

STRONG CHILDREN'S RESEARCH CENTER
Summer 2016 Research Scholar

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ABSTRACT

Title: *What Makes a Healthy Hero? An evaluation of summer camp programming aimed at increasing healthy weight prevalence in Rochester elementary-age children*

Background: To address the high prevalence of unhealthy weight among children in Rochester NY, the Greater Rochester Health Foundation (GRHF) partnered with the Children's Institute Inc., Golisano Children's Hospital, and the Rochester City School District (RCSD) to implement the Childhood Healthy Weight Strategy. This initiative seeks to increase healthy behaviors and physical activity among elementary-age students through school-based interventions, out-of-school time activities, and a sponsored summer camp program. Results from a pilot study suggest that repeat participants in that camp have increased attendance and NYS math scores in the subsequent school year when compared with non-participant peers.

Objective: 1) Assess the impact of the GRHF-funded 5-week summer camp program in promoting physical activity and healthy behaviors and 2) better understand the strengths of this camp in comparison to other summer camps offered to RCSD elementary students.

Methods: As part of the GRHF Childhood Healthy Weight grant, 8 RCSD and 1 charter elementary school were funded to deliver interventions to increase physical activity, improve available nutrition and encourage healthy lifestyles. The grant similarly supports out-of-school time programs and the Healthy Heroes Camp (HHC) at Monroe Community College (MCC), offered to the students from the 9 selected RCSD schools. HHC is available free of charge for up to 450 students ages 5-12. Campers are grouped by gender and grade.

HHC registration rosters were used to identify participants by grade and sex. Camper physical activity was measured with 1) pedometers and 2) an observation-based coded scanning tool, the SOSPA, adapted from validated physical activity observation instruments: the SOPLAY and SOSPAN¹. Scans were collected during various periods of organized physical activity over several days. Observers categorized participant behaviors as sedentary, moderately active or very active.

The social-emotional environment of HHC was measured with the SMRCAY observation tool, adapted for this study from the MCOT-PA SOPLAY extension, OST, and SOSPAN². Scans noted climate details including clarity of rules, camper autonomy, inclusivity of activity, counselor-camper interactions, and physical activity promotion by staff. Observers also monitored mathematics and health classes to gather information about

