



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# YMCA OF METROPOLITAN ATLANTA PROGRAM IMPACT



## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Enabled 27,704 children, families and adults with \$41.6 million of financial assistance for Y programs like child care, Head Start, camp, youth sports, and teen development. Provided \$3.2 million in Partner With Youth annual campaign assistance.

## VOLUNTEERS

Involved 7,440 men, women and young adults as volunteers in different programs.

## PRE-SCHOOL AND HEAD START

Helped 3,092 children prepare for kindergarten by providing a quality, early childhood learning foundation.

## AFTER SCHOOL

Gave 4,604 children enriching activities during non-school hours in a safe, supervised, affordable, and accessible place. Increased physical activity and reduced health risks in youth by offering Youth Fit For Life™ at after-school sites, YMCAs and at schools during physical education classes. Operated 135 after-school sites.

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Helped to develop 4,999 teenagers by guiding them with positive, adult role models, involving them in leadership development activities and community service programs, and preparing them to become future business and community leaders.

## DAY CAMP

Offered a place for 10,978 youth to go when school is out, to build relationships and enrich their understanding of the outdoors while having fun in a secure setting.

## RESIDENT CAMP

Used challenging outdoor experiences to help 2,802 young people grow emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually.

## YOUTH SPORTS AND RECREATION

Helped to address childhood obesity and build a life-long appreciation of health and wellness in 52,724 children through participation in values-based physical activities that build skills and self-esteem.

## YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Offered an opportunity for 408 young people with physical impairments to play team sports and learn to swim. Happy Club outings gave 213 young adults with developmental disabilities time away from family, social interaction, recreational activities, and a chance to learn new skills. Worked with 33 different, local agencies.

## WELLNESS

Progressively involved, supported and empowered 141,295 individuals and family members in the pursuit of health enhancement and the reduction of obesity and related chronic diseases. Developed THE COACH APPROACH® exercise support process for new and returning exercisers and those most at risk.

## COLLABORATIONS

Avoided the duplication of programs and services by collaborating with more than 100 government, health care and community service organizations including Atlanta Housing Authority, DeKalb County Schools, Northside Hospital, and American Association of Adapted Sports Programs, Inc. (AAASP).

# NURTURING THE POTENTIAL IN OUR COMMUNITY



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# YMCA ACTION AGENDA BUILDING HEALTHY FAMILIES



## CREATE A NEW FOCUS

Our goal is to focus on how state leaders can shift the response to the obesity epidemic in Georgia from a culture of disease treatment to a culture of disease prevention through becoming active and making healthy choices.

## ADVOCATE FOR FAMILY HEALTH

Childhood obesity is more than a school-based health issue... it's really a matter of adopting a community-based action agenda for building healthy families.

The Y wants to help local communities create a healthy redundancy of action steps that avoid pointing the finger at any one community partner, and extend an outreached hand to integrate stakeholders. As a health impact organization, the YMCA is a resource with an action agenda and is a partner in the Live Healthy Georgia initiative. We are offering two evidence-based, wellness programs to help adults and children increase their physical activity and reduce health risks related to inactivity.

## ENGAGE YOUR LOCAL YMCA

There are 22 YMCA associations with 77 locations throughout Georgia which create a uniquely impactful prevention and intervention system. If you would like to offer THE COACH APPROACH® and Youth Fit For Life™ at your local YMCA, the Metro Atlanta YMCA will train Y staff in these research-to-practice protocols at no cost.

## THE COACH APPROACH®

THE COACH APPROACH® is an exercise support process that helps adults start and stick with exercise. Wellness coaches help members to set goals, develop behavioral management skills and participate in enjoyable recreational and physical activities – for life.

Youth Fit For Life™ is a physical activity program offered three times per week in after-school settings for elementary school-age children.

## USE RESEARCH-PROVEN PRACTICES

We encourage you to seek public/private partners who are committed to research-to-practice methods. Local YMCAs can learn to deliver these wellness programs and find supporters for underwriting their direct costs. Data analyses on health outcomes can be provided by the Metro Atlanta YMCA.

