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**Category: Health Education, Student/Family/
Community Engagement, Nutrition,
Physical Activity/Education**

Target Population: Students

Project Title: Student Health Fair



Project Objective:

The staff of the Dever-McCormack K-8 School set out to educate middle school students about relevant health topics in an engaging and interactive manner. Choosing the structure of a health fair provided creative opportunities to engage students fully in a fun-filled day of programming.

Project Background:

This was the second annual health fair, back by popular demand as a result of the great success experienced the year before. The health fair is also a wonderful way to bring community partners to the Dever-McCormack School to interact directly with the student body.

Project Activity Description:

Each of the health topics we wanted to highlight were assigned to different volunteers and community-based organizations (HIV, stress management, smokeless tobacco, nutrition, etc.) The task was to create an informational poster or model, as well as a plan to engage students when they visited the booth. We designed two physical activity stations to incorporate into the event between visits to the booths. Students were arranged in groups to rotate through the exhibits.

We coordinated the program with the Geiger Gibson Community Health Clinic, and the University of Massachusetts Nursing Program. Twelve nursing students assisted us throughout the day, and we created 11 different booths for the students to visit. Students were given “health passports” when they entered, and were required to share at least one thing they learned about the topics covered at each booth. Students who successfully completed their “health passports” were eligible to enter our prize raffle.



Results:

Approximately 300 students in grades six through eight participated in the health fair. The hands-on methodology was instrumental to our success. Students enhanced their knowledge of a wide range of important health topics and thoroughly enjoyed themselves while doing so. Discussions about their experiences lasted well beyond the day of the health fair.

Lessons Learned and Next Steps:

The health fair provides a perfect venue to sample foods with students and to expose them to nutritious foods that they had not tasted previously. In our first annual health fair our demonstration of how to make smoothies was so well received that they are now incorporated into our breakfast menus. This year we tasted hummus, and for many of the students this was their first exposure to this healthy food choice.

We will continue to use the successful system of dividing students into groups, and providing “health passports” for their journeys. Next year, however, we will increase the time allowed at each booth to give the students a chance to absorb, process and restate the information learned.

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Category: Nutrition Services, Health Education, Health Services, Staff Wellness, Mental Health/School Counseling, Healthy School Environment, Student/Family/Community Engagement, Physical Education/Activity

Target population: Students and Staff



Project Title: East Boston High School Wellness Day

Project Objective: The goal of the East Boston High School (EBHS) Wellness Day was to engage the entire school community in a two-fold campaign surrounding their health and wellness.

Project Background:

We wanted an opportunity to comprehensively address the student population on health and wellness issues. By engaging the whole school in a Wellness Day, we could meet our goal without disrupting academics. A Field Day committee and Health Fair committee met to plan, design and implement the activities. Committees included students, administrators, teachers and the school nurse. Students worked with teachers in advance to develop questions specific to their health concerns.

Project Activity Description:

Students rotated through both portions of the day.

Ninth and tenth graders began their day at a local park for the Field Day activities, and ended their day at the Health Fair; tenth and eleventh graders did the opposite. At the Health Fair, community partners (New England Dairy & Food Council, Boston Public Health Commission – Mayor's Health Line, Whole Foods, The Sports Club – LA, American Cancer Society, East Boston



Neighborhood Health Center, YMCA East Boston, Boston Police, American Red Cross, ROCA, Mass. General Hospital, Farm to Table, AA, NA, ALanon, Bridge Over Troubled Water, Cyber Smart, Speakers For Hope, PFLAG, UMass Extension Nutrition Ed Program, PBPS Fresh Fruit and Vegetable, Student Council, AIDS Action Committee, Good Samaritans) distributed information to our students, as did several student groups. At the Field Day, the cafeteria staff provided healthy snacks; the East Boston YMCA taught Zumba; and the EBHS Chapter of The84.org ran a dunk tank where students had to answer anti-tobacco trivia questions.

Results, Lessons Learned and Next Steps: The program took place just days before today's Wellness Summit. Jessica will share an update on the success of East Boston High School's Wellness Day during this workshop.