

Healthy Futures' mission is to inspire and empower Alaska youth to lead more physically active lifestyles.

History

Bonny Sosa and her husband Sam Young, concerned parents with three teenage children and long-time community volunteers, conceived the idea for Healthy Futures following much discussion with other parents and the influx of research concerning youth obesity and health problems related to inactivity. Their vision was to unite public and private communities in the mission to increase regular physical activity among Alaska's elementary children.

The initiative launched in September 2003 in Anchorage with the Healthy Futures Youth Jamboree - a one-mile fun run for kids in grades one through six held in conjunction with the 19th Annual World Mountain Running Trophy. That fall, the Healthy Futures Activity Log was introduced through the Anchorage School District faculty and staff.

In October 2004, Healthy Futures expanded statewide through a partnership with the Alaska Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AKAHPERD). In 2006, Juneau, the Mat-Su Borough and Fairbanks Borough School Districts officially joined the movement.

Core Programs

Healthy Futures Activity Logs: With their parents, children record their daily physical activity during a one-month period. Completed Activity Logs are turned in to school faculty who work directly with Healthy Futures to administer the incentives. The original, simple Healthy Futures Activity Log format has been adapted for older youth by including space to log hours of sleep, total glasses of water, as well as fruit and vegetables consumed per day -

Childhood Obesity

A collaborative study conducted by the Anchorage School District and the State of Alaska, Division of Public Health found that 36 percent of all Anchorage School District students and 32 percent of kindergarten and first grade students were overweight or at risk for becoming overweight.

According to information presented by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Overweight children and adolescents are more likely to become obese as adults. For example, one study found that approximately 80% of children who were overweight at aged 10 to 15 years were obese adults at age 25 years. Another study found that 25 percent of obese adults were overweight as children. The latter study also found that if overweight begins before eight years of age, obesity in adulthood is likely to be more severe.

In a study released August 2006 by the American College of Sports Medicine, the largest sports medicine and exercise science organization in the world, they examined the level of activity and physical education compared to academic achievement and concluded that most active kids more often have better grades.

rounding out the entire fitness picture. Cool incentives include Nalgene water bottles, carabineers, dog tags, shoe graffittis, wrist bands and shoe tokens.

Community Youth Recreational Events: Healthy Futures aims to increase youth attendance at a wide-variety of existing community recreation events through sponsorships and public relations/marketing efforts.

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Core Programs cont.

The 2008 Healthy Futures event series includes:

Anchorage Events:

Buckets O' Fun: a Festival on Ice	Mayors Marathon Youth Cup
Winter Trails Day	Arctic Valley Trail & Munchkin Run
Snowball Biathlon (Girdwood)	Run for Your Life Kids Run (Humpty's)
Frostbite Footrace	Alaska 10K Classic Youth Relay
Fur Rondy Indoor Track and Field Meet	Tuesday Night Race Series
Ski 4 Kids	South Elementary Schools Cross-Country Jamboree
Heart Run	Beach Lake Trails Cross-Country Jamboree
Alaska Zoo Kids Fun Run	North Elementary Schools Cross-Country Jamboree
Salmon Run	Huffman Community Family Fun Run.
Skinny Raven Kidz Mile	
Bear Valley 5K Challenge	
Gold Nugget Triathlon	
T-Bird Triathlon	
Eagle River Triathlon	
Alaska Run for Women	

Fairbanks Events:

Beat Beethoven 5K
Salcha K-8 Jamboree
Birch Hill K-8 Jamboree
Eielson 6-8 Jamboree.

Wasilla Events:

Titan Trail Run.

Homer Events:

West Homer Orca Invitational
Cross Country Race.

Juneau Events:

Native Youth Olympics
Glacier 10K & Mile Run.

Galena Events:

Galena Spring Carnival
Scholarships are provided for any youth who wish to participate in any Healthy Futures events, but cannot afford the entry fees. Complete details are posted online at www.healthyfuturesak.org.

Participation

Grand prize incentives reward youth that participate in at least three Healthy Futures events, complete three Healthy Futures Activity Logs or a combination of both during the annual program, which runs June 1 through May 31. Kids who complete five Logs during that time earn Physical Activity All Star status.

More than 2,300 Anchorage elementary students from 30 Anchorage elementary schools participated the inaugural school year. More than 7,900 students from 51 Alaska schools participated in the 2004-05 program; **more than 14,000 students from 72 schools participated in 2006-07**. In addition, Conoco Futures sponsored end-of-year Field Days' activities at 74 schools, reaching 29,153 youth.

	Total Participation	Total HF Activity Logs
2003 - 04:	2,300	1,067
2004 - 05:	7,915	4,381
2005 - 06:	12,681	6,338
2006 - 07:	14,011	10,544

2006-2007 Activity Logs by School District

School District	Total Youth	Completed Logs	Physical Activity All Stars
ASD	3,703	7,001	345
Fairbanks	525	1,147	68
Juneau	260	536	79
Kenai	135	337	24
Mat-Su	421	872	9
Other*	210	651	86
Totals:	5254	10544	611

Spokespersons

Kikkan Randall, a successful Alaska athlete and internationally-known Nordic skier, has been an official Healthy Futures spokesperson since 2003. A 2002 and 2006 Winter Olympian, Randall was crowned National Sprint Champion and U.S. National U23 Grand Champion in 2002 and 2004, was 2006 US National Grand Champion and took third place in the 2007 World Cup Sprint - the best ever American finish. In December 2007, Kikkan became a U.S. cross country legend as the first woman in 27 years to take gold in the World Cup freestyle sprint. She was named by the U.S. Olympic Committee as one of two December 2007 Athletes of the Month.

Aelin Peterson appeared in the 2002 Olympics as the fourth-ranked woman in America for Nordic skiing. She ranked No. 1 for Jr. Female Cross-Country Skier in the U.S. in 1991, 1993, 1994, before retiring from racing in 1995. Returning to the sport in 2000, Aelin won a bronze medal at the 2001 US Nationals. In 2003, she was named Cross Country Ambassador of Excellence by the U.S. Ski Association and earned a bronze medal at the U.S. Nationals. Aelin retired from competitive skiing after the 2004-05 and joined the Healthy Futures team in 2007.

Both Aelin and Kikkan are available for Healthy Futures school assemblies.