

The Southern Area of the Links Incorporated Commission on Childhood Obesity Prevention

Established by The Southern Area of The Links Incorporated, The Commission on Childhood Obesity Prevention is comprised of 13 nationally acclaimed experts and special advisors who developed a nationwide plan for the prevention of the obesity epidemic. The commission was created to increase awareness and heighten understanding about the multidimensional issues that contribute to obesity among children in general, and African American children in particular. The Commission formed a partnership with Community Voices: Healthcare for the Underserved of Morehouse School of Medicine in its mission to give a greater voice to the prevailing disparities and injustices that coexists with cultural, racial, ethnic social systems that affect and shape the lives and choices of this population.

The work of the commission aims to: Establish a culturally relevant evidence-based framework for improving the health of African American children as it relates to obesity prevention; Develop obesity and diabetes-related research and programs/community based prevention strategies that can positively impact the lives of African American children; Identify health and social policies which support healthier African American children and

families; Inform, support and enhance collaboration, partnership development, and capacity building among stakeholders, organization, and agencies the promote childhood obesity prevention. Within these goals the commission focuses on key policy areas which include school nutrition, physical activity, community gardens and the availability of well-lit sidewalks, bike paths, and parks in the community.

In effort to achieve these goals the commission has developed several products such as the *Obesity Prevention Among African American Children* curriculum which is being piloted in seven locations in South Carolina, Florida, Georgia and Louisiana. The commission, starting this spring, will also support the implementation of this curriculum in 23 additional communities in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. The commission has created additional tools including a Children's Activity and Coloring Book and the policy brief entitled "Childhood Obesity in the African American Community: Issues and Policy Recommendations from An African American Perspective".

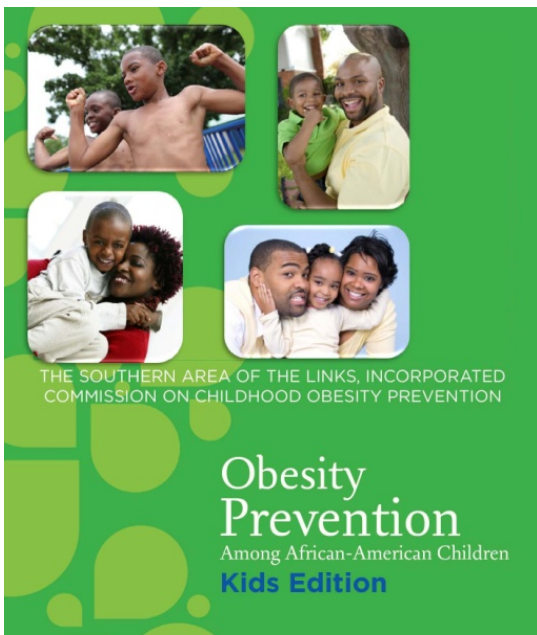
The Southern Area of the Links, Inc., Commission on Childhood Obesity Prevention, and Community Voices of Morehouse School of Medicine strongly believes that the health of African American children and youth are central to improving the well-being of families and support for encouraging thriving communities.

Summary of Local Activities

Seven Link chapters were selected to receive funding to implement the childhood obesity prevention curriculum, increase awareness of the issues, and to engage local communities in policy change beginning January 2010. A summary of the activities planned by each chapter are included in this document.

Greater Miami Chapter: All About Me-Healthy, Happy & Fit **Miami, FL**

All About Me ~ Healthy, Happy & Fit is designed to promote awareness of childhood obesity and prevention alternatives; and identify positive behavior change in the areas of eating habits and physical activity. The program will begin its implementation of the childhood obesity curriculum at four sites. The initial site, Family Christian Association of America Incorporated, is a local community service network providing afterschool activities and support for over 300 youth in the Greater Miami area. They later expanded their program to Lentin K-8 Center (Middle School) in North Miami which has a very large Haitian population. Frank C. Martin K-8 Center in South Miami and Greater New Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church are the additional sites identified to participate in the childhood obesity curriculum implementation. The overall goal of the program is to recruit approximately 60 students representing the African Diaspora, along with parents to participate in a program designed to promote healthy eating habits and physical activity.



