



YES DALLAS

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN SPORTS
PROGRAM IMPACT REPORT





About YES Dallas

The Youth Engagement in Sports (YES) Dallas Initiative was designed to help underprivileged and ethnic minority youth living in one of the highest-need communities in North Texas adopt and sustain healthy lifestyle behaviors and reduce chronic disease. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Women's Health funded the \$800,000 program in late 2019 as part of its federal YES Initiative, designed to increase youth participation in sports and reduce barriers to play in high-need communities across the nation. Of 18 awardees, Texas Health Resources (Texas Health) was the only recipient in Texas.

Community Health Improvement Efforts

As a faith-based, nonprofit health system, Texas Health is committed to improving the health of the people in the communities we serve. Every three years, Texas Health commissions a Community Health Needs Assessment to identify and address critical healthcare needs and disparities in 16 North Texas counties.

Texas Health's Community Health Improvement (CHI) team uses these learnings to partner with community-based organizations in deploying intervention programs to reduce healthcare inequities and improve overall health and wellness. These are supported through grant funding from

the Texas Health Resources Foundation and funding from other innovative health improvement projects. CHI used the \$800,000 grant to launch the YES Dallas Initiative, complementing Texas Health's Community Impact strategy to improve the health of residents in Dallas and Rockwall Counties.

Supporting Pleasant Grove

CHI selected the Pleasant Grove community of southeast Dallas for the YES Dallas initiative due to its classification as one of the unhealthiest ZIP codes in Dallas and a federal Opportunity Zone¹. Pleasant Grove's SocioNeeds Index² score, which combines multiple socioeconomic indicators into a single composite value, was 98.24 (with 100 being the worst). A federal survey³ of middle-school students also found that many children (particularly girls) were inactive, resulting in poor health and obesity.

¹ Federally designated Opportunity Zones drive capital to support new businesses and investments by providing investors with a deferral of capital gains taxes, among other tax benefits.

² The SocioNeeds Index (now called the Health Equity Index) is used nationwide to identify areas of highest socioeconomic needs and where investments should be made to close health equity gaps.

³ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Middle School Youth Behavior Risk Survey, 2011.

ABOUT PLEASANT GROVE

43%+

Adults are obese

62%+

Hispanic/Latino kids were not physically active for 1 hour a day, 5 days a week

36%

Adults have high blood pressure

45%

Black/African-American students played video games 3+ hours per day

63.3%

 of residents live

200%

 below the federal poverty line

1 in 3

 Black/African-American and

1 in 2

 Hispanic/Latino students are physically inactive

GRANT PARTNERS

Texas Health assembled a network of community-based partners to help implement the program:

Texas Health Research & Education Institute

Administered the program grant and research spearheaded by CHI staff.

Texas Woman's University

Provided research design, evaluation and reporting.

North Texas Food Bank

Provided nutrition education, resources and food.

IMPLEMENTATION SITES

Mark Cuban Heroes Basketball Center

Recruited students, performed assessments and hosted activities.

After-School All-Stars

Recruited students, performed assessments and hosted activities.

A+ Charter Schools

Provided physical activity space and served as the control group site.

Objectives

Recognizing that regular physical activity and nutritious foods could help Pleasant Grove's youth achieve healthy body weight, improve motor development skills and enhance their mental health, Texas Health's CHI team designed a two-year program that aimed to:

Reduce barriers to play and increase participation in sports for 6th to 8th-grade students, particularly girls.



YES Dallas Fitness

Encourage healthier eating by delivering evidence-based nutrition education to participants and their families.



YES Dallas Nutrition

Promote long-term health by establishing a community-based intervention model that introduces high-school students to careers in sports medicine.



YES Dallas Sports Medicine Student Internship Program

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services developed the National Youth Sports Strategy to:

- Expand children's participation in youth sports.
- Encourage regular physical activity, including active play.
- Promote good nutrition for all Americans.

