



## Montgomery County Department of Recreation

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**Montgomery County, Maryland**

**Intensive Site**

*“I enjoyed seeing something already prepared. It helped [our] camp directors to have a set script and curriculum. That takes off a lot of stress from planning something new and something that the kids are going to learn from.”*

### **Description**

Montgomery County Department of Recreation serves a diverse community with almost one million residents and operates 32 facilities spread throughout the county. Montgomery County was a magnet site with the Hearts N’ Parks program and through its Affiliated Services, a division within the Recreation Department, enhances well-being by providing customer service, technology and training, safe facilities, and wellness and art programs to staff and customers. The Department of Recreation has strong ties to the community with centers located near schools that offer after-school activities. As a **We Can!** site, Montgomery County engaged its community with dynamic health events and programs that educated both parents and youths about the importance of good nutrition and physical activity.

### **Key Site Successes:**

- CATCH Kids Club summer camp implementation was a strength of the Montgomery County program. CATCH Kids Club activities are designed to attract children, allowing them to make the choice to participate because the variety of games is fun. The site found CATCH easy to use because it provides the information and resource materials to assist after-school staff and counselors to successfully integrate structured activities and nutrition lessons into its programs via its Web site <http://www.catch-works.com>.
- A two week summer camp at three different locations (Sally Ride Elementary School, Wood Middle School, and Beverly Farms Elementary School) for kids who want to have a good time while experimenting and learning about fitness and healthy eating habits was another success. Campers aged 8-12 had the opportunity to explore different fitness disciplines and health habits through the fun activities outlined in the CATCH Kids Club curricula. There was also a good nutrition adventure every day as campers created and tried out healthy snacks.

## Community Outreach

Montgomery County got its community involved with *We Can!* through two community events that attracted more than 1,000 community members, generated local media coverage, and nurtured partnerships with four organizations in the community.

### Community Events

***East County Community Day/We Can! Kickoff*** (June 2005). Montgomery County kicked off its *We Can!* programming at the East County Community Center in Silver Spring by providing games and activities for residents in the area in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services and the African American Health Program. Children participated in a basketball competition and arts and crafts, and entertainment featured a magician and high school singers and dancers. Health information booths addressed a variety of topics, including exercise, nutrition, diabetes, and cardiovascular health. The *We Can!* program poster was displayed, and 100 *We Can!* wristbands were distributed. About 500 people attended the event.



***Health and Fitness Expo*** (September, Annual Event). Held at the City Place Mall in Silver Spring, the event featured a health fair with over 60 exhibitors providing information, visuals, and giveaways related to various health topics. Attendees could also receive health screenings and could view fitness and low-fat cooking demonstrations with a healthy foods taste test from local organic food stores. The *We Can!* program poster was on display and *We Can!* and other materials from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) were distributed: parent handbooks in English (500), parent handbooks in Spanish (500), wristbands (150), and Weight-Control Information Network (WIN) products (350). Over 1,000 people attended the event, which featured several partnerships, including the American Heart Association, *The Gazette*, a local newspaper, and Holy Cross Hospital. This well-marketed event received media coverage from several sources, including *The Gazette*, a local radio station, partners' Web sites, and on buses. The success of the event led the site to make it an annual event, and they plan to add a wellness challenge to future events.

***St. Patrick's Day Family Fun Walk*** (March, Annual Event). Brookside Gardens and Montgomery County Department of Recreation partnered to hold a free "St. Patrick's Day Family Fun Walk" on March 11, 2004, from 10 a.m.–12 p.m. Over 150 children, ages 2–5, plus adults participated. Parents and children followed a Brookside Gardens' trail while hopping like a bunny, flapping their wings, walking backwards, and much more. While on the trail, children tried to locate one of two leprechauns, using their "leprechaun locators." Inside, children decorated goodie bags filled with stickers, fruit and veggie tattoos, and assorted healthy St. Patrick's Day "goodies."

### Media Outreach

Montgomery County's health expo was covered in *The Gazette*, on Hot 99.5 radio station, partners' Web sites, and on buses. Site organizers were interviewed on County Cable Montgomery (TV and Radio).

## Partnerships

Montgomery County worked with four partners to implement *We Can!* programs and events. **Health and Human Services, Latino Health Initiative, and Montgomery County School Health** provided staff support for the parent program curriculum. **Holy Cross Hospital** provided health screenings and demonstrations. The **Montgomery County Employees Health Yourself Wellness Program** provided screenings, gave out information, facilitated walking clubs in the summer, and visited county buildings to teach education seminars.

## Parent and Youth Curricula

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

Montgomery County Department of Recreation began two implementations of the *We Can!* Parent Curriculum in February 2006. The six-lesson curriculum was developed specifically for parents and caregivers by *We Can!* to teach participants essential skills that help families make healthful food choices and become more physically active. Montgomery County taught the curriculum to 21 parents, including 15 women and six men at two elementary schools.



An analysis of 13 respondent surveys show movement toward *We Can!* objectives related to **energy balance knowledge; healthy eating behaviors; physical activity behaviors; portion size knowledge and behaviors; and screen time knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.** These findings were not significant.

