



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

Office of Corporate Communications
1300 E Avenue □ Fort Lee, VA 23801-1800

Tel: (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8524 DSN: 687-8000, Ext. 4-8524

FAX: (804) 734-8009 (two pause symbols) 7-8773

or DSN: 687-8009 (two pause symbols) 7-8773

www.commissaries.com

Release Number: 40-09
Date: May 8, 2009
Contact: Rick Brink, DeCA East public affairs officer
Tel.: (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8409
E-mail: richard.brink@deca.mil

‘Eat Healthy, Be Active Your Way’ open to everyone

*By Rick Brink,
DeCA East public affairs officer*

FORT LEE, Va. – It doesn’t take a gym or a group workout session to include beneficial physical activity in your life as Defense Commissary Agency employees are finding out in a voluntary fitness campaign that’s part of the agency’s new “Eat Healthy and Be Active Your Way” emphasis.

“I’ve wanted to boost my physical activity since April, and with the involvement of my co-workers in the ‘President’s Challenge’ I’ve found extra support to do it,” said Andrea Coyle, a commissary management specialist with DeCA’s East region.

Coyle is among more than 4,000 DeCA employees who have signed up on the President’s Challenge Web site as part of the agency’s “Eat Healthy and Be Active Your Way” campaign that adds an emphasis on physical activity to the agency’s good nutrition campaign.

“This is not just for DeCA employees,” said Philip E. Sakowitz Jr., DeCA director and CEO. “We’re inviting our customers and all Americans to consider both their physical and nutritional needs in order to maintain good health, and the President’s Challenge Web site offers everyone a free tool for doing that.”

Sakowitz and Rear Adm. Penelope Slade-Sawyer of the U.S. Public Health Service and acting executive director for the President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports of the Department of Health and Human Services, signed a proclamation at the Fort Belvoir, Va., commissary May 5 declaring their support of the campaign that recognizes the importance of

good nutrition and appropriate physical activity for good health. May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month.

Sakowitz noted that the commissary agency is a nutritional leader, giving shoppers information to make healthy choices. Through the “It’s Your Choice, Make It Healthy” program, nutritional tips are posted throughout commissaries to help shoppers make informed choices based on the dietary guidelines for Americans.

The agency is expanding the healthy emphasis to include the importance of physical activity, according to Lt. Col. Karen Hawkins, the DeCA dietitian. That’s because the Department of Health and Human Services released the first-ever “Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans” October 2008, stating that being physically active is one of the most important steps that Americans of all ages can take to improve their health.

Slade-Sawyer said the main idea behind the physical activity guidelines is that regular physical activity over months and years can produce long-term health benefits. These are the first comprehensive federal guidelines on physical activity, and they can be customized to a person’s interests and lifestyle.

Coyle, who travels quite a bit for her job and whose exercise routines range from gym workouts to brisk walks depending on where she is, said the President’s Challenge Web site (www.Presidentschallenge.org) gives her an easy way to set personal activity goals and track her progress.

“It’s something I can do wherever I go, and the feedback I get keeps me going,” she said.

- DeCA-

Photo caption 1: From left, Army Lt. Col. Karen Hawkins (DeCA dietitian), Rear Adm. Penelope Slade-Sawyer of the U.S. Public Health Service and acting executive director for the President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports of the Department of Health and Human Services, and Philip E. Sakowitz Jr., DeCA director and CEO, stand next to a President’s Challenge display at the Fort Belvoir, Va., commissary. Sakowitz and Slade-Sawyer visited the commissary May 5 to help kick off the “Eat Healthy, Be Active Your Way” campaign that recognizes the importance of good nutrition and appropriate physical activity for good health. (DeCA photo by Rick Brink)

Photo caption 2: Andrea Coyle, a commissary management specialist with DeCA’s East region, is one of more than 4,000 DeCA employees who have signed up on the President’s Challenge Web site as part of the agency’s “Eat Healthy and Be Active Your Way” campaign that adds an emphasis on physical activity to the agency’s good nutrition campaign. (DeCA photo by Rick Brink)

About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,400 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America’s military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*