“Healthy U” Initiative Expanded to 40,000 Children Statewide in Effort to Combat Obesity

MONTCLAIR, N.J.--(BUSINESS WIRE)–

The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance announced today a $2.25 million expansion grant for Healthy U – a collaborative initiative to combat the obesity epidemic among New Jersey children. Over the next three and a half years, Healthy U will expand to impact approximately 40,000 children statewide. In addition to the after-school setting, the program will now be offered in two new settings, pre-school and school-based for the first time in the history of the program.

“Since its inception in 2008, the Healthy U program has equipped thousands of New Jersey children and their families with nutritional education and increased physical activity to help them lead a healthy life,” said Robert A. Marino, Chairman and CEO of Horizon BCBSNJ and Chairman of the Board of The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey. “Today, the Foundation joins with the YMCA Alliance in renewing and building upon our commitment to combat obesity.”

Healthy U uses the evidence-based CATCH (Coordinated Approach To Child Health) curriculum to help children adopt behavior changes that promote healthy eating and physical activity. This award-winning curriculum was created in 1992 by national education and child health experts at the University of Texas. In its first phase, Healthy U has been implemented in all 41 member Ys across New Jersey, and more than 20,000 children ages 5 to 13 have participated in the program at over 400 after-school sites. The four-year evaluation results showed that the program is effective and working, children are adding more fruits and vegetables to their diets, are cutting back on TV and computer time and are being physically active more each day.

“With this additional investment from the Foundation, the Healthy U program will be expanded to more than 5,000 pre-school children, integrated into 50 public schools that will reach 15,000 children at the elementary level, and maintained as an after-school program at 400 Y sites for 20,000 children,” Marino said.

“Healthy U is an innovative program that is closely in tune with the YMCA’s mission to help children lead healthy lives,” said William Lovett, Executive Director of the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance. “Children have enjoyed it, and we’ve seen how the program’s emphasis on parental involvement really accelerates progress toward positive behavior changes. The Y is excited about building out this program and implementing age-specific programming for the younger children new to Healthy U. We applaud The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey for its generous support and its commitment to a generation of healthier children.”

“New Jersey’s children face an obesity epidemic and programs like Healthy U are making marked improvements in their health,” said Dr. Arturo Brito, Deputy Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Health. “I congratulate The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance for expanding Healthy U so that more children may participate.”
About CATCH:

CATCH is an evidence-based, coordinated school health program designed to promote physical activity, healthy food choices and the prevention of tobacco use in children. The CATCH programs cover kids from pre-school through 8th grade and have been implemented in 3,500 schools and after-school organizations across America. By teaching children that eating healthy and being physically active every day can be fun, CATCH has proven that establishing healthy habits in childhood can promote behavior changes that can last a lifetime.

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Montclair kids learn about healthy eating at YMCA event

Published: Thursday, September 27, 2012, 3:20 PM        Updated: Thursday, September 27, 2012, 3:20 PM

By Star-Ledger Staff

Montclair — Preschool children and their parents — got an education into healthier lifestyles in Montclair this afternoon.

At the re-launch and expansion of Healthy U program at the YMCA of Montclair Geyer Family Branch, the kids and their parents heard from Alma Schneider, who founded "Take Back the Kitchen," a blog and enterprise that promotes beneficial foods and games that get kids up and moving.

During the last four years, Healthy U, started in 2008 by The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, has reached more than 20,000 children at YMCAs across New Jersey.

According to program sponsors, one in five children is overweight or obese by the time they turn 6, increasing the risk of heart disease, diabetes and other ailments later in life.

The initiative promotes nutrition, physical activity and strong family involvement.

It will now expand into several public schools.

For more information, visit http://www.horizon-bcbsnj.com/foundation/healthyu.html
The YMCA and The Horizon Foundation Bringing Healthy U to 40,000 NJ Children

Healthy U is New Jersey’s first comprehensive, statewide initiative to combat childhood obesity.
The YMCA and The Horizon Foundation
Bringing Healthy U to 40,000 NJ Children

BY Georgette Gilmore | FRIDAY, SEP 28, 2012 7:30AM | COMMENTS (0)

Yesterday afternoon, the Montclair Geyer Family Center YMCA was host to members of The New Jersey YMCA State Alliance, The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, The NJ Department of Health, NJ Department of Education, Montclair’s own Celebrity Chef Alma Schneider, Dr. Renee Baskerville, Montclair’s 4th Ward Councilor, and many more.

The big to-do was for a very special announcement—The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance is expanding its HealthyU initiative program.

Healthy U, New Jersey’s first comprehensive, statewide initiative to combat childhood obesity in an after-school setting, will now reach wider and further with its award-winning curriculum. Initiated in 2008 by The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, the program has impacted more than 20,000 children ages 5-13 at 400 YMCA sites across New Jersey. With an additional $2.25 million support from The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, this YMCA program will reach preschool children ages 3-5 and become incorporated into the curriculum of twelve New Jersey public schools. In three years, with the new expanded program, 40,000 children will benefit from Healthy U.
And it’s needed. More than 23 million children and teenagers in the U.S. are obese or overweight, a statistic that health experts consider an epidemic. 20 percent of children are overweight or obese by the age of 6. In New Jersey, the obesity rate among low-income children ages 2-5 was 17 percent.

With September designated National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, there’s no more appropriate time to bring focus to programs and efforts to combat what has become an obesity epidemic. The Healthy U initiative is designed to prevent childhood obesity through behavior change and educates children on proper nutrition, increased physical activity and strong family involvement.

Montclair YMCA President and CEO JoAnn Short welcomed all and said she was excited to announce a new chapter for the YMCA. Several others involved spoke about the importance of the Healthy U program, such as Robert A. Marino, the Chairman and CEO of Horizon BCBSNJ, Bill Lovett, the Executive Director of the NJ YMCA State Alliance, and Dr. Arturo Brito the Deputy Commissioner of the NJ Health Department.

