

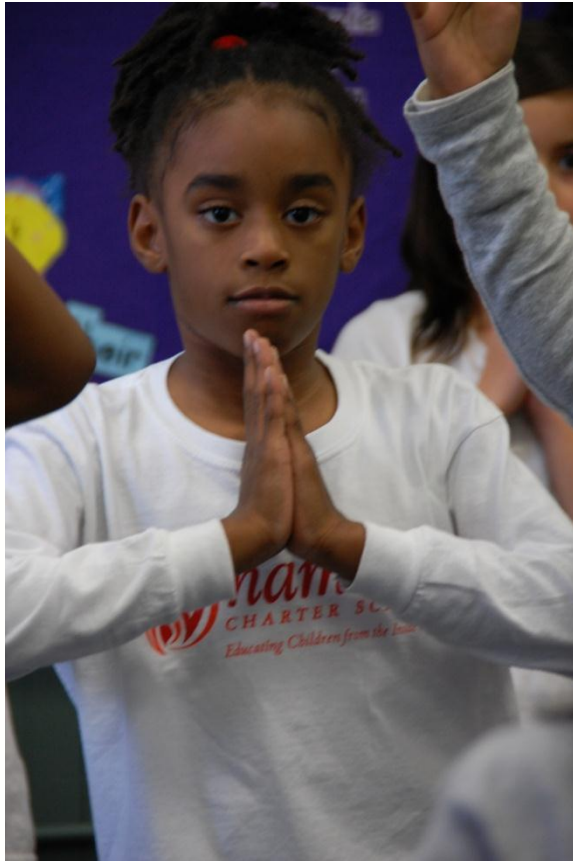


Namaste Charter School:
Educating Children From The Inside Out



Namaste Charter School

“The light in me sees the light in you”



- A public charter school founded in 2004 with 90 students
- 450 Kindergarten – 8th grade students in fall 2011
- 86% low-income and 90% minority student population
- No tuition and no selection criteria for enrollment; admission is by blind lottery
- Health and physical fitness as an avenue to reach higher student achievement
- New model of teaching and learning



Why Focus on Health & Wellness?

- More than 1/3 of America's children are overweight or obese with a disproportionate impact on low-income, minority populations
 - Nearly one-half of children in Chicago's under-resourced communities are overweight or obese
- Healthy students are better learners
 - Aerobic fitness and healthy Body Mass Index levels are associated with faster cognitive responses and increased engagement
 - Physical inactivity and overweight correlate with lower student reading and math scores
 - Physical activity *during academic time* affects attention and working memory
- 80% of overweight or obese children maintain an unhealthy weight their entire lives
 - It is Namaste's responsibility to establish student's *lasting* healthy habits, parallel to academic excellence, in the elementary and middle school years



The Namaste Way

What makes us unique?



Our Core Values

- Nutrition, Health and Wellness
- Movement
- Peaceful School Culture
- Balanced Learning
- Language and Culture
- Collaborative Practice

The first three pillars create the foundation for the Healthy Lifestyles Program



The Namaste Way

Nutrition, Health and Wellness



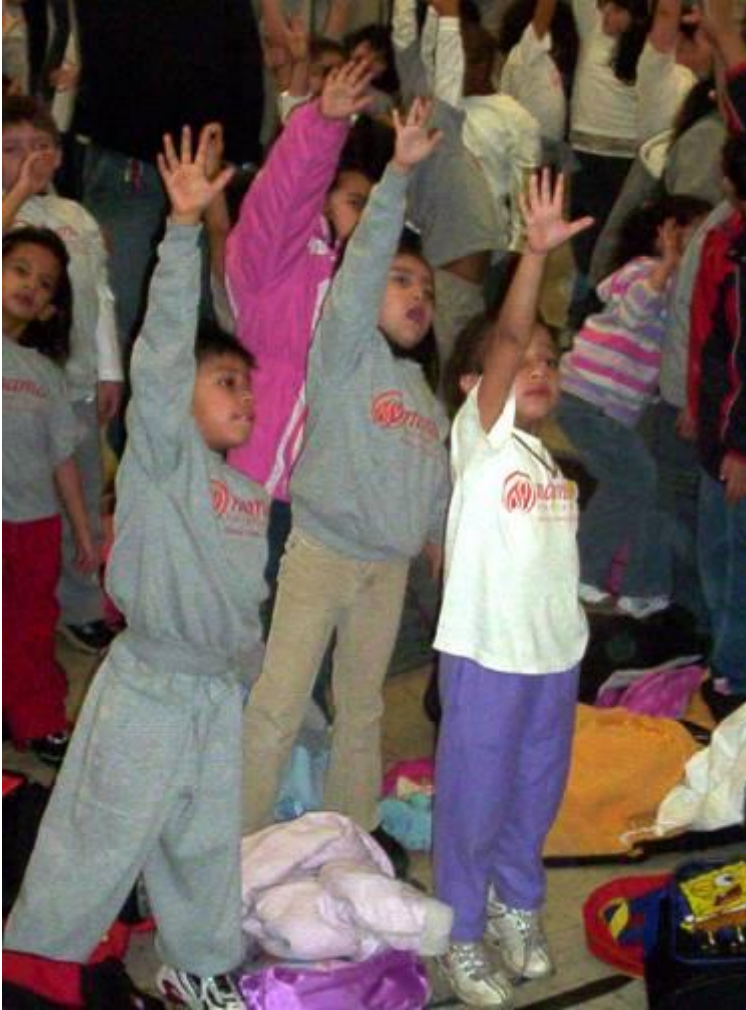
Daily salad bar increases consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables.

