



Foundations for Healthy Choices

FUN, FLY & FIT CASE STUDY

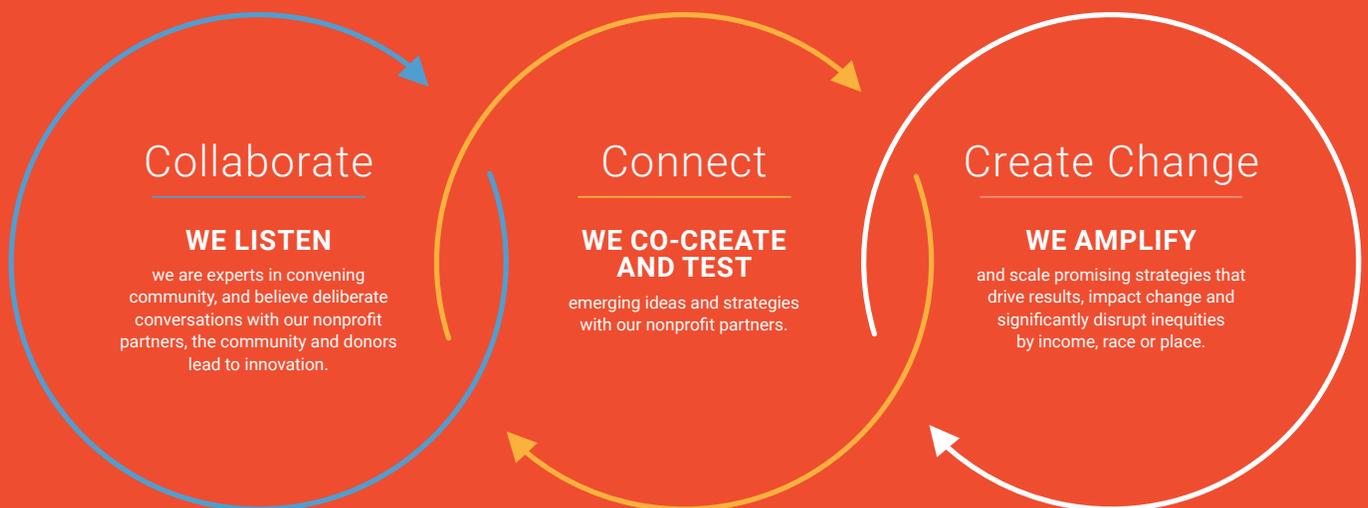


Greater Twin Cities
United Way

LESSONS WELL LEARNED

Through a partnership that started with Target Foundation and expanded to schools and United Way offices in Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, Greater Twin Cities United Way launched the broader Fun, Fly & Fit program. Taking on the issue of childhood obesity, our aim was to create a fundamental shift in the way kids and their caregivers — teachers, parents, grandparents — think about health and wellness. After a two-year pilot, we saw improved health in 80 percent of participating students and learned a few lessons that will help shape future programs.

BIG CHALLENGES REQUIRE BIG IDEAS





PHILANTHROPIC PRIORITY

With one in five American school-aged children and young people experiencing obesity¹, it's clear many kids need more support when it comes to staying active and eating healthy. With the right foundation, young people can start to better understand their health and make the right choices to keep them healthy and have fun.

Building this foundation, however, is no small task. When Target Foundation came to us looking to partner as they shifted their philanthropic efforts toward a health and wellness focus, we worked together to build the strategy for an expanded Fun, Fly & Fit.

PULLING TOGETHER

Cooperation across a number of collaborators was essential. Target provided the initial funding and employee volunteers. Leveraging the power of the United Way network, we reached out to the United Way of the National Capital Area that created the Fun, Fly & Fit model. We worked closely with their team

to build upon the successes of the original program — which, at its core, required collaboration with schools, teachers and community organizations.

Finally, in partnership with United Way of Central Maryland, we piloted this program, not just in the greater Twin Cities area, but in Baltimore as well. Pulling these partners together allowed us to leverage a previously tested program to make a greater impact within two communities.

THE CURRICULUM

Focused on encouraging kids to have active fun, educating them — and their caregivers — about healthy eating, and providing tools and incentives to keep the healthy momentum going, the Fun, Fly & Fit project unfolded over four, six-week cycles.

In the first year, our trainers led nutrition and fitness classes two days per week. On the remaining three school days, physical education teachers or after school staff led

¹ Hales CM, Carroll MD, Fryar CD, Ogden CL. Prevalence of obesity among adults and youth: United States, 2015–2016. NCHS Data Brief. 2017;288:1–8.

Fun, Fly & Fit-provided lesson plans. In the second year, we dialed back our involvement, enabling the teachers and staff to lead the entire course with our trainers observing, coaching and supporting instruction.

In addition to the training support, Greater Twin Cities United Way provided more than \$30,000 in funding to school and community partners to help keep the program going after year two. The dollars were used to buy supplies and materials and support program staff.

MEASURING THE IMPACT

Within two years, 240 students participated and saw improvements in their health as a result. In the 2016-2017 school year, 80 percent of the kids made progress reflected in their weight, body mass index, body fat percentage and cardiovascular measurements. The following school year, students who participated in the program added an average of 54 minutes of physical activity to their day. This amounted to a total of 150,000 total minutes of physical activity by the end of the program.

Over the course of the two-year program, 95 percent of students improved or maintained their shuttle run times and 96 percent maintained or reduced their body fat percentage.

While these numbers are remarkable, some of the most impactful successes we had went deeper than metrics. The level of engagement across parents, caregivers and our partners made it clear what we could achieve by inviting an entire community to rally around the kids in the program.

Over the course of Fun, Fly & Fit, we hosted three Fit Family Health Nights in Washington, D.C., and three Field Events in central Maryland. At each of these events, students eagerly seized the opportunity to share what they had learned and show off their accomplishments. These events also gave Target representatives a chance to see what their investment had achieved on a more personal level.

80%

OF STUDENTS IMPROVED
THEIR HEALTH

54

MINUTES OF ADDITIONAL
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PER
DAY ON AVERAGE

150,000

TOTAL ACTIVITY
MINUTES TRACKED

96%

OF STUDENTS MAINTAINED
OR REDUCED THEIR BODY FAT
PERCENTAGE



LEARNINGS FOR THE FUTURE

The unique design of this program, and the partners we worked with to pull it off, gave us the chance to learn a few lessons of our own.

Partner for Sustainability

Given the complex needs of high-poverty areas, many organizations in the community have a role to play in helping the kids and their families sustain the healthy behaviors they learned. We found the more we could engage these players — from libraries to food shelves — the more likely the program would have a long-term impact.

Tapping the Network

As a global organization, the United Way network is one of our strongest assets. The Fun, Fly & Fit initiative was one of the first times Greater Twin Cities United Way tapped into this strength to help a corporate partner make a multi-location impact. Through this experience, we found ways to improve reporting and communication, better set expectations and collaborate more effectively — lessons we've already been able to use to amplify the success of other programs.

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT
PROGRAMS LIKE FUN, FLY & FIT,
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