

Introductory Guide to the Hip Hop Public Health Ambassador Program

Getting Started





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OVERVIEW

Welcome to the Hip Hop Public Health Ambassador Program! The Ambassador Program is a powerful new initiative developed to extend the reach of our organization across the U.S. You are part of a select group of individuals who will be charged with acting on behalf of HHPH within your communities, promoting our mission to end health illiteracy and to foster positive healthy behavior change through the power of music. You are our volunteer voice in the field, raising awareness and engaging your friends, colleagues, families, and organizations around this important cause.



You have been granted access to our innovative multimedia health curriculum, including hip hop music, cartoons, videos, comic books and more. These materials are designed to promote healthier lifestyles among **8-12 year old children** by teaching children how to make healthier choices about eating and exercising. This welcome packet will take you through first steps as you embark on your Ambassadorship with us.

SITE SELECTION

You may already work at a school, after-school program, summer camp or other community organization that targets children. If you are already involved with youth-centered work, whether as an educator, health professional, volunteer or other professional, please skip below to “Site Recruitment.”

If you are not yet connected to a school, after-school program or other community organization that works with or serves children, we suggest taking several steps to identify and connect to one as a volunteer. You might want to start by approaching a Y or YMCA, if your community has one. The Y is a great place to begin your search because the organization puts a “focus on youth development, healthy living and social responsibility...and giving men, women and children of all ages and from all walks of life the resources and support they need to be healthy, confident, connected and secure” (<http://www.ymca.net/volunteer>). You may also locate a recreation center that offers after-school programming, a Big Brother/Big Sister program or similar mentoring organization. You could also reach out to a faith-based organization like a church or a synagogue in your neighborhood. No matter where you begin, you should choose a site that offers programming for children and already has a captive audience. In the field of public health, best practice is to approach the target population in the community setting.



These are all merely suggestions. You know your community best and are best suited to identify resources within your community. You can be a community activist!

SITE RECRUITMENT

Once you have identified an organization to work with, request a meeting. Before the meeting, prepare your “elevator pitch.” This is a two-minute presentation about what you would like to do and what Hip Hop Public Health offers. You should provide a short introduction of our organization: “Hip Hop Public Health is an organization committed to innovative public health solutions. We use music and



entertainment platforms to eradicate health illiteracy and foster positive health behavior changes among the youth.” You should also prepare an introduction to the materials that you will be using and the population that you would like to target: “I would like to teach children aged 8-12 years old about healthy eating using an innovative multimedia curriculum that includes hip hop music, cartoons and comic books.” The most important element of your presentation is the **why**: why should the organization allow you to present to their members? Research has shown a close **link between health and education**. Schools, after-school programs, and other community organizations play an important role in

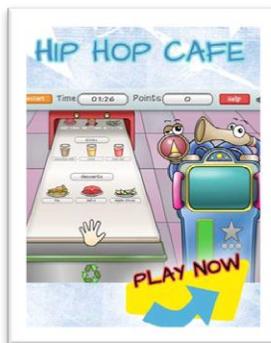
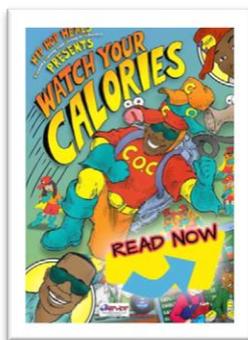
promoting the health of kids and the surrounding community. Healthier kids do better in school. Physical activity breaks, such as those promoted by the H.Y.P.E. Break (Healthy You with Physical Activity) program increases physical activity among school age children, improve their behavior and focus, and improve academic achievement levels.¹⁻⁶

If you plan to use our nutrition toolkit, you can try an answer like this: “Childhood obesity rates have tripled in the last 30 years. Innovative programs such as those created by Hip Hop Public Health offer a new approach for teaching children about these vital topics. Kids who eat healthier foods do better in school, are better behaved, have higher self-esteem and a positive body image, and are at lower risk for obesity and related cardiovascular diseases in adulthood.”⁷

You might want to prepare a PowerPoint presentation for the introductory meeting that includes some facts, program details, screenshots of our programs and a clip of any cartoons that you plan to use. Feel free to contact us for help creating or reviewing your recruitment presentation. We would be happy to make suggestions to improve your presentation. For more guidance, please see the PowerPoint presentation in this packet titled, “HHPH Ambassador Site Recruitment Presentation Template.” You can customize this template to meet your specific needs.

