



# SunWise monitor

An Update on EPA's SunWise Program

## Calling All SunWise Artists!

The SHADE Foundation and EPA are proud to announce the 2007 SunWise® with SHADE® National Poster Contest. This year, the contest will run nationwide from January 1 through May 1, 2007, in all 50 states and U.S. territories. Over the past four years, more than 40,000 students have submitted posters. Prizes from the SHADE Foundation include:

- **State Winners**  
\$250 savings bond, plus a \$500 SHADE grant for the school (some states might have additional prizes)
- **Regional Winners**  
\$500 savings bond, and a \$2,500 SHADE grant for the school
- **National Winner**  
A trip for four to Disney World (or something comparable), and a \$5,000 SHADE grant for the school

All state winners will be entered into regional and national contests. Previous regional and state prizes have included a trip to Fenway Park in Boston, Massachusetts, to throw out the first

pitch of the game, and a trip to Bristol Motor Speedway in Bristol, Tennessee, to start the race.

Poster submissions should be original and creative and incorporate SunWise Action Steps to prevent skin cancer and raise sun safety awareness.

Examples of prevention and awareness tips presented on the posters in the past include:

- Using sunscreen.
- Wearing a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses.
- Seeking shade when the sun's ultra-violet (UV) radiation is most intense, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Covering up with full-length clothing to protect one's skin.
- Checking the UV Index.



Past poster contest winners at Fenway Park in Boston.

To find out more about this year's contest and to download an official poster guide, visit the SHADE Foundation's Web site at <[www.shadefoundation.org/posters.php](http://www.shadefoundation.org/posters.php)>.

## New SunWise Logo Unveiled

Earlier this year, SunWise unveiled its new logo. You can see the logo in new documents and on the SunWise Web site at <[www.epa.gov/sunwise](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise)>. Also of interest, SunWise has trademarked the term "SunWise" and its logo.



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# The Truth Behind Vitamin D

At a recent conference, experts presented some interesting findings on the relationship between vitamin D and sun exposure. The conference—the first ever North American Conference on UV, Vitamin D, and Health—held in March 2006, brought together researchers, clinicians, and public health professionals to discuss the health effects of vitamin D. Key findings from the conference include:

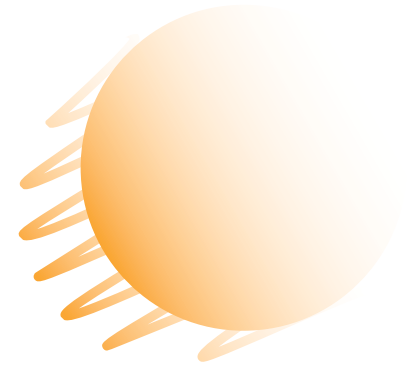
- There is strong evidence that UV exposure from the sun and other sources is harmful and may contribute to health problems such as skin cancer, melanoma, and some cataracts.
- Experts believe that adequate vitamin D is beneficial to musculoskeletal health and can help prevent fractures in the elderly. There is also a growing body of evidence that vitamin D might have a positive effect on some types of cancer—in particular, colorectal cancer. Experts are concerned that levels of vitamin D might be too low in the general population to achieve these health benefits.
- Vitamin D is obtained through skin exposure to UVB radiation, and also through diet (particularly fortified

foods) and supplementation. To minimize the health risks associated with UVB exposure, while maximizing the potential benefits of optimum levels of vitamin D, supplementation and small amounts of sun exposure are the preferred methods of obtaining vitamin D.

- Groups at risk of not obtaining adequate amounts of vitamin D include:

- The elderly.
- Exclusively breast-fed babies.
- Individuals with dark skin pigmentation.
- Individuals with limited skin exposure to the sun (e.g., housebound individuals or those who wear clothing covering most of the skin for cultural/religious reasons).
- Those living above 37° latitude during the winter (Canada and northern United States).

