



South Bend Parks and Recreation Department

South Bend, Indiana

Intensive Site

“We’ve had a great experience with this. When we came back from the training, we were able to secure partners for the program that were very excited to be a part of it and they have stayed on and stayed active with all the programs that we’ve been doing.”

Description

South Bend Parks and Recreation Department offers comprehensive, high-quality, and affordable leisure opportunities to its community including sports, arts, fitness, nutrition, community events, instructional classes, and facilities for all ages. The department was a Hearts N’ Parks Magnet Center for three years and was excited to continue as a **We Can!** Intensive Site. Working with its recreation center, day camp, and fitness supervisor, South Bend provided parent and youth curricula and several well-attended community outreach events. South Bend also engaged two special events supervisors to assist with its community events. South Bend organizers secured some highly motivated partners that became very involved in their programs and events, which helped open the door to healthy eating habits for its entire community.

Key Site Successes:

- Media-Smart Youth implementation
- Citywide health initiative
- Reached over 10,000 community members through Community Outreach.

Community Outreach

South Bend worked very hard to get its community involved with **We Can!** and adopt the healthy attitudes and behaviors that the program promotes. The site participated in six community events that attracted more than 10,000 community members, generated local media coverage, and fostered partnerships with several organizations in the community.

Community Events

Old-Fashioned Summer at Rum Village Park (June 2005). South Bend kicked off its **We Can!** programming at its new Old-Fashioned Summer event. After leading off the event with a press conference, over 1,500 participants enjoyed food vendors, physical



activity games for kids, healthy snack demonstrations by local chefs, food spectrum and portion distortion charts, one- and five-pound fat and muscle displays, and healthy eating tips. Through their partners, added attractions such as local arts entertainers, train rides, a petting zoo, and an old car show attracted larger crowds. A local Martin's Supermarket provided food products for the Chef Association's healthy snack demonstrations that included bananas dipped in yogurt and rolled in raisins, and celery with peanut butter and raisins. These two partners participated in four additional community events and two parent classes demonstrating healthy, seasonal recipes and easy food substitutions for fats and oils. Local CBS and NBC affiliates carried the event on their daily news broadcasts.

Summer Concert at Seitz Park (July 2005). More than 1,500 community members turned out for the 7th annual Summer Concert event at Seitz Park. The day began with a concert and activities for youths, followed by a concert for adults and a fireworks celebration. Attendees also enjoyed viewing food spectrum charts, portion distortion charts, and visual aids that illustrate the differences between fat and muscle. Once again, the event received coverage on local television stations.

Kid's Triathlon (August 2005). More than 2,400 community members watched 600 youths ages 5–13-years participate in this fun triathlon featuring a 25-yard swim, 1.3-mile bike ride, and a half-mile run. When the triathlon concluded, participants enjoyed healthy foods, on-site massages, and chefs demonstrating healthy snacks. Food spectrum and portion distortion charts also helped generate interest and engage attendees. The event was so successful that over 200 potential entrants had to be turned away.

Rum Village Fall Family Fun Fair (October 2005). About 5,000 community members participated in this 5th annual fun fair. The family-friendly event included hikes, lectures, hayrides, games, a petting zoo, healthy holiday recipes, and pumpkin painting. Members of the Chef's Association prepared healthy snacks using food provided by Martin's Supermarkets and distributed healthy recipes for the holidays. Food spectrum and portion distortion charts, one- and five-pound fat and muscle displays, and healthy eating tips also were on view.

Downtown for the Holidays (December 2005). A 15-year-old South Bend tradition, Downtown for the Holidays featured local school groups singing holiday carols and songs while a Christmas tree lighting, ice-sculpture carving, and holiday card decorating contest occurred. Members of the Chef's Association prepared healthy snacks using food provided by Martin's Supermarkets and distributed healthy holiday recipes.



Healthy City Wellness Initiative (April 2006). South Bend kicked off a very ambitious wellness initiative with a nighttime event featuring free health screenings. In fact, South Bend's mayor received his screening on live television. By the next morning, South Bend gleefully reported that over 70 percent of the city's workforce had signed up to participate in the program. As each employee received a free health screening, volunteer nurses provided information about the **We Can!** Parent Curriculum and signed up interested participants.

Camp Fair (April 2006). Nearly 500 residents attended the Camp Fair to hear more about summer camp programs. Throughout the event, residents enjoyed active games, fruit and vegetable taste-testing, and had a chance to view food spectrum and portion distortion charts, one- and five-pound fat and muscle displays, and healthy eating tips. Volunteers provided

information about the *We Can!* Parent Curriculum and signed up over two dozen eager new participants.