- U.S. Department of Agriculture's HealthierUS School Challenge Gold Award of Distinction
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation: 2010 and 2011 Healthy Schools Program recognition
- Variety of whole grains
- Comprehensive food policies
- Nutrition education for students and parents
- Fresh fruit and vegetable snack program
- Cafeteria as a learning laboratory
- Daily Wellness Block



The Namaste Way

Movement



- Increased time for physical **activity** and physical **education**
- One hour of physical fitness instruction daily and movement integrated throughout the school day
- Morning Movement purposefully designed to increase students' "readiness to learn"
- Daily recess with a purpose
- Yoga integrated into PE and classroom instruction
- Fitness Center to promote lasting independent exercise habits
- After School fitness



The Namaste Way

Peaceful School Culture



Putting on the “brakes” as a calm-down tool

- Mental health linked to academic performance
- “Peaceful People” Tools : common language for teachers, students and parents to solve problems peacefully
- Logical consequences and lower incidence of discipline issues
- Instruction on space, energy modulation and “thermometer in the body”
- Study of peace makers
- Developmentally appropriate instruction includes middle school Advisory and service learning
- 2012 Illinois State School of Character



2011-2012 State of the School

How are we doing?



Student Learning & Success

- **86.7%** of Namaste students meet or exceed state standards (2011 ISAT), including all Special Education students (20% of student population) and English Language Learners
 - Compared to **73.4%** of all Chicago Public Schools students
 - Bests CPS selective enrollment elementary schools (85% meets/exceeds) AND other non-selective elementary schools (71%)
- More than **95%** of Namaste students in the general education curriculum meet or exceed state standards
 - Compared to **79%** of students citywide
- 96% average daily attendance
 - 91% Chicago Public Schools' average
 - Healthy, engaged students have better attendance and learn better
- Commitment to ongoing data analysis and growth



Healthy Students & Lifelong Healthy Habits



- Children's Memorial Hospital Partnership
 - There was a significant change in activity patterns ($p < .01$), including reductions in sedentary activity and increases in vigorous activity. Student vigorous activity increased 47.6%.
 - Mean BMI percentile did not increase; percent overweight fell.

Preliminary results indicate that Namaste's immersion intervention holds promise and **merits further study**.

- Disaggregation of data depicts healthier students do better in school (and the converse).



Family Engagement



- 98% of parents attended 1st trimester conferences!
- Namaste hosted 43 family events and workshops in the first trimester of 2011-2012 (61 school days!)
- 83% of families attended at least one workshop in addition to parent/teacher conferences!
- Namaste Families attended on average 2.6 events/workshops
- New partnerships with YMCA and UIC; 98% of parents enrolled in Commit to Be Fit or Eating Right completed the programs



Looking to High School and Beyond



- 100% of current 8th graders attended our second annual high school fair with 28 high schools represented!
- 85% of 8th graders qualified to take the selective enrollment high school exam
- As of 1/30, our 38 8th graders submitted more than 330 high school applications!
- 74% of 8th graders are currently participating in SPARK apprenticeships on Fridays!



What's Next for Namaste?



- Growing our staff wellness programming
- Building the case for the connection between healthier eating and more exercise with more academic growth
- Special focus on the needs of special need students
- Strengthened commitment to sharing our work, disseminating best practices
 - 99 visitors in the first trimester!
 - “Namaste Shares”
 - Learning Institutes: June 2012 pilot institute



The Namaste students say...

