

## **NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

### **Project #1: Walk Our Children to School (WOCS)**

#### **Type:**

- Physical activity program

#### **Setting:**

- School-based
- Community-based

#### **Partners:**

- State health department
- Other state government agency: state department of transportation, state department of motor vehicles
- State physical activity coalition: New York Physical Activity Coalition
- Colleges/universities: Adelphi University, C.W. Post – Long Island University, Ithaca College, SUNY Brockport
- Other: New York Statewide Center for Healthy Schools, Governor's Traffic Safety Committee/Pedestrian Program

#### **Goals:**

- To provide access for youth aged 9-13 to physical activity opportunities in a variety of venues and through improved physical education programs.
- To establish Physical Activity Coalitions for Preteens (PACP) demonstration sites in five counties or regions and implement action plans to provide preteens with access to physical activity.

#### **Description:**

A newsletter to schools was dedicated to the WOCS program, and a web page for teachers to register for the event was created. In addition, student major clubs at institutions of higher education were encouraged to work with local elementary schools for the WOCS event. College students walked with elementary students and together they completed a "walkable community checklist." As a part of the project college students will work with students and teachers to develop a report on how to make their communities more walker-friendly. In the fall of 2002, fifty-six schools participated in the WOCS event with 12,442 students and 997 adults officially registered for the events.

#### **Successes:**

- Throughout the Walk Our Children to School project we have developed an excellent working relationship with the partners identified above.
- Despite the limited funding opportunities for 2003, the foundation has been established for future work in the area of physical activity. Many of these partners



- are working diligently to seek funding opportunities to maintain our momentum in the area of physical activity and nutrition.
- The partnerships that were developed have led to a cooperative environment as opposed to a competitive mindset.
  - The project has provided us with the opportunity to begin to establish relationships with several college and university programs in our state.

**Challenges:**

- Developing a timeline that is acceptable to all organizations always seems to be a challenge.
- Having the financial resources to develop and maintain successful programs is a major challenge.
- Promoting large statewide programs sounds easy, but in reality it is difficult to get broad buy-in to a program.

**Strategies for sustainability:**

- Despite severely restricted resources for the foreseeable future, we continue to meet with our partners on a regular basis.
- Programs may need to be scaled down, but it is clear that there is a commitment to improving physical activity and nutrition conditions for youth.

**Project #2:**

**Fit Individuals through Recreation and Sports Training (FIRST)**

**Type:**

- Physical activity program

**Setting:**

- School-based
- Community-based

**Partners:**

- State AAHPERD association and state AAHPERD zones
- Other: New York Statewide Center for Healthy Schools, the Warren Company

**Description:**

Fit Individuals through Recreation and Sports Training (FIRST) captures students who are less interested in traditional physical activities and is an Olympic feeder program in nontraditional sports, including BMX biking, roller hockey, skateboarding, and inline skating. The program, focusing on 9- to 13-year-olds, is a collaboration among the Statewide Center for Healthy Schools; the state Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance; local school districts; local park and recreation programs; and the Warren Company. Throughout the summer of 2002, ten communities hosted a FIRST event and 838 students took part in those events. An additional 652



participants attended week-long “camps” to improve their skills in fencing, BMX biking, in-line skating, skateboarding, in-line hockey, and in-line speed skating.

**Successes:**

- Working with NYS AHPERD and their zone (regional) structure allowed us to obtain student input about physical activity programs that would be more appealing to the 9- to 13-year-old student population.
- Working through physical education teachers, we discovered that the activities supported by the FIRST program would be of interest to many students who don't particularly care for traditional team activities. After they had this information, teachers were fairly successful in convincing their schools and communities to host these programs.

**Challenges:**

- Limited infrastructures of other organizations minimize their ability to handle the number of willing program participants.
- An issue that seems to be a major obstacle for expanding the FIRST program is the fact that many schools and communities don't want to assume the insurance liability for the promotion of nontraditional physical activities. Yet teaching students how to engage in these activities safely is at the core of these programs.

**Strategies for sustainability:**

- The relationships established with NY state AHPERD and the Warren Company was designed to “seed” and develop the concept of participation through nontraditional sports and activities.
- As this program enters 2003, nine communities have programs planned for the summer of 2003. Three more communities will host programs throughout the fall of 2002, during vacation breaks, and have requested more extensive programming for the summer of 2003.

