

News release



April 25, 2014

For more information:

[Mary Waggoner](#), Director of Communications, 425-385-4040

[Robert Polk](#), Athletics, Healthy, Fitness and Activities Director, 425-385-4216

Great moves earn fifth-graders points and fitness in Gear Up & Go! School Matchups

Across the county, fifth-graders competed to “out move” their peers

Students in four district elementary schools have taken top honors for physical activity in the first ever Gear Up & Go! [Winter School Matchups](#). Those schools are Port Gardner Parent Partnership, Cedar Wood, Lowell and Silver Firs elementary schools.

For the past eight weeks, fifth-grade students across Snohomish County have been running, jumping and playing more. Working together as teams representing their schools, they went head to head in matchups against other schools in their districts.



Students were movin' and vyin' for top spots in three categories:

- **Engagement** – the percentage who synced their PowerPods (like a FitBit for kids) at least once a week. This honor went to the students in the Port Gardner Parent Partnership.
- **Activity** – the average number of points earned each week per school. The fifth-graders at Cedar Wood outscored the other schools.
- **Best Week** – the number of students increasing physical activity levels compared to the previous week. Silver Firs students jumped away with this award.

Lowell Elementary students and those at Port Gardner Parent Partnership were among only a dozen county schools to be undefeated in any of the eight Winter Matchup matches.

(more)

Lots of friendly competition abounds in these Matchups. More than nine out of every 10 elementary schools in Snohomish County have energetic fifth-graders getting off the couch, taking out the trash, adding up steps and jumps during lunch hour – anything to rack up the points on the PowerPods. In the last eight weeks, students have earned a combined 36,461,872 points with all that movement. “Enough to register on a Richter Scale,” laughed one mom.

“School Matchups was a way to entice students to move following winter break and keep that movement going through Spring Break,” said Carly Kaufman, strategic program manager for *Gear Up & Go!* “The results were even better than we imagined. Students moved more and worked together as teams to encourage and motivate each other to stay active.”

Gear Up & Go! is a countywide initiative created by the [Snohomish County Health Leadership Coalition](#). The Coalition’s goal is to encourage healthy habits among fifth-grade students and to reverse a decline in healthy youth activity by coupling fitness with innovative technology that engages and entertains fifth-graders. *Gear Up & Go!* has been underway since October 2013, and nearly 10,000 students and school staff are using the technology, earning points and staying active.

Just as the students are learning the value and benefits of teaming in this program, so the program itself benefits from community partnerships. Students in *Gear Up & Go!* have access to the Snohomish County YMCAs, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Snohomish County and the Lynnwood Recreational Center.

“The School Matchups give PE and health teachers an inspirational way to motivate and energize their students,” said Scott Forslund, executive director of the [Snohomish County Health Leadership Coalition](#). “Students in some districts are moving more than others. Now we can learn from those differences to see what works best to keep students moving and nudge them toward physical activity as a healthy, life-long habit.”

Because the Winter Matchups were so successful, a new six-week Spring Matchup launches on Monday, April 28. This time, to up the ante and suspense, students will be competing with schools outside of their own districts. Full information about the Spring Matchup program is [online](#).



--- end ---

Background information:

Snohomish County Health Leadership Coalition

The Snohomish County Health Leadership Coalition is countywide alliance of local leaders in business, healthcare, education and non-profit organizations, dedicated to addressing the challenges of delivering sustainable healthcare. The group aims to promote the economic development of the region by improving the health, quality of life and competitiveness of the community.

Gear Up & Go!

Gear Up & Go! is a countywide initiative designed to be fun, to encourage students to be more active and foster a lifelong commitment to a healthy lifestyle. This local initiative was created by the [Snohomish County Health Leadership Coalition](#) with school district superintendents and a county-wide working group of district teachers, health and physical education professionals.

For more information:

Mark Fox

Mark.fox@nyhus.com

206-838-3464

Gina Maffei

Gina.Maffei@nyhus.com

206-838-3444