



Let's Move! Cambridge
America's Move to Create a Healthier Generation of Kids

Newsletter

Winter 2013

Let's Move Cambridge

Winter Newsletter

This issue highlights the great programs that were implemented by last year's Let's Move! mini-grant recipients during the spring, summer, and fall of 2012, including: Soccer Nights, theMOVE, Community Charter School of Cambridge, Fletcher Maynard Academy, and Transition House.



SoccerNights

Soccer Nights sponsored free evening soccer clinics in Central Square and North Cambridge this past summer. The clinics brought together more than 400 participants and over 300 volunteers, representing 30 different countries. Clinics for kids age 6-12 emphasized team-building and offered healthy snacks.



Parents reported that participation in Soccer Nights increased their kids' physical activity and the likelihood that kids would participate in sports in the future, and parents appreciated that healthy snacks were served. "She was a couch TV girl and now she wants to go out and play games," reported one North Cambridge parent.

Program coordinator Stephanie Acker said, "Volunteers worked hard to create a sense of camaraderie among parents watching on the sidelines by engaging them in the curriculum. They even created space for mothers to play soccer on an adjacent field."

theMOVE - Farm workdays for Cambridge Youth

In August, theMOVE took 27 middle school students from the East End House summer program to work at City



Growers Urban Farm and Revision Urban Farm.

Working on a farm was a new experience for most of the students and helped change the way they thought about food. For example:

- 88% of participants reported that the trip had increased their concerns about the people and places that grow their food.
- 75% stated that the trip had increased their concern about the health impact of their food choices.
- 63% said the trip would cause a shift in the way they eat.

Community Charter School of Cambridge: Making Nutrition Fun



Under the leadership of Pamela Bajada, Nurse Practitioner, students and families worked together this fall to produce a cookbook of healthy recipes and participated in nutrition workshops.

"Together, the workshops and cookbook increased awareness of nutrition, healthy eating, and meal preparation among our students and parents," states Bajada. "It created a dialog about nutrition in our school community." Students were also able to apply what they learned; for example, a 10th grader brought the dish she made in her cooking workshop ("Loaded Macaroni and Cheese") to a school potluck, where it received outstanding reviews!

Fletcher Maynard Academy: Wii Fit in the Classroom

Patricia Wong, physical therapist, used Nintendo's fitness video game, Wii Fit, in the classroom to motivate students with autism spectrum disorders to be more physically active. The games are very popular with students and help increase students' physical activity and improve motor skills. In addition, when using the game together, students showed excellent sportsmanship, cooperation, and sharing. Instead of "parallel play," which is common for kids with autism, students have been playing together and giving each other tips.



"One of the highlights was a dance game that students played together, where they had to plan the dance moves as well as pay attention to each other's moves and patterns. They worked well together as a team and there was a lot of social interaction during the game," says Wong, who will continue to use Wii in her work with students.

Transition House: Kitchen Garden

Clients planted and harvested a "kitchen garden" at the Transition House emergency shelter for homeless families recovering from domestic violence. Grown ups and children enjoyed planting herbs, berries, vegetables, and flowers throughout the summer. Garden maintenance was incorporated into the regular list of house chores, and many different people took responsibility for its upkeep. As a result, participants spent more time outdoors enjoying the mental and physical benefits of a natural landscape and the therapeutic, nurturing value of gardening.



School-age children also checked on the progress of the food that was growing, and volunteers turned it into a great learning activity for them. The community potluck dinners were often based around what could be harvested from the garden that day.



Entries from the garden journal:

- *Today we planted lettuce, squash, beans, hot peppers, Thai basil, lemongrass, oregano, and thyme. I love being able to garden here. It reminds me of home and I get great exercise. (Jinny, adult resident)*

My job is to water the garden when it doesn't rain. I like to make puddles and jump in them too! (Danny, 4 year old boy, as told to his mom)

For more information about the *Let's Move!* campaign in Cambridge, please visit the Cambridge Public Health Department [website](#).

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