

# Consortium Connection

May 2011

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## “Healthy Environment, Healthy Lifestyles, Healthy Community”

### Physically Active Fun in the Sun!

On Saturday, May 7th, 2011 from 8:30am—1:00pm, the Department of Children and Families in partnership with Miami-Dade County Parks and Recreation, as well as various other partners, hosted a Family Fun Day at Tropical Park. Invited guests included child care center providers, the children that attend their centers, and families from the community. The free event was designed to encourage parents to bring their kids to parks to participate in physical activity.



Trike-a-thon participant getting ready to start the race!

The fun-filled day consisted of a schedule of events including an opening parade, performances showcasing the kids from participating child care centers, physically active pee-wee challenges, a trike-a-thon, box car racing, Miami-Dade Parks summer camp and after-school information, demonstration and registration, bounce houses, face painting, and much more!

Saturday’s event was the first of many more to come throughout Miami-Dade County so keep your eyes and ears open for the next event date. We’ll see you there!

- CPPW Staff

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### A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words...



## Does Neighborhood Walkability affect Chronic Disease?



A research team at the University of Miami is studying the relationships between community design, physical activity, and health.

Led by Dr. José Szapocznik, the team is examining how the physical or “built” environments of Miami-Dade County (for example, the block sizes, street layouts, land-use patterns, etc.) influence residents’ walking habits. They believe that certain built environments are more “walkable” than others, and that people living in more walkable places are more likely to walk. Accordingly, people living in more

walkable places are more likely to have lower weight and better health outcomes than people living in less walkable places.

The researchers are analyzing how environmental, physical activity, and dietary factors interact to affect people’s health. Specifically, they’re looking at outcomes of weight gain and waist circumference, insulin resistance (related to diabetes), and inflammation and lipids (related to cardiovascular disease).

Study participants are a group of 392, 30-45 year-old healthy Cuban immigrants who recently arrived to the United States. The group has already been followed for a year. The “walkability” of each

participant’s neighborhood is being assessed with computerized mapping tools.

As expected, at one year follow up, the group has already gained on average 4.5 lb. Consistent with the hypothesis, weight gain to date is associated with how the individuals’ neighborhoods are designed and built. The results of this study are being used to better inform policy makers and planners on the health impacts of the built environment.

- Matthew Toro, University of Miami Health & the Built Environment Committee



## Benefits of Livable, Walkable Communities <sup>1, 2</sup>

Livable, walkable communities are places where people of all ages have the ability to walk, bicycle and engage in other forms of recreation. These communities support and promote active lifestyles by having bicycle facilities, safe sidewalks, parks, trails, recreational facilities, mixed use development and connected streets. People who live in walkable communities are more likely to engage in daily physical activity by walking and using active transportation.

Benefits of livable, walkable communities include:

**Health:** Increases daily physical activity, which improves health and reduces the risk of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, cancer and other chronic diseases.

**Community:** Increases social interaction and community safety.

**Environmental:** Reduces the use of automobiles, which improves air quality and promotes open spaces and recreation.

**Economic:** Revitalizes communities, supports business growth and increases residential property values.

- CPPW Staff

### Tips to Walk More

- Take a walk with your spouse, child, or friend
- Walk the dog
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator
- Park farther from your destination
- Plan work and social events around walking
- Window shop
- Walk to run errands



## Reversing Obesity in our Schools



The Alliance for a Healthier Generation was founded by the William J. Clinton Foundation and the American Heart Association in 2005 to reverse the trend of childhood obesity in America. The organization continues to garner success with the Healthy Schools Program in Miami-Dade County Public Schools. To date, 308 schools have participated in the program including five new schools that entered this year.

Schools have had varying success; one such school is North Beach Elementary School. North Beach Elementary was featured in a documentary video shoot by the William J. Clinton Foundation this year for the Foundation's multi-

media annual report. The Clinton Foundation focused on North Beach because of their hard work in the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Program.

The school makes sure that students understand the importance of healthy eating and increased physical activity. To achieve this, the school has created three school gardens which are tended by students, staff and parents. In addition, the school just unveiled a salad bar to encourage students and staff to increase their vegetable intake.

Coach Michele Rivera-Healthy Schools Program Coach- is instrumental in ensuring that students take part in physical activity. Students take part in unrestricted play, Sports, Play and

Active Recreation for Kids (SPARK) and fun activities like recently when the school dropped everything and danced to get their heart rates up.

Some other things that North Beach Elementary School is doing to promote healthy habits include having walkathon fundraisers to replace bake sales, distributing pedometers to staff and serving water and fruit at staff meetings. They also involve the students in student wellness councils and running clubs. With principal and parent support, students are seeing the benefits of working towards healthy lifestyle behaviors.

- Gillian Sealy, MPH  
Alliance for a Healthier Generation  
Children Issues Committee

## National Physical Fitness and Sports Month



May has been observed as National Physical Fitness and Sports Month since 1983.<sup>3</sup> During the month of May, individuals and organizations alike are encouraged to promote how physical activity can lead to healthier, more productive lives.<sup>3</sup> With the growing concern over chronic conditions, and obesity in the United States, President Barack Obama recommitted to this observance by re-proclaiming it in 2010.

There is no better time than now to begin adopting healthier behaviors. Thirty minutes a day at least five days a week can help strengthen the body and mind. Take a stroll outside, go swimming, get together with family and/or friends and go to the park. A healthy

lifestyle does not have to be boring or hard! Let's spread the word and make Miami-Dade County a healthier, more active community!

- CPPW Staff

### Resources

1. The National Center for Bicycling and Walking. (2010). Increasing Physical Activity Through Community Design- A Guide for Public Health Practitioners
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. How Land Use and Transportation Systems Impact Public Health. (2000). <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/professionals/environment/aces.html>
3. Presidents Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition. (2011). Encouraging Americans to get active and play in May. <http://www.fitness.gov/npsfm/>

# Upcoming Events

Jackson South Community Hospital Invites you to a

## **Community Baby Shower!**

Come and enjoy free seminars, baby shower games, face painting, goodie bags for over 400 moms-to-be, and other fun activities!

**When:** Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011

**Time:** 11:00AM - 3:00PM

**Where:** Jackson South Community Hospital  
9380 SW 150 Street, West Entrance  
Miami, FL 33176

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## **Building a Bicycle Friendly Miami-Dade**

What communities, businesses and universities can do to transform themselves by promoting bicycling.

**When:** Tuesday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011

**Time:** 2:00PM - 4:00PM

**Where:** Miami-Dade Government Center  
111 NW 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Room 18-4  
Miami, FL 33128

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The Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade's Tobacco-Free Workgroup Presents

## **The Second Annual Tobacco Prevention Seminar and Workshop**

### **“The Burning Truth”**

By: Rick Stoddard

Rick Stoddard is a nationally recognized anti-smoking and anti-tobacco speaker whose mission is to reach as many youth and adults across America as possible about the dangers of tobacco use. Knowledge is contagious! Join us for this FREE community event. There is an opportunity to earn up to 4 CEUs following Rick Stoddard's presentation.

**When:** Thursday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011

**Time:** 9:30AM - 11:30AM

**Where:** Embassy Suites  
3974 NW S. River Drive  
Miami, FL 33142

Please RSVP by June 13th, 2011 to: [Rachelle\\_Theodore@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:Rachelle_Theodore@doh.state.fl.us)

**For additional information or to participate in the Consortium:**

Tel: 305-278-0442

[www.healthymiamidade.org](http://www.healthymiamidade.org)