Program Administration

Physical Activity and Nutrition Education Programming

CHI oversaw program implementation efforts, including coordination with key community partners, relationship management, staffing and reporting. The team also identified, recruited and engaged community physical activity and nutrition education vendors experienced in delivering activities that engaged youth.

Promotion and Recruitment

To encourage participation in the YES Dallas Initiative, a program-funded Community Health Worker distributed flyers at local school food drives and visited local doctor's offices, churches and social service organizations. In addition to offering access to free physical activity and nutrition education activities, participants received two gift cards upon completion of the program (a \$50 value).

Participants also received non-cash incentives such as sporting equipment, yoga mats, t-shirts, towels, water bottles, personal protective equipment, cooking utensils and supplies, and other essentials to remove barriers to participation.

Quasi-Experimental Research Model

The YES Dallas Initiative was designed as a six-month intervention to improve physical literacy. To determine if changes across the participant group were significant, a control group was also instituted. Control group members did not participate in activities but shared similar demographics and completed pre- and post-assessments.

Pre- and Post-Assessments

Texas Woman's University (TWU) researchers partnered with CHI to create assessments that measured students' physical literacy baselines and progress. The assessments included demographic information, fitness self-efficacy, motor competencies, physical activity and sedentary behavior, nutritional literacy and food security. TWU staff trained CHI's team to conduct the assessments and teach community partners to do the same.



ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

- Lived and/or attended school in Pleasant Grove
- Were underserved or low-income
- Were primarily ethnic minority/female students in 6th-8th grades
- Did not participate in other physical activities and did not meet physical activity guidelines
- Agreed to participate weekly for six months



ACTIVITIES OFFERED THROUGH YES DALLAS

Yoga	Gardening
Kickball	Capture the flag
Basketball	Freeze Tag
Soccer	Exercise Videos
Flag Football	Relay Races
Volleyball	Football Drills
HIIT Workout	Dance
Stretching	Jump Rope
Walking	HipHop Step
Cooking Classes	Running
Karate	Swimming
Tae Kwon Do	Zumba

Middle School Program Components

YES Dallas Fitness

The program was designed for students to participate in weekly indoor physical activities over six months to determine if there were noticeable improvements in their fitness and health. When the COVID-19 pandemic reached Texas, the program team:

- Transitioned activities from in-person to virtual, leading to more varied options and flexibility for participants.
- Resumed activities at a local park, where students, families and friends could safely participate. The park was a safe space to connect and counteract the effects of loneliness on physical and mental health.
- Added after-school programming hosted by Mark Cuban Heroes Basketball Center and After-School All-Stars (ASAS). They provided physical activities at their sites, eliminating transportation barriers and expanding attendance.

Putting Fitness Resources at Students' Fingertips

YES Dallas program leaders always intended to provide virtual tools to make it convenient for students and their families to access fitness activities and resources. When the pandemic arrived, virtual support became critical.

CHI contracted with a Netherlands-based vendor to develop the YES Dallas smartphone app, enabling participants to access more than 4,000 fitness classes, activities, stress management and meditation resources. Students also used the app to create group chats with friends and family, post pictures, share recipes, cheer each other on and participate in virtual fitness challenges. Mark Cuban Heroes Basketball Center and ASAS also used the app to schedule or assign exercises to participants.



THE YES DALLAS APP

App features:

- **Class scheduling**
- **Step-by-step workouts**
- **Access to the YES Dallas website**
- **Access to nutrition education and resources**
- **Attendance tracking**
- **Achievements**
- **Meditation**
- **On-demand fitness classes**
- **Group messaging**

YES Dallas Nutrition

While creating a healthy eating environment in a food-insecure area is not easy, YES Dallas sought to influence healthy food choices by replicating a set of effective evidence-based nutrition education interventions. The program aimed to increase the consumption of whole fresh fruits and dark green, orange and red vegetables while lowering the intake of sugar-sweetened beverages.

