Who We Are

HealthM Powers is a nonprofit organization serving children, youth, schools, and families in communities across Georgia. Through physical activity and nutrition education and programming, we address the root causes of many preventable chronic diseases that stem from poor nutrition and lack of physical activity. By partnering with families, schools, and organizations in under-resourced communities, we promote widespread, equitable access to the tools that secure healthy futures for young people. Our work is tailored to meet the specific needs of each population, with the goal of inspiring positive habits throughout a child’s lifetime—because health should never be a barrier to a young person reaching their full potential.

What is SNAP-Ed? 

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the nation’s most important anti-hunger program. SNAP-Ed, the education side of SNAP, is an evidence-based program that empowers individuals eligible for SNAP benefits to maximize their benefits and lead healthier lives.

HealthM Powers has been entrusted as one of a few agencies conducting SNAP-Ed work in Georgia since 2007 through our comprehensive program, Empowering Healthy Choices in Schools, Homes, and Communities. In collaboration with program participants in early care and education sites (ECE), K-12 schools, out of school time sites, and in communities, we assess the current nutrition and physical activity practices of the site and implement improvements unique to the site’s community and culture. It’s a highly interactive process with continued coaching and support that allows for long-term, sustainable, positive change in the communities we serve.

HealthM Powers’ SNAP-Ed Reach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Adults</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>189</td>
<td>75,578</td>
<td>2,208</td>
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The Importance of SNAP-Ed

SNAP-Ed supports making nutrition and physical activity lifestyle changes to reduce the occurrence of obesity and chronic disease. Recent studies show that SNAP-Ed is highly effective at improving food security and dietary outcomes among SNAP-eligible families.

In Georgia, nearly 73% of SNAP participants are families with children.

Ten percent of Georgia households are food insecure or struggle financially to access and afford nutrient dense foods.

SNAP benefits kept 4.9 million children out of poverty and lifted 2.1 million children out of deep poverty more than any other government assistance program.

In Georgia

1 in 3 children are overweight or obese

1 in 6 children experience food insecurity

3 of 4 children do not meet daily physical activity recommendations
By the Numbers

100% of FY22 objectives were exceeded across all HealthMPowers settings!

- Improved or maintained the national recommendation for eating more than one kind of fruit each day: 63%
- Improved or maintained the national recommendation for eating more than one kind of vegetable each day: 51%
- Improved or maintained daily water consumption: 92%
- 3-5 year old participants: 63%
- Fourth & fifth graders: 55%
- Middle and high school students: 54%

- 11% increase in middle and high school students who incorporated 30 minutes of physical activity into their school day outside of physical education class (PE)
- 18% of youth in afterschool programs who completed Cooking Matters classes reported an increase in consuming more than one type of fruit each day
- 29% of families who completed Cooking Matters classes reported an increase in the cups of vegetables consumed each day and 24% reported an increase in the cups of fruit consumed each day

- 294 sustainable policy, system, and environmental (PSE) changes were implemented in the areas of physical activity and nutrition, impacting approximately 75,000 children and youth
- 538 Student Health Advocates activated with leadership and health education training to promote improvements in healthy eating and physical activity in their schools and communities
- 190 youth received food-based instruction through Cooking Matters classes and gardening instruction

- 270+ afterschool staff received training and resources to enhance nutrition and physical programming
- 51 community and family events were hosted, reaching an estimated 2,177 participants

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2 Atlanta Community Food Bank, Facts and Stats (https://www.acfb.org/facts-one-estate)
3 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC Health Schools Physical Activity Facts (https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/facts.htm)
5 Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, SNAP Works for America’s Children (https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-works-for-americas-children)
Success Story

Student Health Advocates
The Power of Putting Kids at the Forefront

The Student Health Advocates (SHAs) at Bernd Elementary School reacted quickly when they realized their friends and fellow students were not eating enough fruits and vegetables to fuel their minds and bodies during the school day.

The SHAs formulated a campaign based on a single healthy message: Eat two fruits and three vegetables every day. In order to promote the initiative, they created videos detailing the many benefits of eating more nutritious foods. The videos were shown during morning announcements, and posted on the school’s social media accounts.

The messaging worked. Post data showed Bernd students upped the amount of fruits and veggies they consumed.

HealthMPowers’ SHA program is designed to ensure that students are the leaders and change agents in their environments. Student Health Advocates are trained and activated to drive healthy behaviors and create sustainable changes in their schools and communities. They host events, develop messaging, and challenge peers to lead healthier lifestyles.

In 2022, the SHA program became a core part of the Empowering Healthy Choices in Schools, Homes, and Communities (SNAP-Ed) program for elementary schools. To rollout the program, a pilot was conducted in Bibb County. Almost 300 SHA’s were trained and activated, 19 schools participated and 16 projects were completed. These youth-led and youth-driven projects focused on increasing water consumption, healthy eating, or increasing physical activity.

SHAs at Matilda Hartley Elementary School started a school garden. Starting small, they planted seeds in cups before finding an area on school grounds to plant an outdoor garden. Harvested food was used in a taste test to expose other students to a wider variety of fruits and vegetables.

SHAs at Alexander II Math and Science Magnet School wanted to provide more physical activity opportunities outside of P.E. class. They developed an all-day challenge, coming up with activities and exercises for all students and teachers.

SHAs at Burdell-Hunt Elementary School used an interactive educational display, posters, taste tests and live cooking demonstrations to promote healthy eating amongst their peers.

These are just a few examples. Across the county, the data was amazing. All student behavior trended in the positive direction. Fruit and vegetable consumption increased, along with physical activity. There were also statistically significant gains in health knowledge among all participants.

These results show why it’s critically important to center youth voice and keep kids at the forefront of our decisions and programs. Once young people are given the platform to organize and be heard, they create change in their communities.

Thank you!

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