If you are concerned that you might be deficient in vitamin D, discuss supplementation with your health care practitioner. Current recommendations of



200 IU/day up to age 50, 400 IU for ages 50 to 70, and 600 IU for those over age 70, are now considered too low for optimal health by many experts. The most appropriate supplementation level is likely to be some quantity above these recommendations but below the safe upper level of 2,000 IU/day for adults. More research is needed to determine the optimal amount of vitamin D supplementation required to prevent health problems.

SunWise would like to reemphasize that before changing your vitamin D intake, you should consult your physician.

## A SunWise Hat Trick

In July 2006, the SunWise Program received its third Gold Triangle Award from the American Academy of Dermatology (the Academy). The award was presented in recognition of the program's new UV Alert, a joint venture between EPA and the National Weather Service that provides guidance for locations around the country that are expected to experience well above normal UV radiation levels on a given day.

The Gold Triangle Award recognizes media, industry, the health community, and individuals who further the understanding of dermatological issues and encourage healthy behavior in skin care. At the 10th annual awards ceremony, held in San Diego, California, President Bush sent greetings and congratulated the honorees, and actors Robert Wagner and Jill St. John (in photo at right) emceed the event. To celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the awards ceremony, the Academy highlighted EPA's UV Index and the growth of the SunWise Program.



Linda Rutsch of EPA (center) accepts the Gold Triangle Award on behalf of the SunWise Program.

# Sun Safety Legislation For States

One way to increase sun safety awareness is by passing legislation, and recently, two states did just that. In April 2005, Arizona became the first state in the nation to mandate that SunWise be taught in all K-8 public schools. As a result, more than 75 percent of schools in Arizona are registered as SunWise partners. The text of the law reads:

“All public schools shall incorporate instruction into the existing curricula in the common school grades on skin cancer prevention if the United States Environmental Protection Agency furnishes a comprehensive program on the

prevention of skin cancer free of charge to schools. The instruction shall be provided in an age appropriate manner and shall include the following components:

1. The basic facts about skin cancer, including the negative impact of human exposure to ultraviolet radiation obtained through sunburns and tanning.
2. A comprehensive set of strategies and behaviors to reduce the risk of contracting skin cancer.”

In addition, in January 2006, the Utah legislature passed a resolution encouraging Utah schools to educate children about the risks of sun exposure. This nonbinding resolution was sent to all schools in the state and lists statistics about skin cancer and resources for educating children. SunWise is listed as one of the four resources available to schools. In Utah, more than 30 percent of all K-8 schools are registered as SunWise schools.

## A Letter From Miss Maryland

Dear Friend,

When I was diagnosed with skin cancer last year, my first thought was that it wasn't “real” cancer. I assumed my doctor could just cut the odd-looking mole off of my back and my life as a college student would go on as normal.

It wasn't until my doctor told me I needed surgery immediately that I realized how wrong I was. After a two-hour operation that left me with an 8-inch scar across my back and a one-inch scar under my arm where a sample of my lymph nodes was taken for further testing, I was officially diagnosed with Stage 2 melanoma. I had always thought that melanoma was something that happened to old people. How could I, at 20 years old, be diagnosed with the deadliest form of skin cancer?

As I soon learned, it was a gradual process. I have very fair skin to begin with, making me especially susceptible to sun damage. But in all likelihood the story of my melanoma really began when I was 17 years old and wanted to look good in a white dress at my prom. I thought I'd look better if I just got a little color, so I paid a few visits to the local tanning salon. I liked the results so much that I went back—again and again over the next three years, working up to a routine of 4 to 5 tanning bed sessions for 20 to 25 minutes each week.

The truth is, I had no idea how bad it was for me. I was told that getting a “base tan” was healthier because it allowed one to prevent sunburns and tan safely. I thought that I looked

healthier and prettier with darker skin. I wish I now could go back and prevent what had happened, but because I can't, I have made it my mission to help others do just that.

