Childhood obesity has become a problem of epidemic proportions. Over the past thirty years, the rate of childhood obesity has tripled and continues to increase. Decreasing childhood obesity is a health promotion imperative, given that obese youth have an increased risk of high cholesterol and high blood pressure, are at a greater risk for several physical and mental health concerns, and are more likely to become overweight or obese adults who suffer from health consequences, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and stroke.

The HEROES Initiative (Healthy, Energetic, Ready, Outstanding, Enthusiastic, Schools), a program of the Welborn Baptist Foundation, is a grant-funded multi-level and multiple-year intervention in Southern Indiana, Northwestern Kentucky, and Southeastern Illinois, states with some of the highest obesity rates in the United States. The HEROES Initiative aims to facilitate systems change within individual schools by implementing the coordinated school health (CSH) approach and helps schools decrease childhood obesity and increase healthy lifestyle habits among students, their families, and school staff. Through HEROES, the Welborn Baptist Foundation provides a supportive infrastructure for participating schools that involves local oversight, substantial funding, and prescribed implementation strategies that can be tailored based on schools’ individual needs and identities. The intervention uses the CSH approach, implemented at the school level rather than the more typical district level, which encourages individual schools to take ownership over needs assessment, planning, and implementation of strategies for school change. HEROES also includes a rigorous evaluation framework, which has created an annual cycle of assessment and related opportunities for program enhancement to best meet students’ needs and increase the likelihood of the intervention’s success.

We commend you on your school’s commitment to health for the students, staff, and families. It is our hope that HEROES becomes a part of your school’s culture and creates lasting change that impacts your community.

Developing healthy cultures, one school at a time.

Sincerely,

The HEROES Team

[Signatures]
Chrissy Ash
Physical Activity Coordinator
Laura Mesker
Health and Nutrition Coordinator
The CDC is charged with protecting the public health of the nation by providing leadership and direction in the prevention and control of diseases and other preventable conditions, and responding to public health emergencies. In response to recommendations from a 2007 expert panel, CDC began using Coordinated School Health to better describe the systematic approach needed to coordinate the policies, practices, and components as a strategy for improving students’ health and learning in our nation’s schools.

Why Coordinated School Health?

The health of young people is strongly linked to their academic success, and the academic success of youth is strongly linked with their health.

CSH eliminates gaps and reduces redundancies across the many initiatives and funding streams. The initiative focuses efforts on helping students engage in protective, health-enhancing behaviors and avoid risk behaviors.

Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC)

The WSCC model expands on CSH and uses ten components to “strengthen the integration of school health and public health.” It is directed at the whole school and promotes the use of community resources and influences to create an environment that serves “the needs of the whole child.”
FOUNDATION OF DEVELOPING THE HEROES INITIATIVE IN YOUR SCHOOL

• Designate a champion within the school to represent and lead the initiative as the School Wellness Coordinator

• Create a School Wellness Council with diverse representation of a school administrator, school staff, physical education teacher, food service manager and/or director, PTO/PTA/Booster Organization president, nurse, students, parents, & community members

• Complete the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s School Health Index (SHI) to learn the strengths & weaknesses within a school around the Coordinated School Health components

• Develop a three year action plan utilizing the results of the School Health Index that focuses on building areas of weakness and continuing areas of strength. The HEROES CSH model provides guidance on the activities that build your school’s action plan

INTRODUCTION
YEAR FOUR & MORE

After successfully completing the first three years of HEROES, participating schools continue their initiative by recommitting each school year. To fulfill the requirements and be considered a Year Four & More HEROES School, schools should adhere to the following actions:

• Continue to have an appointed School Wellness Coordinator or School Wellness point of contact
• Continue monthly School Wellness Council meetings and build upon the action plan formed during the first year
• Organize and conduct a Staff Health event or promotion
• Organize and conduct a Family/Community/Student Health Event, such as a 5K run, a student health fair, a bike or walk-a-thon, etc.

• Continued evaluation includes:
  □ Physiological Student Health Assessments for each student in the spring.
  □ Grades 3–12 will complete the Student Health Assessment Questionnaire (SHAQ) once a year in the spring.
  □ The HEROES Team will make one site visit to the school in the spring with a follow-up visit or phone call the following fall to discuss the results.

