

What really happens to that sandwich you eat after you swallow it? Students at Alma J. Brown will find out as they tour the Louisiana Body Walk exhibit on Friday, February 21, 2014.

The Louisiana Body Walk is an exhibit that travels the state to teach students the importance of adopting healthy behaviors. It is part of an innovative program sponsored by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation and the LSU AgCenter.

As students tour this representation of the human body, they will explore each of the Body Walk's eleven stations by participating in hands-on activities that focus on healthy lifestyle choices such as eating nutritious food and getting plenty of exercise.

Students enter the exhibit by walking into the Smart Bodies lunchroom where they are magically turned into a piece of food, such as a carrot or a hamburger. They then walk through a giant ear into the brain where they experience "brain waves". The "foods" then step into the exhibit's larger-than-life mouth, are "swallowed" through the esophagus tunnel, and are "digested" in the stomach. From the stomach, the students travel through the small intestine where they are "absorbed" by villi into the blood. They then follow the path of the nutrients to the heart, lungs, bones, muscles, and skin stations. As students leave the body through a cut in the skin, they visit the pathway for life station to review the health concepts they have just learned.

The Louisiana Body Walk is one component of Smart Bodies, an innovative program sponsored by the LSU AgCenter and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation, that teaches the importance of good nutrition and physical fitness.

The Smart Bodies program is in its ninth year and was developed to address increasing national concerns about the lack of physical activity and the declining nutritional status of young children. In Louisiana, childhood obesity has doubled in the past 20 years; almost one in three school-aged children is overweight or obese.

The Body Walk provides a unique and exciting opportunity for Louisiana elementary students to learn about their bodies and the importance of making healthy choices.

For information on the Smart Bodies Program or Louisiana Body Walk, contact Cathy Judd, LSU AgCenter Area Nutrition agent at 318-251-5134 or visit the Smart Bodies Web site www.smartbodies.org.