After 18 months filled with repeat surgeries and more doctor visits than I can count, I finally have a clean bill of health. Since becoming Miss Maryland, I have dedicated myself to spreading the word about skin cancer—how serious it really is, how to prevent it, and the importance of regular screenings. I have had the opportunity to travel with the Skin Cancer Foundation on its national skin cancer screening tours, as well as work with the American Academy of Dermatology, the Joanna Nicolay Melanoma Foundation, and the National Foundation for Cancer Research to get this message out. I am also an active member of the Maryland State Coalition for Skin Cancer Prevention. I travel to schools and programs around the state to speak of my personal experience with the disease and hope that it will help others to see what they can do to prevent my obstacles in their own lives.

Through my experience I feel driven to spread awareness about the real risks of skin cancer and teach those young and old alike to make healthy choices for the future. I didn't have to tan, I chose to and it nearly cost me my life. Take a stance against the pressure and the sun and be proud to go NATURAL!



Dream BIG!  
Brittany Lietz  
Miss Maryland 2006

## Update: “Make Sun Safety Your Goal!®” Campaign Kicks Off Again

After a short break, SunWise is again working with Major League Soccer (MLS), the U.S. Soccer Foundation (USSF), and the American Academy of Dermatology (the Academy) to bring sun safety back to the sport of soccer. In 2006, EPA produced public service announcement (PSA) posters for five teams—DC United, FC Dallas, Houston Dynamo, Columbus Crew, and Real Salt Lake—highlighting the simple action steps people can take to prevent skin cancer, cataracts, and other negative health effects from overexposure to the sun.

In addition to the posters, the Academy provided cleat bags containing sun safety information to the first 2,000 fans at 10 games. EPA is grateful for the opportunity to support the campaign and is looking forward to another productive campaign in 2007. For more information and to see copies of all five PSAs, visit [www.makesunsafetyyourgoal.org](http://www.makesunsafetyyourgoal.org).





# SunWise Reaches Out to Cities and Counties

A new SunWise initiative seeks to reach even more people with sun safety messages. The initiative—SunWise Cities/Communities—is a pilot program that coordinates and promotes the use of SunWise educational activities in school classrooms, informal education venues such as science and children’s museums, and other community-based organizations. The idea is to reinforce sun safety messages throughout the community—not just in K-8 classrooms—to get people to change their behavior when it comes to protecting themselves from the harmful health effects of UV exposure.

## SunWise Cities - Houston, TX

On August 3, 2005, SunWise joined Houston Mayor Bill White at the John P. McGovern Museum of Health & Medical Science in Houston, Texas, to launch the first SunWise community-wide initiative—SunWise Cities. The program is working to teach children simple steps that will reduce their lifetime risk of skin cancer. To become a SunWise City, Houston agreed to the following criteria:

- Encourage residents to practice EPA’s SunWise Action Steps when participating in outdoor activities.
- Endorse SunWise programs within schools and informal education programs, including city parks and recreation, after-school programs, summer camps, and children’s science centers.
- Develop a sun safety policy for city outdoor workers that includes the SunWise Action Steps.
- Promote SunWise Action Steps at all city-sponsored events and venues.

## SunWise Communities - King County, WA

SunWise Communities—officially launched in May 2006—builds on the successful SunWise Cities pilot effort launched in Houston in 2005. King

County, Washington, was the first county to officially become SunWise. On behalf of King County, Executive Ron Sims:

- Proclaimed May 1 a SunWise Day by encouraging King County residents to practice EPA’s SunWise Action Steps when participating in outdoor activities.
- Sent a letter to all King County schools encouraging staff and students to use the free SunWise Tool Kit, which provides a fun and easy-to-use sun safety and ozone science curriculum.
- Created a “SunWise Zone” at a local school to kick off SunWise Communities in Seattle and to encourage the student body to be burn-free during the summer.



SunWise Communities in action at a King County, Washington, school.

One King County school—Blaine Middle School—pledged to be SunWise during the spring and summer of 2006. After following up with the school, EPA found that students who took the pledge were more likely to practice sun safety during summer 2006 than their peers who did not take the pledge.

