

Well-Informed

Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation | Community Benefit Report | Fall 2011



School Collaborative School Initiatives Supported by Foundation Are at the Top of Their Class

The Foundation takes our role in supporting area school districts to improve the health and wellness of their students and teachers very seriously. Our long-term commitment to providing grants and collaborative programming has been producing positive results that are making a measurable impact on our community.

School Collaborative

Twice a year, the Foundation brings together all the public and private school health and physical education teachers, nurses, school health and wellness council members, and school administrators. The purpose of the Collaborative is for the Foundation to facilitate a conversation

among these peers to learn from each other about best practices, what initiatives are working, what challenges they are facing and to encourage them to give updates on their school's programs. The Foundation also takes this opportunity to see how we can better support this dedicated group of individuals.

"This past May, we all gathered at St. Aloysius in Pottstown, a new venue for us," comments Anna Brendle, Program Officer-Schools, Recreation & Active Living, Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation. "It's really exciting to see how everyone embraces this opportunity to network and learn from each other." Highlights from this

past Collaborative include reviewing the local BMI stats and viewing the documentary [Food Stamped](#). "We also gave the attendees a survey," says Brendle. "We wanted to gather information on what initiatives the schools were doing or considering doing that incorporated Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" campaign. We want to see how the Foundation can help these ideas continue, grow or start."

(continued on page 2)

a message from our director



Dear Community,

Welcome to fall! Leaves will soon be changing color, apples will be ready for picking, there's a slight chill in the air and...oh, the kids are back in school, too. So, the regimen of taking them to practices, games, classes, has begun...again.

Even though fall brings with it great things, it is also a time when busy working moms have even less time to themselves. Evenings are full of activities, and while it's a joy to be involved in the children's lives, it's easy and often necessary to forgo personal time. I'm here to suggest that even though time is tight, mom should carve out even a little time for herself – the effects will benefit the entire family.

If you're one of these busy moms, start small with a weekly walk or a group fitness class. If you're really adventurous, check out the new [Roller Derby](#) group in town! Consider joining Pottstown Memorial Medical Center's [Healthy Woman](#) program, which regularly has healthy events. Also, our own Dr. Laurie Betts, a working mom with three kids, has started a blog that you will be able to find on www.missionhealthyliving.org starting in October. As a medical doctor, she will talk about how she balances family and work.

There are also many ways to stay balanced and fit as a family, too. Our fun & fitness guide on <http://www.missionhealthyliving.org> offers many suggestions that families can do together outside while the weather is still good.

Live healthy!

David W. Kraybill, Executive Director

(continued from page 1)

BMI Statistics*

The state of Pennsylvania requires all public schools, and encourages all private schools, to gather and measure Body Mass Index (BMI) statistics for its students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. BMI is a formula based on using height and weight [[click here](#) for BMI calculator] and is gathered by the school nurses at least once, sometimes twice a year. The schools then send the information to the state to gather and analyze the data. "We're lucky that the schools are willing to send us this data as well," comments Brendle. "We are using this information as part of our evaluation to see what impact the programs we fund are having on the schools—and the news is very encouraging!"

Overall, the entire state average has leveled off in the past three years—16% of students are obese, 17% are overweight, and 65% are healthy. In 2007-2008 the Pottstown Foundation's local service area for students showed 17% of students were obese, 18% were overweight, and 64% were healthy. "We were actually slightly worse than the national average," states Brendle. "However, the exciting news is that since we've been monitoring the data, our local schools are actually now slightly better than the national average—this is extremely encouraging for us, our schools and the community." The local data from 2007 to 2010 shows the obesity rate has declined from 17% to 14%, the overweight rate has declined from 18% to 17% and the rate for healthy students has increased from 64% up to 68%.

(continued on page 3)

*See last page of report for more information.

www.pottstownfoundation.org

profile

Dick Frantz, Board Member

Dick Frantz is a long-time member of the Pottstown community. In fact, as a Registered Architect, he has designed many buildings in southeastern PA, many of which are right in Pottstown. So, his commitment to Pottstown is written in stone, so to speak.

Dick has been on the Foundation's board since its inception. He was on the board of directors of the former Pottstown Memorial Medical Center and was asked to be on the board of the newly formed Foundation. "I've been on the Grants Committee for my entire tenure with the Foundation. I am also on the Oversight Committee, which I've chaired the last three years," comments Frantz. The Oversight Committee's task is to ensure that the current owners of the hospital are operating it in accordance with the purchase agreement. Frantz goes on to say, "The agreement requires them to maintain it in the spirit of the community and to spend \$150M during their first five years of ownership to improve the hospital."

