



# CATCH Healthy Habits

## Uniting children and adults age 50+ in the fight against obesity

**CATCH Healthy Habits is an evidence-based intergenerational program that encourages healthy eating and active living**

The program combats obesity by engaging adults age 50+ as mentors to teach healthy lifelong habits to kids in grades K-5. Adults in the program benefit in several ways. Research shows that volunteers have lower rates of depression and mortality and greater functional ability than those who do not volunteer. As they promote healthy habits for kids and for themselves, they also experience the rewards of meaningful community service.

### Why CATCH Healthy Habits?

Obesity rates in America have tripled for children and doubled for older adults in the last 30 years. Nearly one in three children in America are overweight or obese — increasing their risk of becoming overweight adults with chronic conditions like diabetes, heart disease and asthma. Approximately 60% of adults over 50 do not meet the CDC's recommended physical activity standards. Higher obesity rates have increased chronic disease and reduced quality of life. Isolation and a lack of meaningful paid or volunteer work exacerbate these problems.

How did we get here? A decline in physical activity and unhealthy eating styles are the principal causes. Walks to school have been replaced by car and bus



"I just get a joy out of seeing the kids be active."

*Evelyn Gillespie, St. Louis, MO*

rides. Instead of running around after school, kids spend their afternoons with TV, video games, and the Internet. Parents are busier than ever and families are eating more fast food and larger portions.

### An effective solution

Teams of volunteers work with children in after-school and summer programs for up to 25 sessions. Each one-hour session includes a nutrition lesson, a healthy snack and 30 minutes of physical activity.

CATCH Healthy Habits is based on the Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH), a nationally recognized evidence-based physical activity/nutrition curriculum.

Research supports that participation in CATCH increases healthy eating and physical activity behaviors in children. CATCH was created by research teams from the University of California at San Diego, University of Minnesota, Tulane University and the University of Texas.



**By the end of 2012, CATCH Healthy Habits aims to reach over 5,000 children and adults in 18 cities across 14 states**

**“Obesity is the biggest problem we face in pediatrics today. CATCH Healthy Habits makes learning about nutrition and exercise fun for little children.”**

*Dr. Katherine Kreusser, St. Louis, MO*



## **WellPoint Foundation and OASIS**

A grant from WellPoint Foundation supports the OASIS CATCH Healthy Habits program in 18 cities: Atlanta, GA; Escondido, Long Beach, Los Angeles and San Diego, CA; Indianapolis, IN; Portland, ME; Saint Louis, MO; Las Vegas, NV and Richmond, VA; Denver, CO; Madison, WI; Albany and New York City, NY; Hartford, CT; Louisville, KY; Manchester, NH; and Cleveland, OH.

### **Real results**

CATCH Healthy Habits builds on three years of pilot testing as Active Generations, which was originally funded by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. From 2008 to 2010 more than 200 volunteers and 1,000 children in grades three to five participated in the pilot program. Based on pre- and post-test survey data, children:

- reported eating more servings of fruits and vegetables
- improved their knowledge of the daily recommended servings of fruits and vegetables, and read food nutrition labels more frequently
- decreased their weekly screen time
- were more confident that they could participate in physical activity three to five times per week, run or bike during the week and run at a steady pace for at least 15 minutes



*“We have young men who are not eating the right things and they need role models to show them its good to eat well.”*

*Lynn Olinger, Lakewood, CA*

Recent preliminary outcomes for the adult volunteers showed that time spent in vigorous physical activity increased by 71 percent, and 90 percent of the adults enjoyed the program and would recommend it to a friend.

**For more information, contact us:  
The OASIS Institute  
314-862-2933  
[www.catchhealthyhabits.org](http://www.catchhealthyhabits.org)**

OASIS is a national non-profit organization that promotes successful aging through lifelong learning, health programs and volunteer engagement. The OASIS vision is to see that adults age 50-plus across the country have opportunities to pursue vibrant, healthy, productive and meaningful lives. Founded in 1982, OASIS serves more than 370,000 adults through partnerships in 40 cities. The OASIS Institute in St. Louis is the national headquarters.