

## 2016 FRED O'CONNELL AWARD WINNING PROJECTS

### **2016 Joint Winner - The Parents' Association of St. Kevin's National School, Greystones, Co. Wicklow with their project**

#### 'Healthy Mind Healthy Body Week'

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#### **Purpose of the project:**

Reinforce the positive benefits to children of healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle for their overall mental wellbeing in a fun and practical way.

#### **Who needs to be involved:**

The Parents' Association Committee, parent volunteers, teachers and children in the school.

#### **How to implement in your school?**

**Step 1:** The Parents' Association Committee or a Parents' Association subcommittee plans a schedule for a 'Healthy Mind Healthy Body' week.

In St. Kevin's National School the week was broken down into 5 elements:

- Mindfulness and Krav workshops
- Food day
- A recipe book
- Sponsored walk
- A talk for parents on children's mental health

**Step 2:** Two weeks before the chosen week, the Parents' Association to send a notice out to all parents and school staff with information on the planned week and looking for parents to volunteer their time to help out during the week.

#### **Ideas from St. Kevin's 'Healthy Mind Healthy Body' week**

##### **Mindfulness and Krav workshops**

An experienced yoga teacher conducted workshops for parents, teachers and the children in the school. The yoga teacher's philosophy combined breathing exercises, postures, creative play and relaxation to sow the seeds of a lifetime of health and wellness.

A qualified Krav Maga Global Kids Instructor held workshops for children, where they learned self-defence, self-awareness and confidence-building skills in a safe and fun environment. The main objective of the class was to empower children to use their voices to defend and not to attack.

##### **Food day**

Food day was split into two elements a) Food tasting and b) the story of sugar. The main objective of this day was that it would be fun, educational and interactive.

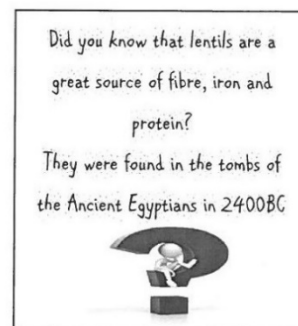
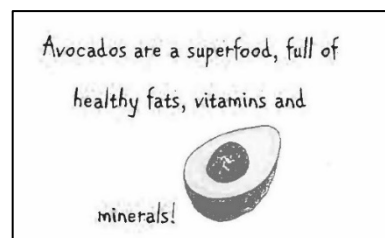
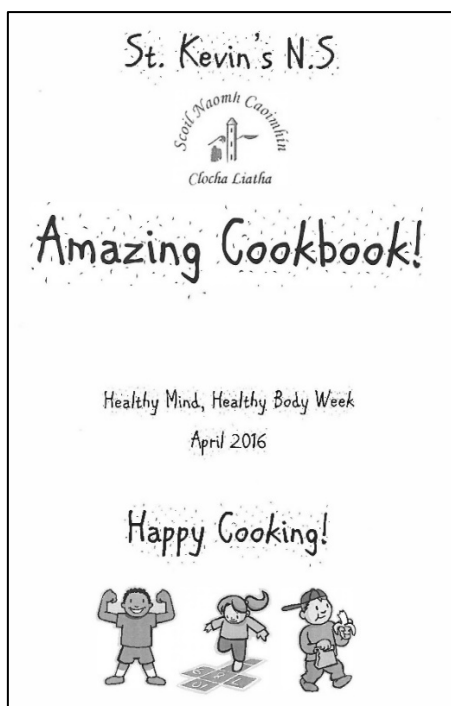
Children were given the opportunity to sample healthy food provided by the parents, including rice cakes, vegetable crisps, organic yogurts, fresh fruit and veg and a number of parents made home-

made healthy dips, carrot muffins and smoothies. Most of the food tastings included allergen free items to cater for children with allergies.

The story of sugar saw children being able to guess the amount of sugar in familiar products, in a hands-on workshop. They were also informed about their recommended daily intake of added sugar and how to calculate this.

### Recipe book

Parents in the school were asked to submit healthy, easy to make, tried and tested recipes for inclusion in a recipe book. The recipes were discussed in the classrooms by teachers with the children. Over 40 recipes were submitted and compiled into a book, broken into four chapters, breakfast, lunch, dinner and baking & sweet treats. Pictures, graphics and insights into ingredients were included in the book to make it visually appealing to parents and children.



### Sponsored walk

The annual sponsored school walk was linked with the 'Healthy Mind Healthy Body Week' to raise funds to upgrade the outdoor playing fields. 550 children, all the teaching staff and 45 parents took part. The walk had a theme of 'Tremendous Ties' where each child created a tie to wear.

### A talk for Parents on Children's Mental Health

The PA committee organised a National Parents Council Primary information session for parents 'Supporting Parents to Support their Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing' which took place during the Healthy Mind Healthy Body week.

### Outcome

This was a very positive week for parents, children and teachers; children learned new skills, tasted and enjoyed new foods and parents became more aware of their children's mental health.

The school will continue to use this formula for a Healthy Mind Healthy Body week for the foreseeable future.