

# Security Health Plan: Invests in Owen-Withee School District

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**CONTACT:** Rebecca Normington, 715-221-9726, [normington.rebecca@securityhealth.org](mailto:normington.rebecca@securityhealth.org)

## **Security Health Plan invests in Owen-Withee School District**

MARSHFIELD – “We know students that are more active do better in school, and feel better about themselves,” Owen-Withee High School principal Matt Cihlar said. “Coming off the recent pandemic, the more students we can connect to the building the likelihood of their success in school goes up.”

The Owen-Withee School District is expanding its weight room with help from a \$1,000 grant from Security Health Plan’s Employee-Drive Corporate Giving grant program.

Security Health Plan of Wisconsin, Inc., invests \$1,000 each month in a different charity or organization nominated by Marshfield Clinic Health System employees as part of the grant program. Health System employees are encouraged to nominate organizations making a positive difference in the community.

Marshfield Clinic Health System administrative secretary Jennie Hanson nominated the school for the grant.

“Owen Withee is a rural school, and like many rural school districts, it is a poor district,” Hanson said. “I personally know a lot of our teachers who purchase items not only to supply their classroom but are also buying supplies for their students, including shoes. For me that’s heartbreaking and drove me to step up and help the school in any way I can.”

Hanson said when she learned the district was receiving the grant she was excited, and asked the school district to use the funds in a way that would benefit the students.

Cihlar said the district recently passed a referendum to build a new cafeteria. He said the existing cafeteria space will be renovated into the new weight room. He explained the current weight room is small and congested. He said by moving it to the existing cafeteria’s location it will allow for more room, equipment and enable users of the facility to spread out.

“By doing this, we hope to increase the number of students using the weight room,” Cihlar said. “The goal is to have as many students as we can use the weight room before, during and after school as we can. I am a big believer in physical activity and the positive impact it has on students.”

Cihlar said the grant will make a positive difference for the school district and the community.

“A healthier population is a more productive population,” he said. “The hope is to

instill healthy habits in the lives of our students. We also want to give them positive outlets to help deal with stress and other challenges that life throws their way. When you feel good about yourself, you typically perform better in everything that you do. Weight training and physical activity teaches many life lessons: working hard to reach a goal, perseverance, learning through failure, and pushing yourself beyond your comfort zone in order to grow. With the improvements made to our weight room, we have the opportunity to help a larger population of our students.”

He said the long-term goal is to open the weight room up to the community, which would be a positive addition since there is currently no fitness center within Owen or Withee.

“The goal of school is to create productive citizens,” Cihlar added. “Our job is to give our students as many experiences as we can, along with pushing students to be their best. Every day, our staff does an amazing job of connecting with students and guiding them. The addition of an updated weight room will help enrich the lives our students in a positive way!”

Hanson said the school district, which has 484 students enrolled in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, holds its students to a high standard. She said each year students from the school give back to the community and help its citizens, by doing minor yard work and home repairs for the elderly and cleaning up parks and public spaces.

“We push our students to help pay back what our community gives them,” she said.