

# Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Triangle Policy Change leads to Culture Change

## STEPS TO SUCCESS

### ENGAGE STAFF AND LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS

Take time early on to present the purpose of the health initiative. Involve board members, management, key volunteers and participants in creating a shared vision. Provide ongoing opportunities for idea and feedback sharing (e.g., listening sessions or periodic surveys).

### PROVIDE RESOURCES

Make it easy for people to support the health Initiative by providing activities and connecting them to resources.

### MAKE IT FUN

Plan and include fun, active activities during events or meetings already planned. When people see fun, they want to join in!



**Changing the culture of an organization** can feel like rolling rocks uphill, but the leaders at Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Triangle (BBBST) were up for the challenge. While the mentoring environment is an ideal place to promote healthy, active lifestyles, BBBST leaders acknowledged that for efforts to have long lasting impact, existing practices would require modification; healthy habits would need to be encouraged among staff and volunteers alike. BBBST looked at a variety of factors that influence health; everything from what foods are served at Big/Little meetings and events, to the support and resources available for staff to focus on health. As a result, the *Building Blocks: Healthy Child Initiative* was born. The goal of the initiative is to enhance organizational policies and training practices, while providing programs and resources to promote active living and health eating at every level, from volunteers to participants, parents and staff.

“Big” changes are happening! A Healthy Foods Policy and Physical Activity Policy was approved by the Board of Directors and added to operations manuals; policies are brought to light during new staff or volunteer orientations. New volunteers pledge to promote good nutrition and fun physical activity when spending time with their Little, while parents pledge to reinforce those messages by talking to their child and doing their best to model healthy behaviors. BBBST staff provide encouragement and provide volunteers with resources for choosing fun, active things to do when spending time together. Special events, such as Zumba classes, hikes, and rock climbing, are offered to promote fun, new ways of being active. Staff are encouraged to take physical activity breaks throughout the day, and special programs such as yoga and fitness challenges are offered to promote staff wellness.

BBBST has demonstrated that change starts within. Modeling the behavior you want to see happen is key to successfully shifting the existing culture of an organization and impacting the participants served.



A grant-funded initiative to increase active living and healthy eating for underserved youth in Wake County. Administered by the Community and Clinical Connections for Prevention and Health Branch in the NC Division of Public Health and the NC Public Health Foundation. Funds provided by the John Rex Endowment.

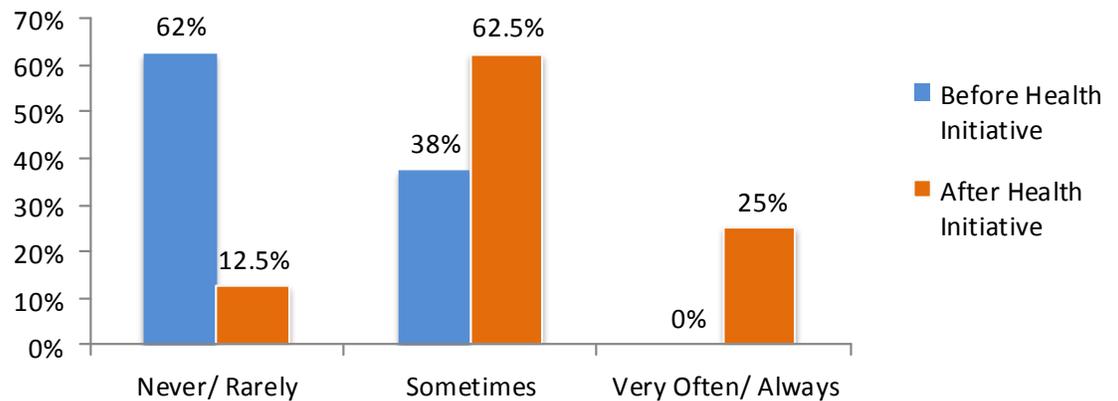
## TESTIMONIAL

Parent, grandparent and foster parent, Robin, noticed that many of the BBBST events were more active and health focused. She began bringing 5 children to BBBST fitness sessions. They participated in yoga, hiked trails, played soccer and kickball. Robin was excited to learn about the resource page on the BBBST website that linked her to more activities she could do on her own. She has used it regularly over the months, taking her children hiking, and using it to find healthier dining options.



## Survey says...

### How often do you and your Little participate in physical activity?



## Lasting Impact

The Healthy Child Initiative Committee, comprised of staff and volunteers, has been established to ensure that ongoing support is given to the initiative. Additionally, approximately 20 partnerships have been established to provide community resources that help support Matches to stay active and eat healthy. A resource page on the BBBST website has been added to showcase these resources. The BBBST Development Department also continues to explore funding and resources that would enhance the initiative.



## In the Spotlight

As a result of the Healthy Child Initiative, BBBST has received additional funding from grants and donations from Walmart, Cargill, E3, Blue Lotus Yoga, and the Big Muddy Challenge.

The Initiative is also getting attention from other chapters across the state; a number of presentations have been provided to Big Brothers, Big Sisters Directors and CEOs.



**Big Brothers Big Sisters**  
of the Triangle

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