

WHO WE ARE

Youth Policy Institute (YPI) is a community-based nonprofit organization currently implementing 69 federal, state, local and private grants to support braided and blended services with over 1,200 staff. YPI serves over 112,000 youth and adults each year at 138 program sites. Youth Policy Institute is dedicated to aid in the transformation of Los Angeles neighborhoods using holistic place-based strategies to reduce poverty by ensuring families have access to high-quality schools and educational opportunities, workforce training and job placement assistance, and essential services for youth and families—enabling a successful transition from cradle to college and career. For more information, visit <http://www.ypi.org/>.

YPI is the Lead Implementation Partner for the LA Promise Zone in conjunction with the City of Los Angeles. YPI partners with over 60 public and private agencies in Los Angeles to collaboratively address health-related issues, through working groups and place-based collective action, including health and wellness. YPI's Health and Wellness (H&W) Department currently provides Champions for Change program services to 10 school sites and a Family Source Community Center in the East Hollywood and Pico Union areas. The program includes nutrition education, community school garden implementation, physical activity promotion, and active transportation & safety initiatives.

THE CULTURE OF CHAMPIONS

As of August 2018, YPI's Health & Wellness (H&W) Department has provided 932 nutrition education and physical activity workshops to program participants (243 Nutrition Education, and 689 Physical Activity, respectively). The H&W team has been able to provide in-classroom nutrition education and incorporate outdoor learning as part of the school day thanks to the implementation of 10 new community school gardens. The school site gardens reflect the community itself and provide a place for residents to gather and actively participate with one another to improve the quality of life and character of their neighborhoods by incorporating their diverse cultural backgrounds.



At the beginning of each semester, the H&W Team meets with each school to develop a site-specific schedule. Through the development of the "Champions for Change Day", each school participates in a rotation of programming specific to their needs. A typical day includes one nutrition education class per period, and two physical activity classes per period, for a total of 3

to 6 periods per day. YPI's Champions for Change Day allows our team to provide programming to each school site once every two weeks. By incorporating play and nutrition education into each rotation, the classes focus on the development of physical literacy and nutrition awareness. This hybrid approach to programming ensures students are physically active and gain pivotal knowledge they can carry through life. Each class has two coaches that lead the instruction of the lessons and use a "Teach the Teacher" training model to support long term sustainability.



To build positive relationships during each Champions for Change Day, our team also interacts with students during each recess and lunch period. We provide a safe place for students to play, interact with our physical activity team, and build a personal relationship between students and staff. For example, our team developed a secret Champions for Change handshake that allows students to feel connected and supported. Our secret handshake has created a culture at each school site that students look forward to and are excited to participate in.

The H&W strategy aims to increase mobility of children and families in and around school sites. By reinforcing healthy behaviors like walkability, in coordination with health education and physical activity programming, there is a natural synergy to support real change within Service Planning Area 4 and promote a healthy and sustainable lifestyle.

PUBLIC SPACES AS SOCIAL NETWORKS

YPI partners with community-based transportation agencies, advocates, and policymakers to create safer streets. YPI engages community members in planning and implementing programs for healthier communities, including establishing active transportation policies that increase opportunities for physical activity. According to the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), 50 schools in LA County are in high injury networks, often experiencing larger numbers of traffic related accidents. 10 of those schools are Champions for Change school sites. Through our partnership with the LA Promise Zone, YPI leverages partnerships to recruit and promote active transportation through activities such as “Walk to School Days”, walking safety assessments, and Safe Routes to School (SRTS). In addition, YPI is a member of the City of LA Vision Zero Alliance and has been actively involved in the Safe Routes to School committee, which includes agencies such as the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, Los Angeles Walks, and Cyclists Initiating Change Through Live Exchange (CICLE). LADOT and LAUSD’s Safe Routes to School project partnered with YPI to host a walking safety assessment at Alexandria Elementary School (6/1/17), Lockwood Elementary School (9/18/17), Berendo Middle School (9/19/17), and Grant Elementary School (9/22/17). YPI is planning one final walking safety assessment at Rosemont Elementary in September 2018, and two final assessments in the 2019 grant year.



With the creation of a community taskforce at each school site to support engagement efforts, we aim to develop strategies to ensure community members are both informed about plans and have opportunities to participate and provide feedback. Data collected from these engagement efforts is used for school-specific recommendation plans and for policy and systems change efforts that promote healthy behaviors like walkability and active transportation. Walking safety assessments provide our team with community developed recommendations for potential engineering improvement projects and safety education. Examples of improvements may include crosswalks, speed humps, traffic signals and signs. These walking safety assessments help inform future programming at schools, increase participation and engagement, and develop an increased sense of community.

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In April 2018, LADOT, Councilmember O'Farrell, and Grant Elementary school site staff celebrated new traffic improvement projects on Hollywood Blvd and Gramercy Place. These projects were developed based on the feedback and recommendations parents shared at our Grant Elementary Walking Safety Assessment on September 22, 2017. Lastly, in August 2018, LADOT announced the submission of California State Active Transportation Program grant applications that

includes 4 of our Champions for Change school sites (Lockwood Elementary, Grant Elementary, Berendo Middle School, and Alexandria Elementary). If funded, these projects include direct recommendations provided by our parents and school site administration. These projects would not be possible without the support of our YPI Team, community partners, school site administration, and parent stakeholders.



If you would like to submit content or have any questions or comments about the Champions for Change – Healthy Communities Initiative newsletter, please contact Naho Fukushima at nfukushima@ph.lacounty.gov.

For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. Funded by USDA SNAP-Ed, an equal opportunity provider and employer. Visit www.CaChampionsForChange.net for healthy tips.