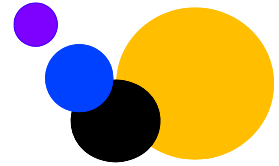


Organization: Mission Healthcare Foundation, Inc**County:** Buncombe**Address:** 980 Hendersonville Rd., Ste. C
Asheville, N.C. 28803**Phone:** 828-213-1020**Website:** http://www.missionhospitals.org/home_foundation.cfm?id=480&fr=true**Project:** Physical Activity Promotion*****Below are excerpts from their final report*****

About the Project: After identifying the students and families of Asheville Middle School (AMS) as the target population, we developed relationships with the staff at the school. With the input of the student advisory board at AMS (consisting of middle school students and parents as well as faculty and community members) we designed a series of events that included a week-long health focus. A news letter was sent to all the students and their families describing the events planned for the week-long health focus and, "Color Me Healthy Week," which began March 9th, 2009.

As part of Mission Hospital's Health Education Center, we also collaborated with the YWCA (a local fitness center primarily serving a minority, low economic population). We coordinated Healthy Family Day, a health fair focusing on the prevention of diabetes, which occurred at the YWCA the Saturday following "Color Me Healthy Week". On April 6th, the AMS PTO held an event titled "Diversity Night," similar to an open house, but highlighting different foods from the various ethnicities represented in the AMS population. We provided fruits and vegetables for this event, as well as diabetes prevention education to parents and community members.

The "Color Me Healthy Week" at the school included activities that involved fitness, nutrition, and healthy living education. We started with a three week fitness challenge, in which students were encouraged to achieve daily physical activity and record the kind and amount. Each student that participated in the fitness challenge (36 students) was allowed to choose a prize from the sports equipment that we had purchased. On Monday through Wednesday, we held a fitness event, which included various stations with alternative forms of exercise (i.e. kickboxing, Tai Chi, hip-hop dancing, and resistance band exercises). Students were able to rotate through these stations during their "Move More time" to learn fun ways to exercise. Using the "5-A-Day the Color Way" approach, students were introduced to daily fruits and vegetables and were encouraged to wear the color of the day each day. The days started with a video clip on the school news that incorporated humor into an educational segment. These segments included exercise, sleep, nutrition and hygiene. We held a poster contest with the theme being "Color Me Healthy." Throughout the entire week we promoted Healthy Family Day in an effort to encourage students and their families to attend. Together these events were intended to encourage healthy lifestyles in the students and their families.



Students attending Asheville Middle School, as well as their parents and the community surrounding them, were reached. Asheville Middle School has 667 students enrolled for the 2008-2009 school year. Over 60% of these students are minorities, and 50% qualify for free/reduced lunch. Although not all of the students were able to participate in the week's events, those that did expressed enjoyment and genuine interest (via word of mouth to the student advisory board members). The faculty of AMS felt compelled to host a faculty/parent fitness challenge following "Color Me Healthy Week" as a result of its motivation for healthy living. In addition, out of the 109 people who were screened at Healthy Family Day, 18 of those were 18 years of age or younger, and were accompanied by their family members. With the local news showing a segment that included film of the fitness event, as well as interviews from several students, it is likely that others in the city of Asheville were impacted by these events.

Successes: The impact of this project is two-fold. First, students of Asheville Middle School and their parents, as well as members of the community, likely increased their desire to eat healthier and exercise. Many students expressed their enjoyment of trying new fruits and vegetables, as well as their surprise at how delicious these foods were. Students not prone to traditional exercise, such as running or biking, may begin exercising (i.e. using kickboxing, the resistance bands, or another style of exercise they learned during this week).

Second, a platform has been established within the community that can be used for continued promotion of health and wellness among this population. By advertising for Healthy Family Day at AMS, families came to the YWCA that otherwise may not have, saw the facilities and met the staff, and now know that support network exists. AMS, Mission Hospitals, Buncombe County Health Department, and the YWCA plan to continue to collaborate to fight the obesity epidemic.

A pharmacy resident presented this intervention at a residency conference with thousands of people in attendance. The opportunity for other communities to provide this style of intervention was encouraged. Thus, the potential exists for this project to continue to influence other communities.

Due to limited amount of funds available to the school systems, as well as the time and effort it takes to design and implement this approach of intervention, AMS has not previously been able to provide health education to this scope or degree. The funding we received from this grant gave us the opportunity to bring a condensed, but intense, healthy living program into a middle school that would not have happened otherwise.