

Librarian's Shelf by Brad Hruska

"L.A.N.A the Iguana"

Studies suggest that children who are physically active and eat healthier tend to be more well-rounded than those who do not. Researchers also note that such habits can lead to a life-long respect of fitness and nutrition. But for parents like me, who find it difficult to personally make the best choices when it comes to exercise and nutrition, it is hard to know what options are ideal for our growing families. Luckily Columbus has a number of organizations like the Columbus Public Library (CPL), the Columbus YMCA (Y), the UNL Extension Office-Platte County, and the East Central Health District (ECHD) that can assist families in these areas. Now when people ponder fitness and nutrition, they don't normally think of their local libraries; however, CPL offers a number of quality books like "My Food Pyramid: Eat Right. Exercise. Have Fun" by Alisha Niehaus and "Eat Right: Your Guide to Maintaining a Healthy Diet" by Allyson Schrier that can equip parents with the basic understanding of what proper fitness and nutrition entails.

Columbus is fortunate to have a sound YMCA program and to be getting a new Y facility opening late September, early October. Corey Briggs, Thom Schmit, and Jonathan Niles have partnered with CPL in the past to provide sports related events to library summer reading participants that not only teach children important sports techniques but also reiterates that getting out on to the field and court can be fun.

The past two summers CPL has worked with the UNL Extension Office-Platte County to provide hands-on activities to students going into the fifth and sixth grades. Jill Goedeken and Mindy Vyhnalek's primary goal for the programs has been to encourage older students to make healthier eating choices and to understand that what they put into their bodies matters. These activities also included motion games to get students out of their seat and onto their feet and exercise.

Back in early May, the East Central Health District (ECHD) sponsored a healthy-eating kit entitled "L.A.N.A. Preschool Program" to the resources CPL has to offer on nutrition. L.A.N.A. is an acronym for "**L**earning **A**bout **N**utrition through **A**ctivities" and is a mascot/curriculum used by ECHD to encourage families to indulge in a more healthy diet of fruits and veggies. The kit includes a L.A.N.A the Iguana puppet, plush toy fruits and veggies, a cookbook, and a CD power point presentation. L.A.N.A. is available to all CPL cardholders including parents, daycare providers, and teachers for check out. This interactive kit is located up in the Children's Room and can be borrowed for three weeks.

So if you want to get your family on the track to good health and fitness, contact one of the many organizations in the Columbus area that has health as one of its primary goals and don't forget to jog on over to the Columbus Public Library and checkout the resources we have to offer as well. If you have any questions about L.A.N.A. or the other programs mentioned in the article, contact me at (402) 564-7116 opt. 4.