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## Students zoom in on health to win

### Washington 8th-graders create 2 videos that win \$1,500 for the school in the Iowa Department of Education's Team Nutrition Youth in Action for a Healthy Iowa contest.

**BY STACEY BECKER TH STAFF WRITER**

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**Photo by: TH: Stacey Becker**  
Natalie Ervolino

Fruits and vegetables, physical education classes, sports and a wellness policy were the video stars.

Five George Washington Middle School eighth-graders created two short videos that showcased how their school makes it easy for students to be healthy.

Early last week, the students learned their videos were among the top six videos in the Iowa Department of Education's Team Nutrition Youth in

Action for a Healthy Iowa contest.

Madeline George and Natalie Ervolino created the first-place video. Anne Edwards, Haley McDonnell and Elizabeth Burns created one of five runner-up videos.

"It was really cool that both our videos placed," Burns said.

Between the two videos, Washington won \$1,500 to support its wellness efforts.

Amy Mozena, a teacher/librarian, told the girls, who occasionally come to the library during their lunch block to work on special projects, about the video contest.

"I really left it up to them to do what they wanted," Mozena said.

The students shared a school camera, took video footage for each other and shared editing equipment.

"It kind of had us realize how much our school is doing," Ervolino said.

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The students said they believe Washington gets better each year when it comes to providing healthy options for students. For instance, the district's wellness policy prohibits foods high in sugar and fat for school lunches.

The students said pizza parties, pudding, cookies and pretzels are banned. Edwards said any prepackaged desserts cost more than fruits and vegetables.

While the students believe their school is doing great things, they also believe it can do more.

"Maybe even offer different fruits and vegetables more," Edwards said.

The girls all agreed physical education class activities should change by grade. They said the same activities are used each year.

Ervolino, who wants to work in the film industry or video production, entered a second video contest about childhood obesity.

She recently won first place in the national Recess Rocks video contest.

Ervolino won an iPad for her video in which she stands in front of a white wall and talks while her friend, eighth-grader Meredith Ruden, films from different angles.

"I love making videos," Ervolino said. "It's a great feeling."



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