

NEWS RELEASE

August 11, 2009
YMCA of Greenville
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YMCA OF GREENVILLE CONFRONTS CHILDHOOD OBESITY IN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

Greenville, SC – The childhood obesity statistics for Greenville County are alarming—nearly 40% are either overweight or obese. The YMCA, long an advocate for health and fitness, has typically incorporated activity and healthy eating in its programs, but beginning this fall there will be an even greater emphasis on health for children in their care.

“Our Afterschool Program is an ideal setting to focus on developing life-long healthy habits in this age group,” said Scot Baddley, YMCA of Greenville President and CEO. “We will incorporate the Activate America principles--a minimum of 30 minutes of exercise each day and healthy nutrition—into Afterschool. Of course, ample time for homework and free play will continue to be important priorities as well.”

According to Marc McCulley, the Activate South Carolina Director, “making Activate integral to Afterschool will also help children to link their healthful learning and activities to their home life. Activate is a program that both adults and children can use to improve their fitness and overall health. Getting the whole family involved is the best way to have a positive impact on reducing childhood obesity.”

A curriculum is being developed by Activate to focus on learning about nutrition and incorporating moderate exercise that will be used at all YMCA of Greenville branches. The children can log their activity into their personal Activate Upstate page. Small monthly incentives for participants will be used to encourage them. The YMCA Afterschool Program is being co-branded as Activate Afterschool. “One of our field trips this year,” commented McCulley “will be the Activate Upstate Kickoff event. Good health habits should be learned early and our efforts will have lifelong, maybe generations-long, impact.”

“We also want to encourage parents to keep their children active in youth sports, swimming and in Kid Fit and Kid Yoga classes,” commented Baddley. “Our Afterschool staff escort the children who participate in those at our branches to and from these activities. This year, our three family branches with an Aquatic program will be providing swim classes to Afterschool kids at a discount.”

The YMCA of Greenville is the largest provider of afterschool care in Greenville County. All four family branches, Judson Community Center and Sterling Hope provide on-site care. Many elementary and middle schools in Greenville are also YMCA Afterschool sites. Financial assistance is available.

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