



## City of Tamarac Parks and Recreation

**Tamarac, Florida**

**Intensive Site**

*[Partners] were happy we were coming into the schools and giving the positive message to the kids. When you hear it from someone else and not a teacher or your principal you take it more to heart."*

*"I enjoyed it because I didn't have to come up with stuff. It wasn't so much research based on our part, but it was nice to have the We Can! staff and know we could e-mail or talk to another site and say, 'Is this working? How did you do this?'"*

### **Description**

The City of Tamarac Parks and Recreation Department was committed to bringing awareness of health, nutrition, and physical activity education to the public through three years as a Hearts N' Parks Magnet Site, and offering programming through the Kidnetic program for children and the You Can! program for seniors. For **We Can!**, Tamarac Parks and Recreation Department is working with schools, recreation centers, and summer camps to offer CATCH Kids Club, Media-Smart Youth, and the Parent Curriculum in its community.

### **Key Site Success:**

- Tamarac experienced a significant level of participation and support from both parents and children by working through Tamarac Elementary for curricula implementations. Tamarac was also able to facilitate a strong relationship with the school administration, enabling recruitment and outreach to parents to reinforce the youth program at home. This level of involvement was fostered by the close communication among parents, PE teachers, school administrators, and children. Children were excited to see their names and photos in the newspaper representing the **We Can!** program and wanted to continue learning more.

### **Community Outreach**

Tamarac conducted several events that attracted nearly 10,000 participants from the community. Relationships with four community partners were developed through site organizers. The **We Can!** program generated media coverage in a southern Florida newspaper called the *Sun-Sentinel*, after being implemented in Tamarac Elementary School..

### **Community Events**

**Fourth of July Event** (July 2005). This event attracted about 8,000 people to celebrate the Fourth of July with bands and dancing at a city park. There was a designated area for **We Can!** with a banner, healthy food giveaway, and informational fliers. The summer camp staff of the community center attended and led the children in activities such as relays and a tug-of-war.

**Back-To-School Event** (Tamarac Park Gymnasium, September 17, 2005). About 300 parents and youths participated in this event that included a DJ and games. Parents received informational fliers and brochures while kids enjoyed the **We Can!** wristbands and playing on the bounce houses.

**Saturday Morning Sign-Up Event** (Tamarac Park, September 10, 2005). Two weeks after the start of school, the local recreation center invites all of the sports leagues to staff registrations for local sports teams. Tamarac Parks and Recreation also had a table that featured **We Can!** and distributed **We Can!** information.

**Easter Spring Fest** (Tamarac Baseball Fields, April 8, 2006). More than 400 people participated in this event that included carnival games, a dance contest, an egg hunt, and a relay race. Participants also had access to **We Can!** information and giveaways.

### **Media Outreach**

Tamarac had two articles placed in southern Florida's *Sun-Sentinel*, and the site was also listed in the City of Tamarac, Florida Parks and Recreation's "Discovery" program after the program was implemented in the elementary school.

### **Partnerships**

Tamarac's site organizers developed relationships with three community partners to help implement its program. The **Broward County School Board** helped recruit participants for the after-school program. The **Big Bike Riders Association** assisted Tamarac with its Christmas event and distributed **We Can!** materials. The **One Community Partnership** allowed Tamarac to use its recreation center rooms helped facilitate programs with parents and supported material distribution.

### **Parent and Youth Curricula**

#### ***We Can! Energize Our Families: Curriculum for Parents and Caregivers***

Tamarac made multiple attempts to engage parents and conduct the Parent Curriculum, but never achieved enough interest to conduct a complete, 6-lesson session. The first attempt consisted of press releases and fliers that provoked no response. Then, the program was promoted with fitness center members. It generated interest with a few parents but not enough to support a session. The site tried again after New Year's Day hoping to capitalize on resolutions, but again, no interest by the parents. As the site noted, "*We were offering it at our community center, our main facility. We even offered on-site babysitting and watching the kids, and we still had difficulty getting parents to sign up.*" No data were available for analysis.

### **CATCH Kids Club**

Tamarac implemented CATCH Kids Club and was able to provide parents with follow-up activities at home for the families. The parents had a lot to do with making sure the kids followed the curriculum at home with eating smart and exercising and contributing to the choices of foods for meals. The program was implemented through the whole school year and then also at the elementary school after-school program for half the year. One site organizer said, "*I felt this program could be used for the younger kids, with some tweaking to the program. It's good for kids to get an early start on the program and to be familiar with it by the time they get to the age level [8] the program targets.*" No data were available for analysis.

### ***Media-Smart Youth: Eat, Think, and Be Active!***

The City of Tamarac Parks and Recreation implemented Media-Smart Youth once at Tamarac Park. Seventeen children, including 11 girls and 6 boys, participated in the lessons. Some of the lessons were combined to complete the program as it was becoming evident kids were dropping out by the sixth week. The kids enjoyed creating media messages but lost interest because the curriculum was more like school with the associated lectures, homework, and bookwork. No data were available for analysis.