Dogwood City Chapter: Keep It Moving: Childhood Obesity Prevention in the African-American Community Atlanta, GA

Dogwood City has selected M. Agnes Jones Elementary School to serve as its community partner for the childhood obesity curriculum program. M. Agnes Jones is located in a predominately African-American neighborhood near the Atlanta University Center. The Dogwood City Chapter will be partnering with the West End Medical Center, Inc. and will provide a health advocate and pediatrician to assist in the implementation of education sessions. The program will utilize the Kaiser Permanente Theatre company to teach the children topics outlined in the curriculum. Recognizing that physical fitness is an essential key to maintaining a healthy lifestyle with the assistance of the physical education teacher, the program seeks to introduce the children to long distance running with the culmination of their training resulting in a one-mile run 5k race.

The Links, Inc. New Orleans Chapter: Program STOP: Successful Tools for Obesity Prevention New Orleans, LA

The New Orleans Chapter begins its project with the goal of demonstrating that an obesity prevention program provided in a school based setting will promote a measurable change in weight and the BMI and waist circumference, blood pressure, dietary intake, physical activity, and nutrition knowledge. Members of the Pontchartrain, New Orleans, and Crescent City Chapters will deliver the program at the following three elementary schools in New Orleans Louisiana: Joseph A. Craig, Mary McLeod Bethune, and Henry C. Schaumburg Elementary Schools. The New Orleans Hornets Basketball Team organization will assist with implementing the physical activity section of the curriculum.

Columbia SC Chapter, The Links, Inc.: Links to a Healthy Lifestyle. Columbia, SC

Links to a Healthy Lifestyle serves to widen the chapter's influence as a catalyst for bringing together leaders and organizations to resolve community problems. The Columbia, SC chapter's focus is increase physical activity among children and collaborations through community engagement and partnership development as well as improves school nutrition. The childhood obesity curriculum will be implemented at the E. E. Taylor Elementary School where they will also host a healthy fun fair themed with nutrition and physical activity. The fair will highlight students that have successfully completed the childhood obesity curriculum. In addition, the Columbia chapter has invited the Nassau Bahamas Chapter, to participate in the fair by providing a Webinar where students can have 'real time' dialogue about making healthy choices. The Columbia SC chapter will also establish a healthy Kid's Think Tank to encourage further dialogue among the students throughout the program.

The Fort Valley Chapter of The Links, Inc in partnership with The Boys and Girls Club Ft. Valley, GA

The Fort Valley chapter will implement the childhood obesity curriculum at the Fort Valley Unit Boys and Girls Club. The students will be boys and girls from the Peach County School District who are already members of the Club. The Boys and Girls Club is located in the heart of Fort Valley, a rural city with an approximate population of 8,000. This population faces many of the same problems of rural Georgia such as insufficient cultural, recreational inopportunities, and substantial poverty. The Fort Valley Links plan will host awareness session at Fort Valley State University with Dr. Ian Smith as guest lecturer.

Azalea City Chapter, The Links, Inc.: Multigenerational Approach to Childhood Obesity Atlanta, GA

The Azalea City chapter's program will take place at the Kinship Center. The Kinship Center is a support service for grandparents with custody of their grandchildren, located in Clayton county Georgia. The centers focus and mission for 2010-2011 is health and wellness. The program will be delivered concurrent with a training program titled "Second time Around", which is being offered to grandparents to help them become more effective guardians. 30 children will be identified to participate in the program and 5 grandparents will also be a part of the training. Children and Grandparents will share a healthy meal and common lessons about healthy eating before each childhood obesity curriculum session.

Tampa Chapter of The Links, Incorporated: Fitness Blazers Tampa, FL

The Tampa Chapter of The Links Incorporated has selected St. Peter Claver Catholic School (SPCCS) as their site to pilot the childhood obesity curriculum. The students identified will become "Fitness Blazers" of innovative programming and activities designed to positively change behaviors and forge a path to health and fitness. Students and their families at SPCCS are the targeted population for the childhood obesity prevention program. The Tampa Chapter of The Links, Inc. will introduce the program by inviting students, teachers, and parent volunteers to the national tour of "Bodyology," an interactive, multi-media performance that covers body systems and reinforces the importance of maintaining a healthy body throughout life. The culminating activity, "Youth Walk for Fitness", will include all public and charter elementary schools in the inner city east of Tampa.