



**YScreen** is the emotional health screen offered to all 9<sup>th</sup> grade students at the high schools in Fond du Lac County to identify risk factors for depression, anxiety and suicide.

## **March 2019 Staying Active Improves Mental Health**

Staying active and exercising is a lifelong behavior that should begin at a young age. Exercising and staying active is shown to improve executive functioning, mental health, and decrease depressive symptoms. Unfortunately many of America's youth don't get the appropriate amount of daily exercise. Although there may be barriers in daily exercise, the benefits strongly suggest overcoming those barriers. The following information lays out examples on how to encourage youth to stay active as well as the benefits of this healthy choice.

### **Ways to Encourage Youth to Stay Active**

- Suggest walking instead of driving to nearby locations
- Role model healthy exercise
- Stress the importance of exercise and mental health
- Encourage children to go outside
- Suggest organized sports as well as unconstructed play
- Establish routine household chores

### **Benefits of Staying Active**

- Improves body composition and self-esteem
- Improves academic performance
- Increases attention control
- Decreases depressive symptoms
- Reduces the risk of chronic diseases
- Improves mood and behavior
- Improves sleep

YScreen staff helps connect teens and their families to the appropriate community resources that can address these concerns and help them cope with stress by providing suggestions such as daily exercise. YScreen is available to teens in Fond du Lac County. If you would like to request screening for your child or would like more information about YScreen, please contact us at **(920) 906-6700 ext. 4714**.

The Fond du Lac Area YScreen Program is administered through Fond du Lac School District with guidance from the YScreen Advisory Board. The Fond du Lac Area YScreen program is proud to be supported in part by the Fond du Lac Area United Way, Agnesian HealthCare and the Wisconsin Partnership Program through the UW School of Medicine and Public Health.