



OSSINING UFSD NEWS

For Immediate Release

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Brookside School Club Recruits Kids with Asthma

(OSSINING, NY) – “You have asthma?” one student asked another, surprised, as he arrived for his first Asthma Club meeting at Brookside School in Ossining, NY.

It’s just what School Nurse Alice Habina likes to hear. For six years, she has worked to reduce the stigma associated with the chronic ailment among third graders at the school by inviting sufferers to a weekly lunchtime meeting to learn about the disease and how to control it.

“Our goal is for kids not to call in sick with asthma,” she said. “It’s manageable.”

According to the American Lung Association, asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism due to chronic conditions, accounting for 14 million lost school days last year. More than 20 million Americans suffer from asthma; more that one-third are under the age of 18.

Nearly 20 students at Brookside have enrolled in this year’s Asthma Club, which will meet Tuesdays in October for small-group discussions about what triggers asthma, how to relax during an attack and how to control asthma. The American Lung Association has provided Habina with more than \$200 worth of supplies to give to each student, including dust-mite mattress covers and other essentials.

Habina is dedicated to her asthma cause. If a student calls in sick more than two times with asthma, she arranges a weekend home visit. She brings lunch to the house, and an interpreter if needed, and meets with parents to show them how they might be able to reduce

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attacks. For one home, she secured two air purifiers from a private fund, as well as dust-mite covers for mattresses and pillows. She also got the child a referral to an allergist. “She hasn’t been in the hospital since,” said Habina.

The Asthma Club meets Tuesdays through October 23 beginning at 11:05 a.m. in the Brookside School Library.

The Ossining Union Free School District, nationally recognized for its mission to further the success of all children, serves approximately 4,200 pupils in six schools: Roosevelt School for newborn to four-year-olds, Park Early Childhood Center for kindergarten through first grade, Brookside School for grades two and three, Claremont School for grades four and five, Anne M. Dornier Middle School for grades six through eight, and Ossining High School for grades nine through 12.

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