Next Montclair YMCA’s amazing staff (and if your children have taken any Y classes or summer camp, then you know I’m just how amazing these men and women are) and a group of adorable Montclair kids who participate in Healthy U demonstrated just what the program was all about. Watch the video of Mr. Rob an Mr. Marlon with the kids to see them in action:
The physical part of Healthy U follows the CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) curriculum. The 4 main objectives of CATCH are:

1. Have fun!
2. 60% of physical activity
3. Participation of all the kids all of the time
4. Take it home (the goal is to have children bring their lessons home and teach their parents)

After the children demonstrated the physical aspect of Healthy U, they were greeted by Alma Schneider of Take Back the Kitchen, who explained that getting children to eat healthy snacks was easy if you involved them in the cooking and preparation process, made small changes so kids would be more willing to try new things, made food fun and ate together. The kids were treated to banana slices topped with Sunbutter (a peanut butter alternative) and raisins and brown rice cakes topped with Alma’s famous and award-winning edamame dip.

With the new Healthy U expansion, 400 YMCA aftercare sites, 70 preschools, and 50 schools will offer children the Healthy U program.
Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, YMCA Alliance announce 2.25M expansion grant for Healthy U

The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance announced today a $2.25 million expansion grant for Healthy U - a collaborative initiative to combat the obesity epidemic among New Jersey children. Over the next three and a half years, Healthy U will expand to impact approximately 40,000 children statewide. In addition to the after-school setting, the program will now be offered in two new settings, pre-school and school-based for the first time in the history of the program.

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Source: Horizon Foundation for New Jersey
Healthy U combats childhood obesity in New Jersey at local YMCAs

Healthy U is New Jersey's first comprehensive, statewide initiative to combat childhood obesity in an afterschool setting and is reaching wider and further with its award-winning curriculum. Initiated in 2008 by The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, the program has impacted more than 20,000 children ages 5-13 at 400 YMCA afterschool sites across New Jersey. With additional support from The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, the Somerset Valley YMCA will now be expanded, for the first time, to reach pre-school children ages 3-5.

The Somerset Valley YMCA will be kicking-off the new school year of Healthy U at their preschool and school age sites in Hillsborough and Somerville.

Healthy U is a part of their preschool and afterschool childcare program. The program involves leading children through a variety of physical activities during their day and also provides them activities and education for healthy eating. Family involvement and health tips are also provided. The YMCA is playing a major role in helping children get their 60 minutes of physical activity each day.

The program will be held on Thursday, Oct. 11. The Hillsborough Family YMCA, 19 East Mountain Road, Hillsborough, will hold the program from 5:30-6:30 p.m. The Somerville Family YMCA, 2 Green St., Somerville, will hold it from 4:30-6 p.m.

One in three children in New Jersey are overweight or obese. These weight issues affect children's health, put them at greater risk for major illness and can impact their ability to perform academically. The Healthy U initiative is designed to prevent childhood obesity through behavior change and educates children on proper nutrition, increased physical activity and strong family involvement.

With the start of new school years, there’s no more appropriate time to bring focus to programs and efforts to combat what has become an obesity epidemic.
YMCA launches program to prevent childhood obesity

On Oct. 18, the Lakeland Hills Family YMCA in Mountain Lakes will kick off CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Children’s Health), a new initiative incorporated into the Y’s preschool and afterschool programs to promote physical activity and healthy eating.

They will be one of 80 YMCA preschool sites, 368 afterschool childcare sites, ten elementary schools who partner with Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of N.J. in implementing this program.

CATCH is available only at the Y, and everyone is invited to see it in action and participate on Oct. 18, from 10 a.m. to noon for children 18 months through 5 years old, with parent; or from 3:30-5:30 p.m. for children ages 7-12.

It is free and membership is not required.

In New Jersey, one in three school-age children is either overweight or obese. These children risk developing serious health problems in adulthood, such as heart disease, type two diabetes. To learn more, visit www.catchinfo.org.

For the schedule of events on Oct. 18, visit www.lakelandhillsymca.com.
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Summit YMCA expands its ‘Healthy U’ program

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first time in the history of the program.

The Summit YMCA plans to kickoff this new Healthy U expansion on Thursday, Oct. 18,
for the preschool and afterschool programs. Children will participate in CATCH games,
nutrition and taste testing of fruits and vegetables, along with special Healthy U and
CATCH original songs, and learning about making healthy eating choices.

The schedule is as follows: 10-11:30 a.m. for preschool program and 4-5:30 p.m. for
afterschool program at Summit YMCA, 67 Maple Street, Summit; 908-273-3339.
Presented by representatives from the City of Summit and the Summit School District,
and from Flag House (supplier of CATCH and Healthy U materials used in the
program).

“Since its inception in 2008, the Healthy U program has equipped thousands of New
Jersey children and their families with nutritional education and increased physical
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The four-year evaluation results showed that the program is effective and working, children are adding more fruits and vegetables to their diets, are cutting back on TV and computer time and are being physically active more each day. “With this additional investment from the Foundation, the Healthy U program will be expanded to more than 5,000 pre-school children, integrated into 50 public schools that will reach 15,000 children at the elementary level, and maintained as an afterschool program at 400 Y sites for 20,000 children,” Marino said.

“New Jersey’s children face an obesity epidemic and programs like Healthy U are making marked improvements in their health,” said Dr. Arturo Brito, deputy commissioner, New Jersey Department of Health. “I congratulate The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance for expanding Healthy U so that more children may participate.”

Healthy U at-a-glance, Phase 1 (2008–2011):
• $1.2 million Horizon Foundation for New Jersey Grants
• 380 afterschool Y sites
• 500 trained Y staff
• 20,000 children, ages 5-12

Healthy U at-a-glance, Phase 2 (2012 – 2015):
• $2.25 million Horizon Foundation Expansion Grant
• 400 Y afterschool Y sites; 20,000 children ages 5-13
• 79 Y preschool sites, 5,000 children, ages 3-5
• School-based – 50 schools, 15,000 children
• 2,000 trained Y and other staff

For more information, contact Terri Clinton, executive director, Summit YMCA, 908-273-3330, ext. 1126.
Healthy U Initiative Expanded to 40,000 Children Statewide in Effort to combat obesity. Kickoff event at the Summit YMCA

The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance recently announced a $2.25 million expansion grant for Healthy U – a collaborative initiative to combat the obesity epidemic among New Jersey children. Over the next three and a half years, Healthy U will expand to impact approximately 40,000 children statewide. In addition to the after-school setting, the program will now be offered in two new settings, preschool and school-based, for the first time in the history of the program.

