

# University of Miami Miller School of Medicine

Excerpts from the 4-22-11 article found at:

<http://med.miami.edu/news/from-tykes-to-teachers-um-nutrition-initiatives-impress-bipartisan-policy-c> (accessed May 10, 2011)

## Latest News

### From Tykes to Teachers, UM Nutrition Initiatives Impress Site Visitors

The 3- and 4-year olds at Kids Kollege preschool in Miami Springs showed off their nutrition smarts to some special guests on April 20, 2011 – UM **President Donna E. Shalala** and two other former Cabinet secretaries – who watched the youngsters talk, sing and dance about the function of their hearts, kidneys, brains, bones, and yes, even their intestines.

*“If you want to keep it movin’, then you have to have a plan. You can start by eating fiber, fruits and vegetables and bran,”* the youngsters sang along with **“Hardy Heart”** and the **“Kidney Brothers,”** three cuddly characters in the innovative **“Organ Wise Guys”** curriculum the Miller School of Medicine is testing in 27 Miami-Dade preschools for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Followed by a three-stop tour of UM nutrition and fitness programs and an evening public forum on the importance of nutrition education and physical activity, the preschool visit officially kicked off the **Bipartisan Policy Center’s new Nutrition and Physical Activity Initiative** aimed at combating obesity in a nation where more than one-third of adults and 17 percent of children are obese.

Co-chaired by **President Shalala**, the longest serving secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), former Secretaries of Agriculture **Dan Glickman** and **Ann M. Veneman**, and former HHS Secretary **Mike Leavitt**, the initiative was launched in March to promote and build national consensus for the best nutrition and physical activity policies and programs . . .



**Bipartisan Policy Center’s Nutrition and Physical Activity Initiative**, held at The University of Miami, FL April 20, 2011.



(Left to right) Dr. Michelle Lombardo, co-founder and President of The OrganWise Guys Inc., UM President Donna E. Shalala, former Secretaries of Agriculture. Anne M. Veneman and Dan

# Empowering Kids to be Healthy and Smart from the Inside Out!



... “Obese children are likely to become obese adults,” Veneman said, “and we also know that high obesity rates correspond to higher incidence of diabetes.”

One key strategy, Miller School Dean Pascal Goldschmidt, M.D., said, is getting more medical schools to adopt preventive medicine and nutrition education in their curriculum and urging health care providers to focus not only on medical procedures, but the benefits of healthy behavior.

... They all agreed with President Shalala, who told the audience of mostly students, faculty and staff at the Newman Alumni Center, “It’s imperative that we find a way to help people make healthier choices so that we can reduce obesity and obesity-related diseases and the many associated health care costs.”

For youngsters, one way may be the USDA-endorsed **Organ Wise Guys curriculum, which uses high-energy activities and fun characters – Peri Stolic, Calci M. Bone, and Sir Rebrum, to name a few – to teach children why healthy food choices are so important.** Already found in elementary schools in 48 states, the program’s effectiveness for preschoolers, particularly low-income ethnic minorities who, in many cases, have never tasted a fresh fruit or vegetable, is now being tested by Miller School researchers with a three-year, \$1 million USDA grant. “The children are learning about nutrition as they develop their language skills,” explained Sarah Messiah, Ph.D., research assistant professor of pediatrics and director of research for the Healthy Caregivers-Healthy Children project at Kids Kollege and 26 other area preschools. “They’re learning to eat right and take care of their bodies, a skill set we hope they will carry for the rest of their lives.”



Though Messiah and fellow investigators Ruby Natale, Ph.D., Psy.D., assistant professor of clinical pediatrics and Danielle Hollar, Ph.D., voluntary assistant professor of pediatrics, won’t start measuring the program’s impact until next year, the curriculum already has triggered one tangible change at Kids Kollege. There wasn’t a sugar-laden fruit juice or cookie in sight – only cups of water and trays of raw carrots, broccoli, plums, kiwis, oranges and pears – which the kids gobbled up shortly after singing “Keep It Movin,” the song about the intestines, for the initiative co-chairs.

“Impressive kids,” President Shalala said, summing up the pervasive feeling at the school visit. “I have pre-med students who don’t know that much about the body.”