



#### Grantee Profile

Name:	Alliance for a Healthier Generation
Program:	Healthy Schools Program
Grants:	\$2,000,000 over 4 years
Activities:	First district-wide implementation of the Healthy Schools Program in an urban district
Impact:	362,000 students, grades K-12, attending Miami-Dade County Public Schools

## Miami Springs Middle School Recognized for Healthy Changes

Miami Springs Middle School was one of the first schools in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools District to participate in the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Program. The school enrolls about 1,800 students in grades six to nine. Reflecting the urban district's diverse demographics, the student body is 78 percent Hispanic and 15 percent African-American; 70 percent of the school's students participate in the free and reduced lunch program.

The healthy changes implemented by the school are rooted in the childhood obesity epidemic. In Florida, on average, 32.5 percent of children ages 10-17 are overweight or obese, with poor children suffering a higher prevalence rate of 43.1 percent. The 2005 Florida Youth Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey, conducted by the Florida Department of Health, cited that among middle school students: 62 percent spent three or more hours of an average school day in front of a television, computer or video game screen; only 45 percent played outside after school; 24 percent of sixth graders and just 20 percent of eighth graders consumed five fruits and vegetables each day; and overall, 19 percent substituted vending machine snacks for lunch on one more days a week.

### Motivating Change

Middle Springs Middle School formed a School Wellness Council to help implement the Healthy Schools framework with the goals of offering healthier food and beverages at school and encouraging students and staff to increase physical activity.

Among the first actions taken was to modify food and beverage offerings and meal preparation to provide healthier menu options.

Steps to increase physical activity included starting a before-school walking club open to staff, students and parents; encouraging activities after lunch; and adding five aerobics classes to the PE options. In addition, all students received pedometers and devised math challenges and contests.

In August 2007, Miami Springs Middle School was one of two Miami-Dade schools recognized by President Clinton and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation at the Bronze level for its measurable progress. To further the program's remarkable impact, a district-wide expansion of the Healthy Schools program began during the 2007-08 school year, funded through a grant by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation.

## **Outlook**

The expansion of the Healthy Schools Program into the Miami-Dade County Public Schools District is well under way. Ninety-seven schools are actively engaged, making school-wide improvements to promote healthy eating, nutrition and health education, and increased physical activity. Working with Alliance for a Healthier Generation Relationship Managers, the schools have completed two technical assistance sessions, developed action plans, and are applying for seed grants to support their efforts.

As a result, every participating school will have made a significant impact in children's health and fitness by offering more health education, nutrition and physical education instruction to students at all grade levels.