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**UD STUDENT TEACHER GETS GRANT TO START AFTER-SCHOOL
WELLNESS PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS**

DAYTON, Ohio — For most student teachers, teaching full time without compensation and attending night classes while finishing a degree doesn't leave room for work on the side, particularly if that work doesn't pay.

But Steven Kandel, according to the principal at Brantwood Elementary School, is not the typical student teacher.

Kandel, a senior elementary education major at the University of Dayton, student teaches a fourth-grade class at Brantwood, located at 4350 Schwinn Drive. When school's out, he heads to UD for his own classes. Despite his busy schedule, he's found time to take his teaching experience a step further.

After learning that the Mad River Local Schools had funding available for drug education programs, Kandel created an after-school Wellness Program. He puts in an extra two hours a week, helping Brantwood fourth graders learn about health, responsibility and fitness.

"I wanted to give students an alternative activity after school. Children in today's society need more positive role models," said Kandel, a native of Canton, Ohio. "I wanted to create a fun situation in which the students could interact with the teachers. And I noticed that the students seemed to respond better when I played with them. We go outside at recess and play games with them, talk to them outside of a classroom, and they really thrive from it."

With help from a fellow teacher, Kandel drew up a proposal for the after-school program that incorporates sports, drug awareness and first-aid as well as lessons on building self-esteem, teamwork, responsibility and other social skills in an afternoon course for third- and fourth-graders.

The program receives district funding through a federal Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities grant that pays for supplies, snacks and stipends for two certified teachers to assist Kandel, who cannot be paid for his work as a student teacher.

Kandel said he's not concerned about the pay. Instead, he focuses on how the program can translate into better behavior and healthier habits among his students and increased parental involvement at the school. Students can't go to the Wellness Program on days when they are absent from school, and parents of participants are required to pick up their child in person at the end of each session.

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"It's getting a lot of parents into the school," Kandel said.

Now in its third week, the Wellness Program has been limited to fourth-graders because of the overwhelming response from parents and students. After Christmas, Kandel said, the third-graders will get their turn.

"It's just so unusual for a student teacher to do anything other than what's required," said Charlcie Ogg, principal at Brantwood. "Steve has really put this together. He is an extraordinary student teacher. He is interested in the children personally and he follows through on that."

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