The Summit YMCA plans to kick off this new Healthy U expansion on Thursday, October 18 for the preschool and afterschool programs. Children will participate in CATCH games, nutrition and taste testing of fruits and vegetables, along with special Healthy U and CATCH original songs, and learning about making healthy eating choices. Summit City and School officials are expected to attend along with Flag House (supplier of CATCH and Healthy U materials).

“Since its inception in 2008, the Healthy U program has equipped thousands of New Jersey children and their families with nutritional education and increased physical activity to help them lead a healthy life,” said Robert A. Marino, Chairman and CEO of Horizon BCBSNJ and Chairman of the Board of The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey. “The Foundation will now join with the YMCA Alliance in renewing and building upon our commitment to combat obesity.”

Healthy U uses the evidence-based CATCH (Coordinated Approach To Child Health) curriculum to help children adopt behavior changes that promote healthy eating and physical activity. This award-winning curriculum was created in 1992 by national education and child health experts at the University of Texas. In its first phase, Healthy U has been implemented in all 41 member Y’s across New Jersey, and more than 20,000 children ages 5 to 13 have participated in the program at over 400 afterschool sites. The four-year evaluation results showed that the program is effective and working, children are adding more fruits and vegetables to their diets, are cutting back on TV and computer time and are being physically active more each day. “With this additional investment from the Foundation, the Healthy U program will be expanded to more than 5,000 pre-school children, integrated into 60 public schools that will reach 15,000 children at the elementary level, and maintained as an afterschool program at 400 Y sites for 20,000 children,” Marino said.
“New Jersey’s children face an obesity epidemic and programs like Healthy U are making marked improvements in their health,” said Dr. Arturo Brito, Deputy Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Health. “I congratulate The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance for expanding Healthy U so that more children may participate.”

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Healthy U at-a-glance, Phase 2 (2012 – 2015):
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* 79 Y preschool sites, 5,000 children, ages 3-5
* School-based – 50 schools, 15,000 children
* 2,000 trained Y and other staff

Some Facts About Childhood Obesity:
* More than 23 million children and teenagers in the U.S. are obese or overweight, a statistic that health experts consider an epidemic.
* Obesity increases the lifelong risk for type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, osteoarthritis, stroke, certain kinds of cancer, and many other debilitating diseases.
* Researchers estimate that one out of every three males and two out of every five females born in the United States in the year 2000 will be diagnosed with diabetes.
* More than 100,000 children ages 5 to 14 have asthma each year because of overweight and obesity.
* If current adolescent obesity rates continue, researchers predict that by 2035 there will be more than 100,000 additional cases of heart disease linked to obesity.
* Between 1999 and 2005, the number of children hospitalized with a diagnosis of obesity nearly doubled; treatment costs rose from $125.9 million to $237.6 million between 2001 and 2005.
Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to Prevent Childhood Obesity
* One in five children is overweight or obese by the time they reach their 6th birthday.
* In New Jersey, the obesity rate among low income children ages 2-5 was 17 percent.
Somerset Valley YMCA kicks off second phase of Horizon Healthy U initiative

The Hillsborough Family YMCA and Somerville Family YMCA will be celebrating the start of the second phase of the Horizon Healthy U initiative, an evidence-based program for the prevention of childhood obesity. This year, the YMCA is integrating the program into its pre-school curriculum. The two YMCAs will kick off the second phase of the initiative on Thursday, Oct. 11, from 4:30-6 p.m. The Hillsborough Family YMCA is located at 19 East Mountain Road, Hillsborough and the Somerville Family YMCA is located at 2 Green St., Somerville.

The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance announced a $2.25 million expansion grant for Healthy U. Over the next three and a half years, Healthy U will expand to impact approximately 40,000 children statewide. In addition to the after-school setting, the program will now be offered in two new settings, preschool and school-based for the first time in the history of the program.

The Healthy U program uses the CATCH (Coordinated Approach To Child Health) curriculum to promote physical activity, healthy eating, and healthy family behaviors by providing a supportive learning environment. The program partners with Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of N.J. in implementing this proven method of using education and activities to prevent childhood obesity.

The kick-off celebration will include CATCH physical activities games and Healthy U nutritional lessons that will provide healthy snacks for all participants.

For more information, visit ymcasomersetvalley.org.
Somerset Valley YMCA one of hundreds of sites now fighting childhood obesity
Healthy U program now also focusing on children ages 3-5

Healthy U at the Somerset Valley YMCA (10/11/12): Somerset Valley YMCA children participate in the Healthy U program to fight childhood obesity. STAFF VIDEO BY JASON TOWLEN
Somerset Valley Y celebrates launch of Healthy U into preschool programs

At the Hillsborough Family Y, fifth-grader Alex Ascencio gets some exercise.

At the Somerville Family Y, Noah Oons, 3, and Joshua Baker, 5, with Somerset Valley Y CEO Paul Kieltyka in the middle. The kids are identifying which food groups the carrots and cupcakes belong to.

At the Somerville Family Y, Samaj Harrison, 9, and Zachary Gottlieb, 9, reach for a healthy fresh fruit snack.
Children in the Somerset Valley Y’s child care center in Hillsborough and Somerville joined with their parents and Y staff on Thursday, Oct. 11, to celebrate the launch into preschool of an important statewide initiative to combat childhood obesity.

Healthy U, New Jersey’s first comprehensive, statewide program to prevent childhood obesity, began in after-school settings in 2008. Sponsored by The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, the program has impacted more than 20,000 children ages 5-13 at 400 YMCA afterschool sites across New Jersey and is now expanding its reach to younger children.

