



Project ACES in Action: How One Teacher Is Motivating Students in May

SHAPE America member Janice Skene, Glastonbury, CT

Twenty-nine years ago, as a second-year health and physical education teacher in Glastonbury, CT in 1989, Janice Skene was encouraged by her colleague and mentor Connie Kapral (CTAHPERD Executive Director) to have her elementary school take part in a new initiative to promote [National Physical Education and Sport Week](#) and to motivate students to exercise. Janice's schools have been participating in Project ACES, "the world's largest exercise class," on the first Wednesday of May at 10 am local time, ever since!

This month Buttonball Lane (BBL) students are currently working on morning announcements and posters to promote the following events:

- **Project ACES (All Students Exercise Simultaneously)**- all BBL staff and students will join children around the world at 10:00 a.m. on May 2, with a school walk to promote proper health and fitness habits.
- **Bicycle Safety**- Students on the BBL Leadership Team are using their iPads to create a Bicycle Safety video for students culminating in National Bike/Walk to School Day on May 2. Over 300 staff, students and parents are expected to participate.
- **Kids Marathon**- BBL students are participating in an eight-week "in school" running and nutrition education program that will enable them to complete a full marathon (26.2 miles) by running approximately three miles per week before and after school. 155 participants will finish their "Final Mile Celebration" in front of cheering friends and family at Glastonbury High School on May 20. Many participants and their families will also participate in the Bill Lander's Building Bridges Memorial 5K on May 12.
- **"Sock" Hop**- On May 23, staff and students will come together for a morning dance activity to get their hearts and brains going! This event collected 350 pairs of brand new socks for families in need throughout Glastonbury and the Greater Hartford area last year.



- **Healthy Hero Fitness Cards**- the Glastonbury Elementary Physical Education Department is working together to develop a Fitness Calendar for students to complete during May.

Janice says there are countless reasons why she thinks Project ACES is a fun way to recognize National Physical Education and Sport Week. “Our students love it because they feel a sense of achievement, being a part of a bigger movement of students from around the world who are participating at the same time as they are, sharing the same goal of connecting daily exercise and lifetime fitness. Students also enjoy the opportunity for all grade levels to participate at their own rate and pace together at the same time- there is no competition. Finally, the focus is overall school community caring about their health as everyone participates- administrators, teachers, secretaries, paraprofessionals, tutors and custodians supporting that fitness and exercise are important at all ages.

Feedback has been fantastic- teachers and students comment that they wish we could do Project ACES every day! Comments have included “best day ever,” “do we really have to go back inside,” “that was so much fun,” “I loved walking with a friend.” So much laughter, smiles, high fives, hugs and hearts racing from the sheer joy of physical activity! It does not get any better than that!



Looking for a **cool** idea for May Week?

Hold a school-wide celebration to promote living an active healthy lifestyle! **Take part in Project Aces** – the world’s largest exercise class, May 2, a signature program of the Youth Fitness Coalition.