

A young boy with a joyful expression is running towards the camera. He is wearing a bright orange tank top with a colorful graphic of a sun and water, and dark blue shorts. The background is a warm, textured wall, possibly made of brick or stone, with a yellow and red patterned ground in the foreground.

A COMMUNITY HUB *for* HEALTH

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF PITTSBURGH OF UPMC

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation is the nation's leading provider of evidence-based technical assistance and capacity building to youth-serving organizations. Expanding on its work with schools, early childcare centers and afterschool programs, Healthier Generation has found innovative ways to leverage the unique role children's hospitals play in leading community health initiatives to support these youth-serving programs locally.

Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC is just one example of how Healthier Generation is working with children's hospitals to protect and improve the health of the nearly 50,000 children in the greater Pittsburgh community.

Reaching Children Beyond Hospital Walls

After conducting a community health needs assessment in 2013, Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC identified childhood obesity as a key issue to address in the Pittsburgh region. The hospital learned of Healthier Generation's decade-long history of implementing comprehensive, sustainable child health programs and decided to seek a partnership.

Since 2014, Healthier Generation has been working with Children's to empower youth-serving organizations in the Pittsburgh region to create healthier environments where children can thrive. Director of Community Health and Health Improvement Partnerships Anne Marie Kuchera is the primary liaison for the hospital's partnership. "Working with Healthier Generation has helped us significantly expand our reach beyond hospital walls, increase structure and effective collaboration with school and out-of-school time partners and address our community's priority health needs," she said.

Healthier Generation trained hospital staff to implement its evidence-based Healthy Schools Program, which transforms the environments where kids spend the majority of their waking hours into places that support healthy growth and development. Hospital staff received

in-person consultation, live virtual trainings, monthly check-ins, data reports and on-going technical assistance from Healthier Generation to get their programs off the ground and sustain their momentum.

In 2014, Children's began working with Pittsburgh Public Schools to enroll the district's schools in Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Program. Initially, just 10 schools signed onto the program, and by 2017, nearly every one of the district's 56 schools were on their way to improving health at school.

Partnerships Expand Reach, Strengthen Communities

As a result of its outreach to schools and other community institutions, Children's cemented its role as a community convener, bringing together many organizations and initiatives with a shared goal of advancing children's health.

In 2015, Children's engaged fitUnited of United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania to expand its work in out-of-school time settings by establishing partnerships with likeminded organizations such as the Neighborhood Learning Alliance, Boys and Girls Clubs, the Sarah Heinz House, the Bible Center Church, the Providence Family Support Center, and the Brashear Association—to name a few.

“We're incredibly proud of the collaboration between our organizations, our work with other valued community partners in creating healthier out-of-school time environments and the excitement this effort has created for afterschool programs.”

ANNE MARIE KUCHERA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIPS

By pooling resources, Children's and fitUnited were able to offer mini-grants and professional development to out-of-school time sites to help them implement healthier nutrition and physical activity practices for youth. They also engaged community partners to educate afterschool program staff on topics such as trauma-informed care and parent engagement.

Healthier Generation staff continued to offer in-person and virtual technical assistance, training and resources to support Children's through this period of rapid expansion. During the first year of the partnership, Children's began working with 10 out-of-school time sites, and by 2017, they had expanded to nearly 150. The community health arm of Children's has received additional staffing support and funding streams to continue to grow its community outreach after demonstrating the success of its initiatives.

Expanding Impact: Early Childcare and Education Centers

In 2016, Children's sought to pilot a new model to reach the youngest members of the Pittsburgh community through early care and education (ECE) facilities and programs (serving children from birth to age 5), building upon the strong foundation created through its work in schools and out-of-school time settings. Once again, they turned to Healthier Generation.

Just a few years earlier, Healthier Generation joined forces with the American Heart Association (AHA) and Nemours Children's Health System (Nemours) to help expand the *Healthy Way to Grow* initiative, a national, science-based, technical assistance program that empowers early childcare providers to improve physical activity, nutrition, screen time, and infant feeding practices and policies in early care and education programs.

Through the national collaboration, Healthier Generation has made *Healthy Way to Grow* resources and tools easily accessible through an online platform allowing Children's staff to easily connect ECE centers in the Pittsburgh region with the resources they need to create healthier environments for young children. Healthier Generation staff, in collaboration with Nemours and AHA, have also trained Children's to provide technical assistance, tools and resources that will improve center environments, educate families, and help centers to develop and adopt a center wellness policy.

This innovative program will launch next year in five early child care and education centers and will enable Healthier Generation and Children's to reach the region's children earlier than ever, giving them a head start to develop the healthy habits that are critical to their healthy growth and development.

Timeline: Reaching More Pittsburgh Children than Ever Before

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Identified child obesity during community health needs assessment	Initiated partnership with Healthier Generation; Enrolled 10 schools in Year 1	Expanded support to out-of-school time settings	Began early care and education center pilot	Reached more than 135 youth-serving sites through Healthier Generation partnership	Launch pilot program in early childcare and education centers