



**YMCA of Silicon Valley
Pomeroy Elementary School Healthy Behaviors Learning Center
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Site Background

The YMCA After-School Program at Pomeroy Elementary School in Santa Clara Unified School District opened in February 2006. It serves a diverse group of students—58 percent are Latino, 14 percent are Korean, 14 percent are Caucasian, 5 percent are Indian, 5 percent are African American, 2 percent are Vietnamese and 2 percent are Filipino. The staff are African American, Latino and Caucasian. The site serves between 85-100 students per day.

What We Do

The YMCA After-School program focuses on three components: Homework Support, Academic Enrichment, and Physical Activity/Nutrition Education. These three components are woven throughout the regular after school day for each child.

Every day begins with physical activity. At the YMCA After-School program, physical activity is much more than a segment of time in the daily schedule. It sets the stage for teambuilding, trust building, self-esteem and self-empowerment building, staff-to-student interaction and connecting the child to the after school program. It is one of the pillars of this program that helps make it strong. Through a model called “Healthy Play,” all students are able to participate in the activities at one level or another. During the physical activity component, children truly have fun exercising and participating in ways they never thought possible. Games are taken from the *Fit for Learning* and Spark! curricula that are aligned with the California State Content Standards for Physical Education.

The students also receive nutrition education that is incorporated into regular lesson plans at least three times a week. Conversations during snack about nutritional information, specific lesson plans, and games created around nutrition topics are a few of the ways that nutritional education is delivered to the students. Monthly themes and packets are provided to the students as well as their parents.

Primary Challenges

Primary challenges that are faced by the YMCA After School Program at Pomeroy involve the culture of poverty and family access to healthy foods, recipes, and ways of creating more nutritious meals at home. Often times families on limited budgets purchase food items that are non-perishable, highly processed, and thus not as nutritious. Pomeroy has worked to overcome these challenges through education, not only for the students, but their families through family nights and open discussions. Over 41 percent of families reported trying new healthy recipes or changing how they eat as a result of something shared from their child from the afterschool program.

Changes that have occurred over time in Healthy Behaviors:

As a *Fit for Learning* School campus, Pomeroy Elementary School has seen drastic behavior and attitude changes around food consumption, education and physical activity. Students are being given positive messages, experiences, and knowledge about healthy eating habits and physical activity in the classroom, in special events and during the after school program. Since starting this program, staff have seen students' consciousness change greatly. There has also been a positive shift in staff perceptions and attitudes towards nutrition and physical activity.

Using resources such as *Fit for Learning* and Spark!, afterschool staff have taken intentional measures to educate students about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Students have been transformed through the curricula and activities, which are in alignment with the regular school day's mission as a *Fit for Learning* school.

Impact

The impact on the afterschool community has been a paradigm shift in the way overall health is viewed. Students look at food consumption more critically and understand that food is more than something that tastes good—it provides nourishment or can provide excessive fat, leading to damage of their body. They see physical activity as more than playing outside, rather they understand that being active leads to being healthy and that inactivity is unhealthy. Over 96 percent of students engaged in 150 plus minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per week throughout the year. Students also improved in all four Fitnessgram measures that the program tests.

Contributing Partners

The YMCA After-School program partners with various organizations and individuals throughout the community to provide the most resources available to the children and families in their program. Some of these partners are the Region V After School Partnership, California After School Resource Center (CASRC), Santa Clara County After School Collaborative (SCCASC), Bay Area Women's Sports Initiative (BAWSI), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Diabetes Association, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, National Dairy Council, U.S. Department of Agriculture, local grocers, and Second Harvest Food Bank.

The Center for Collaborative Solutions (CCS), with funding from The California Endowment, the *Network for a Healthy California* and the David & Lucile Packard Foundation, has greatly contributed to the resources and knowledge the YMCA program has attained and passed on to its children and their families. The YMCA After-School program at Pomeroy has been designated a Healthy Behavior Learning Center by CCS.

Kaiser Permanente is working closely with the entire Pomeroy school community, providing resources to a variety of community partners through a collaborative that has been established. The goal of this collaborative is to connect and engage agencies whose objectives are to promote the well being of the children in the Pomeroy community. The YMCA After-School program has also received a grant from Kaiser to hire an additional staff person to help serve more students in the school.

The afterschool program also uses the YMCA's organizational resources. They have held family nights at the YMCA facility to encourage families to come and exercise, using their pools, workout rooms, basketball, and racquetball courts. They also offer special discounted rates to the families in the program to participate in Youth Sports leagues as well as swim lessons.