To help YES Dallas participants transform poor eating habits into smart nutritional choices, the program team offered a variety of resources:

North Texas Food Bank

Teams from NTFB delivered both in-person and virtual culinary and nutrition education programs to students and their families. They developed recipes and delivered virtual Cooking Matters® programs that taught how to shop for and cook affordable, healthy foods. NTFB also provided Thanksgiving dinners and cooking utensils.

YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas

As part of its offerings, the YMCA provided a combined parent-child physical activity and nutrition program called FIT (Families Improving Together), which YES Dallas families could join.

This 11-week healthy lifestyle program was created by a grant awarded to the YMCA in collaboration with Baylor Scott & White by the

National Institutes of Health. FIT focused on physical activities, information about healthy habits, calorie goals and self-monitoring, as well as positive parenting styles and tips.

To Taste

Chefs and registered dietitian nutritionists from this culinary nutrition consulting and education company conducted online cooking demonstrations. They explained how to identify healthy beverages and snacks, make easy meals with fruits and vegetables, and the importance of sports nutrition. They also met with parents to customize meals based on the cooking tools and utensils they had at home.

The program aimed to increase the consumption of whole fresh fruits and dark green, orange and red vegetables while lowering the intake of sugar-sweetened beverages.



NUTRITION MODULES

A graduate Fellow developed six nutrition modules that were made available to the public through the YES Dallas website. These modules covered fruits, food additives, plate building and urban gardening. Each module shared concise educational information and began and ended with a quiz as a knowledge check.

For program participants, this resource supported their Junior Master Gardeners curriculum, adding to their overall knowledge of nutrition. The modules also enabled parents and siblings to join in on virtual sessions, increasing student participation.

Through YES Dallas, participating families also received kitchen essentials such as cutting boards, measuring cups, bowls and cutlery.

ENGAGED PARENTS INCREASED PARTICIPATION

Recognizing that many Pleasant Grove families lacked access to fitness and nutrition resources, the YES Dallas team engaged parents throughout the program to help them adopt and sustain healthy behaviors at home.

At the program's inception, they formed a Parent Advisory Committee to solicit input on foods and activities their families were more likely to enjoy. They also directed caregivers to Texas Health's behavioral health counseling and education programs to receive additional resources at no cost.

Participation was 58% higher for those with engaged parents.

Research Findings

Throughout the grant period, the YES Dallas Initiative met or exceeded most of its goals, despite COVID-19. The program team recruited 411 students, which was enough to find significant differences between the treatment groups (263 students) and control group (144 students). Of these students, 76.5% were Hispanic/Latino, 53.7% were female and 17.8% were Black/African-American.

Program Wins

Compared to the control group, the participants:



Increased the number of days youth was physically active 60+ minutes by

6.3%



Increased pushups by

19%



Improved self-confidence by

2%



Increased self-efficacy by

13%



Increased girls' participation in sport programs by

4.4%



Reduced consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages by

3.8%

Unexpected Outcomes

Surprisingly, data revealed some unexpected outcomes:

Fitness

Control group outperformed program participants in the following:



PACER* runs averaged
6.7 vs. 2.1



Curl-ups averaged
3 vs. -0.6927

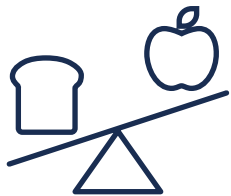


Body Mass Index improved
6% vs. declined by 0.1%

**PACER (Progressive Aerobic Cardiovascular Endurance Run is a multistage shuttle run that measures endurance, performance and fitness.*

Nutrition

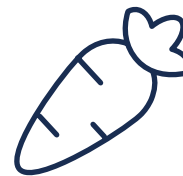
Nutrition behaviors did not improve among student participants:



Nutrition knowledge improved
by 2% among the control group
vs. declined by 0.5% among
participants



Consumption of whole fresh
fruits decreased by 11.1%



Consumption of dark green,
orange and red vegetables
decreased by 0.3%





High School Program Components

In socioeconomically challenged communities like Pleasant Grove, many families do not have access to or cannot afford to see a primary care doctor. This often results in overlooked injuries, unnecessary visits to the emergency room and undue stress resulting from a lack of resources and potential misinformation. Developing a program that would reduce these impacts would benefit the community in many ways.