Frantz is also a member of the Nominating Committee, which recruits new board members and recommends board officers. He is also currently serving on the Facilities Committee, which is investigating possible new locations for the Foundation.

When asked what was most satisfying during his years of service, Frantz states, "I'm most proud of the efforts the Foundation made in support of the creation of Community Health & Dental Care. I'm also pleased the Foundation is beginning to consider grant requests for emotional health programs. We've taken some time to evolve into this area of health, but there is a correlation between emotional health and physical health." Frantz is also impressed by the dedication and professionalism of the Foundation's staff and his fellow board members.

On a personal note, Frantz enjoys spending time with his wife, Mary, and their children and 10 grandchildren. He is also active in many community organizations.



Summer Health & Physical Education Conference

For the fifth straight summer Steph Petri has coordinated a summer health and physical education conference for health, physical education, and classroom teachers across the state of Pennsylvania. Petri is the K-12 Health and Physical Education and Family and Consumer Science Lead Teacher and 10th Grade Health and Physical Education Teacher at Boyertown High School. “The goal is to provide quality professional development for teachers that stress the importance of improving the health of their students,” comments Petri. “It has been very well received, and our attendance has grown steadily each year along with repeat attendees. There were 16 attendees from the seven local school districts in the Foundation’s service area.”

The day is comprised of many different sessions the teachers can choose to attend. Some of the topics for this past summer’s conference included activity-based sessions like Zumba and aerobics. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources was also invited to talk about hiking and survival skills to encourage outside activities for kids. Other topics were cyber safety, HIV prevention and nutrition. In addition to the sessions, the conference also features different vendor tables that introduce new resources to the teachers.

One of the highlights of the conference included listening to Paul Zientarski, Learning Readiness Coordinator from the Naperville School District in Illinois. He shared his stories about improving the district’s state standardized scores through physical activity. The Naperville School District is a pioneer in learning readiness and was discussed in John J. Ratey’s book



Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain. The book outlines the connection between exercise and new brain cell growth.

The Naperville School District is focused on getting the students’ heart rates up to promote better learning. It let the students choose what type of physical exercise they wanted to do and issued heart-rate monitors to them. What they found is that, immediately following exercise the brain is more active and more focused. The district began to schedule the students’ hardest classes right after their exercise. As a result of these efforts, the district’s state standardized test scores rose significantly along with the students’ commitment to exercise.

“This strategy has worked extremely well for the Naperville district and it’s a model that schools in Pennsylvania are interested in learning more about, we were very excited to have Paul here,” commented Petri. Petri goes on to say, “The conference is really a collaborative effort between the

Boyertown School District, the Pottstown Health & Wellness Foundation and the Boyertown Community Wellness Council. Without their help, we wouldn’t be able to bring to the conference the kinds of resources that ultimately will benefit students across the entire state.”

Immediately following exercise the brain is more active and more focused.

www.pottstownfoundation.org



“The goal is to provide quality professional development for teachers that stress the importance of improving the health of their students.”

Elementary Students Learn Lifetime Skills Through the Game of Tennis

"Always believe in yourself," is what Nikita learned at tennis camp. "Teamwork" and "how to help people," were the key points Jimmie learned. Erica stated, "I learned how to play and [be a] good sport." These are just a few of the life skills acquired by this year's group of students at The Tennis Farm's summer program.

Forty-five elementary students from the Pottstown School District attended a free, four-week youth tennis camp held at The Hill School. The camp opportunity is offered to motivated students from at-risk or lower socio-economic backgrounds. Experienced school district staff provide their expertise in the development of the program, while trained professionals provide the tennis instruction to the students.

First-year students learned basic tennis techniques such as the backhand, serve, volley, grips and foot work. Second-year students advanced their skills with drop shots, overheads and lobs, and they perfected game strategies. All students were able to use their new-found skills by competing in both singles and doubles matches during the final two weeks of camp.

The tennis camp also provided daily outdoor activity and an exercise regimen as part of the curriculum. The importance of staying hydrated by drinking plenty of water, and developing healthy eating habits was discussed and reinforced by providing snacks of fresh fruits and vegetables.

According to Phyllis Mascioli, Executive Director of [The Tennis Farm](http://www.pottstownfoundation.org), "Learning how to play the game well and the importance of conditioning their bodies

are the individual goals being achieved. However, the overall program goal is to teach necessary life skills through the game of tennis."

The Tennis Farm was founded in 1973 by Cindy and Tom Ringe and has taught tennis to more than 24,000 participants throughout the Delaware Valley. The Hill School has been a site for the camp for the past 12 years. According to Mr. Ringe, "Even though the goal of the program is to have the students embrace tennis as a lifetime sport, the main goal is to inspire confidence, develop maturity and nurture ethical behavior on and off the court. These are the true rewards of the program and will stay with the students throughout their lifetime by providing them the foundation to be quality members of the community."

The Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation would like to thank Cindy and Tom Ringe for their years of dedication to the youth of the community and to the sport of tennis. Cindy and Tom are still active in tennis at ages 75 and 83 respectively. Best wishes for a long and active life in your retirement!





BMX Racing at Trilogy Park is Quite the Rage in Pottstown

Trilogy Park, the local BMX racing facility, hosted the National Bicycle League's Memorial Classic event in May 2011. More than 2,000 riders competed in this year's National qualifying event, which has been held over Memorial Day weekend for the past four years. Families travel from as far away as California, Canada and Florida and make this event part of their family vacation. According to a dad from Virginia, "Pottstown is no longer just a location, it's a destination."

Competitors find the Pottstown track very appealing, because the paved surfaces provide a faster and smoother ride compared to other locations. This also lends itself to a safer ride. One of Pottstown's own riders, Justin Knapper, age 14, won the Grand National title in 2010, thanks in part to the faster track, and has qualified to participate in this year's Grand National. Justin, son of Glen and

Cathy Knapper, will be traveling to Louisville, Kentucky over Labor Day, along with other local competitors to take a stab at this year's National title.

Opened since 2005, the park is not just for National events. It provides a safe, organized and a fun alternative sports facility in Pottstown and is considered home to BMX riders of all ages. From the early age of three, to the mature age of 68, both males and females ride BMX bikes. The track is open from April through November and is used for both pleasure riding and competitive training, with more than 100 riders at the track each week. According to Cathy Knapper, Trilogy Park Parents Association President, "Approximately 40% of riders are from Pottstown Borough, with the remaining 60% from outlying areas such as Spring City, Royersford, Douglassville and Downingtown."

BMX racing is a sport that involves all members of the family. Rather than just sitting on the sidelines watching the kids race, both moms and dads have taken to the track on BMX bikes. Since this is a family affair, there is no surprise that the interest in the sport can start at a very young age. Two to five year olds start testing the waters by learning to ride on a Strider Bike. The special bikes are made without pedals which eliminates the need to concentrate on pedaling while teaching the child balance and coordination.

The Trilogy Park Parent's Association is a group of volunteers who have become part of the BMX "family," and it is through their dedication that Trilogy is such a success," remarked Knapper. For more information, log onto www.trilogypark.org.

“It made me look at the good things in life.”

“Girls in Charge” Make Healthy Choices!

Girls are taking charge and making healthy choices as a result of the YWCA Tri-County Area’s *Healthy Choices (HC)* program. “It made me more confident and outgoing”... “It helped me to walk away from starting a first fight”... “It made me look at the good things in life”... “It helped me in relationships and school”... “I am healthier and happier”... These are just a few of the strong sentiments that have been shared by the participants of the 10-week *HC* program.



Forty-eight girls from the Pottsgrove and Pottstown Middle schools attended the program during the fall and spring of the 2010/11 school year. Topics such as nutrition, bullying, alcohol, drugs, smoking, healthy relationships, self-esteem, eating disorders, sexual harassment and peer pressure were presented and discussed with the girls. Each session ended with 30-45 minutes of Zumba dance exercise or Pilates to introduce physical fitness and to emphasize the importance of incorporating physical activity into their daily routines. The girls also enjoyed nutritious snacks and learned about calorie, fat, vitamin and sodium content.

“The beauty of this program is the small group work, which allows the girls to ask questions and share thoughts in a more personal setting,” stated Sue Krall, Director of Programming at the YWCA. “They respond better when information is provided through a fun and creative activity rather than in the traditional classroom setting.”

Realizing the importance of parental support, the program concludes with a parent/daughter dinner. In addition to providing a relaxed and stress free atmosphere for the families, this event also allows an opportunity for parental feedback.

“We are very proud of the success of the *Healthy Choices* program,” commented Andrea Primas, YWCA Executive Director. “Over the past six years, the program has served 350 teenage girls in the Pottstown and Pottsgrove Middle schools. The program will be starting its seventh year this fall and will be expanded to include ninth and tenth grade girls in the Pottstown High School. The older girls will be awarded the responsibility to mentor middle school *HC* participants in addition to volunteering within the community.”