## TAKE ACTION AND CONTACT

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INCREASING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY + REDUCING HEALTH RISKS IN YOUTH

# YOUTH FIT FOR LIFE™



## TARGET POPULATION

Children ages 5 to 12 years.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Youth Fit For Life™ is a physical activity and health behavior change program developed by the YMCA of Metropolitan Atlanta. It is delivered at after-school sites, YMCAs, and during physical education classes and camps. The program is an excellent way for YMCA programming to supplement school-based physical education curricula (which has often been reduced). Typically, after-school counselors directly deliver the Youth Fit For Life™ program, and YMCA wellness staff members conduct quality assessments and evaluation of associated physiological and behavioral changes.

The program consists of cardiovascular exercise 3 times per week in the form of non-competitive activities and cooperative games. Resistance training using bands is administered 2 times per week. Interactive, age-appropriate behavioral skills training (e.g., goal setting, progress feedback, facilitative self-talk) helps to foster feelings of competence and increase free-time physical activity (outside of programs where activity is mandated). A nutrition and health education component is provided through collaboration with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Currently, methods of training caregivers to support healthy behaviors are being tested.

## PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The 2003 initial trial of Youth Fit For Life™ (2,000 participants) was supported by a Carol M. White Physical Education Program grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Grants by the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, Altria Corporate Services, Atlanta Falcons Youth Foundation, Kimberly Clark, Healthcare Georgia Foundation, AT&T, Kaiser Permanente, Sara Giles Moore Foundation, Community Center Foundation, and WellPoint Foundation support

further dissemination and research and development. Youth Fit For Life™ now extends to YMCAs in Rockford, Ill; Asheville, N.C.; San Jose, Calif; and Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

## RESULTS

In 13 large-scale trials, Youth Fit For Life™ was associated with significant improvements in body mass index (BMI), body composition, strength, and endurance. Trends demonstrated a reduction in health risks, and percent of children in at-risk for overweight and overweight categories. Changes in self-concept, self-efficacy, and use of behavioral skills were significant, and were associated with an increase in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity outside of mandated programming. Feelings of participants' overall self-confidence, a marker of academic success, also increased.

Research conducted on Youth Fit For Life™ by the University of Texas and Oregon Research Institute indicated that effects on BMI change were greater than 84% of peer-reviewed and published intervention trials for elementary school children and effect sizes were, overall, significantly larger. Youth Fit For Life™ was accepted into the Research-Tested Intervention Program of the National Cancer Institute and National Institutes of Health.

## GRANT REVIEWER COMMENTS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

"Youth Fit For Life™ is comprehensive, developmentally appropriate and a research and evidence-based program. Clearly, a tremendous amount of planning has gone into this project, and its development, clear assessments and evaluation design have proven themselves already and can serve as a model for other similar programs."



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# THE COACH APPROACH®

# BUILDING THE EXERCISE HABIT



## TARGET POPULATIONS

Sedentary adults, overweight and obese individuals

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

THE COACH APPROACH® is an evidence-based health behavior change system in which exercise leaders or “wellness coaches” collaborate with new and returning adult exercisers to build the behavioral skills needed to maintain a regular physical activity program. Initially, an assessment of needs is made through an inventory. Participants and their wellness coaches meet over the next 6 months, based on the assessed needs. Social cognitive and cognitive-behavioral theory form the basis of the self-management/self-regulatory skills, exercise plans ‘paired’ with reinforcing feeling states, and the recruitment of social support systems. A specifically designed computer program supports delivery and standardization of the protocol.

A grant by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Georgia Foundation (2009–2011) is testing THE COACH APPROACH® on persons with Class II obesity. Grants by Kaiser Permanente and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2004–2007) tested THE COACH APPROACH® on obese (BMI  $\geq$  30) and severely obese (BMI  $\geq$  40). Data indicate significant reductions in weight, body mass index, and improvements in measures of mental health and quality-of-life. Extensions of THE COACH APPROACH® are being tested with obese adolescents and with diabetes and renal disease patients.

## RESULTS

A 13-year research program was conducted, including testing in wellness centers in the United Kingdom and Italy, medically-based wellness facilities in the U.S., and YMCA associations in nine major U.S. cities. Findings indicated a reduction in dropout rates of new and returning exercisers of approximately 40% to 65% (relative to control conditions of standard exercise counseling). Exercise session completion was doubled and significant physiological, self-image, and mental health improvements were found, including significant reduction(s) in modifiable health-risk factors.

## ADDITIONS PLANNED

Integration with behavioral weight loss programming.

