YEAH! Youth Engagement and Action for Health

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PARC
Physical Activity Research Center
Existing approaches to childhood obesity

- School based approaches
- Personal behavior change motivations

"Health Impact Pyramid"
Play is an Important Role in Children’s Health

Health status determined by:

- Genetics (5%)
- Health care (10%)
- Behavior (30%)
- Social conditions (55%)

WHO Commission on the Social Determinants of Health (2008)
Research Shows that Advocacy is a Tool for Youth Betterment

Advocacy is the act of communicating with people or organizations to persuade them to take a particular position.

- **Empower youth** (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002)
- **Aid marginalized youth development of agency, efficacy & hope** (Whitehead, 2009)
- **Successful in reducing tobacco usage among youth** (Holden, Crankshaw, Nimsch, Hinnant, & Hund, 2004; Kulbok et al, 2008; Ribišl et al., 2004)

**Successful Youth Advocacy Programs ...**

- **Help youth to gain and exercise power** (Millstein, & Sallis 2011)
- **Move from placation of youth to true partnerships with adults and decision makers** (Botchwey et.al. 2020)

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Youth Engagement and Action for Health (YEAH!) Program Description

A youth advocacy training program designed to teach advocacy for improving physical activity and nutrition assets in communities focusing on policy, systems, and environmental changes.

3 Core Elements
- Conducting neighborhood assessment
- Completing advocacy project
- Learning about advocacy and health
Youth Engagement and Action for Health (YEAH!) Program Design

- 10 - 14 week program
- Target age group 11-14 years old
- 12-15 youth per club
- Target demographic low-income students from minority backgrounds
- Conduct one to two different community assessments
- Share an advocacy presentation with a decision-maker
- Complete physical activity and attitudes assessment at week 1 and final week
## Participants by Demographic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Count (Percentage)</th>
<th>N=137</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>16  (12%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>59  (43%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>62  (45%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>43  (31%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>19  (13%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American, Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian</td>
<td>33 (24%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>25  (18%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Identified</td>
<td>17  (12%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>59  (43%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>78  (56%)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
PAST YES! CLUBS AND PROJECTS

1. ASIAN YOUTH CENTER, Los Angeles, CA
   - School Assessment
   - Improvement of school grounds specifically around trash cleanup

2. POE MIDDLE SCHOOL, Annandale, VA
   - Community Physical Activity Assessment
   - Pole vault training

3. HOLMES MIDDLE SCHOOL, Alexandria, VA
   - Community Physical Activity
   - Membership for students at a local gym

4. CHARLOTTESVILLE MINISTRY, Charlottesville, VA
   - Safety crossing at dangerous intersection
   - Lights on the park
   - Complete sidewalks

5. PENOBSCOT BOYS & GIRLS CLUB, Presque Isle/Macomb Unit, ME
   - Community Assessment

6. BGC OCEANSIDE, Oceanside, CA
   - School and Community Assessment

7. BGC Tococca-Stephens, Tococca, CA
   - Community Physical Activity Assessment

8. BGC OF HUMBLE, Humble, TX
   - Community Physical Activity Assessment

9. WEST HAWAII COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER, Kailua-Kona, HI
   - Community Physical Activity Assessment

10. BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF MIAMI, Miami, FL
    - Park Assessment
    - Increase activities and resources at the local park

11. BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF MIAMI, Miami, FL
    - Park Assessment
    - Increase activities and resources at the local park

12. GLADES MIDDLE SCHOOL, Miami, FL
    - School Assessment
    - Dance for girls, improvement of school grounds
Sample YEAH! Projects and Results

1. Dance Elective
   - Lyrical Dance as extracurricular activity
2. 'Litter'-ature Group
   - Schoolwide awareness
3. Water fountain cleanliness
   - Clean water fountains
4. Resurface the track
   - Awareness of the condition
WHAT GLADES STUDENTS LIKED BEST ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN THE YEAH! GROUP

- I liked feeling as if I could take control and persuade others to make a difference.
- I get to work together with my group and make a change.
- I liked best when we shared our ideas, and when we presented.
- I liked doing the right thing to make the environment better.
- I was able to work on public policy issues with my friends.
- I learned a lot about leadership and teamwork.
- I like meeting new people and getting food.
- I have a say in things.
- I got snacks at the end.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>Decline</th>
<th>Averages across time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical activity:</td>
<td>Physical activity:</td>
<td>All youth increased the number of days they were physically active for at least 60 min from an average of 3.8 to 4.3 of the recommended seven days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days of meeting recommendations</td>
<td>Active transportation for suburban youth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active transportation days for rural and urban youth</td>
<td>Diet: Fruit and vegetable consumption for rural youth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diet: Fruit and vegetable consumption for suburban and urban youth.</td>
<td>Increased fast food for urban youth and boys overall.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced fast food in rural and suburban youth and girls overall.</td>
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YEAH! Impact on Student Attitudes

**Improvement**
- Optimism for change for rural and suburban youth.
- The number of friends who are physically active and eat healthy, (peer support for healthy behaviors), increased among all youth.
- Feelings of having an influence for rural and suburban youth.

**Decline**
- Optimism for change for urban youth.
- Feelings of having an influence for urban youth.

**Averages across time**
- Attitude changes varied by place and race. More attitude scores improved than decreased.
- Mut more decreases occurred in urban youth.
- This points to targeted programs for urban youth.
Implications

- Need more programming for urban youth to increase hope, optimism, and self-efficacy.
- Need additional PSE changes that increase African-American/Black and Latino physical activity.
- Trimming surveys for ease of use.
COVID and Social Justice Implications

- YEAH! empowered youth in different locations/ethnic backgrounds to make behavior/place changes.
  - COVID exacerbates underlying inequities, which are themselves risk factors for health and safety, making advocacy a key tool in the fight for equity.
- YEAH! can be a future vehicle for advocating for COVID-safe physical activity opportunities and community education:
  - Advocating for open streets while traffic is lighter, as a conduit to more permanent changes.
  - Helping communities post signage for mask wearing/enforcing physical distancing.
- YEAH! can help empower youth to transfer their advocacy skills to decision-making during COVID to make healthy community changes.

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Next Steps

- Expand YEAH! to more states and clubs with our guidebook
- Disseminate results and encourage broad adoption

www.yeah.gatech.edu
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• Healthy Places Lab Team Members and Collaborators: Anna J Kim, Katie O’Connell, Jasmine Jones-Bynes, Terry Conway

• YEAH! Clubs from Hawaii to Maine!

• YEAH! Advisory Board

• YEAH! Club Members

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Summary/Conclusions

- PARC identified effective strategies for specific race and ethnic subgroups to create opportunities for active play in multiple settings.

- Failure to consider equity creates potential for PA disparities to widen between subpopulations.

- PA is especially important in communities at higher risk COVID-19 illnesses and deaths.

- PA research must make health equity an explicit priority in ensuring that all children, youth, and families achieve optimal PA levels.
Thank You!

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Aaron Hipp
Renée Umstattd Meyer
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