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11/4/10

## Sterling Area Health Center teams up with Standish-Sterling Middle School

School Success program designed to help students

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1

STANDISH — The Sterling Area Health Center and the Standish-Sterling Middle School have teamed up for a number of years to help “at-risk students” get back on track.

A program called School Success has been in operation in Standish-Sterling Area Schools for a number of years, and for the last six, School Success Educator Rita Lundgren, a Sterling Area Health Center Employee, has been helping students get their schoolwork and organization back on track.

“This program teaches students how to do this thing called school,” she said. “We target (students) who are at risk of failing classes, or who miss a large amount of time from school. We also try and connect with students who simply do not know how to organize their school work.”

Lundgren said she also contacts parents and discusses ways they can help their children with their studies.

“Maybe they can take the (television) out of the bedroom, or I see if they can find a place for (the student) to study quietly,” she said. “It’s important for (students) to know how to organize their everyday lives.”

School Success is a state-funded program that Lundgren said, at times, has around 60 percent of students make improvements.

“Some years (results) are lower,” she said. “It depends; if they are willing to work, they will see improvements. I can give them the tools, but they have to use them.”

Lundgren said, “The proof is in the pudding.”

“The bad habits need to be broken,” she said.

Currently School Success focuses on 6th- through 8th-grade students. Lundgren said she is currently stationed in the school two days a week.

“I work in the study skills room sometimes, tutoring students, or I take them aside to give them resources,” she said.

Students can get involved with School Success in a number of different ways. Lundgren said teachers who see a student struggling approach her for help.

“I approach (students) who I think could use help too,” she said. “I can walk by a student’s locker and see stuff fall out and give them advice.”

Lundgren said she spends around 40 hours a week with individual students, helping them with organization or contacting parents.

“I will check-in with parents every three or four weeks,” she said.

Lundgren said the program will continue to grow and evolve.

“It all depends on funding,” she said. “As long as the state sees a need in schools, we will continue.”

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