

Fit Kids News

For Openers...

Dear Friends,

Although I have lived in California for years, and that is where Fit Kids does most of its work, my heart is at home in Minnesota, where I was born and raised. That's why it brings me so much joy and fulfillment to announce that Fit Kids is launching in the Twin Cities with the non-



profit Perspectives as our first partner. It took a lot of consideration to choose an initial partner in Minnesota but as soon as I saw how Perspectives positively impacts an extraordinarily vulnerable group -- homeless women and children -- it was a no-brainer to provide them Fit Kids programming.

As you will read below, Fit Kids was the missing piece in Perspectives' holistic solution of housing, nutrition, therapy, transportation, and so much else. The one thing they weren't able to provide was a structured curriculum of physical activity to augment the existing physical and mental health services they do provide. Likewise, 10 years into my journey with Fit Kids, Perspectives provides a piece that I felt Fit Kids was missing, programs operating in my home state.

Meanwhile, back in California, all 134 of our partners here are running Fit Kids programs in person at their schools and community centers, and their students have 24/7 access to our online library of 200-plus videos, demonstrating fitness movements, full-body workouts, yoga flows, and mindfulness practices.

I wish you all a happy and healthy holiday season!



Partner Profile: Perspectives

Fit Kids now impacts youth in Minnesota's Twin Cities area via a new partnership with Perspectives, a non-profit



that addresses the community's issues around homelessness, racial disparity, poverty, trauma, mental and chemical health issues, and nutrition. Established in 1976, the organization's work becomes even more holistic in its service to homeless women and children by introducing Fit Kids' fitness component.

The partnership stems from

Fit Kids Founder Ashley Hunter's drive to impact her hometown and fortuitous connection with restaurateurs Lori and David Fhima, who also support Perspectives.

"We were so excited about Fit Kids because in our 43 years, we've never actually had a fitness program to run along with our nutrition program," said Lisa Walker, Perspectives' Vice President of Development and Communications. "When Ashley called with Fit Kids, it was a dream come true. Lori and David Fhima are more than just partners, they're family members, and we've looked at so many fitness curricula over the years and there was never a fit.

"Nobody really got what we do. They just thought, 'Oh, give the kids a dodgeball and let them play.' But everything we do is trauma-informed. You can't just give a dodgeball, without a good curriculum behind it, to a kid who's witnessed a parent be shot and killed."

Fit Kids is providing equipment, curriculum, and program support services to the 70 children that Perspectives can serve at one time, based on the housing capacity the organization can offer, Walker said. "Our head of children's programming, when she was talking with Ashley, said we would not be able to pay for a program so big and expansive, that we've been dreaming about this and 'You're probably going to tell me it costs a billion dollars.' When she found out Fit Kids was giving us this, she almost fell out of her chair."

Perspectives plans to start running the program in January, as the holiday season is generally a time of increased crisis and emergency mental health situations for the people the organization serves. "We plan to incorporate Fit Kids into the children's school day, every day," Walker said. "We've been attacking physical health issues as much as possible from the food side, because all of our families come from food instability, and now we get to add movement on top of that!"

Even the informal introduction of Fit Kids already is making a difference at Perspectives. "With the cold weather, we are not able to go outside, so playing one of the activities that the curriculum lays out for us is a perfect way to spend that time," said Aurie Dyer, a teacher in Perspectives' Kids Connection program. "The younger students LOVED playing with the equipment and they truly did not want to stop! This equipment is going to be a huge hit with our kids and will help take our program to the next level.

"Another of our teachers set up one of the obstacle courses for the class to do instead of recess, and they had an absolute BLAST! Each kid went through it probably 7 times and would have kept going if we didn't stop them. We wanted to move onto Turtle Tag, which I think is also going to become a classroom favorite! We cannot thank Fit Kids

enough for this incredible partnership!"



The Rite Aid Foundation's Giving Tuesday Gift



[The Rite Aid Foundation](#) has generously gifted Fit Kids with a \$10,000 grant as part of its annual Giving Tuesday grant award funded through Rite Aid's KidCents customer round-up program.

"We are thrilled to receive this gift," said Fit Kids Founder Ashley Hunter. "The funds will go a long way toward bringing our structured fitness program to many more children who need it. Rite Aid is doing right by the kids we reach with fitness resources they would otherwise lack."

Fit Kids is one of nearly 500 partner charities across the country receiving a grant from The Rite Aid Foundation, which donated a total of \$4.8 million on Giving Tuesday this year. "Fit Kids shares The Rite Aid Foundation's caring commitment to creating healthier and more equitable neighborhoods," said Matthew DeCamara, executive director of The Rite Aid Foundation, a public charity established by Rite Aid in 2001.

"All of our Giving Tuesday grant recipients address the profound realities of racial inequities and health disparities through their own ways and strategies – and have done it during an unprecedented public-health crisis that has significantly interrupted normal programming, fundraising events and daily operations. We're grateful to support their important work and uplift our neighborhoods together."



Wendy McAdam Named Fit Kids Board Chair



Long-time Fit Kids Board of Directors Member Wendy McAdam now chairs that board. She fills the role formerly held by Russell Hirsch, who provided Fit Kids many years of great service and decided to step down as he moved his residence from California.

"My years on the Fit Kids board have shown me the importance of the organization's mission and the impact of its program," McAdam said. "I'm excited to chair the board of directors and to work with Ashley and her team to continue making a huge difference in the lives of tens of thousands of under-served youth."



Please Donate During This Holiday Season

With the holiday season in full effect and the end of 2021 fast approaching, we hope you will consider a [year-end gift to Fit Kids](#). Your support makes a difference in helping under-served youth over the hurdles of their everyday lives.



[DONATE NOW](#)

