



# Award-Winning Show Promotes *Wellness*

**One local organization teaches kids and families how to live well.** By Angela Magee

**W**ellsville” is a family television program produced by a local organization, WellFit Inc. The award-winning family show airs Saturday mornings at 8 a.m. on FOX 66 and is written, cast and filmed entirely here in our area.

Well Fit Inc., is a 501c3 non-profit organization committed to educating, entertaining and empowering children and their families to L.E.A.P. – Learn, Embrace and Actively Practice optimal health in mind and body.

The magic behind the “Wellsville” show is the two hosts and real-life dynamic husband-wife duo, Dr. Tony Snow and Kathy Iorio, who founded Well Fit Inc. in 2002.

Dr. Snow is retired from the USAF Reserves with the rank of Colonel after completing 21 years of service and has practiced medicine for over 35 years. Currently, he is CEO of Community Health Net in Erie. Community Health Net handles over 30,000 medical and 15,000 dental visits per year.

Iorio spent 18 years as director of the Hamot Wellness Center and is currently executive director of “Wellsville” and a co-executive director and writer, in addition to being co-host, of the show.

“Children are now suffering so many illnesses that they didn’t used to have. We have childhood obesity, diabetes presenting earlier and earlier, hypertension and health difficulties brought on by these problems,” says Dr. Snow.

Dr. Snow and Iorio made a decision to do something concrete to help combat the growing issues. Their goal is to motivate people into being physically active on a regular basis, to make healthy nutritional choices and to learn to care for each other.

After starting the non-profit, the couple set to connecting with the community through their program, Wellsville. Wellsville started with an in-school health and physical activity program dubbed “Wellsville Goes to School” and grew to include the 30-minute family show after procuring sponsors to support the production.

They actively try to involve themselves in health fairs and Erie events as well as offer resources on their website. Dr. Snow and Iorio have received such positive feedback on their programs that they feel they are making a real impact in people’s lives.

Dr. Snow says, “We happened to be filming one day and a mother spontaneously came up to us and talked about how much she loved the “Wellsville” show. She said, ‘Every Saturday we start our day with Wellsville,’ and she ended up doing a testimonial on camera. That touched my heart and made me feel, like maybe we are making a difference.”

Wellsville Goes to School hosts live assemblies in 12-15 schools, including Fairview and Girard school district and reach 2,000 to 3,000 kids each year with a positive message of wellness.

Children participating in the Wellsville school program learn healthy eating habits, good dental and personal hygiene, as well as manners. It addresses bullying and teaches kids to be what Wellsville calls a “cool dude” and not a “rude dude.”

“When they learn at a young age how to make healthy living choices, they are more likely to adopt these habits as adults,” says Iorio who leads the assemblies.



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Well Fit Inc. trains high school students to teach the Wellsville school program to younger kids. The mentoring program teaches them leadership, builds confidence and self-advocacy.

Wellsville works with teachers to incorporate wellness into their classroom curriculum. Wellsville produced a DVD to be used in schools as a tool for teachers to engage kids in quick, fun physical

activities as well as quieting exercises to focus and calm the students.

Their goal is to get school districts across Pennsylvania and across the country, not just in Fairview, to start using Wellsville by creating teacher champions in the schools who can also teach and promote the curriculum.

“We love teachers at Wellsville. They are the backbone of our country and with our children every day,” said Iorio.

At the end of the school program there is a teacher tribute to recognize their hard work and the kids get to see the teachers being thanked and honored. ■