The Somerset Valley Y, in its fourth year of teaching Healthy U in its after-school programs in its Hillsborough and Somerville, in September became one of 79 Y child care programs across New Jersey to implement the initiative into preschool.

In the Somerset Valley Y’s afterschool programs, over 150 children in its Hillsborough and Somerville branches are taking part in the Healthy U program which involves both physical activity and healthy eating lessons. Nearly 100 children are being exposed to lessons on the importance of staying physically fit and eating nutritious foods.

“We are teaching kids to make healthy choices to prevent the onset of obesity,” said Matt Gray, Hillsborough Family YMCA program director. “We incorporated a component into our daily curriculum that involves ‘Go’ and ‘Whoa’ foods. ‘Go’ foods are healthy options like fruits and vegetables, and ‘whoa’ foods are less nutritional choices like french fries.”

Kids who choose “Go” foods get tickets that can be traded in for rewards.

Studies show that childhood obesity is rising, putting more and more children at risk for major health problems and hindering their ability to do well in school.

The Healthy U initiative focuses on preventing childhood obesity through behavior changes and education on proper nutrition, increased physical activity and family involvement.
The initiatives uses CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Childhood Health), an evidence-based, coordinated school health program, which is geared toward kids from preschool through eighth grade. By teaching children that eating healthy and being physically active every day can be fun, CATCH has proven that establishing healthy habits in childhood can promote behavior changes that can last a lifetime.

In preparation for the expansion into preschool, Y staff was trained in how to implement the CATCH program for younger children.

“We’re trying to ‘catch’ our participants even earlier,” said Tina Gandarillas, Somerville Family YMCA children’s services director. “The CATCH philosophy works because it brings people together for a common goal - being healthy.”

In addition to promoting healthy eating habits in weekly lessons, the program includes ensuring all of the children have 30 minutes of physical activities each day.

“Our children play non-elimination games, where they are continuously moving,” said Dana Scarantino, Somerville Family Y’s youth and family director. “We use age-appropriate activities that encourage fun and participation.”

In addition to expanding the program into preschools, the Horizon Foundation has chosen 12 public schools in New Jersey to incorporate Healthy U into the curriculum. Somerville’s Vanderveer Elementary Schools is one of the 12, and the Somerville Family Y is involved in implementing it there.

On Thursday the day’s events included making health snacks from “Go” foods and games.

“We enjoyed the opportunity to showcase the CATCH program in action and reinforce the importance of healthy lifestyle habits to our families and community members,” said Lee Santaromita, Hillsborough Family YMCA children’s services director.

For more information about the Somerset Valley Y’s early childhood and school-age programs, visit [ymca-sv.org](http://ymca-sv.org).
Westfield Y participates in expanded ‘Healthy U’ initiative

The Westfield Area Y is pleased to announce that the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance received an expansion grant of $2.25 million for Healthy U, a collaborative initiative to combat the obesity epidemic among New Jersey children. Over the next three and a half years, Healthy U will expand to impact approximately 40,000 children statewide. In addition to the afterschool setting, the program will now be offered in two new settings: preschool and school-based for the first time in the history of the program.

As a result of this $2.25 million expansion grant for Healthy U, the Westfield Area Y along with other Y’s throughout the state will benefit from the grant and are now able to expand their program to also include preschools. In support of the ‘Healthy U’ initiative, Westfield Area Y preschool programs hosted kickoffs on October 11th.

The children participated in special healthy activities and wore their “Healthy U” tee shirts in support of this healthy initiative. The Y’s School Age Child Care Kickoffs will be held Oct. 18.

“Since its inception in 2008, the Healthy U program has equipped thousands of New Jersey children and their families with nutritional education and increased physical activity to help them lead a healthy life,” said Robert A. Martin, Chairman and CEO of Horizon NJBSN and Chairman of the Board of The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey. “Today, the Foundation joins with the YMCA Alliance in renewing and building upon our commitment to combat obesity.”

Healthy U uses the evidence-based CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) curriculum to help children adopt behavior changes that promote healthy eating and physical activity. This award-winning curriculum was created in 1992 by national education and child health experts at the University of Texas. In its first phase, Healthy U has been implemented in all 41 member Ys across New Jersey, and more than 20,000 children ages 5 to 13 have participated in the program at more than 400 after-school sites. The four-year evaluation results showed that the program had a positive and lasting impact on the program at more than 400 after-school sites. The four-year evaluation results showed that the program had a positive and lasting impact on the children.

More than 20 million children and teenagers in the U.S. are obese or overweight, a statistic that health experts consider an epidemic.

Obesity increases the lifelong risk for type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart problems, stroke, certain kinds of cancer, and many other debilitating diseases.

Researchers estimate that one out of every five females born in the United States in the year 2000 will be diagnosed with diabetes.

More than 100,000 children ages 5 to 14 have asthma each year because of overweight and obesity.

If current adolescent obesity rates continue, researchers predict that by 2035 there will be more than 100,000 additional cases of heart disease linked to obesity.

Between 1999 and 2005, the number of children hospitalized with a diagnosis of obesity nearly doubled; treatment costs rose from $12.5 million to $237.6 million between 2001 and 2005.

Pictured are Westfield Area Y preschoolers, kindergartners and teachers celebrating Healthy U with a walk-around Mindowaskin Park on Oct. 11. "It puts a smile on my face when I hear a child say, 'WOW, I feel so much stronger,' as a result of this initiative. I am happy to be a part of Healthy U and getting parents and children on board to engage in healthy habits. It is a win-win for everyone," said Eileen Rooney, Westfield Area Y Preschool Director.
THE YMCA marks the start of the second phase of the Horizon Healthy U Initiative on Thursday, Oct. 18. The preschool program will be showcased 4-4:30 p.m., and the school-age program will be featured immediately afterward, from 4:30-5 p.m.
YMCA Healthy U Kickoff

WHERE: South Brunswick Family YMCA

WHEN: Thursday, October 18, 2012 4:00 PM

Healthy U -- New Jersey's first statewide initiative to combat childhood obesity in an after-school setting, is reaching wider and further with its award-winning curriculum. Initiated in 2008 by The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, the program has impacted more than 20,000 children ages 5-13 at 400 YMCA sites across New Jersey. With additional support from The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, this YMCA program will now be expanded to, for the first time, reach pre-school children ages 3-5 and become incorporated into the curriculum of twelve New Jersey public schools. State of New Jersey health and education officials, a celebrity chef, and Healthy U children and their parents will join Horizon BCBSNJ, the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance, and local dignitaries to announce details of this historic expansion.

