recognize schools in the National School Lunch Program that choose to promote healthier school environments for students with well-balanced meals and physical activity.

The invitation comes after the district's elementary schools took action this past school year to offer more education on healthy eating and fitness.

Earlier this year, Golfview Elementary School took on the USDA's HealthierUS School Challenge and became the first non-chartered school in Illinois to earn top honors from the agency.

Golfview met the USDA's "gold standard" with its daily lunch menu that includes vegetables, fruits and whole grains. Students also exercise for 30 minutes twice a week and learn about nutrition every week.

After Golfview received the Gold with Distinction Award from the USDA, the district encouraged other elementary schools to follow suit by implementing healthier lunch menus and bolstering nutrition and fitness education.

Since that time, 16 schools out of the 17 throughout the district took the "challenge" and received USDA recognition. Lakewood School, which covers only fifth and sixth grades, did not qualify as an elementary school under the USDA's Challenge.

Through the HealthierUS School Challenge, the school received a \$56,000 grant to bring children's dietitian Jill Jayne and her Jump with Jill music tour to each of the district's elementary schools. Jayne also filmed a Jump with Jill music video to celebrate the district's accomplishments.