

## Hamilton school promotes healthy living

Story and photo by Susan Meeker [smeeker@tcnpress.com](mailto:smeeker@tcnpress.com) | Posted: Tuesday, January 27, 2015 9:33 pm

Hamilton City Elementary School students and their families have joined a statewide movement for a healthy change in 2015.

A first-of-a-kind event held Jan. 15 at the school, launched the newly-named Center for Healthy Communities' efforts to introduce grade school students and their families in Glenn County to the importance of proper hydration and good nutrition.

Students learned about simple changes to good health can be as simple as drinking water instead of soda, eating more fruits and vegetables and moving more.

"I learned that if you eat a Big Mac, you will have to walk 100 minutes just to burn it off," said Danny Alvarez, a fifth-grader and soccer player from Hamilton City. "That is a lot."

The event was held also to launch the opening of the school's new "Rethink your Drink" water bottle filling station recently installed and sponsored in by the Center for Healthy Communities and First Five Glenn County.

"By the time a young child is thirsty and takes a drink of water, he or she is already in an early stage of dehydration," said Patricia Loera, First Five GC executive director. Loera said research shows that children ages 3 to 5 years old need at least four to five cups of water each day for proper brain development and general good health.

That need, she said, increases as the child gets older.

"A child 14 to 18 needs to drink eight to 10 cups of water a day," she said.

Melissa Stearns, program manager promoting Champions for Change, said events where children and their families interact with booths highlighting nutrition and physical activities is a good way for them learn about nutrition and health.

At the same time, the event encourages students to make healthy changes, visit local Farmers Markets, and enjoy activities like biking and gardening.

As part of the celebration, Hamilton students were given reusable water bottles.



### Wellness

Yasmin Linares, 6, left, shown with Gricel Aristo of the Center for Healthy Communities, laughs at the tickle of a blood pressure cuff at a Passport to Wellness event on Jan. 15 at Hamilton City Elementary School.

The Center for Healthy Communities at Chico State University, Chico, formerly known as Center for Nutrition and Activity Promotion, is making water available for student in kindergarten and transitional kindergarten.

Darcy Pollak, Hamilton Elementary School principal, said efforts to get her students to drink more water has been successful as many now flock to the water station instead of reaching for a sugary beverage to quench their thirst.

"It's been fabulous," Pollak said.

The Center for Healthy Communities is planning similar events at Mill Street School in Orland and Murdock Elementary School in Willows.

Students said the event was not only educational, but fun.

"I learned how to make a smoothie with a bicycle," said Jose Magana, 9.

And when he was done, he said he didn't mind that the fruit smoothie contained spinach. "It was pretty good," he said.