YES Dallas Sports Medicine Student Internship Program (SMSIP)

One key objective of YES Dallas was to design a community-based intervention to promote long-term health. To increase the number of trained individuals who could assist neighbors with minor health issues—and boost their employment potential in such careers as athletic training, physical therapy, nutrition and kinesiotherapy—a one-year sports medicine internship was incorporated into the program design. With weekly lessons, student interns learned from a curriculum developed in-house with support from the Texas Health Sports Medicine department and sports medicine instructors from Texas Christian University.

The internship was offered to 9th-12th graders in and around the Pleasant Grove community who were interested in a health-related career.

Selected students participated in a year-long program to sharpen their skills and increase their future earning potential and job prospects. Under the guidance of a licensed and certified athletic trainer, student interns learned about injury prevention, sports nutrition, behavioral health and other topics to boost their physical literacy. Additionally, they:

- Attended YES Dallas middle school activities to create a safe environment for participants, helped treat athletic injuries, and practiced taping, bracing, casting and splinting.
- Became certified in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and how to use automatic external defibrillators (AEDs).
- Completed The HEADS UP to Youth Sports: Online Training, which explained how to assess, prevent and respond to concussions.

Through community connections, CHI recruited several guest lecturers who volunteered their time to guide the student interns on applying to college, boosting their confidence, managing their time and teaching other essential life skills.

YES DALLAS SPORTS MEDICINE STUDENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



16

Interns



94%

Female



72%

Hispanic/Latina



9

Graduates enrolled in college health sciences programs

From Being Uncertain to Finding Purpose

When sophomore Itzel Guerrero began the YES Dallas Sports Medicine Internship, she felt confused and stressed about life after high school—not knowing whether to pursue college or what careers were best suited for her. She discovered through the nine-month internship that she became interested in occupational therapy.

“YES Dallas gave me a wide scope of opportunities and an understanding of how much rehabilitation sciences are needed everywhere,” she said. “The experiences really made a big impact on my life. I learned not only to take care of my physical self but also my mental self. It inspired me to start a healthy diet and walk at least 10,000 steps a day.”

Over the weeks, Guerrero also learned the basics of human anatomy, what to expect in everyday life after graduation, how to save money in college and how to manage her time effectively.

“My instructor taught me that managing time not only makes you more prepared for an unexpected event, but it also attracts tons of potential working opportunities,” she said.

When she graduates high school, Guerrero hopes to study Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of Texas at El Paso.

“This experience made me feel good about myself.”

“My instructor taught me that managing time not only makes you more prepared for an unexpected event, but it also attracts tons of potential working opportunities.”

Itzel Guerrero



INTERNSHIP OUTCOMES

Of the 16 interns who began the internship, **11 completed the program** and participated in a formal graduation ceremony.

Of the seniors, **nine were accepted to college** and committed to studying health sciences. Many of these students are the first in their families to pursue higher education.

Making Things Work Through a Global Pandemic

The YES Dallas program team overcame significant challenges, adjustments, and staffing and partnership losses caused by the pandemic. It required significantly more time to administer the program, recruit students, and engage vendors, partners and families.

Despite these challenges, the team found innovative ways to deliver activities virtually and through on-demand apps. They tapped existing funding sources and experienced community partners to expand the program's reach and eliminate participation barriers. Team members also created valuable tools and resources that would benefit program families beyond the duration of the study and leveraged the media to draw attention to the need and interventions being delivered in Pleasant Grove.

