

Adopters



Adopted The Children's Storefront School in Harlem, NY

This fall Dr. Cathrine Himberg will be on sabbatical working with the teachers and administrators at The Children's Storefront School in Harlem, NY, to transform physical education and implement a comprehensive school wellness program. Dr. John Roussell (Communication Design) will be creating a documentary of the project.

The Children's Storefront



In August the teachers at this tuition free private school, serving children from Preschool through 8th grade, will participate in SPARK training. New equipment has been donated and will be ready for the new school year. A newly hired, highly qualified, credentialed physical education teacher will help Cathrine guide the classroom teachers in implementing physical activity throughout the school day. Students will have lots of choices of physical activities before, during and after school, and will be taking energizing brain-breaks every 20 -30 minutes in their classrooms. Staff will participate in wellness training, and the school's nutrition program, which is already good, will be examined and improved. The students' families will also be included in a variety of creative ways. Most importantly, the school will have its first quality, standards- and research-based physical education program. The biggest challenge will be the space issues. The school's facilities for indoor and outdoor physical activities are very minimal. However, class sizes are small, 18 max, so that should help!

This project, funded by private donations, will serve as a model for other schools that are "adopted" through CASPER (Center for Advancement of Standards-based Physical Education reform). Updates and video clips will be featured on the supportREALteachers.org website throughout the next years. We hope that these, and the completed documentary, will serve as useful tools in garnering administrators' support for quality physical education and comprehensive school wellness. It is crucial that education leaders understand why they should care, and realize the important role they play in ensuring that students receive high quality physical education.



The project is grounded in the research on how exercise effects learning and academic success, as well as the role quality physical education plays in helping children become active and fit for life. The Head of School (principal) at The Children's Storefront, Wendy Reynoso, has been reading the book SPARK: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain (2008). She is learning about how schools have boosted academics with quality physical education classes and activity breaks throughout the day. She is excited to implement this project at The Children's Storefront, a school where 100% of the students are African American and Latino and live at or below the poverty line.

Cathrine and John will spend two months in Harlem at the start of the 2011-2012 school year, and will return at least once more in the fall semester to provide continued support and guidance, and to document (video) and evaluate the process. More follow-up trips will be planned in 2012 as the budget allows!

SPARK is sponsoring this project with curriculum, training and equipment, and Human Kinetics and the Action Based Learning Lab have donated texts and other materials for the teachers' use. If you are interested in helping in any way with this project, please contact Cathrine: chimberg@csuchico.edu.

Reference: Ratey, J. (2008) SPARK: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain, New York: Little, Brown and Company.

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