

February 2021

News Release



Teachers Model Better Health and Wellness for Their Students

Health in Action (HIA), an innovative school-based programme of INMED Partnerships for Children and the Mondelēz International Foundation, combines participatory education in nutrition and healthy lifestyles, access to fresh food via school gardens and regular break-time fitness activities led by INMED-trained unemployed youth. The programme is facilitated by INMED South Africa, a registered local NGO.

The programme has reached almost 260 000 learners, 6 900 teachers and 1477 food preparers in 342 schools in Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth.

Underpinning the HiA program model is the belief that long-term improvements in nutrition are not possible without changes in everyday behaviour. Realising that teachers are the most effective role models, the INMED South Africa team introduced a wellness challenge during the last quarter of 2020 designed to help teachers and Health in Action programme staff make positive changes in their nutrition and physical activity habits.

Health in Action Program Manager Dr Sandra Pretorius says the challenge was introduced through educational workshops, encouraging both programme staff and teachers in Health in Action schools to work toward a healthy weight, follow a daily exercise routine, grow their own vegetables and learn to prepare healthy meals at home. “To further motivate challenge participants, we created a WhatsApp group through which we regularly shared nutrition, physical activity and gardening tips,” she adds.

In total, 79 teachers and staff submitted entries documenting the changes they made for better health over the course of the eight-week challenge period. Three winners from both groups were selected, each receiving grocery vouchers ranging between R1 500 and R3 000.

In the teacher category, Ms. Rogaiter Mahlangu of Diepsloot Primary School took first place, followed by Ms. Nolutwe Mngumevu of KwaNoxolo Primary School in second, and Ms. Lindiwe Sibindi of Diepsloot Primary School in third place.

“At the beginning of the challenge, with the help of the knowledge gained from our nutrition workshops, I drafted a weekly menu as guide, which I followed religiously,” said Ms. Mngumevu. “Each day, I did exercises for 30 minutes in the morning before I prepared for work and 30 minutes in the afternoon, and I made sure that I drink at least 8 glasses of water. As such, I’ve lost 8 kilograms during the challenge and I feel much healthier.”

Additional merit prizes were also awarded to five teachers, including Ms. Thabisile Nkosi from Diepsloot Primary School, who lost 12 kg (approximately 26 lb.) during the challenge. “Since the start of the challenge, I now eat plenty of fruit and vegetables and I also drink between 2-3 litres of water a day, whereas previously I would hardly finish a litre of water a day. I also exercise 2 or 3 times a week doing walking and weight lifting for 30-45 minutes,” she said.

Among Health in Action staff, Break-Time Buddy Siphosethu Molo took first place, followed by John Westcott and Thandiwe Mboniswa in second and third place respectively. “At the start of the challenge I weighed about 64 kilograms, and I wanted to obtain a normal BMI so much,” Siphosethu said. “With a regular exercise regime and a much healthier diet I managed to lose 5 kilograms during the challenge. I am very grateful and feel much healthier.”

Pretorius says although the initial challenge has concluded, most participants said they would continue the challenge on their own, encouraged by what they learned and the progress they made.

As prize winner Ms. Sibindi said so aptly, “I really appreciate the time that the INMED team spent with us and their concern about our diet, health and lifestyle. I learned that it is not a matter of having everything money can buy and a vast amount of land to be healthy, but it’s your desire to live good and take little steps each day. Thanks for showing us love and adding more years to our lives.”

CAPTION

Wellness challenge winner Rogaiter won R3000. Mahlangu tends one of the multiple container vegetable gardens she started at home as part of the challenge.

ENDS

PREPARED ON BEHALF OF INMED SOUTH AFRICA BY CATHY FINDLEY PR. CONTACT JACQUI MOLOI WITH ANY QUERIES ON (071 764 8233) OR EMAIL JACQUI@FINDLEYPR.CO.ZA

About INMED

INMED Partnerships for Children is a non-profit international development organisation that has worked in more than 100 countries for over 30 years to build pathways for vulnerable children and families to achieve well-being and self-reliance. Through multisector partnerships and in-country affiliates, INMED builds effective systems that deliver innovative and sustainable approaches to break complex cycles of poverty for current and future generations.

Since 2006, in-country affiliate INMED South Africa has been working in collaboration with a wide range of corporate, foundation and government partners to transform the health, lives and futures of South Africa's most vulnerable children. INMED South Africa's programmes focus on food security, child and community health, and economic and social development via climate-smart agriculture and participatory education. Incorporated under Section 21, INMED South Africa is a registered non-profit organization (NPC/PBO) recognized by the Department of Social Development and the South African Revenue Service (SARS). For more information, visit:

www.inmed.org.za.

About the Mondelēz International Foundation

The Mondelēz International Foundation (MIF) is the charitable arm of global food and beverage conglomerate Mondelēz International. Through international partnerships with leading NGOs, MIF funds nutrition education, active play and fresh foods programs to empower more than one million children and their families around the world to lead healthier lives. For information, visit: <https://za.mondelezinternational.com/>