Media Outreach

South Bend held a press conference to kick off *We Can!* and prepared press releases to help promote all of its community events. Local CBS and NBC affiliates covered several events including the launch press conference.

Partnerships

South Bend's site organizers developed relationships with six community partners to help implement its program. **Martin's Supermarket** provided food for chef demonstrations, as well as \$150.00 in gift cards for each day camp site for healthy snacks. The **Chef's Association** presented healthy cooking demonstrations at community events and at parent education sessions. The **Dairy Nutrition Council** provided educational materials on dairy products, as well as speakers for parent education programs. **Purdue University Extension Office of St. Joseph County** provided nutritional and family budgeting expertise and also provided experts who spoke to parents in the site's education programs. **Memorial Hospital** provided speakers for the youth curricula. **St. Joseph County Health Department** also provided speakers and educational materials.



Parent and Youth Curricula

We Can! Energize Our Families: Curriculum for Parents and Caregivers

Starting in October 2005, South Bend launched two implementations of the six-lesson *We Can!* Parent Curriculum—developed by *We Can!* specifically for parents and caregivers—in weekly sessions at Holy Cross Parish School and the O'Brien Center, a community center. In all, 31 parents including 15 women and 16 men signed up to gain essential skills that help families make healthful food choices and become more physically active. South Bend found it challenging to recruit parents to the program; most parents simply had a hard time fitting the program into their already busy schedules. Its greatest success came from having members of the Chef's Association provide demonstrations of healthy cooking tips and techniques.

An analysis of 11 complete questionnaires found statistically significant increases in **energy balance knowledge; portion size behaviors; healthy eating behaviors; healthy food behaviors; and physical activity knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.** By the end of the Parent Curriculum, parents reported increased knowledge of the ways to maintain a healthy weight and reported increases in healthier food behaviors including controlling and monitoring portion sizes, acting as a role model for healthier eating, making healthier foods more available, and ensuring that foods high in fat and sugar are less available. Parents also increased their knowledge about physical activity, perceived fewer barriers to engaging in physical activity, and more often encouraged and participated in physical activity on their own or with their family members.

The analysis also suggested movement toward *We Can!* objectives related to **energy balance attitudes; portion size knowledge and attitudes; healthy eating attitudes; and screen time knowledge and attitudes.**

Parent Curriculum Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	% (n)	Characteristics	% (n)	Characteristics	% (n)
Gender		Age		Adults in Household	
Males	18 (2)	36-45	18 (2)	1	18 (2)
Females	82 (9)	46-55	55 (6)	2 or more	82 (9)
Race		55+	27 (3)	Education Level	
African American	9 (1)			High school graduate	18 (2)
Caucasian	91 (10)			Some college	18 (2)
				College degree	18 (2)
		Ethnicity		Some graduate school	9 (1)
		Non-Hispanic	91 (10)	Graduate Degree	36 (4)

N = 11

Summary of Parent Curriculum Findings

Measure	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Mean Difference	Percent Change	t Value	df	p
Energy Balance Knowledge	2.27	2.73	.45	20%	2.89*	10	< .05
Energy Balance Attitudes	6.64	7.27	.64	10%	.96	10	.36
Portion Size Knowledge	2.27	2.30	.10	4%	.43	9	.68
Portion Size Attitudes	3.82	4.64	.82	21%	1.70	10	.12
Portion Size Behaviors	6.82	8.36	1.55	23%	3.56*	10	< .05
Healthy Eating Knowledge	2.91	2.91	.00	0%	.00	10	1.00
Healthy Eating Attitudes	11.55	12.82	1.27	11%	1.69	10	.12
Healthy Eating Behaviors	21.09	22.64	1.55	7%	2.32*	10	< .05
Healthy Food Behaviors	10.00	12.45	2.45	25%	3.55*	10	< .05
Physical Activity Knowledge	2.45	2.64	.18	7%	1.00*	10	< .05
Physical Activity Attitudes	20.00	23.27	3.27	16%	3.40*	10	< .05
Physical Activity Behaviors	18.73	20.36	1.64	9%	2.63*	10	< .05
Screen Time Knowledge	2.60	3.00	.50	19%	1.00	1	.50
Screen Time Attitudes	13.09	15.00	2.00	15%	1.00	1	.50
Screen Time Behaviors	16.09	15.00	.00	0%	.00	1	1.00

*Statistically significant finding

CATCH Kids Club

South Bend implemented the CATCH Kids Club Curriculum—designed for children in grades K–5 in after-school or summer-care settings to encourage healthier dietary and physical activity behaviors—four times at community centers throughout the community. In all, 124 children aged 8–14 including 67 girls and 57 boys received nutrition lessons, participated in physical activities, and learned recipes for making healthy snacks.

