



TAG in Action: CANFIT

As part of its national call to action, **Adolescent Health: Think, Act, Grow**® (TAG), the Office of Adolescent Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has identified a number of successful strategies for improving adolescent health throughout the country.

The Goal

CANFIT works with communities and youth to develop culturally resonant policies and practices that improve food and fitness environments for adolescents in low income communities and communities of color.

The Game Plan

CANFIT focuses on meeting the health needs of low-income, African-American, American Indian, Latino/Hispanic, Asian American and Pacific Islander adolescents. Many of these historically underserved populations have limited access to affordable, healthy foods and safe places for physical activity. CANFIT provides training, consultation, and technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of youth-serving organizations and the youth themselves so they may address these challenges. The technical assistance helps identify strategies to address current conditions, such as expanding community fitness opportunities or improving the quality of snacks/meals provided in out of school settings.

CANFIT engages youth in every stage -- from community-based planning to implementation and evaluation. The organization serves as the Youth Engagement Lead for nine communities as part of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's National Food and Community Program, an effort to address the root causes of health inequities for children. In their work with youth, CANFIT strives to:

- Provide a space where youth feel welcome, honored and can support each other;
- Present a realistic approach and lens, especially if cultural boundaries are present;
- Apply an interactive and shared learning approach; and
- Support the development of leadership skills.

CANFIT's capacity-building model has been recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Community Health Leaders Program, the Center for American Indian Research and Education, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The Winning Plays

Arnell Hinkle, Executive Director of CANFIT, shared that "We put culture first, and that includes youth culture and ethnic culture. We take time to get to know a community before we start any work. We acknowledge where they are and work with youth and community leaders to figure out how to get them to a better place. Because of that approach, we develop interventions that resonate and make a difference."

Learn More

CANFIT
<http://canfit.org/>

