

Marquette University Collaborates with the United Community Center to Help Local Hispanic Youth

Marquette University in collaboration with the United Community Center has developed a program to help local Hispanic youth. The Youth Empowered to Succeed Program (YES) is designed to help local Hispanic high school youth develop necessary skills to succeed in school and in the community, as well as educating them on issues of fitness and wellness to addressing the rising incidence of obesity, diabetes, and risk factors for cardiovascular disease.

The Y.E.S. program has four main components in which it strives to promote healthy life choices regarding academics, career choices, personal health, fitness, and cultural enrichment. With these four main components YES hopes to prepare and educate these young individuals for better decision making to properly address challenges that they may face in the future. The Y.E.S. program also strongly believes that the support from family and the development of great relationships play a main role in helping the youth succeed.

Currently, 57 Hispanic 10th and 11th graders are working in the program for a total of three years. The students are given opportunities such as ACT preparation, fitness screening with Marquette University physical therapy students, exercise prescriptions, interaction with various health professionals, and cultural enrichment through exposure to other cultures. The program is currently a demonstration project that is federally funded through the Department of Health and Human Services and its Office of Minority Health. As one of 150 academic institutions to apply for a Youth Empowerment Program, Marquette was honored to be one of only 20 schools to be awarded funding. Research data from the program will be submitted to the federal government, and if results are positive, Congress may consider approving future funding for these types of programs.