Another key opportunity for teenage girls to develop character and leadership skills is through the United Way SEPA *Girls Today Leaders Tomorrow (GTLT)* program. Each year the YWCA is asked to enroll two to four *HC* girls into the two-year GTLT program that meets monthly and awards scholarships upon completion. Initiatives such as these focus on helping girls build self-esteem and pride in themselves, their bodies and in their relationships with their peers... skills they can adopt and use for a lifetime. (www.ywcatricountyarea.org)

BMI stats & facts

28 PA Code, Chapter 23.7 states "height and weight measurement shall be conducted at least once annually and preferably twice annually. Every effort shall be made to determine the pattern of growth for each child so that his weight and height can be interpreted in light of his own growth pattern rather than those of his classmates."

BMI screenings were mandatory for grades K-12 in school year 2007-08 and beyond; however, many educational entities performed the growth screen and calculated the BMI-for-Age Percentile for students in additional grades for each school year prior to school year 2007-08.

BMI < 5th Percentile: At risk for underweight

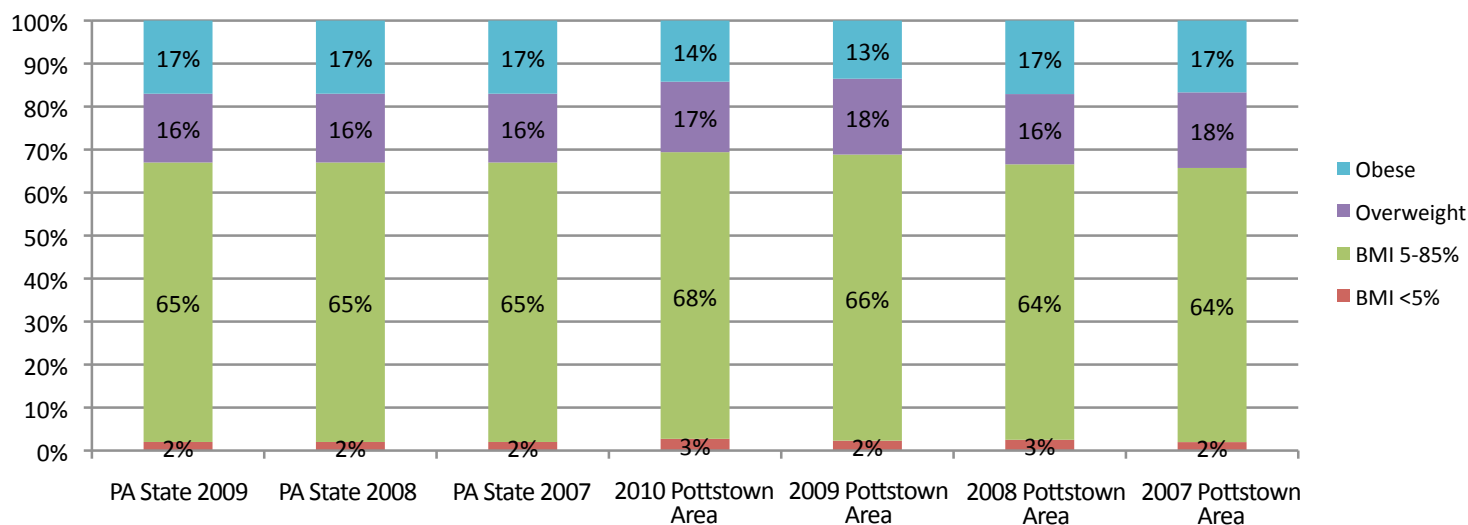
BMI 5th to 85th Percentile: Healthy weight

BMI > 85th to < 95th Percentile: Overweight (formerly At-Risk-for-Overweight)

BMI > or = to 95th Percentile: Obese (formerly Overweight)

Pottstown Region & PA State Data	Number of Students Screened	BMI <5th Percentile	BMI 5th - 85th Percentile	BMI >85th - <95th Percentile	BMI > or = 95th Percentile
PA State 2009		2%	65%	16%	17%
PA State 2008		2%	65%	16%	17%
PA state 2007		2%	65%	16%	17%
2010 Pottstown Area	29,450	3%	68%	17%	14%
2009 Pottstown Area	36,922	2%	66%	18%	13%
2009 Pottstown Area	35,615	3%	64%	16%	17%
2007 Pottstown Area	29,646	2%	64%	18%	17%

BMI Averages



ATTENTION GRANTEES FOUNDATION FUNDING UPDATE

Effective July 1, 2011, consideration will be made towards projects and programs in the following areas by both current and new grantees within our service area:

- Positive emotional health
- Capital projects, not to exceed \$100,000 per project

Effective June 28, 2011 our grant giving goals have been redefined:

1. Funding programs and solutions for long-term improvement in healthy behaviors.
2. Funding programs for physical health and emotional well-being.
3. Funding learning opportunities and strategic planning to strengthen non-profits.

For more detailed information related to these updates [[click here](#)].



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