• WBF provides the following support for Year Four and More Schools:
  □ Specified dollar amount match to the school for the wellness coordinator stipend
  □ Continued opportunities for workshops at no charge
  □ Opportunities for sustainability mini-grants
  □ Monetary rewards for high-implementing Year Four & More schools
  □ Substitute teacher stipends to attend HEROES meetings
HEROES is a primary prevention initiative that is intended to prevent increased rates of childhood obesity. Because this goal is related to overall rates of normal, overweight, and obese students, HEROES requires that schools collect body mass index (BMI) data for surveillance purposes. BMI surveillance refers to the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data to identify the percentage of students in the school who are obese, overweight, healthy weight, and underweight.

BMI surveillance has been endorsed by the American Public Health Association, the American Heart Association, and the Institutes of Medicine. HEROES requires the collection of BMI surveillance data so that schools can:

- Describe trends in weight status across time;
- Create awareness among school personnel, parents, and policy-makers of the prevalence of obesity among the youth they serve;
- Provide an impetus to strengthen policies, practices, and services to prevent obesity among youth; and
- Monitor the effects of HEROES-related activities and policies on students’ health

### Evaluation Headlines: 2009-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEADLINE</th>
<th>RELATED CITATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BMI results are currently unpublished, but come from 2013-2014 results.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Incorporate a research-proven physical education program, such as SPARK (Sports, Play + Active Recreation for Kids), Focused Fitness or Cross Fit, into PE classes to increase the number of minutes students spend in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity.

- Apply the use of physical activity tracking technology such as pedometers or heart rate monitors into PE classes that will promote an increase in the number of minutes students spend in moderate to vigorous physical activity, as students will be able to monitor their individual target heart rates.

- Recommend that PE staff become members of SHAPE America, a national physical education organization

- Participate in active transportation initiatives

- Utilization of before, during, and/or after-school time to increase physical activity, such as walking clubs, yoga classes, Pilates classes, Cross Fit, etc.

- Incorporate physical activity in classroom settings with programs such as Take 10!, Just A Minute (JAM), Symbaloo webmixes, etc.

- Encourage opportunities to be physically active during indoor recess

We implemented a walking club for students that brings students, parents, and teachers together to focus on the importance of physical activity. The traveling trophy, 100 mile club, and other small incentives encourage students to exercise – remembering small steps make a big difference!

Laurie Schopmeyer
Wellness Coordinator/Teacher
St. Benedict Cathedral School
HEALTH EDUCATION

Providing students with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for making healthy decisions

- Increase opportunities for students to receive health education that reinforces healthy lifestyle choices
- At the elementary level implement SuperFood HEROES, a taste testing and nutritional education intervention designed to increase vegetable consumption among elementary school students
- At the middle school level involve students in Student Wellness Awareness Group (SWAG), a team of students to promote and model healthy student choices in a middle school environment
- At the high school level involve students in Student Wellness Awareness Team (SWAT), a team of students to promote and model healthy student choices in the high school environment
- Improve classroom health education
- Enhance student involvement and awareness with nutrition education presentations by HEROES team and/or community partners

“SuperFood HEROES gives students the opportunity to experience food in new ways that will hopefully encourage them to make healthy food choices in the future!”

KATIE ZENTHOEFER
Teacher
Christ the King

SuperFood HEROES
NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT & SERVICES

Assisting food service departments to provide nutritious and appealing foods that accommodate the health needs of all students, and linking the department as a resource for nutrition-related school community services.

- Implement education wall graphics, posters, and other media health messages in the school cafeteria and other areas of the school that will impact students, staff and families
- Farm to School guidance and implementation is available from the HEROES Team
- Food service training and equipment
  - Salad and Fruit/Vegetable Bar Implementation
  - Guidance and equipment for school meal presentation
  - Assistance with new recipe standardization
- Recommend that the Food Service staff become members of a professional organization as well as attend webinars, training, and conferences
- Improve the nutritional value of all foods served on the school grounds
- Schools should strive towards “no food”, “healthy food”, or “activity-based” fundraisers, classroom celebrations, or rewards. Examples of foods to avoid: doughnuts, cinnamon rolls, cupcakes, cakes, candy, soda, pizza or any other high fat, high sugar, or high calorie foods

“We’ve found birthday excitement is no less without cupcakes and candy. Students are just as happy to celebrate with a classroom gift such as a ball, small school supplies for each student, or an extra recess in the birthday child’s honor. It’s really just about acknowledging and celebrating someone’s special day.”

