


## Key Strategies for Promoting Physical Activity in Underserved Communities

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- Brief introduction of the health issue
- Two culturally relevant programs designed to promote healthy lifestyle
- Recommended strategies to enhance and promote physical activity in hard-to-reach populations


## The Changing Face of America

**U.S. Overall Population**  
**52 Million**  
Estimated current Hispanic population (16.7%), making Hispanics nation's largest minority

**132.8 million**  
Projected U.S. Hispanic population in 2050 (30%)

**25**  
Number of states with Hispanics as largest minority

**27 years**  
Median age of Hispanic population (36.9 years overall)



U.S. Youth 2025 (est.)

**30%**  
**Latino**

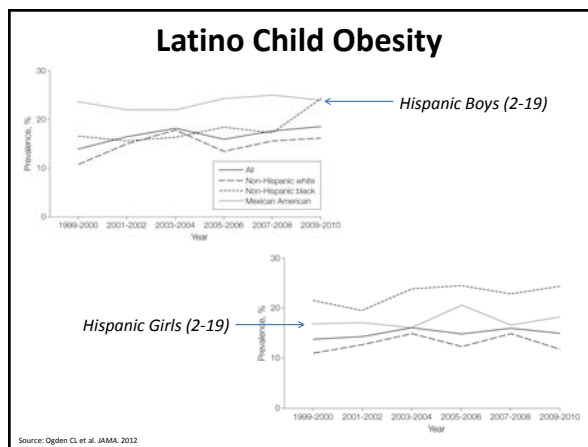
U.S. Youth 2011

**24%**  
**Latino**

U.S. Youth 2001


**17%**  
**Latino**

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau (<http://2010.census.gov>) and KIDS COUNT data center (<http://2010.kidscount.org>)




## What we know:

- Overweight children become overweight adults
- Obesity increases risk for many serious health problems
- Physical activity is a critical part of the issue
- Girls less active than boys
- Activity declines with age



## Factors Contributing to Physical Inactivity

- Media-dominated lifestyle
- Transportation
- Urban/suburban infrastructure
- Reduced participation in PE



### Remaining questions...

- What would it take to help girls be more active?
- As a community, what can we do to support girls' *desires to be physically active*?



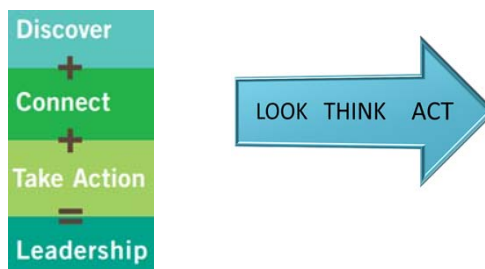
### Bridging the Divide

- Steps:
  - Partner with 2 community organizations
  - Engage community leaders in advisory board
- Benefits:
  - Increased knowledge about
    - the role of physical activity in health
    - barriers to physical activity in this community
  - Increased communication among agencies
  - Advocacy development: Community Advisory Board prepared to make an urgent and compelling case for physical activity in their community

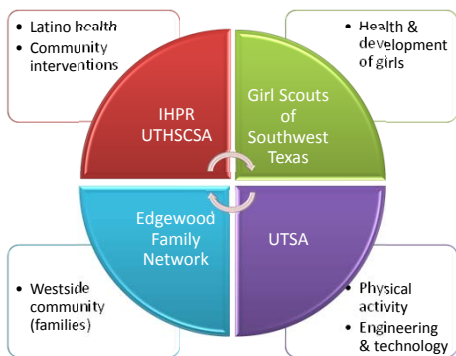
### Principles of Community-Based Participatory Research

- Based on a mutually respectful partnership between researchers and community
- Equitably involves all partners in all phases of research
- Builds on knowledge, strengths and resources within the community
- Involves cyclical and iterative process
- Educates both researchers and communities
- Results in action based on results obtained from the research

