



A World Fit For Kids! Afterschool Program at Norwood Elementary School

Preparing Young People for Fit and Fulfilling Lives

A Healthy Behaviors Learning Center

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About the Program

A World Fit for Kids! (WFIT) is an award-winning, physical activity-based youth development program recognized with a gold medal by the *California Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports* for its positive impact on the physical activity and fitness levels of California's children and youth. Norwood Elementary School is one of WFIT's 11 afterschool sites in the Los Angeles area. It also serves as one of 14 Healthy Behaviors Learning Centers across the state that work with other afterschool programs to help them improve students' eating habits and physical fitness by intentionally integrating physical activity and nutrition education with youth development principles and practices. Over the past three years at Norwood Elementary, the program has demonstrated the effectiveness of its approaches and its impact on students' lives.

WFIT at Norwood Elementary serves a high poverty student population that is 96 percent Hispanic in the south Los Angeles. The program operates Monday through Friday from the end of the school day until 6 p.m. The staff to student ratio is 20:1 with a minimum of one coach/mentor per grade. This ratio is enhanced by a minimum of one teen assistant coach/mentor per grade, a parent representative, and a staff member. An average of 110 students attend the programs every day, and additional students are on a waiting list.

Activities offered include:

- **Physical Activity:** Students participate in a variety of activities designed to help them develop their social, emotional and physical skills. Students engage in at least 40 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity five days a week. WFIT coaches integrate skills and activities students are experiencing during the school day with afterschool.
- **Nutrition Education:** Students receive nutrition education that emphasizes the social and emotional connections to healthy behaviors and includes classroom lessons, and food and snack preparation. Lessons educate students about topics such as the food pyramid, the benefits of eating more fruits and vegetables, serving sizes, and label reading. Family fitness and nutrition trainings are a regular component to the program.
- **Academic and Enrichment Opportunities:** Students participate in literacy and library programs, arts and crafts, and a variety of field trips and service learning projects. They receive homework help and assistance, which is supported by an on-site academic coach. Site staff work with the Title I coordinator, math coach, and literacy coach from the school to ensure age appropriate activities are designed and implemented.
- **Mentoring:** Mentoring is a unique and innovative aspect of the program. It inspires and educates teens, college students and adults to be positive role models and make a difference in the lives of the youth they mentor. This learning-by-doing approach builds personal and academic success and leads to meaningful employment. **Teen Fit for SuccessSM** Program trains and

prepares high school students to serve as role models and mentors for the younger students, moving them towards responsible adulthood while benefiting the youth they mentor. **Mentors in Motion^{NSM}** offers physical activity training to teen and adult staff so they are prepared to design and conduct quality physical activities. Also, the school's certificated Physical Education teacher is employed by the program after school, providing ongoing support and training for *WFIT* and school district staff to ensure that standards-based physical activities build on students' skills and knowledge

Impact and Accomplishments

Over the past three years, *WFIT* at Norwood Elementary has served almost 600 students. The program has demonstrated that it is changing lives and making a positive impact on kids, families, schools and communities. The program tracks student progress using FITNESSGRAM[®] evaluations, in addition to pre/post surveys to track healthy behaviors, physical activity participation, and physical activity/ nutrition skills and knowledge. Results include:

- 46% of 5th grade students lowered their Body Mass Index from fall 2008 to spring 2009.
- 60% of 5th grade students passed FITNESSGRAM[®] testing during the 2008-2009 school year, compared to 51% in 2007-2008 and 36% in 2006-2007.
- For each of the six areas of FITNESSGRAM[®] testing (aerobic capacity, body composition, abdominal strength, trunk extensor strength, upper body strength and flexibility), the percentage of 5th grade students in the Healthy Fitness Zone (HFZ) increased from fall 2008 to spring 2009. For example, 28% of 5th grade students were in the HFZ for abdominal strength during the fall and 74% of 5th grade students were in the HFZ during the spring.
- 100% of Norwood students ran and/or walked 26.2 miles or more in four months through the school wide Marathon Kids Program conducted during and after school.
- 32 parents participated in Marathon Parents, an aerobic and resistance training program for parents and guardians of Norwood students.
- 71.3% of students reported drinking water three or more times per day during spring 2009, compared to 60% during fall 2008.
- 77.8% of students indicated that the program definitely helped them to be more physically active.
- 61.1% of students indicated that they share what they learned about physical activity with others.

Partnerships

Many partners have helped ensure the success of the program. They include:

- Center for Collaborative Solutions
- California Endowment (HEAC)
- *Network for a Healthy CA*
- LAUSD Physical Education Division
- CA State Univ., Los Angeles
- Project LEAN / CANFit
- University of Southern California
- CA Dept. of Public Health
- American Heart Association
- LA City Park & Recreation Dept.
- Salvation Army, Red Shield
- School administrators, teachers, staff
- Parents/guardians
- Beyond the Bell/LAUSD