**Project #3:  
Healthy Steps**

**Type:**

- Physical activity program

**Setting:**

- School-based

**Partners:**

- State AAHPERD association
- Other: New York Statewide Center for Healthy Schools, Regional Coordinated School Health and Wellness Centers, PE Central



**Description:**

Healthy Steps is a walking program designed for elementary school students (grades K-5) and staff ([www.nyshealthyschools.org](http://www.nyshealthyschools.org)). It is a friendly competition that encourages the school community to accumulate the most miles they possibly can in a 10-day period. Healthy Steps registration and record keeping is available either in paper form or online. Healthy Steps online allows schools to record their miles quickly and easily, track competitions between classes within their school, compare themselves with other schools statewide, monitor their progress via a virtual hike across America, and learn about destinations along the way. Healthy Steps is designed in such a way that it can easily be integrated across many different disciplines. Since the fall of 2001, one hundred eight schools have registered for the Healthy Steps program. During the 10-day programs, 35,946 students walked over 236,000 miles.

**Successes:**

- This was our first venture into offering online programming. We had a 50 percent increase in program participation over the paper version that was implemented a year earlier. It's anticipated that approximately three years will be needed for this site to reach its potential.
- Additionally, because this is now an online program, it can be offered in both the fall and spring at minimal cost.

**Challenges:**

- Promoting large statewide programs sounds easy, but in reality it is difficult to get broad buy-in to a program.
- Using "state of the art" technology to develop a site causes problems for individuals and schools that don't have updated technology. While they were able to access the core components of the program, they often were unable to take advantage of all the features the site had to offer.

**Strategies for sustainability:**

- Web-based programs make sense because the resources required to maintain and expand them are minimal.

**Project #4:  
Ready-Set-Go!**

**Type:**

- Professional development
- Policy

**Setting:**

- School-based

**Partners:**

- State health department



- State AAHPERD association
- Other: New York Statewide Center for Healthy Schools, Regional Coordinated School Health and Wellness Centers

**Description:**

Ready-Set-Go! is a project that was developed to provide schools with the tools and leadership to enhance the physical activity, nutrition, and tobacco (PANT) initiatives in their districts. Framed in a coordinated school health approach, workshops were held throughout the state to train individuals how to use the CDC's School Health Index (SHI) to assess the status of PANT in their schools. Six-months after attending the workshop schools were sent flyers inviting them to report the results of their SHI results. This on-line reporting system became available in January 2003. Throughout 2002, more than 700 Ready, Set, Go! tool kits were distributed, and 448 teachers and administrators received in-service training on how to use the kits.

**Successes:**

- The number of kits that have been distributed and the number of people who have been trained through attending the Ready, Set, Go! workshops are impressive.
- The measure of success will be determined by the number of schools who report having done something with the SHI in their schools or districts. We are at the beginning stages of collecting these data.

**Challenges:**

- Monitoring how schools use the SHI will be a major challenge.
- It is also difficult to maintain an infrastructure to provide the technical assistance required of schools after they have completed the assessment of their schools.

**Strategies for sustainability:**

- A web-based reporting system has been established for schools to report their findings from completing the SHI.
- The work of the Regional Coordinated School Health & Wellness Centers will be crucial in assisting schools to address their needs as identified by the SHI.

**Project #5  
Healthy Hearts**

**Type:**

- Physical activity program
- School/community health education

**Setting:**

- School-based
- Community-based

**Partners:**



- State AAHPERD association
- Colleges/universities: Adelphi University, Ithaca College, SUNY Brockport
- Other: New York Statewide Center for Healthy Schools, Regional Coordinated School Health and Wellness Centers, PE Central

**Description:**

Healthy Hearts is an interactive web-based learning module intended to positively affect the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of students in the fifth and sixth grades relating to physical activity, nutrition, cardiovascular health, and tobacco usage ([www.nyshealthyschools.org](http://www.nyshealthyschools.org)). Healthy Hearts is a teacher-guided curricular intervention that encourages students to participate in regular physical activity, eat properly, and avoid the use of tobacco products. The instructional module is designed to increase children's awareness of the risk factors associated with cardiovascular health. The program encourages youngsters to read, write, and problem solve, while learning to make wise decisions that will affect them throughout their lifetimes. It also encourages parents to participate with their children in contests related to physical activity and nutrition throughout the school year. This site will be launched during the spring of 2003.

**Successes:**

- New program

**Challenges:**

- Promoting large statewide programs sounds easy, but in reality it is difficult to get broad buy-in to a program.

**Strategies for sustainability:**

- Web-based programs make sense because the resources required to maintain and expand them are minimal.

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