South Bend implemented CATCH as part of an existing summer camp program that met every weekday throughout the summer. CATCH participants quickly caught on to CATCH and found the program to be fun and exciting. In fact, once kids understood the basic format of the program the kids themselves facilitated the physical activities. South Bend especially liked that all the kids were involved and found it helped children bond with one another. In terms of the nutrition components of CATCH, South Bend found that the children were excited to learn about eating better and wanted to do so. Unfortunately, healthier foods were not always available in their neighborhoods. While South Bend found that children’s home-brought snacks became healthier over the course of the summer, they hope to support families in the future by suggesting places where parents can purchase more affordable fruits and vegetables or by providing coupons to parents for the purchase of fruits and vegetables.

An analysis of 41 complete questionnaires found statistically significant increases in **food attitudes: self-efficacy** and **healthy eating behaviors: eating fiber**. Statistically significant decreases were found in **screen time behaviors: weekday TV time**. At the end of CATCH youths said they were more likely to select healthy foods such as skim milk, fresh fruit, and skinless chicken and to eat high fiber and whole grain foods. They also self-reported eating more fiber and watching less TV on weekdays. Although not statistically significant, the analysis also suggested positive movement toward *We Can!* objectives related to **food knowledge; food attitudes: intentions to reduce fat** and **intentions to drink skim milk; healthy eating behaviors: eating fruits and vegetables** and **reading labels; physical activity behaviors; and screen time behaviors: weekend TV viewing, weekday video gaming and weekend video gaming**.

CATCH Curriculum Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	% (n)	Characteristics	% (n)	Characteristics	% (n)
Gender		Grade		Age	
Males	37 (15)	Second	7 (3)	8	24 (10)
Females	63 (26)	Third	20 (8)	9	22 (9)
Race		Fourth	24 (10)	10	10 (4)
African American	46 (19)	Fifth	12 (5)	11	29 (12)
American Indian	2 (1)	Sixth	29 (12)	12	15 (6)
Caucasian	44 (18)	Seventh	5 (2)		
Hispanic	2 (1)	Eighth	2 (1)		
Other	5 (2)				

N = 41

CATCH Summary of Findings

Measure	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Mean Difference	% Change	t Value	df	p
Food Knowledge	21.00	21.23	.33	2%	.40	38	.69
Food Attitudes: Self-Efficacy	13.50	14.79	1.24	9%	2.38*	36	< .05
Food Attitudes: Intentions to Reduce Fat	9.38	9.83	.42	4%	1.95	32	.06
Food Attitudes: Intentions to Drink Skim Milk	1.27	1.33	.05	4%	.63	38	.53
Healthy Eating Behaviors: Reducing Fat	2.08	1.78	-.36	-17%	-1.27	38	.21
Healthy Eating Behaviors: Eating Fiber	1.70	2.10	.40	24%	2.16*	39	< .05
Healthy Eating Behaviors: Eating Fruits and Vegetables	8.75	8.83	.25	3%	.61	35	.54
Healthy Eating Behaviors: Reading Labels	.68	.85	.17	25%	1.64	40	.11
Physical Activity Attitudes	7.27	6.58	-.68	-9%	-1.93	40	.06
Physical Activity Behavior	.93	.88	.05	5%	.81	39	.42
Screen Time Behaviors: Weekday TV Viewing	5.24	4.49	-.76	-15%	-2.56*	40	< .05
Screen Time Behaviors: Weekend TV Viewing	5.45	4.95	-.20	-4%	-.56	39	.58

Measure	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Mean Difference	% Change	t Value	df	p
Screen Time Behaviors: Weekday Video Gaming	1.70	1.32	-.35	-21%	-1.40	39	.17
Screen Time Behaviors: Weekend Video Gaming	1.70	1.56	-.10	-6%	-.41	39	.68

***Statistically significant finding**

Media-Smart Youth

South Bend implemented Media-Smart Youth in its summer camp setting. The kids met five days a week to understand the connections between media and health. It concluded with the Big Production where students apply their new skills to create a media project to help motivate other young people to take action for better health. The participants especially enjoyed the sessions that dealt with creating a commercial and being in front of the camera. According to the facilitator, creating the commercial was the most popular part of the implementation. Even after they had finished filming, the kids still wanted to create examples and take them home to watch or show to their friends. The facilitator was experienced with media production and development, expertise that proved invaluable in creating the PSA. No data were available for analysis.