SCHEDULING AND IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAM

Once you have successfully recruited your organization to participate in Hip Hop Public Health programming, we encourage you to find a dedicated time to use our toolkit, show our videos and play our music for the target children. This can be during a physical education class, recess, regular class-time, or at an after-school program. Based on the literature, the recommended frequency for screening each cartoon or video is **three times**. We recommend that you use all components of a specific toolkit (e.g. screen the “Watch Your Calories” cartoon, listen to the “Watch Your Calories” song, play the “Hip Hop Café” video game and read the “Watch Your Calories” comic book). We also recommend that you outline lesson plans in advance to provide some structure to the overall curriculum.



You can also incorporate the material from any of our toolkits into your regular classroom activities. For example, you can create word problems about balancing calories and reading menu board labels in a 4th grade math class.

We also encourage students to share the material and adopt some of the behaviors that they have learned in class or after-school with their families. This multiplies the impact of the program as children educate their parents and grandparents in a method called “Child Mediated Health Communication,” whose efficacy HHPH has successfully demonstrated in other disease domains.⁸



REFLECTION AND ACTIVITY LOG

We ask you to submit a quarterly reflection and activity log. This provides an opportunity for you to share your experiences with us, including both the positive and negative aspects. We would like you to send us a descriptive “journal-style” report as well as answers to some standard questions to help us get a sense of reach and how we can better support you. Questions will include:

- How many children are you **Reaching**?
- Do you have any metrics to show that your programming is **Effective**?
- How many organizations have agreed to **Adopt** and support your programming?
- How are you ensuring that your programming is delivered / **Implemented** properly?
- Are you taking any steps to make sure your program is delivered / **Maintained** over the long-term?
- Do you feel that you have the tools you need?
- Did you use our template or create your own separate template that incorporated our tools? If you did the latter, please share your presentation with us.
- Are you confused about anything?

SAMPLE REFLECTION LOG

I have been meeting with a group of 15 kids at the local YMCA the first Saturday of every month. The administration was very open to my holding these meetings after my initial presentation using the HHPH template. I meet with the kids for an hour and show them a Hip Hop cartoon when they first come in. I then hand out comic books and the kids go through them together in groups of 3-4. They read through them and complete the activities at the end. I play some HHPH songs in the background while they work. At the end of the session, we put together a healthy snack. The kids identify which foods are Go, Slow and Whoa and have fun with this hands-on part. I created a standardized format to make sure that I don't leave out any important learning needs and so that someone else can run the program in my absence. Amazingly, the kids' knowledge of calories and healthy foods has dramatically improved as evidenced by _____ and they reported sharing what they learned with their parents at home. I was excited to hear that the local Y has decided to adopt my program and extend my relationship with them for another year.

While this has been rewarding overall, I feel like I could use a bit more guidance and structure. I want to make it feel more like a curriculum. Can you please provide more guidance for this? I feel like I want to provide more continuity between all the discrete products.

Thank!



LEARN MORE

We look forward to working together throughout your ambassadorship. For program support, please contact the HHPH Ambassador Program Manager, Mindy Feldman Hecht at mkf2106@columbia.edu or 212-305-4697. You can also contact us via Skype with our username, HHPHOrg.

¹ Whitt-Glover MC, Ham SA, Yancey AK. Instant Recess®: a practical tool for increasing physical activity during the school day. *Prog Community Health Partnersh.* 2011 Fall;5(3):289-97.

² Barr-Anderson DJ, AuYoung M, Whitt-Glover MC, Glenn BA, Yancey AK. Integration of short bouts of physical activity into organizational routine a systematic review of the literature. *Am J Prev Med.* 2011 Jan;40(1):76-93.

³ Donnelly JE, Lambourne K. Classroom-based physical activity, cognition, and academic achievement, *Prev. Med.* 2011 June;52 (suppl 1):S36-S42.

⁴ Åberg MAI, Pedersen NL, Torén K, et al. Cardiovascular fitness is associated with cognition in young adulthood PNAS. 2009.

⁵ Kibbe DL, Hackett J, Hurley M, et al. Ten Years of TAKE 10!®: Integrating physical activity with academic concepts in elementary school classrooms. *Prev. Med.* 2011 June;52(suppl 1): S43-S50.

⁶ Donnelly JE, Greene JL, Gibson CA, et al. Physical Activity Across the Curriculum (PAAC): a randomized controlled trial to promote physical activity and diminish overweight and obesity in elementary school children. *Prev. Med.*, 49 (2009): 336–341.

⁷ American Psychological Association. Changing diet and exercise for kids. 2013. Accessed December 19, 2013. <http://www.apa.org/topics/children/healthy-eating.aspx>

⁸ Williams O, DeSorbo A, Noble JM, Gerin W. Child Mediated Stroke Communication: Findings from the Hip Hop Stroke Program. *Stroke.* 2012; 43: 163-169.