With September as National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, there's no more appropriate time to bring focus to programs and efforts to combat what has become an obesity epidemic. The Healthy U initiative is designed to prevent childhood obesity through behavior change and educates children on proper nutrition, increased physical activity and strong family involvement. A group of young children will demonstrate this curriculum in action, then they'll get some tips on healthy snacking.

Some Facts About Childhood Obesity:

More than 23 million children and teenagers in the U.S. are obese or overweight, a statistic that health experts consider an epidemic.

Obesity increases the lifelong risk for type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, osteoarthritis,
stroke, certain kinds of cancer, and many other debilitating diseases.

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More than 100,000 children ages 5 to 14 have asthma each year because of overweight and obesity.

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Between 1999 and 2005, the number of children hospitalized with a diagnosis of obesity nearly doubled; treatment costs rose from $125.9 million to $237.6 million between 2001 and 2005.

One in five children is overweight or obese by the time they reach their 6th birthday.

In New Jersey, the obesity rate among low income children ages 2-5 was 17 percent.

Sources:

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to Prevent Childhood Obesity

White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity-Report to the President, May 2010
Summit Area YMCA Holds Healthy U

Stephanie Ollom
Thursday, October 18, 2012 • 10:05pm

SUMMIT, NJ - On Thursday afternoon, Oct. 18, afterschool children at the Summit Area YMCA sang and danced to “We can build a Healthy U, at the YMCA!”, an original song written by staff to encourage good eating and exercise. Students from ages 5-13 attended the Healthy U event sponsored by The Horizon Foundation.

Healthy U is the first afterschool program in New Jersey that combats child obesity. Created in 2008, the Healthy U program has helped over 20,000 kids at 400 different YMCAs across the state.

Along with singing and dancing, the children were involved in CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) games and food tastings of various fruits and vegetables. By learning an original song “Whoa, Slow and Go,” the children discovered which foods are healthier than others. Each child pledged to eat as many “Go”, or healthy foods as possible, with a minimum of “Slow” foods and no “Whoa” foods.

The children sang and danced to musical entertainment. Apart from the original song about good eating, the young people also enjoyed “YMCA” by the Village People, “We Will Rock You” by Queen and “What Makes You Beautiful” by One Direction.

The Summit Area YMCA’s program was created to prevent childhood obesity by trying to teach kids proper nutrition, exercise and that strong family involvement can lead to a healthy, happy life.

Healthy snacks were provided for the children and they also enjoyed a group dance session in which they sang to various songs.

“The biggest idea with Healthy U and the CATCH program is just for the kids to have fun,” Sue Fiezeler of the Summit Area YMCA said. “If they enjoy what they are doing, they are going to do it more often.”
HEALTHY U KICKOFF

October 18, 2012

Healthy U — New Jersey's first comprehensive, statewide initiative to combat childhood obesity in an after-school setting, with Healthy U Kickoff, is reaching wider and further with its award-winning curriculum. Initiated in 2008 by The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, the program has impacted more than 20,000 children ages 5-13 at 400 YMCA sites across New Jersey. With additional support from The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, this YMCA program will now be expanded to, for the first time, reach pre-school children ages 3-5 and become incorporated into the curriculum of twelve New Jersey public schools. State of New Jersey health and education officials, a celebrity chef, and Healthy U children and their parents will join Horizon BCBSNJ, the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance, and local dignitaries to announce details of this historic expansion.

With September as National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, there’s no more appropriate time to bring focus to programs and efforts to combat what has become an obesity epidemic. The Healthy U initiative is designed to prevent childhood obesity through behavior change and educates children on proper nutrition, increased physical activity and strong family involvement. A group of young children will demonstrate this curriculum in action, then they’ll get some tips on healthy snacking.
Expanded Y program fights obesity in kids

By JESSICA MASULLI REYES
masulli@njnews.com

FRANKLIN — "Eat your rainbow" was the message Franklin Elementary School students received as they sipped strawberry, orange, banana smoothies after school Thursday.

The students in the Sussex County YMCA's after-school program learned that having an array of colorful fruits and vegetables every day is the key to being healthy. The lesson was part of the YMCA's Healthy U Childhood Obesity Program, which is now expanding to pre-school children and 12 public schools in the state.

“We are trying to have a healthy impact on the community and kids,” said Samantha Walter, Sussex County YMCA's school age child care and sports enrichment director.

To launch this expansion of the Healthy U program, the YMCA after-school programs that serve 319 children ages 5 to 13 in Blairstown, Hardyston, Franklin and Montague furthered their commitment to fighting obesity by providing healthy lessons, fresh fruit snacks, exercise-inspired games, health pledges and other activities Thursday and today. Students also decorated banners to prove their commitment to health.

This is all leading up to Saturday when there will be a free Healthy U community celebration at the Sussex County YMCA from 6 to 8 p.m. Children ages 5 to 13 are invited to the event to play games, eat healthy apple strawberry salsa samples, swim and enjoy a song called "Heart Smart" by Raymond Griffiths-Ayers.

To attend, the YMCA is asking parents to preregister by calling Walter at 973-209-9622.

Healthy U is a statewide initiative by the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance that began in 2008 to combat childhood obesity in an after-school setting.

"Initially, the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey granted YMCA's in the state $1 million to run the Healthy U program," said Rick Gorab, See OBESITY, Page A8
Gabriel de Jesus, 7, receives a smoothie from Louann Litteral, YMCA site supervisor, not seen, as Karissa Maloney, 9, waits her turn at the Franklin Elementary School Thursday. The kids are members of the Sussex County YMCA’s after-school program, which was taking part in the Y’s Healthy U Childhood Obesity Program.

