

Celebration at Friars Point Elementary School Friday, October 30, 2009

A transformation in attitude, environment, and personal choices was very evident at Friars Point Elementary School today when Principal Sherry Coleman and PE Teacher Michael Campanova gathered staff and students in the gymnasium to welcome with Senator Robert Jackson, Lela Keys, and other distinguished guests for their ribbon cutting celebrating Project Fit!

In her remarks to introduce Lela Keys, Principal Coleman mentioned their first meeting more than two years ago at the Coahoma County Community Health Council sponsored by Get A Life. She acknowledged Lela as a great friend of Friars Point who has helped bring many good things to the school.

Coach Campanova, who at his first CHC meeting two years ago wondered out loud if things could change at Friars Point, enthusiastically told the students and staff that “we have everything we need to be fit” at Friars Point now. He told the standing room only crowd that the Project Fit equipment was there for the entire community and encouraged them to come and use it after school and on weekends.

From the first donation of DDR equipment from the Coahoma CHC all the way to combi ovens in the kitchen and a full time school nurse thanks to the Bower Foundation, Project Fit equipment outside and in the staff fitness center from Blue Cross/Blue Shield of MS Foundation, and students embracing all the change, Friars Point is a school empowered, energized and equipped to turn out healthier kids!

One 5th grader proudly told me they had salads everyday in the cafeteria but she doesn't just eat salad because their other food is healthy now. “We don't fry ANYTHING at our school anymore” she told me with a big smile.....and she added, “the new food tastes good.”

Xandra Keys, who manages the Fruit and Veggie grant the school got, (also from the Bower Foundation) said the students get a fresh fruit snack twice a day. She uses fresh fruit prepared on the new slicer combined with packaged fruit obtained through food service and has only spent an additional \$300 thus far this school year to provide the fresh fruit snacks!

From the very beginning when their DDR equipment arrived, the school staff has embraced their opportunities with one thing leading to another and today the students in this rural Delta town right up against the levee have a real chance to escape the obesity epidemic our state is normally credited with leading and live longer, healthier, more productive lives.