

Children's Health After-School Mentorship (C.H.A.M.P.) Program Guide

Cause for Action:

- In Syracuse, 50% of children under age 18 live in poverty compared to 23% County-wide.
- Overall, 35.1 % of children and adolescents in Onondaga County are overweight or obese. This rate has increased from 32% in 2010 – 2012
- In addition, among adults in the County, 26.6% reported that they did not participate in leisure time physical activity in the past 30 days.

Where is the program?

The program is held at [Syracuse Community Connections \(SCC\)](#), formerly known as the South West Community Center located at 401 South Ave., Syracuse, NY 13204

What does Syracuse Community Connections do?

SCC provides a network of human services to residents of Onondaga County, through special events, outreach efforts, prevention, intervention, employment and educational services, support, peer and mentoring groups, and collaborative programs.

How does the CHAMP program provide for this population?

The purpose of CHAMP is to promote fitness mentorship in a positive and safe learning environment for children of various functional abilities. Upstate Medical University students serve as mentors in the afterschool program and assist with a Healthy Heroes Training station on physical activity annually for National Public Health Week held the first week in April. The program also increases the children's understanding and performance of various fitness activities and health behaviors.

Who does the CHAMP program serve?

The afterschool program is intended for youth aged 4 to 14 years of varying functional abilities. The children are inner city youth coming from various Syracuse City Schools to SCC.

What would I do as a student volunteer?

Upstate students coordinate and participate in weekly activities with the children focusing on balance and coordination, aerobics exercises, core strengthening, and plyometrics (hopping, skipping, and jumping). All student volunteers are required to attend an orientation at SCC.

How often would I serve?

Student volunteers participate in the afterschool program every Friday starting in the spring semester from 3:30 pm – 5 pm.

What are the community impacts?

With adequate physical activity, guidance and knowledge/skill, a child can become a CHAMP and live a healthy life. Youth participating in the afterschool program and receiving the benefits of mentoring and engaging in healthy behaviors. They will also gain positive adult role models in their lives. Increased daily physical activity can help children manage stress, promote team building and social skills.