**Obesity**
Continued from Page A7

Gabriel de Jesus, 7, receives a smoothie from Louann Litteral, YMCA site supervisor, not seen, as Karissa Maloney, 9, waits her turn at the Franklin Elementary School Thursday. The kids are members of the Sussex County YMCA’s after-school program, which was taking part in the Y’s Healthy U Childhood Obesity Program.

Healthy U programs use the Coordinated Approach To Child Health (CATCH) curriculum to promote healthy eating, healthy behaviors, parent involvement and physical activity. This curriculum is meant to combat the obesity epidemic in the United States. "It is a terrific program, and it is really unique and one-of-a-kind collaboration between the Horizons Foundation for New Jersey," Gorab said. "It is a special collaboration that is making a difference in the lives of kids."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that about 17 percent of children and adolescents aged 2 to 19, or 12.5 million, are obese. Since 1980, the prevalence of obesity in children and adolescents has almost tripled. "It is a significant epidemic that is reaching throughout the entire county," Gorab said. "It has amazing negative impacts when it goes into the future."

For the elementary school students in Franklin who participate in the after-school program, the Healthy U message is part of the day-to-day activities. The children often play non-competitive games that get their hearts racing and have healthy snacks every week, Walter said.

However, the message was amplified Thursday when students, dressed in Healthy U shirts, had fresh fruit smoothies, while coloring fruit and vegetable pictures. Karissa Maloney, 9, said the activities taught her something about being healthy. "I learned about eating a few colors a day," Karissa said. She said now she will focus on eating more of her favorite healthy fruit — lemons.

Fellow fourth-grade student, Nicholas Fortin, 9, said he really enjoyed the smoothie, but he also brought his own healthy oranges snack from home.
Expanded YMCA program fights obesity in kids

Posted: Oct 18, 2012 11:31 PM EDT
Updated: Oct 19, 2012 12:35 AM EDT

BY JESSICA MASULLI REYES
jmasulli@njherald.com

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The students in the Sussex County YMCA’s after-school program learned that having an array of colorful fruits and vegetables every day is the key to being healthy. The lesson was part of the YMCA’s Healthy U Childhood Obesity Program, which is now expanding to pre-school children and 12 public schools in the state.

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This is all leading up to Saturday, when there will be a free Healthy U community celebration at the Sussex County YMCA from 6 to 8 p.m. Children ages 5 to 13 are invited to the event to play games, eat healthy apple-strawberry salsa samples, swim and enjoy a song called “Heart Smart” by Raymond Griffiths-Ayers. To attend, the YMCA is asking parents to preregister by calling Walter at 973-209-9422.

Healthy U is a statewide initiative by the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance that began in 2008 to combat childhood obesity in an after-school setting.

“Initially, the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey granted YMCA’s in the state $1 million to run the Healthy U program,” said Rick Gorab, president and CEO of the Metropolitan YMCA of the Oranges.

The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey has broadened the program to the second phase through $2.5 million more in funding this school year so that the program for the first time will reach pre-school children ages 3 to 5 and will be included in 12 public school classrooms.

“In total, when the program concludes when the funding concludes, we will have 40,000 kids in the entire state on a daily basis involved,” Gorab said. “It has a significant impact, as you can see.”

The expansion to YMCA preschools and public schools will not touch Sussex County at this point, but the local YMCA after-school programs are able to continue to embrace the Healthy U message thanks to this new additional funding.

Healthy U programs use the Coordinated Approach To Child Health (CATCH) curriculum to promote healthy eating, healthy behaviors, parent involvement and physical activity. This curriculum is meant to combat the obesity epidemic in the United States.

“It is a terrific program, and it is really unique and one-of-a-kind collaboration between the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey,” Gorab said. “It is a special collaboration that is making a difference in the lives of kids.”

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Fellow fourth-grade student, Nicholas Fortin, 9, said he really enjoyed the smoothie, but he also brought his own healthy oranges snack from home.
Somerset Hills Y kicks off Healthy U Initiative in preschool childcare

The Somerset Hills YMCA is proud to announce the launch of the Healthy U initiative within the preschool childcare setting. The Y is playing a major role in promoting healthy living among children by teaching them the importance of good nutrition and helping them get their 60 minutes of physical activity each day.

Healthy U is New Jersey’s first comprehensive, statewide initiative to combat childhood obesity. Launched in 2008 by the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, the program has had an impact on more than 20,000 children age 5-13 at 400 YMCA after school sites. With additional support from the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, the Somerset Hills YMCA will now expand the program, for the first time, to reach preschool children ages 3-5.
To demonstrate and celebrate the benefits of the Healthy U program, a kick-off event was held today at the Y’s Millicent Fenwick Daycare Center. During the morning celebration, parents and children participated in a lesson on nutrition and healthy eating habits. In the afternoon, they enjoyed the benefits of physical activity through fun games that kept them moving. The preschoolers also had opportunities to learn about healthy foods by planting seeds in the Y’s Giving Garden. They will help to nurture and care for the vegetables as they grow in the coming weeks and then will harvest the produce when ready.

The Healthy U program uses the CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) Curriculum to educate and promote healthy eating and increased physical activity. The program also provides parents with valuable tips and suggestions to use at home for overall family wellness. The Somerset Hills YMCA is one of 80 YMCA preschool sites, 368 afterschool childcare sites and ten elementary schools that are partnering with Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of NJ in implementing this proven method.

Obesity in America is at epidemic levels. In New Jersey, one in three school-age children are either overweight or obese. These weight issues affect children’s health, put them at greater risk for major illness and can have an impact on their ability to perform academically. The Healthy U initiative is designed to prevent childhood obesity through behavior change and educates children on proper nutrition, increased physical activity and strong family involvement.

“With the start of the school year, there is no more appropriate time to bring focus to healthy living,” said Kim DeZutter, Senior Director of Family Services at the Y. “We are thrilled to offer the benefits of the Healthy U program to our preschool and afterschool childcare families.”

