

# Kids Have Fun While Learning Healthy Behavior at The Brooklyn Hospital Center's Pediatric Wellness Program

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A dozen young Brooklynites participated in sports, team building, and learned about healthy living as part of The Brooklyn Hospital Center's (TBHC) Pediatric Wellness Program for teens and tweens this summer. The program also offered its counselors--high achieving minority students--the chance to learn about careers in medicine through its partnership with Prep For Prep, which identifies promising students of color throughout New York City and provides them with access to superior education and life-changing opportunities. Young Brooklynites had fun and learned about healthy living at The Brooklyn Hospital Center's Pediatric Wellness Program.

☒ "Our goal at TBHC is keeping Brooklyn healthy, and that has to start with our youngest residents," says Dr. Richard B. Becker, the hospital's President and CEO. "Teaching kids healthy habits is the best way to prevent obesity, diabetes, hypertension and heart disease, conditions that are so prevalent in Brooklyn."

The Wellness program is also a learning experience for its counselors.

This summer Shikah Kofie, who will attend Wesleyan in the fall and wants to be a pediatrician, and Howard University Junior Roschel Williams, who wants to be a surgeon, were the program's counselors. They spent three mornings a week working with the youngsters; for the rest of the week, they trailed physicians as they met with patients, attended lectures and observed surgeons in the OR. Ms. Kofie's mentor was Dr. Leslie Hayes, a specialist in adolescent medicine, and Ms. Williams's mentor was surgeon Dr. Larry Griffith.

The children participated in outdoor sports and team building exercises in Fort Greene Park. They also received a free, healthy lunch and attended a weekly educational lecture to learn more about physical fitness and nutrition.

"For example, one lecture focused on socio-economic disparities and how it affects healthcare," says Dr. Stephen Carryl, director of Bariatric Surgery and Medical Director of TBHC's International Medicine Program, who founded the program. "We wanted children to understand how to overcome the challenges of living in neighborhoods where fast food restaurants far outnumber sources for fresh, healthy food."

"These lessons have a practical element as well," says Jackie Bravo, the surgery department coordinator. "This year, we challenged the kids to give up one junk food for the entire month and substitute a healthy food in its place. The kids had a

lot of fun trying to stick to the challenge.?

View photos from the Teen Wellness Program below

*TBHC encouraged healthy behavior among kids in its Pediatric Wellness Program, who participated in sports and team building exercises like this human knot, which they had to work together to untie.*

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