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Promoting Advancement of Eye Care, Nutrition and Oral Health in Underprivileged Youth


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Promoting Advancement of Eye Care, Nutrition And Oral Health in Underprivileged Youth

Nicole Frerichs and Joseph Moran
Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine
Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine Program

The Community Site

St. James School is a faith based middle school in the Episcopal tradition, committed to educating traditionally under-resourced students in a nurturing environment. St. James School develops the student's moral and spiritual identities, as well as their intellectual, physical and creative gifts. St. James has established a strong connection to the community in its Allegheny West neighborhood in North Philadelphia and focuses on educating only students from this surrounding area.



Community Preceptors from St. James School

Victoria Cellucci, Assistant to the Principal
Laura Hoffman-Dimery, M.Ed, Principall

Academic Preceptors from PCOM

Ronald Allen, MHA
Joanne Behm, MSS
Oliver Bullock, DO

Project Goals and Objectives

These were derived collaboratively with community preceptors and with client feedback

- To improving nutrition habits of the students and their families
- To raise awareness of the importance of good oral health
- To provide eye exams and eye glasses for students in need at little or no cost
- To collect immunization records for all students in the school
- To secure donations of first aid supplies to ensure the school has all necessary materials



Project Methods

The student interns facilitated health initiatives at St. James with various projects. Nutrition was addressed with fresh food donations to the community. Oral health was addressed through a presentation and distribution of oral health supplies. Eye health was addressed by connecting with a physician at Wills Eye Institute who will perform eye exams and donate glasses. Immunizations were addressed by calling families of students with outstanding records. Emergency health was addressed by securing a donation of first aid supplies for the school.

Project Outcomes

- The interns delivered boxes of donated Trader Joe's food items biweekly to the students and West Allegheny community. Students took home donations in "share bags" which consisted of fresh fruit, vegetables, grains, and protein options.
- The interns gave a presentation on oral health to the students. The interns touched on brushing and flossing, diet and oral health, smoking, tooth decay, orthodontics, and dentist visits. The interns also provided the students with oral health supplies to ensure they are able to continue the techniques they learned.
- To ensure the students have eye exams and glasses, a connection was made between St. James School and Wills Eye Institute. A Wills Eye physician will be donating his time to examine the students and provide them with glasses if needed.
- The student interns communicated with the parents of the students with outstanding immunization records. The interns stressed the importance of having the vaccines and the records for the school.
- The student interns took inventory of the school's first aid kits and secured a donation of the missing supplies.

Bridging the Gaps Focus Areas Adopted from Healthy People 2010 and HP 2020

- Access to healthcare
- Educational Advancement / Literacy
- Nutrition and Weight Status
- Oral Health; Vision and Hearing
- Immunization