The Somerset Hills YMCA is a charitable community service organization, rooted in Christian values and dedicated to helping all people grow in spirit, mind and body. We are guided by our core principles of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. For more information, please visit somersethillsymca.org or call 908-766-7898.
Wood-Ridge students aim to eat right, stay fit

Among first in state to join Healthy U program

By JOHN A. GAVIN

WOOD-RIDGE - More than 500 students at the Catherine Doyle School on Thursday took part in an expanded statewide initiative designed to combat childhood obesity through nutrition education and increased physical activity.

Dubbed the Healthy U program - a partnership between the Horizon Foundation of New Jersey and the YMCA State Alliance - students took part in a variety of exercise regimens that will become daily routines.

"Healthy U focuses on physical activity for health versus physical activity for athleticism or skill," said Susan Cornell, the statewide Healthy U director.

"The significance is the amount of community input that carries the message to the youth about the importance of physical activity and healthy eating," said Cornell. During a brief ceremony, Jane A. Fagan, the Meadowlands Area YMCA chief executive officer, said the school's anti-obesity program paves the way for more schools to follow after an announcement in September of a $22 million grant by the Horizon Foundation to expand the program.

"You guys are one of the first 10 schools [to be expanded] in the state," Fagan said.

Once the program is under way, Sheila Dunn, the YMCA's family wellness director, said her staff will show teachers and school dieticians how to implement optimum exercise and nutrition routines while students are in school.

Healthy U incorporates a curriculum called CATCH - Coordinated Approach to Child Health - that was created by the University of Texas through its Houston School of Public Health to help children adopt behavior changes that promote healthy eating and physical activity.

Forty-one member Ys with more than 20,000 children ages 5 to 13 have participated in the program at more than 400 after-school sites, officials said.

Statistics on childhood obesity are grim, with a recent study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation showing that one in five children is either overweight or obese by age 6.

But results of the Healthy U program that began in 2008 show it has been effective with children, adding more fruits and vegetables to their diets, cutting back on TV and promoting more physical activity each day, officials said.

To mark Thursday's kickoff, scores of children, dressed in bright blue T-shirts participated in a series of exercise activities.

Educators at the K-5 school said they hope it leads to lifelong activity.

"Not everyone is gifted with good athleticism, but everyone can be physically fit," said Anthony J. Albree, the principal.

Email: gavin@northjersey.com
Hundreds of Wood-Ridge students take part in anti-obesity campaign

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2012
BY JOHN A. GAVIN
STAFF WRITER

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"Healthy U focuses on physical activity for health versus physical activity for athleticism or skill," said Susan Cornell, the statewide Healthy U director.

"The significance is the amount of community input that carries the message to the youth about the importance of physical activity and healthy eating."

During a brief ceremony, Jane A. Egan, the Meadowlands Area YMCA chief executive officer, said the school's anti-obesity program paves the way for more schools to follow after an announcement in September of a $2.2 million grant by the Horizon Foundation to expand the program.

"You guys are one of the first 10 schools [to be expanded] in the state," Egan said.

Once the program is under way, Shelia Dunn, the YMCA's family wellness director, said her staff will show teachers and school dietitians how to implement optimum exercise and nutrition routines while students are in school.

Healthy U incorporates a curriculum called CATCH — Coordinated Approach to Child Health — that was created by the University of Texas through its Houston School of Public Health to help children adopt behavior changes that promote healthy eating and physical activity.

Forty-one member Ys with more than 20,000 children ages 5 to 13 have participated in the program at more than 400 after-school sites, officials said.

Statistics on childhood obesity are grim, with a recent study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation showing that one in five children is either overweight or obese by age 6.
But results of the Healthy U program that began in 2008 show it has been effective with children, adding more fruits and vegetables to their diets, cutting back on TV and promoting more physical activity each day, officials said.

To mark Thursday's kickoff, scores of children, dressed in bright blue T-shirts participated in a series of exercise activities.

Educators at the K-5 school said they hope it leads to lifelong activity.

"Not everyone is gifted with good athleticism, but everyone can be physically fit," said Anthony J. Albro, the principal.

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Healthy U at Y

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2012
NEIGHBOR NEWS (BOONTON EDITION)

Healthy U, a behavior-change program designed by The Horizon Foundation to help prevent childhood obesity, opened at the Lakeland Hills Family YMCA on Oct. 18 with a great turnout. Miss Bonnie, the Balloon Lady, shown here, was a big hit with the kids at the Y's Early Childhood Learning Center, teaching them that eating healthy and being physically active every day promotes positive behavior changes that can last a lifetime.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BEVERLY COOPER
Healthy U at Y

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Healthy U at Y

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Childhood Obesity Program Kicks Off at YMCA

The YMCA of Western Monmouth County begins its “Healthy U” program today.

In an effort to help combat childhood obesity, the YMCA of Western Monmouth County is bringing its “Healthy U” initiative to its preschool site today.

A press release for the new program explains that “Healthy U” is New Jersey’s first comprehensive, statewide initiative to combat childhood obesity in a child care setting. The program started in 2008 with the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and has so far affected more than 20,000 children between the ages of five and 13 at 400 YMCA child care and after-school care sites across the state.

Using a Coordinated Approach To Child Health (CATCH), the program is now being expanded to reach pre-school children between the ages of three and five and will promote physical activity, healthy food choices, and prevention of tobacco use in children.

The new program was unveiled today at the YMCA of Western Monmouth County for parents, children, staff and board members.
Y aims to combat obesity with launch of health curriculum for children

WAYNE - The Wayne YMCA has partnered with Healthy U to bring a "coordinated approach to a child's health," known as the award-winning CATCH curriculum, to New Jersey preschoolers and elementary students. The program is also backed by The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and New Jersey State Alliance.

"The Healthy U initiative is designed to prevent childhood obesity through behavior change and educates children on proper nutrition, increased physical activity and strong family involvement," according to Liz Youngstein, director of healthy living at Wayne YMCA.