## Videos Educate Kids on Sun Safety

A new set of videos is available to make learning about sun safety fun and interesting. As entertaining as they are informational, *The Sun Show* videos are ideal for elementary school classrooms. Students will identify with *The Sun Show*’s hosts and field reporters—children themselves—in this pair of videos that simulate two episodes of a live television morning show. In a variety of attention-grabbing short segments, the news team uncovers the darker side of sunlight and reveals simple strategies for protecting one’s skin from dangerous UV rays. Punctuated by clever surprises, some hilarious animation, an original score, and hit song clips, viewers will find these sun safety lessons very enjoyable.

To ensure accuracy, Jeff Ashley, M.D., a dermatologist, and Andrew Manthe,



MPH, CHES, chief of the Skin Cancer Prevention Program, co-produced the videos with a panel of consultants that included several educators and EPA’s very own Linda Rutsch, director of SunWise.

Accommodating both the lower and upper elementary levels, two versions are offered: *The Sun Show – Ages 6-8* and *The Sun Show – Ages 9-11*, each including a teacher’s guide. For additional detail and to view trailers, visit <[www.SunSafetyforKids.org](http://www.SunSafetyforKids.org)>.

# SunWise Spotlight: Field Day Sports a SunWise Message

**K**aren Delgado and her 7th grade health class at Union Township School in Hampton, New Jersey, undertook an effort to keep people SunWise at the school's annual field day. The physical education teachers had been asked to set up a field day for grades 1 through 8, and the superintendent wanted it to be an all-day affair from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the direct sun!! Karen communicated her sun safety concerns to the superintendent, the school nurse, physical education teachers, and the principal. To address the concerns, the school nurse sent a note out to the students' parents informing them about the health effects of overexposure to UV, and the school was able to institute sun safety measures, including setting up a "tent" for the nurse's station to keep people in the shade.

"It was amazing to me to find out how many adults are unaware of this health issue. I put information in all the teachers' mailboxes as well. We were successful in getting the students to wear sunscreen, hats, and sunglasses. It ended up being a partially cloudy day, which in a way was worse—except for the 7th graders who KNEW the dangers! The adults kept saying, 'See, you were wor-

ried for nothing!' I don't know how many times I repeated that heat and UV light are two different issues, and that UV is present even on cooler, cloudy days! The neat thing is that I had the UV Frisbee with me. The 7th graders kept checking it...and it is impressive to see it change when, to us, it looks as if there is 'no' sun shining," said Karen.

In addition to the success at the field day, Karen's classes gave presentations to a few of the younger grades. For the 1st grade, the students presented a song incorporating "slip, slop, slap, and wrap," and made the sunglasses that are in the SunWise Tool Kit. Each participant received a certificate of SunWisdom.

For the 4th graders, some of Karen's students presented a skit, showed a PowerPoint presentation, and performed a song. Some students even made up their own puzzles based on the SunWise vocabulary and distributed them to the 4th graders.

The class also distributed sun safety information to each class in the younger grades and enclosed a SunWise pencil and UV-sensitive



bracelet from the Women's Dermatologic Society (see box below) to the youngest ones before field day, so the teachers could use it on that day.

The program has been a huge success. "I was handed the job of teaching health this year, in addition to 7th grade science," Karen said. "The SunWise Tool Kit has saved me! I was trying to plan how we could end the year with summer safety. I usually do some solar energy and other alternative energy sources learning/teaching at the end of the year in science class, so this is a perfect integration!"

For more information:  
Karen Delgado  
Union Township School  
165 Perryville Road  
Hampton, NJ 08827  
(908) 735-5511

## Women's Organization Promotes Sun Safety

**A** program sponsored by the Women's Dermatologic Society (WDS) is helping to promote sun safety to communities around the country. WDS's "Families Play Safe in the Sun"—a broad-based national campaign made possible through a generous grant from the 3M Foundation—includes a wide range of educational and outreach programs in 15 communities across the United States. The program offers free skin cancer screenings, educational materials, and dynamic sun protection activities

geared towards the needs and interests of different communities. Led by WDS member dermatologists, the campaign is designed to help spread the message of skin cancer prevention and proper skin health. SunWise provides materials to WDS for the "Adopt-a-School" component of these events and sends materials to teachers who want to learn more about sun safety.

