

Boys & Girls Clubs of Wake County Healthy Habits Easy to Achieve

STEPS TO SUCCESS

DEVELOP POLICIES

Work collaboratively with individuals at every level of the organization to draft policies that are intended to promote health. This increases the chance of sustained support, even when staff turnover.

EDUCATE

Include training on the policies at staff meetings and new employee and volunteer trainings. Create resources that help them support the health initiative.

REINFORCE

Periodically engage staff and volunteers during meetings or through surveys to obtain feedback about compliance and improvements to the efforts.



Serving more than

4,000 children and teens in Wake County is no small task, but Boys & Girls Clubs (BGC) wouldn't want it any other way. Providing a safe place for learning and growing is what they do best. BGC leaders know that promoting health is part of fulfilling their mission. At that start of the Healthy Places, Active Spaces Grants Program, staff assessed what was being offered in Club vending machines, concessions and at meetings and

events. They examined policies that would support or hamper efforts to model healthy eating, such as the types of foods and beverages accepted from outside donors, and if unhealthy food was being used to reward kids for good behavior.

These initial steps led to numerous improvements: organizational policies were adopted by the Board to address vending, food provided at Club meetings and events, and eliminate food rewards. Resources were sought to help support staff in implementing these new policies. The Healthy Celebrations Guide, developed in partnership with other agencies, provides tips on serving healthier, kid-friendly options during any food-related event or celebration. Vending guidelines were adopted, which include an approved list of items vendors can stock. In addition, the H.O.T. (Healthy Options Too) Spot Concessions was born, which is run by BGC Entrepreneur Club members.

Gardens have also been added at many of the Clubs to involve children in planning and growing fresh fruits and vegetables. A commercial kitchen is planned for the new BGC Teen Center, scheduled to open Fall of 2014. It will be used to engage Club participants in healthy food preparation and culinary jobs training as well as provide healthy meals. In addition to the focus on the food environment, Boys & Girls Clubs are expanding physical activity offerings, such as dance, Zumba and bike clinics.

With all of these efforts, kids will find healthy habits easy to achieve.



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 N.C. Public Health Foundation. Funds provided by the John Rex Endowment.

“Being diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes, with my determination, I have lost 45 pounds with hard work and keeping my eye on the finished product. I am very proud to show off the new and improved me. Now that I feel and look healthy, it inspires me to do more...I thank my Club for keeping me healthy and alive.”

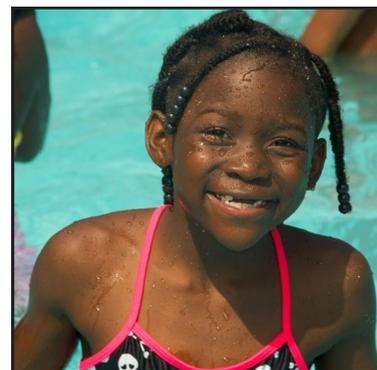
Chris Williams, 2014 Boys & Girls Clubs of Wake County's Youth of the Year.



Findings

Physical activity and healthy eating opportunities reach about 900 youth per day. Physical activity opportunities are offered 5 hours a day during the school year and 8 hours a day in the summer.

Approximately 100 members from the Girls Club report purchasing more frequently from the H.O.T. (Healthy Options Too) Spot Concessions because of its selection and price. However, the vending machines received high marks for offering healthier options compared to the HOT Spot.



Lasting Impact

Boys & Girls Clubs is building a new teen facility— scheduled to open in Fall 2014— that will include a professional grade kitchen. To support the sustainability of the BGC health initiative, this kitchen will be used to support nutrition education programs, cooking lessons and increase job skills. BGC has researched many models for this and has developed an action plan for the new kitchen. Future plans also include preparing and serving healthy meals to BGC youth.

The partnerships developed over the past few years will continue to keep the BGC Health Initiative going strong.

In the Spotlight

In 2012, the organization was honored with the State Award for Program Excellence in Health & Life Skills for the “Project Healthy Kids” program (honored by the NC Area Council of Boys & Girls Clubs).



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

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