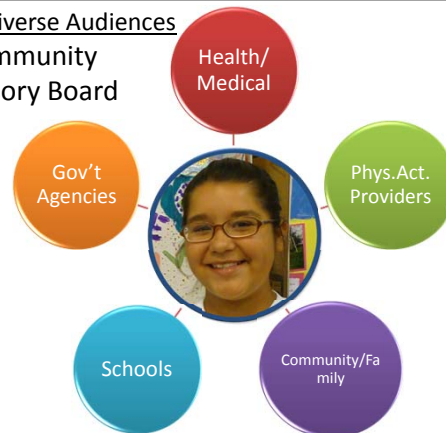
### Mobilization

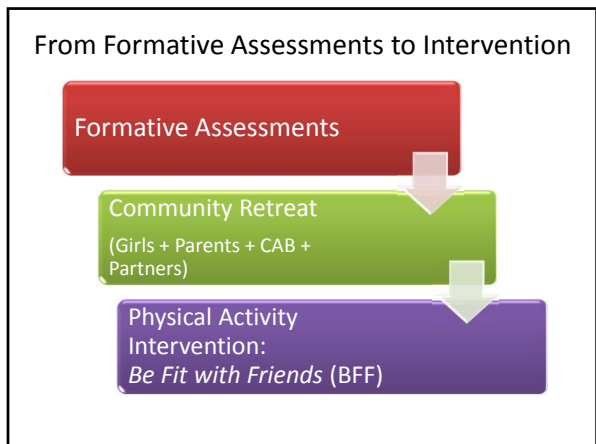


### Engaging Diverse Audiences The Partnership



### Engaging Diverse Audiences Community Advisory Board





### Engaging Community Leaders: Stakeholder Survey

Survey Categories:

- Potential Benefits
- Relevant Resources and Programs
- Barriers to Physical Activity
- Opportunities to Increase Physical Activity, Reduce Sedentary Activity
- Prioritizing Strategies
  - Importance
  - Feasibility

### Photovoice with Girls: *Picture This!*

**Girl Scouts on a mission Identifying a SOLUTION**

- Girls, photo walks, guided discussion and reflection
- Girls focused on these questions:
  - What helps girls your age to be active?
  - What keeps girls your age from being active?

### Engaging Girls: Photovoice

Uses photos to identify issues or themes through group discussions

### Engaging Parents: Focus Groups

- Community partner involvement:
  - Provided facility
  - Recruited parents
  - Post-group debriefing
- 4 groups for Westside parents of 11-14-year-old girls
  - 2 for moms, 2 for dads
  - Spanish
  - Childcare
  - Dinner

### Community Retreat

- Engage diverse audiences collaboratively in the intervention planning process

**Girls + Parents + CAB + Partners**

- What end products were we seeking?
  - List of priorities identified by the community
  - Strategies for addressing community priorities

“People have answers - it will be very interesting to see what they come up with.”  
-Velia (facilitator)

“People come with their experiences, energy, and ideas - we want to harvest that.”  
-Lea (community partner)

### Breaking the ice...



### Girls' Perspective

- Adult leader and girls share girls' findings in photovoice activity
- Interactive sharing of photo displays



### Main Themes

Centered on the physical environment and safety

- Dogs as barriers and promoters of PA
  - Stray dogs make girls feel afraid to walk in certain areas
  - Domestic dogs encourage girls to go for walks
- Uneven sidewalks and potholes as barriers
  - Difficult to skateboard, ride bikes or walk in neighborhoods
- Vacant lots as a promoter
  - Used for gardens
  - Place to build recreation center



### Awards Presentation



### Parents' Perspective

- Researcher presentation on overall focus group findings
- Parent testimonials



### Challenges for girls to be physical active

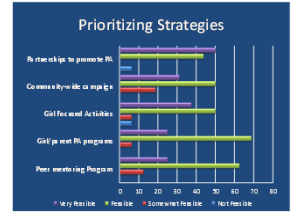
- Cost
  - Sports uniforms, costumes, equipment, enrollment fees
  - Lack of school resources for uniforms or equipment

*"Honestly its the money. I told my daughter you can be in whatever no voy a decir nombres pero conozco de 2 lugares donde se van los niños, después de escuela...entonces niñas han salido embarazadas ahí mismo, o algunos se...salen por ahí a hacer drogas o fumar cigarros"*

- Child's lack of time
  - Participate in other school activities, sports, and homework

### Community Stakeholder Survey

- Survey results shared by CAB co-chairs (researcher & community member)
  - Strengthen partnerships and collaborate to...
    - Make the case to parents and community leaders that physical activity is important
    - Improve efforts to promote existing opportunities for girls
  - Address key environmental barriers to activity:
    - Transportation, neighborhood safety, lack of opportunities for girl-focused programs



### Sharing Ideas



### Transitioning to Small Groups

Cluster ideas into session topics

Ideas for Parents  
 Advocacy (Government)  
 Resources  
 What Do Girls Like?  
 Role Models  
 Low-Cost Activities & Volunteers to Help

### Closing

- Participants shared highlights of the retreat experience
- Facilitator helped weave themes through this reflection process

"interesting"  
 "exciting"  
 "productive"  
 "informative"  
 "fun"

*"We want people to feel we are listening to them – it's important to reflect back what we heard."  
 -Deborah (researcher)*



