



Campus News



SHELBY COUNTY CHILDREN'S POLICY COUNCIL LAUNCHES BE HAPPY! BE HEALTHY!

A FAMILY HEALTH INITIATIVE TO COMBAT CHILDHOOD OBESITY

The Shelby County Children's Policy Council Health Committee announces a new program for parents and caregivers of adolescent boys and girls. "Be Happy! Be Healthy!" is a collaboration of several community agencies, organizations and professional volunteers working together to educate and promote a healthier lifestyle for Shelby County children and families.

Ten families with at least one child ages 9-14 who is 30 pounds or more overweight, will be selected to participate in this free 13 week program hosted by Jefferson State Community College' Shelby-Hoover Campus. Families will participate one night a week for 13 weeks exercising, preparing a healthy family meal and while eating be provided an education on topics such as nutrition, exercise, recipes, and keeping mentally healthy. BodyWorks, a curriculum developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health, focuses on helping families create healthier lifestyles and will be used as the educational component.

The program is set to begin on September 13, 2011. Families will meet from 6-8 p.m. at the Jefferson State Shelby-Hoover Campus at 4600 Valleydale Road. Participants will be given a comprehensive wellness screening before and after the program and other health metrics will be measured weekly to monitor healthy goals set by the family and the wellness team.

Many adolescents have poor eating habits and do not get the recommended daily amount of physical activity, which contributes to the global obesity epidemic. A recent statistic says that 1/3 of vegetable servings eaten by youth are in the form of potato chips and French fries. In developing the BodyWorks curriculum, the Office on Women's Health (OWH) found that many teens skip breakfast, have non-nutritious lunches and don't eat dinner with their families. Boys and girls spend about three hours a day watching television, playing video games, using the computer, and talking on the telephone, without parental limitations.

The "Be Happy! Be Healthy!" program focuses on parents as role models

and provides them with the tools and support they need to create healthy lifestyles for their children. Parents who enroll in the “Be Happy! Be Healthy!” program will receive a BodyWorks toolkit and will attend regular group meetings to help maintain behavior change. The toolkit serves as a guide to creating an overall healthy lifestyle. It includes a video on healthy shopping and cooking strategies, a recipe book, food and fitness journals, a weekly meal planner refrigerator magnet and more. Families that complete the program will receive incentives such as free gym memberships and a Nintendo Wii.

Overall, adolescents expressed a desire to have their parents be stronger role models for fitness. They wanted their parents to set boundaries for unhealthy eating habits and sedentary activities, and to engage the entire family in increasing physical activity.

“We believe that healthy teens become healthy adults,” says Jonelle Rowe, M.D., M.A., consultant of adolescent health for OWH.

“BodyWorks teaches parents to be role models for their children and encourages them to establish better eating and activity habits for their families.”

Barbara Williams, Children’s Policy Council Coordinator, remarked, “We are seeking families who will commit to the 13-week program’s expectations and are dedicated to helping their families become healthier, both mentally and physically, for the wellbeing of the family.”

Interested parties should contact Barbara Williams, 669-3831 or Bonnie Bradley, 497-3704 to register or get more information. You must be a resident of Shelby County to participate in this program. Also, check with the Shelby County Children’s Policy Council website, www.shelbycocpc.org, for updates, community resources and much, much more information for children and families.