

Building a Culture of Sun Safety for Nevada's Kids



More Nevada children are engaging in sun safe behaviors and decreasing their risk of skin cancer thanks to participation in Nevada Cancer Coalition's Sun Smart Schools program. Designed to establish a culture of sun safety for our children while promoting outdoor exercise and activity, Sun Smart Schools helps children to build healthy habits they can carry on through adulthood. It's based on other successful programs launched in Arizona, Colorado, and abroad in Australia.

The 3 Pillars of Sun Smart Schools

1. Sun safety curriculum and education in preschool, elementary, middle, and high school systems;
2. Access to sunscreen and shade in both the school and community environment; and,
3. School and school district policies to support sun smart behavior.

Why schools? They provide an ideal environment that's geared towards learning and practicing new skills, and teachers play a major role in influencing attitudes and behaviors for young children.

Sun Smart Schools launched in seven schools across Nevada in the 2015-2016 school year, and was quickly adopted by the Douglas County School District for the 2016-2017 school year. Reviews of the program are glowing and its future looks bright as we continue to add schools and school districts to the roster of Sun Smart Schools participants.



Photo: Brad Coman, Record-Courier



Reno meteorologist Mike Alger of KTVN News 2 teaches first and second graders at Elizabeth Lenz Elementary about UV rays from the sun as part of the Sun Smart Schools pilot program. Sun safety curriculum is one of the three pillars of Sun Smart Schools.

First in Class

Nevada Cancer Coalition would like to acknowledge the participation of the seven pilot schools for the Sun Smart Schools program in the 2015-2016 school year. We couldn't have done it without you!

Clark County

Hyde Park Academy of Math & Science
Rogers Elementary School
St. Viator Parish School (K-8)

Douglas County

Gardnerville Elementary School

Elko County

Spring Creek High School

Washoe County

South Reno United Methodist Church
Preschool
Elizabeth Lenz Elementary School

Sun Smart Scholar: Nikita Thummala

Las Vegas eighth-grader Nikita Thummala became a champion for the Sun Smart Schools program at Hyde Park Middle School Academy of Math and Science in Las Vegas, earning her the first Sun Smart Scholar award. She not only helped get her school to sign on for the pilot year, she completed presentations to her classmates, and raised money for the program at her summer dance recital. Thank you Nikita for all of your hard work!



“We find it easier and easier to incorporate sun safety into regular conversations with the children!”

***- Jamie Rogers, Preschool Director,
South Reno United Methodist Church***



Pilot Program Yields Results

How do we know Sun Smart Schools works? Pre- and post-surveys developed by University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), were administered as part of the pilot program and provided valuable data for evaluation. Students and their parents completed the surveys which were then analyzed by Emily Kouzes, UNR masters of public health student and intern at NCC.

Check out these results:

- 4th and 5th grade students showed an increase in sun safety practices including use of sunscreen and sunglasses as well as protective behaviors while outside.
- 6th, 7th, and 8th graders showed an increase in use of sun protective clothing including hats, long sleeves, and sunglasses. There was also an increase in those reporting they felt they and their friends did not look better with a suntan.
- 10th grade students reported increased use of sunscreen when outside and use of hats, sunglasses, and long sleeve shirts.

Data also showed that as students got older they were less receptive to certain messages. For example, 10th grade students were more likely to think they and their friends looked better with a tan. This feedback has been used to make adjustments to the program for future years. For Ms. Kouzes' full analysis and report, go to www.SunSmartNevada.org.



\$un Smart Spending

Take a look at how donations of all sizes contribute to the success of Sun Smart Schools:

\$25 = UV sensitive bracelets for one classroom

\$200 = purchase and plant one shade tree at a school

\$300 = one automatic sunscreen dispenser and 4 refill pouches

\$1,500 = program costs for one school for one year

A District-Wide Commitment for Douglas County Kids

Impressed with the success of the pilot program at their own Gardnerville Elementary School, administrators at the 6,000-student Douglas County School District approved the Sun Smart Schools program for implementation in all 13 schools (elementary, middle, and high schools) for the 2016-2017 school year.

Chief school nurse Jen Tyndall quickly became a champion for the program, and working with NCC and the district's operations team installed automatic sunscreen dispensers in each school. The Sun Smart curriculum was delivered to teachers throughout the district, and assemblies and presentations began to dot the calendar.

An assembly at Gardnerville Elementary School marked the official district-wide launch of Sun Smart Schools, complete with a 5 S's presentation and

the planting of five fast-growing shade trees donated by Minden's Mountain View Tree Farm and the school's parent teacher organization. School principal Shannon Brown was also awarded "champion status" for his work during the program's pilot year.

To-date the program has presented assemblies at Scarselli and Gardnerville

elementary schools, and completed 13 classroom presentations to elementary and high school students.

Local meteorologist Mike Alger led one presentation during the pilot year, and the remaining presentations featured melanoma survivor Bria Hosier, who graduated in December from UNR with a degree in public health.



"We were so impressed with the quality of the program and curriculum, and thrilled with the positive health benefits of sun safety for our students, that the decision was easy to make Sun Smart Schools a district-wide program this year."

– Jen Tyndall, Chief School Nurse, Douglas County School District

Sun Smart on the Farm

Blustery weather couldn't dampen spirits for Skin Cancer Prevention Day at Bill & Rocky's Bella Vista Farm in Minden. The May event was the first public fundraiser for Sun Smart Schools, raising \$10,000 for the program's implementation in Douglas County. It was also the first glimpse of Sun Smart Schools for many residents in the area. Attendees got a chance to see their skin as the sun does inside a skin analyzer machine, while a nurse from Renown Institute for Cancer provided guidance on any trouble areas of sun damage. The Sun Smart tent provided sun safety education, free sunscreen, and UV-sensitive bracelets. There was also a raffle, live music, a barbecue, and a farmer's market and farm tour.



Sunscreen in the Community: Donations for Youth

Even students who don't attend a Sun Smart school are getting a dose of sun safety! NCC has partnered with several community organizations to introduce Sun Smart concepts to students through their own programming.

The Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation provides sunscreen and a brief training on the 5 S's for their Student Stewards. Their program reaches 1,500 students in 26 Title I schools in Washoe County.

Student runners in grades three through eight from 26 Title I schools participating in the Girls on the Run of the Sierra program also benefit from Sun Smart Schools. At the beginning of the season volunteer coaches received sun safety education and sunscreen to share with students who train outdoors.



Organizers of the Reebok Ragnar Las Vegas relay race have embraced the message of sun safety by donating \$1,500 to Sun Smart Schools to support the program at Rogers Elementary School in Las Vegas. Runners at the race learned more about the Sun Smart program through a sunscreen station set up at one of the race's exchange points and hosted by stage 3 melanoma survivor and NCC board member Stacey Escalante. We are thrilled to have this partnership in place!



A Bright Idea

Sunscreen in every school – that's a dream for NCC and a goal for Sun Smart Schools. Thanks to a partnership with Bright Guard, it one day may become a reality. Through a grant from the Melanoma Foundation of New England, NCC received its first two Bright Guard automatic sunscreen dispensers. A partnership with the company quickly formed resulting in dispensers and sunscreen for schools throughout the program. For each sunscreen dispenser or case of sunscreen Bright Guard sells on behalf of Sun Smart Schools, NCC receives a portion of the proceeds to benefit the program. It's a win-win, getting sunscreen out to those who need it and funding the sun safety program too!

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Sun Smart Schools is a program of Nevada Cancer Coalition, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. For more information visit www.SunSmartNevada.org or call 775-737-9720.

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