## YMCAs WITH THE COACH APPROACH®

Atlanta  
San Francisco  
San Diego  
Los Angeles  
Philadelphia  
Indianapolis  
Jacksonville, Fla.  
Kettle Moraine, Wis.  
Rhineland, Wis.



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# ENRICHING CHILDREN'S LIVES

# YMCA CHILD CARE



The Metro Atlanta YMCA child care program strives to provide a safe environment and quality services so all children develop intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically. Family and community involvement are strongly encouraged to support program goals. Reasonable fees are provided to accommodate the entire community.

## COLLECTIVE IMPACT

- More than 8,255 children are cared for each day, making the Metro Atlanta YMCA the largest nonprofit provider of child care services in metro Atlanta
- Raised more than \$8.6 million in child care subsidies to keep programs affordable and accessible (sliding-fee scale)

## Pre-School

Helping parents prepare their children for the future by providing them a values-based, high quality foundation for positive growth

- Opened first pre-school center in 1983
- 25 classes of state-funded pre-k
- Six licensed pre-schools (YMCA Academies of South DeKalb at Snapfinger and Lithonia, Arthur M. Blank Family Youth YMCA, Andrew & Walter Young Family YMCA, Drew Charter-East Lake Family YMCA and Paulding Early Childhood Development Academy)
- Provide childcare support services for the children of teen parents so they can complete their high school educations
- More than 3,223 children per day participate in traditional pre-school and Head Start
- Five NAEYC-accredited sites

## After School

Giving children a chance to become more self-reliant; develop relationships; gain autonomy; and enrich their skills in a safe, supervised place that is affordable and accessible for their parents

- Started in 1980 in metro Atlanta
- Work with local schools to provide programs on site, with 133 state-licensed sites

- Enriching programs include academic support, homework time, arts and humanities, literacy, science and technology, and service learning projects
- Social competencies include resolving conflicts and developing the YMCA core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility
- Family involvement, mentoring and community collaborations are vital program components
- Focus on health with a physical activity component, Youth Fit For Life™. This research and evidence-based program is delivered through after-school sites and is effectively administered by YMCA childcare counselors

## Head Start

Providing children an opportunity to reach school age with a solid foundation for learning and relating to others

- Received first Head Start grant in 1999 and expansions in 2002, 2007, 2008, 2009, & 2010
- Opened state-licensed Chattahoochee YMCA Head Start Academy in 2003. Opened Dean Rusk YMCA Head Start Academy in 2009
- Largest single provider in Atlanta with more than 1,998 children per day in 31 sites
- Meeting the needs of children and their families with full-day care, extended summer program, transportation, parent and family programs, parent and community policy council
- Community partnerships and collaborations with Atlanta Public Schools, private child care providers, government and health-related agencies, and community organizations
- Three Head Start NAEYC-accredited sites
- Physical fitness program that includes swimming and soccer
- Approximately 85% teaching staff w/ AA, 15% teaching assistants w/ CDA
- \$25 million operating budget as of 2009



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# FALCONS FITNESS ZONE INCREASING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



## THE NEED

In a time of increasing alarm over childhood obesity, the case for increased physical activity, improved nutritional knowledge, and the ability to manage a healthy lifestyle has never been stronger. Medical journals have reported that our country faces a serious obesity problem – one that disproportionately impacts poor, minority individuals and communities. The number of overweight American children has tripled in the past 25 years, and young people from Georgia are in the least favorable 20 percent for a sedentary lifestyle.

## ADDRESSING THE NEED

The Falcons Fitness Zone was created by the Atlanta Falcons Youth Foundation to help combat the serious obesity problems afflicting Atlanta's children. The Metro Atlanta YMCA is one of three nonprofit partners selected by the Foundation to participate in a grant aimed at launching or expanding youth fitness activities in underserved areas.

## LOCATIONS

There are five sites in the Georgia Dome area, anchored by the Centennial Place YMCA. Participating City of Atlanta elementary schools include: Centennial Place, Bethune, Herndon, M. Agnes Jones, and Atlanta New Century School. In addition, Falcons Fitness Zone programs are administered at the East Lake Family YMCA and the adjacent Drew Charter Elementary School.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

From September 2005 through December 2009, more than 2,700 young people at these sites received expanded fitness and nutritional education programs to help reduce health risks related to lack of physical activity and poor diet, such as obesity and type 2 diabetes. At the elementary schools, organized fitness programs are delivered during the school day and in after-school programs. Sports activities include t-ball, baseball, flag football, cheerleading, dance, and rock climbing.

