

To: Kevin Kirkland, Post-Gazette

For Your Consideration

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### **Kids Lead Movement for Healthy Habits in Schools**

February 4, 2016 – Poolapalooza. Walking Club in the mornings. In-class dance breaks. Home workout challenges. These are some of the activities Jennifer Watenpool and her teacher at Aiken Elementary School submitted that won them a \$1,000 Champion Schools Award from Phipps Conservatory's Let's Move Pittsburgh initiative last year. The 2016 Champion School Grant application process is now open for 2016 and \$40,000 will be awarded this go around. The deadline for submission is April 1, 2016.

As a result of Jennifer and her teacher's efforts, students that joined the Walk/Jog Club got an extra 60-70 minutes of exercise a week and improved their fitness testing scores, broke school records and beat their own personal score. They even learned to dance and perform in front of the entire school.

In 2015, Let's Move Pittsburgh doled out 41 grants to elementary schools, providing the impetus for as many schools to develop programs that improve healthy lifestyle programming for children. Since students spend a majority of their day in school, it is important that kids have the chance to be physically active and eat healthy foods. As important is that they develop those habits as a lifestyle inside and outside of school. The projects need to address one of the following focus areas: Bag the Junk, Get Kids Moving, or Teach Kids to Grow and Cook Food. Any educator, administrator, student, food service director, school nurse or even parent can apply on behalf of a licensed early childhood center, pre-kindergarten or elementary school in Allegheny County. More information can be found at [letsmovepittsburgh.org/champion](http://letsmovepittsburgh.org/champion).