For more information about Families Play Safe in the Sun, visit the program's Web site at <[www.playsafeinthesun.org/](http://www.playsafeinthesun.org/)>.



Linda Rutsch of EPA at a "Families Play Safe in the Sun" event.

## McWane Center Promotes SunWise

For the past three years Jan Mattingly, vice president of education, and the staff at the McWane Science Center in Birmingham, Alabama, have been busy promoting SunWise in numerous arenas. The center has featured SunWise prominently in its annual “A Clean Air Affair”—a community activity that educates the public on ways to reduce ozone and promote environmentally sound practices and sun safety.

The science center has also conducted more than 10 SunWise workshops, where it has trained countless educators on how to implement SunWise in their schools. In addition, Jan and her director of science education and school relations, Rachel Pace, presented information about SunWise at the Alabama Science Teachers Association Conference held at the center last year and will do

so again this year. More than 700 elementary, middle, and high school teachers attend this conference.

The center holds an annual Teacher Appreciation Day, and this year, it distributed SunWise Tool Kits to teachers who attended. Finally, Jan has presented with SunWise at the Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC) Conference for the past two years. ASTC is an organization of science centers and museums dedicated to furthering the public understanding of science among increasingly diverse audiences. ASTC encourages excellence and innovation in informal science learning by serving and linking its members worldwide and advancing their common goals.

Clearly Jan has been busy. SunWise staff would like to thank Jan, Rachel, and the McWane Science Center for their stead-



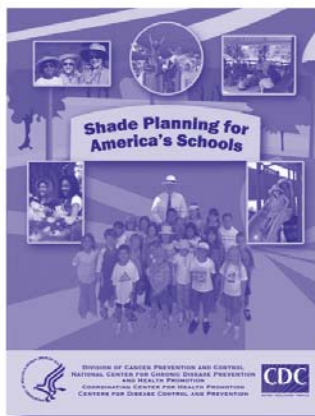
Jan Mattingly from the McWane Science Center presents a SunWise message.

fast support of the program. We look forward to working with the center to promote SunWise in the future.

## CDC Shade Document Features SunWise

In 2006, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a new document that serves as a supporting piece to the *Guidelines for School Programs to Prevent Skin Cancer*, published in 2002. The document, *Shade Planning for America's Schools*, explains the dangers of UV radiation, the easy steps to prevent overexposure to UV, and how to use shade to decrease UV exposure. It provides shade planning information, tools for conducting a formal shade audit, and case studies from previous success stories. The SunWise Program's collaboration with the SHADE Foundation is highlighted on pages 31 to 33 of the CDC document. To download a copy,

visit the new “SunWise Resources for Educators” Web page at [www.epa.gov/sunwise/educator\\_resources.html](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/educator_resources.html).



## New Resources Available For SunWise Educators!

In summer 2006, EPA added a new page to the SunWise Web site that offers resources for educators. Educators will benefit from the activities and supplemental resources, including a set of new, age-appropriate introductory sun safety lessons. Check out the “Resources for Educators” page at [www.epa.gov/sunwise/educator\\_resources.html](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/educator_resources.html). As SunWise continues to develop additional materials, many of them will be posted on this page.

Stay tuned for new activities on proper sunscreen use.



## Wyoming Launches Sun Safe Schools of Distinction Program

In summer 2006, the Wyoming Department of Health launched a new voluntary program for Wyoming schools. The Wyoming Sun Safe Schools of Distinction Program was formed in an attempt to raise awareness and enhance school policies regarding sun safety. Modeled after the highly successful Tobacco-Free Schools Program in the state, a school must meet a variety of sun safety criteria to earn the Sun Safe School of Distinction award. Schools that meet the criteria will receive a plaque from the state, a mention in the news, and recognition on Wyoming's Comprehensive Cancer Control Consortium Web site. Once every school within a district has signed on, the school district will be honored and receive a district award as well. To earn the award, schools must:

1. Include skin cancer and sun protection education in school curricula (SunWise is one program that meets this criterion).
2. Promote outdoor measures to decrease UV exposure, such as wearing hats, sunglasses, and protective clothing while outdoors; bringing and wearing sunscreen at school;



Promoting sun safety in Wyoming.

and seeking shade during peak hours of sun exposure.