Onset of the Pandemic

INITIATION | Q4 2019

- *Launched internally*

PRE-LAUNCH | Q2 2020

When COVID-19 pandemic was declared:

- *Adapted implementation plans to comply with social distancing requirements*
- *Held in-person programming outdoors*
- *Utilized a virtual platform for physical activity and nutrition education classes*

PLANNING PHASE | Q4 2019 - Q2 2020

- *Coordinated with partners*
- *Determined research protocols*
- *Developed enrollment packet and promotional materials*
- *Conducted pilot assessment*

LAUNCH | Q3 2020

- *Aligned programming with social support activities such as food drives, COVID-19 education and vaccination efforts when possible*
- *Developed the YES Dallas app*



“The YES Dallas program is a great experience for kids and parents alike, especially for me as a single mom. My daughter and I were introduced to places in the Dallas metroplex that I didn’t know were there.”

- Kimjada Rice, mom of Aliyah, age 12

HYBRID PROGRAMMING | Q1 2021 - Q3 2021

- *Launched the YES Dallas app*
- *Held some in-person activities at a gymnasium and required masks and social distancing*

FINAL PROGRAM PHASE | Q1 2022 - Q3 2022

- *Sent text reminders to encourage use of the YES Dallas app*
- *Infused YES programming into an existing after-school model*
- *Modified the traditional community-based sports center model to also include activity delivery at local school sites*

PROGRAM ADAPTATION | Q4 2021

- *Engaged local organizations to serve as primary recruitment and program delivery sites*
- *Continued diversification of program offerings*
- *Continued use of the YES Dallas app*

Adapting to a New Normal

Acknowledgments

The success of the YES Dallas Initiative is due to the tireless efforts and investments of its program leaders, researchers, grant partners, vendors and instructors. They invested significant time and resources to improve the health and wellness of Pleasant Grove youth and their families. For more information about this program, please visit <https://www.texashealth.org/Community-Health/Yes-Dallas>.

Texas Health would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to the following:

Pleasant Grove:

Participating middle and high school students, their parents and siblings

Financial and in-kind supporters:

- U.S. Health and Human Services
- Texas Health Resources
- Texas Health Sports Medicine

Program leadership and research team:

- Marcus Fagan, Ph.D., Statistician
- Paul Yeatts, Ph.D., Co-Investigator
- Tauane Araujo Cruz, MBA, Principal Investigator

Program implementation team:

- Iris Contreras Sereno, LMSW, Program Manager
- Katherine Moreno, ATC, LAT, Athletic Trainer
- Narsha Davis, BA, Program Manager
- Tanya Hrobowski-Simpson, Community Health Worker
- Whitney Houston, MSW, Program Manager
- Zelmy Allen, C-CHWI, Community Health Outreach Specialist

Graduate program Fellows

- David Sobalvarro (engagement/YES Dallas app)
- Keyanna Evans (virtual nutrition education modules)
- Matthew Boezinger (program assessment and improvement)
- Tiffany Thames (Junior Master Gardeners program)
- Zelmy Allen (parent engagement strategy)

Grant partners, vendors and services:

- A+ Charter Schools
- After-School All-Stars
- BeMoore Fitness
- City of Dallas Parks & Recreation
- Fitness on Demand
- Kicksite
- Mark Cuban Heroes Basketball Center
- North Texas Food Bank
- Salvation Army Pleasant Grove Corps
- Texas Health Research & Education Institute
- Texas Woman's University
- Top Tier Athletics
- To Taste
- VirtuaGym
- YLT Fitness
- YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas
- Yoga N Da Hood

Resources

To learn more about the value of YES Dallas and access nutrition modules, please visit:

- **YES Dallas YouTube video:**
<https://youtu.be/T-LUeglxvBI>
- **Introduction to Fruits:**
bit.ly/3HZrOfM
- **Introduction to Vegetables:**
bit.ly/3WtwJPd
- **Introduction to Supplements and Food Additives:**
bit.ly/3jvS7oD
- **Introduction to Food Shopping:**
bit.ly/3WEgRcE
- **Introduction to Plate Building:**
bit.ly/3FWIB6v
- **Introduction to Urban Gardening:**
bit.ly/3jwmL13





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