

Inspiring Health through Creative Teachings

Student Interns:	Stephen Klepner, UMDNJ-School of Osteopathic Medicine Mutiat Otunba, UMDNJ-School of Public Health Seema Sahdev, UMDNJ-School of Public Health and Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences
Preceptors:	
Community:	Cynthia Primas, M.Ed., IDEA Performing Arts
Academic:	Millicent Channell, D.O., UMDNJ-School of Osteopathic Medicine Marcia Sass, ScD, MSN; UMDNJ-School of Public Health; Carl Hock, PhD, UMDNJ-School of Osteopathic Medicine and Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

Healthy People 2020

Bridging the Gaps Focus Areas
Adapted from HP2010 and HP2020
 Nutrition and Weight Status
 Adolescent Health
 Physical Activity
 Oral Health
 Injury and Violence Prevention

IDEA Performing Arts Center

IDEA is a creative learning organization that exists to build better futures for youth in Camden and throughout Southern New Jersey. The organization taps into their creative spirit in order to inspire and give power to their dreams and aspirations through arts education.

IDEA and Youth Health

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention's recent Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) highlights key health-risk behaviors that contribute to death and disability among youth and adults. Included among these are behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence, unhealthy dietary behaviors, inadequate physical activity and alcohol and tobacco use. Working with IDEA Performing Arts we developed various activities to address these factors among Camden's youth.

The New Jersey Childhood Obesity survey estimated that 35% of Camden public school children are overweight or obese (compared to the 21% nationally). These daunting figures provide a glimpse of the health crisis that may occur if steps are not taken to improve the health of Camden's youth. IDEA helps provide a solution to the current obesity epidemic through various activities such as yoga and African dance classes. As members of the IDEA family, we researched and assisted with the development of a health segment for the IDEA video magazine (kid fit talk show). The youth are taught by their peers about the effects of unbalanced diets and sedentary lifestyles, while focusing on topics such as obesity and nutrition.

We also worked with IDEA's day camp and jazz camp on a range of health behaviors including:

- Consuming foods high in fat and sugar
- Healthy food alternatives
- Reading nutrition labels
- Exercise
- Proper oral hygiene
- Bullying



Reflections

Utilizing the arts as an avenue for health education has proved to be an effective approach when working with Camden's youth. These talented and ambitious adolescents quickly learned the significance of avoiding health-risk behaviors at a young age. They also learned the importance of practicing the basics of daily nutrition and exercise, key in obesity prevention. As an interdisciplinary team of health professionals, the BTG-CHIP experience has been inspirational and invaluable in exposing us to situations involving health disparities and allowing us to work towards eliminating them for future generations.

References

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