The CATCH curriculum was launched last Thursday for the Wayne Y's Abram B. Cohen Nursery School and Kindergarten Enrichment program. Parents, Y members and community officials were invited to the program's kick-off with Mayor Chris Vergano in attendance.

The kids began the day by cooking a healthy breakfast of whole wheat pancakes and bagels, low fat yogurt, and fruit. Throughout the day the children made a story about healthy food and played CATCH games. Youngstein said that parents were excited to see their kids in the special gym classes and happy that the Y was incorporating the CATCH curriculum into their nursery classes.

Youngstein describes the new curriculum as having a strong emphasis on moderate to vigorous activity, with no child being eliminated to sit on the sidelines. While the kids keep moving, nutrition is taught. For example, while the kids play with an oversized parachute, balls of yarn are thrown into the mix. Then they yell out the names of vegetables or fruits that match the color of the yarn.

The children are taught three key words about how food processes in the body. A "go" food is food that helps you move, like a fruit or vegetable. A "slow" food is food that slows you down, like starchy foods and fruit juices that are not 100 percent juice. A "whoa" food is food that should be avoided, like sugary desserts. These words are incorporated into games. If a child is tagged out of a game, instead of sitting out, they need to do five jumping jacks and yell out five "go" foods.
Sue Cornell, Healthy U director for New Jersey YMCA State Alliance, emphasized that the CATCH curriculum is based on research. Studies showed that after kids graduated from the program and entered middle school, they continued to have high physical activity, chose more fruits and vegetables and had a lower BMI (body mass index).

"We plan to spread the word," she said. "We have 10 pilot programs in New Jersey public schools, and we want to have this program in 50 schools within the next three years."

The Wayne Y will include the CATCH curriculum in their new after school program in January - SACC (School Age Child Care).

"We are hoping to get this into all of our Wayne public schools," said Youngstein. "We want this to be their curriculum. Instead of having a gym class be skilled based, how to kick a soccer ball, to be health based. It's an amazing program. We would love for other public schools to want to do this."

Youngstein and Cornell agreed that the Healthy U program is important because teaching kids at a young age will set them up for a lifetime of healthy choices.
New School Year Ushers In New Era For Heralded HEALTHY U Childhood Obesity Program

WHAT: Healthy U -- New Jersey's first comprehensive, statewide initiative to combat childhood obesity in an after-school setting, is reaching wider and further with its award-winning curriculum. Initiated in 2008 by The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, the program has impacted more than 20,000 children ages 5-13 at 400 YMCA afterschool sites across New Jersey. With additional support from The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, the Hamilton Area YMCA Healthy U program will now be expanded, for the first time, to reach preschool children ages 3-5.

Our YMCA has been kicking-off our new school year of Healthy U at our Preschool and School age sites, and will kick-off the program at the JKR Branch Creative Beginnings Child Learning and Development Center (Creative Beginnings) on Friday, October 26th at 11:00 a.m.

Healthy U is a part of our preschool and afterschool childcare program. The program involves leading children through a variety of physical activities during their day with us and also provides them activities and education for Healthy eating. Family involvement and health tips are also provided. The YMCA is playing a major role in helping children get their 60 minutes of physical activity each day.

WHERE: Hamilton Area YMCA JKR Branch

WHEN: Friday, October 26, 2012, 11:00 a.m.

WHY: One in three children in New Jersey are overweight or obese. These weight issues affect children's health, put them at greater risk for major illness and can impact their ability to perform academically. The Healthy U Initiative is designed to prevent childhood obesity through behavior change and educates children on proper nutrition, increased physical activity and strong family involvement.

With the start of new school years, there's no more appropriate time to bring focus to programs and efforts to combat what has become an obesity epidemic.

Some Facts about Childhood obesity:

- More than 23 million children and teenagers in the U.S. are obese or overweight, a statistic that health experts consider an epidemic.

- **Obesity** increases the lifelong risk for type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, osteoarthritis, stroke, certain kinds of cancer, and many other debilitating diseases.

- Researchers estimate that one out of every three males and two out of every five females born in the United States in the year 2000 will be diagnosed with diabetes.

- More than 100,000 children ages 5 to 14 have asthma each year because of overweight and obesity.

- If current adolescent obesity rates continue, researchers predict that by 2035 there will be more than 100,000 additional cases of heart disease linked to obesity.

- Between 1999 and 2005, the number of children hospitalized with a diagnosis of obesity nearly doubled, treatment costs rose from $125.9 million to $237.6 million between 2001 and 2005.

Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to Prevent Childhood Obesity

- One in five children is overweight or obese by the time they reach their 6th birthday

- In New Jersey, the obesity rate among low income children ages 2-5 was 17 percent

Madison Y kicks off Healthy U program

The F.M. Kirby Children’s Center at the Madison Area YMCA joined hundreds of YMCAs across the state in kicking off its Healthy U program and in celebrating its partnership with The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance.

The Healthy U program is the dynamic result of research sponsored by The Horizon Foundation to combat the growing epidemic of childhood obesity. It teaches children the importance of making physical exercise and healthful eating a part of their daily lives by using practical, fun exercises and healthy eating examples.

The Healthy U program is New Jersey’s largest and most comprehensive statewide initiative to address childhood obesity and as a leading provider of child care, the Kirby Center is at the forefront of bringing it to families through its programs as well as through community outreach and training.

The official launch on Oct. 18 highlighted Kirby’s ongoing commitment to work with The Horizon Foundation. The event drew a crowd of parents and children who enjoyed a variety of fun, physical activities, games and an assortment of healthful snacks under the direction of Kirby’s School Age Director, Dionne James, a certified Healthy U master trainer.

The F.M. Kirby Children’s Center of the Madison Area YMCA is a state-renowned early childhood development center and provides exceptional quality in childcare and curriculum-based early childhood education.

A former elementary school, the Kirby Center facility is situated on almost three acres of property, boasts a full-size gym and five state-of-the-art playgrounds to serve all age groups.

For more information about the Kirby Center or about the Healthy U program, call Executive Director Harriet McCarter at 973-377-4945.