### Intervention Program

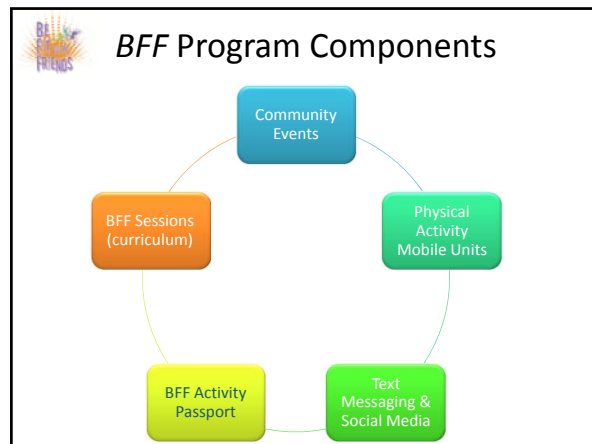
*Girls get moving with their BFF*





## BFF Program

- Behavioral Goals:
  - Meet the physical activity recommendation (60 min/day MVPA)
  - Engage in <2 hrs/day sedentary behavior (recreational screen time)
- Behavioral skills:
  - Activity monitoring, goal-setting, support for behavior change
- Provide opportunities in a safe, non-intimidating setting for girls to enjoy PA and develop new skills
- Connect girls and families with community resources that promote PA




## BFF Group Education

### BFF Sessions

- 9 brief education sessions delivered in a group setting by a facilitator
- Draws on knowledge girls already have
- Discussion-focused and highly interactive

### Physical Activity Mobile Units

- Introduce **fun** activities to do with **friends**
- Facilitators model active behaviors
- Reinforce concepts learned in BFF Sessions
- Active gaming & videos






## Community Events

- Girls & parents
- Existing community resources
- New kinds of physical activities
- 6 community events

### Activity Passport





## Communication Channels: SMS & Social Media

- **SMS** = Short Message Service
- **Broadcasts**: event reminders, cues to action, fit facts
- **Polls**: ask questions, get answers, share results



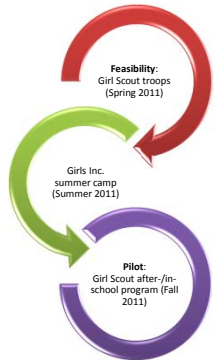


### Facebook page

- Promote community events (date, time, maps)
- Share *BFF* participant photos
- Increase social support
- Positive reinforcement
- Encourage active behaviors

## Be Fit with Friends Implementation

- Intervention development was iterative
- Constantly went back to our partners and CAB to:
  - Get input
  - Problem-solve
  - Share lessons learned
- Disseminated process and outcomes of project broadly
  - Joint Use Coalition
    - RWJF Healthy Kids Health Community Grant
  - Active Living Council
  - Multiple hats



## Y Living Healthy Lifestyle Program

- YMCA developed the program in response to local needs
- Used culturally tailored family-focused approach
- Engaged local volunteers with relevant expertise
- Based on YMCA values and priorities

Spirit	Mind	Body
Goal Setting The Importance of Life Balance Building Your Support System Identifying Energy Sources	Developing Healthy and Active Family Lifestyles Breaking Through the Stress Importance of Positive Self Esteem Creating a Family Schedule	Label Reading and How to Prepare Healthy Meals Meal Planning and Budgeting Setting and Meeting Fitness Goals Fun Family Physical Activities



## New Partnership



- YMCA wanted to:
  - enhance program
  - expand reach
  - demonstrate effectiveness
- UTHSCSA wanted to:
  - continue to serve and address community needs
  - sustain efforts and build trust
- YMCA
  - local knowledge
  - passion
  - staff
  - facilities
- UTHSCSA
  - behavioral science
  - evidence-based program development
  - research & evaluation



## Expanded Y Living Program

- 3 Components
  - Y Living Campaign
  - Y Living Speaker's Bureau
  - Y Living Healthy Lifestyle Program
- Uses evidence-based strategies
  - communication campaign
  - individually adapted health education
  - enhanced social support
  - enhanced access to resources

## Y Living Healthy Lifestyle Program

- A 12-week evidence-based program designed to:
  - increase physical activity
  - improve diet quality
  - prevent excess weight gain
- Families:
  - receive 3 month no-cost YMCA family membership
  - attend bi-weekly group health education
  - exercise 3 times each week (tailored sessions)
  - family wellness consultations
  - special events (grocery store tours, camp, walk)

## Challenges



- Varied level of experience of YMCA staff in working with targeted population
  - urban, Hispanic, financially disadvantaged
  - sedentary, overweight/obese, at risk for chronic disease
- Developing culturally relevant, standardized curricula
- Getting staff buy-in for rigorous evaluation
- Implementation with fidelity
- Identifying and meeting training and capacity building needs of the organization

## Key Strategies

- Involvement of the community of interest
- Engagement of community stakeholders
- Develop cultural competency in staff
- Tailoring to culture
- Address participants needs and use established settings and infrastructure
- Address safety concerns