During the course of each school year, trained staff implement the Metro Atlanta YMCA's Youth Fit For Life™ physical activity program, which consists of cardiovascular and strength activities along with an age-appropriate, interactive behavioral skills training component to help foster increased physical activity by children outside of school and YMCA programs. A research and evidence-based program, Youth Fit For Life™ includes a nutrition and health education component provided through a partnership with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.





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# RESEARCH TO PRACTICE HEALTH PROMOTION



The Metro Atlanta YMCA's research program focuses on behavior change methods applied to exercise adherence, weight loss, and the effects of physical activity on depression, anxiety, self-image, and other mental health and quality-of-life factors. Their impact on child, adult, and older adult health behaviors has been published in research journals from a variety of health-related disciplines.

## RESEARCH PROGRAM GOALS ARE TO:

- Develop evidence-based, community health promotion programs that emphasize facilitating health behavior change;
- Subject our research to a rigorous, international peer-review process to ensure the highest scientific standards of our work;
- Share our research and resulting programs within the YMCA movement and with other community advocates, and to be a reliable resource to advance needed health behavior change methods;
- Extend and advance traditional health messages to affect needed behavioral change in this country's inactivity and obesity crisis.

## RESEARCH PROGRAM AREAS:

- Exercise adherence intervention design and application
- Correlates of health behavior change in children and adults
- Countering barriers to physical activity in children and adults
- Behavioral and psychological processes of weight loss and maintenance
- Weight loss behavior change
- Effects of physical activity on mental health and quality-of-life

## PROGRAM FUNDERS INCLUDE:

- U.S. Department of Education
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Kaiser Permanente
- Healthcare Georgia Foundation
- The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Georgia Foundation
- Atlanta Falcons Youth Foundation

## PUBLISHED RESEARCH REPORTS APPEAR IN SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS SUCH AS:

- Research Quarterly for Exercise & Sport
- Journal of Psychosomatic Research
- Women & Health
- Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science
- Journal of Mental Health and Aging
- Health Psychology Review
- Health Education & Behavior
- Journal of Sport Science & Medicine
- American Journal of Health Behavior
- Obesity Facts

## MEET JIM ANNESI, PH.D.

Jim Annesi joined the Metro Atlanta YMCA as Director of Wellness Advancement in 2000. He has research and applied backgrounds in health psychology, behavioral medicine, applied behavior analysis, and human performance enhancement. His systematic, evidence-based protocols are applied within a variety of healthcare and preventive medicine settings in the U.S., United Kingdom, Italy, Japan, and Canada. Dr. Annesi has authored more than 100 research studies, chapters and articles for professional publications and has written three books describing evidence-based methods designed to help empower individuals to better adopt and maintain healthy behaviors.



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# REDUCING HEALTHCARE COSTS WORKSITE SUPPORTED WELLNESS



## TARGET POPULATIONS

Working and retired employees with and without health risks who are currently ready or not yet ready to begin health behavior changes.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The wellness initiative is adapted from several other successful initiatives previously delivered in the United Kingdom and through medically based wellness centers in the U.S. It incorporates health risk appraisals which assess risk areas and an employee's readiness for change in those areas. After a health risk is identified and paired with an individual's readiness to change (based on the stages-of-change model), "stage-matched" interventions are delivered through the company's internal communication system until the Preparation/Action Stage is attained. At that point, methods based on THE COACH APPROACH® are delivered to improve and maintain health behaviors, moving a participant from the Action to Maintenance Stage. Progressive and sustained physical change is designed to prevent and change modifiable health-risk factors in employees. Assessment of treatment effect will include "progress" on stages of readiness, ongoing physical and mental health evaluations, and financial impact (based on increased health and productivity) on the sponsoring company.

## ADDITIONS PLANNED

Adaptation of the weight loss initiative to be suitable for worksite-supported applications.

## WORKSITE MODELS IN PROGRESS

Yamaha Corporation in Newnan  
City of Alpharetta  
City of Alpharetta Fire Department  
Emory Clinic, Inc.  
Northside Hospital - Cherokee  
WellStar Health System