

American Council for Fitness and Nutrition

In 2003, the food and beverage industry founded the American Council for Fitness and Nutrition (ACFN). ACFN is a non-profit organization that brings together food and beverage companies, associations, and health and nutrition advocates to work toward viable long-term solutions to the obesity epidemic. ACFN represents a diverse group of organizations and is guided by an executive board of committed sponsors and a 21 member advisory board of experts in the fields of nutrition, physical activity, behavior change and medicine. ACFN's wealth of high-value partnerships with organizations across the spectrum of health and wellness, officials in local, state and federal government and its 5,000-member database demonstrates ACFN's leadership and credibility on the issue of providing solutions to obesity.

In 2006, ACFN in partnership with the American Dietetic Association Foundation and leaders in its African American and Latino practice groups developed two authoritative Blueprints for African American and Hispanic communities. The Blueprints were developed in order to help communities build, expand and promote culturally sensitive health and wellness programs.

The Blueprints provides guidance on how one can become an agent of change within the African American and Hispanic communities. The concept of the Blueprints came after ACFN held a series of TRIUMPH (Trends, Resources, and Understanding and Maintaining Physical Health) events in seven cities in 2005 and found that cultural relevance and community leaders are the critical parts of reaching people in all communities, especially those that are most at-risk of obesity. The complete text of both Blueprints can be found on ACFN's website at www.acfn.org.

Promoting Healthy Lifestyles in Schools

The ACFN Foundation in partnership with PE4Life and the American Dietetic Association Foundation launched the Healthy Schools Partnership pilot program in October 2007 in four Kansas City-area schools. More than 1,000 students in fifth through ninth grades took part in this 12-week pilot during Fall 2007.

The Partnership's innovative approach to addressing the childhood obesity epidemic is based on the already existing success of PE4Life's proven model of getting kids active now and adding a new nutrition component developed by ACFN and the ADA Foundation. ACFN was instrumental in bringing the organizations together for this pilot, which provides a comprehensive program incorporating the USDA MyPyramid and focuses on teaching the concept of balancing food intake with energy expenditure. The content of the pilot's nutrition curriculum is laser-focused on teaching the importance of calories and energy balance, and its delivery fits seamlessly into PE4Life's proven model, without taking away from activity time. During the pilot, energy balance is not taught as an abstract concept; instead this concept is embraced in PE4Life classes and throughout the school environment. To deliver the program's educational components, seven coaches—registered dietitians—are working side by side with the schools' physical education teachers. Staffing nutrition coaches in schools is unique to the program, and is designed to model many of the premier fitness centers in the nation.

In addition to drawing resources from successful program models, the Partnership developed several unique components including "The Filling Station" interactive kiosk, posters and information cards to reinforce the pilot's lessons. "The Filling Station" kiosk, developed through collaboration with software developer Immersion Media, is an interactive application integrated into physical education classes to deliver program information to students through a question and answer format that is aligned with weekly nutrition topics.