ASHLEY PETERS
Teacher/Wellness Coordinator
Chrisney Elementary
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Developing an integrated school, parent, and community approach to support the health and well-being of students. Parent involvement and engaged community resources should respond to the health-related needs of students.

Family/Community Health Event

- Bring community partners together along with your school community to help build the relationship and development of a healthier culture. Examples:
  - Health fair
  - Walk or Bike to School Event
  - Family Fitness Night
  - School day classroom rotations that promote health education from community partners
- Best practices align the community health event during an existing school event such as open house, ball sign-ups, home ball game, etc. Consider healthy giveaways to attract your audience. Always remember to publicize your event through newspaper, school website, staff mailboxes, staff paycheck envelopes, email, and at businesses.

School Community Partners

- Share HEROES Initiative and Wellness Council goals with important school community partners such as PTO/PTA or Booster Club. Attend at least one meeting to emphasize support for a healthy school environment.

School to Home Activities

- Engage parents and families with interactive, healthy activities. The HEROES team will supply ideas or add your own to engage families in healthy recipes, activities, fitness nights at school, etc.

Newsletter or Online Communication

- Update a quarterly health newsletter that captures your school’s health initiative. The newsletter can be printed, emailed, or posted on the school’s website.
- Share your successes, upcoming events, recent health articles, healthy recipes, and many other related ideas to communicate healthy living to the staff, students, and community.
EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

Provide opportunities for staff to build their commitment to their own health, which transfers into greater promotion of student health.

- Promote school staff wellness
  - coordinating two staff health promotions each year
  - before school or after school exercise opportunities
  - seek staff fitness center membership discounts

- Create an environment of wellness within a school for staff
  - Limited sweets at staff meetings
  - Replace soft drinks and candy in staff vending with healthier beverages and snacks or fruit
  - Hold nutrition presentations or plan physical activity breaks at staff meetings
  - HEROES Champions – a visible commitment tool for staff to adhere to specific action items throughout the school day that promote health
HEROES TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

CHRISY ASH
Physical Activity Program Coordinator
cash@welbornfdn.org
812.437.7824

Chrissy Ash is the Physical Activity Program Coordinator for HEROES at the Welborn Baptist Foundation. Chrissy’s professional background includes eleven years as a junior high and high school physical education and health teacher. During her teaching years, Chrissy utilized a fitness-based approach in the classroom and presented health education that was relatable for her students. She also served as a Wellness Coordinator, pioneering one of the first HEROES initiatives in the Tri-state, and coached varsity volleyball and track. Chrissy earned her Bachelor of Science degrees at Oakland City University and is a L.E.A.N. Certified Health Coach. She has presented many ideas and lessons in small and large group workshops for teachers and supervisors. Additionally, she is the creator of the SuperFood HEROES program.

In her spare time she enjoys landscaping and being outdoors with her family. Like many moms, she spends multiple hours at the ball fields cheering on her kids.

LAURA MESKER
Health and Nutrition Program Coordinator
lmesker@welbornfdn.org
812.437.7816

Laura Mesker is the Health and Nutrition Coordinator for the HEROES Initiative. Previous to her position at the Welborn Baptist Foundation, Laura was a food service director for K-12 schools. During her time as a food service director, she implemented self-serve fruit and vegetable bars for all grades, incorporated the 2012 Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act meal guidelines into school menus, and engaged the Student Wellness Awareness Group (SWAG) in the cafeteria. Time with the Foundation has allowed Laura to gain experience in the Farm to School program as well. Other professional experience includes event planning and catering.

Laura earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management from Purdue University in 2010. In June of 2014, she completed her L.E.A.N. health coach certification, specializing in helping adults and parents raise healthy children through informed grocery shopping, traffic-light eating, and promotion of active play. Her interests include travel, country music, and her raised bed garden. One of Laura’s favorite travel destinations is her alma mater.