3. Participate in the ongoing evaluation of policy development, program implementation, and program outcomes through the Wyoming Sun Safety Survey.

In addition to the above criteria, the program also encourages schools to promote sun safety among the staff and the community at large.

For more information on Wyoming's program, please contact Kimberly Rogers at the Wyoming Department of Health at (307) 777-8609 or <kroger@state.wy.us>.

## What Does E-mail Have To Do With Skin Cancer Prevention?

In 2005, SunWise developed a tool called EnviroFlash UV, which sends subscribers an e-mail containing the daily UV Index forecast for their city or ZIP Code. You can also subscribe to receive e-mails only on days when there is a UV Alert for your area. The UV Alert lets you know when UV intensity in your city or town will be unseasonably high. E-mails are sent out in the early evening so you will have plenty of time to prepare for your next day's activities. It's easy to subscribe and unsubscribe, so if you'll be traveling for a few days, and you will have access to your e-mail, you can receive the local UV Index wherever you are, or you can just check the daily forecast on the UV Index home page. For more information, visit <[www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html)>.



## Congressional Families Program Takes SunWise on the Road

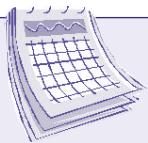
In July 2006, Stephene Moore of Kansas' 3rd Congressional District, Lisa McGovern of Massachusetts' 3rd Congressional District, and Katie Lapidus of the Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation represented the Congressional Families Action for Cancer Awareness Program and SunWise at the annual Kansas School Nurse Conference in Wichita, Kansas. Congressional Families is a bipartisan network of congressional spouses who are advancing cancer prevention, early detection, and education. Congressional spouses enjoy unique visibility in all areas of the country and use this platform to reinforce

their goal of educating, motivating, and advocating cancer awareness and early detection to make sun safety a part of everyone's total health routine.

At the School Nurse Conference, the team was able to register 155 school nurses representing approximately 77,000 students in Kansas. SunWise thanks Congressional Families for its support of the program and looks forward to future collaboration. For more information on the Congressional Families Program, please visit the Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation's Web site at <[www.preventcancer.org/programs/confamilies.cfm](http://www.preventcancer.org/programs/confamilies.cfm)>.



Congressional spouses Lisa McGovern (left) and Stephene Moore (right) at the 2006 Kansas School Nurse Conference.



## SunWise Conference Schedule 2007

- March 13–17, 2007: American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD) Annual Conference, Baltimore, MD
- March 29–April 1, 2007: National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) National Conference, St. Louis, MO
- April 10–13, 2007: National Catholic Education Association (NCEA), Baltimore, MD
- May 4–6, 2007: New England School Nurse Conference (NESNC), Portsmouth, NH
- June 21–27, 2007: American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference, Washington, DC
- June 25–27, 2007: National Association of Health Education Centers (NAHEC) Annual Conference, Atlanta, GA
- June 28–July 1, 2007: National Association of School Nurses (NASN) Annual Conference, Nashville, TN
- June 30–July 2, 2007: National Education Association (NEA) National Conference, Philadelphia, PA
- July 12–15, 2007: American Federation of Teachers (AFT) QuEST Conference, Washington, DC
- October 11–13, 2007: National Council of Teachers in Mathematics (NCTM) Regional Conference, Richmond, VA
- October 18–20, 2007: NSTA Regional Conference, Detroit, MI
- November 8–10, 2007: National Middle School Association (NMSA), Houston, TX
- December 6–8, 2007: NSTA Regional Conference, Birmingham, AL

### Save the Date

September 16, 2007, is International Ozone Day and also marks the 20th Anniversary of the Signing of the Montreal Protocol.

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