### *Parent Curriculum Demographic Characteristics*

Characteristics	% (n)	Characteristics	% (n)	Characteristics	% (n)
<b>Gender</b>		<b>Age</b>		<b>Adults in Household</b>	
Males	31 (4)	26-35	15 (2)	1	31 (4)
Females	69 (9)	36-45	31 (4)	2 or more	69 (9)
<b>Race</b>		46-55	23 (3)	<b>Education Level</b>	
African American	8 (1)	55+	8 (1)	High school graduate	39 (5)
Asian	15 (2)			Some college	39 (5)
Caucasian	23 (3)	<b>Ethnicity</b>		College degree	23 (2)
		Hispanic	85 (11)		
		Non-Hispanic	15 (2)		

N = 13

### *Summary of Parent Curriculum Findings*

Measure	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Mean Difference	Percent Change	t Value	df	p
Energy Balance Knowledge	2.23	2.67	.50	22%	1.92	11	.08
Energy Balance Attitudes	8.38	7.92	-.46	-5%	-1.00	12	.34
Portion Size Knowledge	1.92	2.08	.17	9%	.52	11	.62
Portion Size Attitudes	4.77	4.69	-.08	2%	-1.00	12	.34
Portion Size Behaviors	7.77	8.15	.38	5%	.49	12	.63
Healthy Eating Knowledge	2.67	2.69	.00	0%	.00	11	1.00

Healthy Eating Attitudes	14.15	12.85	-1.31	-9%	-1.71	12	.11
Healthy Eating Behaviors	22.42	22.62	.33	2%	.65	11	.53
Healthy Food Behaviors	11.54	10.77	-.77	-7%	-1.00	12	.34
Physical Activity Knowledge	2.62	2.62	.00	0%	.00	12	1.00
Physical Activity Attitudes	24.45	23.85	-1.09	4%	-.88	10	.40
Physical Activity Behaviors	21.18	20.58	.20	1%	.21	9	.84
Screen Time Knowledge	2.31	2.38	.08	3%	.27	12	.79
Screen Time Attitudes	12.46	12.92	.46	4%	.34	12	.74
Screen Time Behaviors	14.85	15.85	.69	5%	1.56	12	.15

### *CATCH Kids Club*

Montgomery County offered CATCH Kids Club Curriculum to youths at four of its summer camps. The curriculum is designed for children in grades K–5 in after-school or summer camps and helps children adopt healthier dietary and physical activity behaviors by positively influencing the health environments of recreation programs, schools, and homes. The participants in Montgomery County’s camps met Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for two weeks and performed CATCH activities every day. Site organizers marketed the youth program in its summer guide, which attracted 66 kids. The children enjoyed the program—both the physical activities and nutrition lessons—and especially liked the food label exercise and learning how to distinguish between different types of milk.

An analysis of 23 respondent surveys suggest movement toward *We Can!* objectives related to **food knowledge; food attitudes: intentions to reduce fat; healthy eating behaviors: eating fiber and eating fruits and vegetables; physical activity attitudes; and screen time behaviors: weekday TV viewing, weekend TV viewing, and weekend video gaming.**

### *CATCH Curriculum Demographic Characteristics*

Characteristics	% (n)	Characteristics	% (n)	Characteristics	% (n)
<b>Gender</b>		<b>Grade</b>		<b>Age</b>	
Males	30 (7)	Second	4 (1)	8	22 (5)
Females	65 (15)	Third	9 (2)	9	39 (9)
<b>Race</b>		Fourth	48 (11)	10	17 (4)
African American	30 (7)	Fifth	22 (5)	11	13 (3)
Asian	17 (4)	Sixth	9 (2)	12	4 (1)
Caucasian	9 (2)	Seventh	4 (1)		
Hispanic	9 (2)				
Other	26 (6)				

N = 23

### *CATCH Summary of Findings*

Measure	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Mean Difference	% Change	t Value	df	p
Food Knowledge	23.80	24.11	.38	2%	.39	12	.71
Food Attitudes: Self-Efficacy	16.06	15.50	-.08	0%	-.10	12	.92
Food Attitudes: Intentions to Reduce Fat	10.87	11.47	.43	4%	1.00	13	.34
Food Attitudes: Intentions to Drink Skim Milk	1.61	1.55	.00	0%	.00	16	1.00
Healthy Eating Behaviors: Reducing Fat	1.25	1.04	-.25	-20%	-.62	19	.54

Measure	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Mean Difference	% Change	t Value	df	p
Healthy Eating Behaviors: Eating Fiber	2.06	2.14	.20	10%	.64	14	.53
Healthy Eating Behaviors: Eating Fruits and Vegetables	11.35	11.16	.07	1%	.09	13	.93
Healthy Eating Behaviors: Reading Labels	1.50	1.43	-.05	-3%	-.33	19	.75
Physical Activity Attitudes	6.56	6.91	.41	6%	.91	16	.38
Physical Activity Behavior	.75	.83	-.10	13%	-1.00	19	.33
Screen Time Behaviors: Weekday TV Viewing	3.79	3.91	-.17	4%	-.40	17	.70
Screen Time Behaviors: Weekend TV Viewing	4.48	3.86	-.60	-13%	-1.29	19	.21
Screen Time Behaviors: Weekday Video Gaming	1.05	1.09	.00	0%	.00	20	1.00
Screen Time Behaviors: Weekend Video Gaming	1.29	1.05	-.16	-12%	-.45	18	.66