

# Healthy Kids Initiative

Rosedale Development Association

(kids chanting)

>>Caress Gonzales, Mother: Just seeing the kids face, seeing them run around the park and just having so much fun doing things that they probably wouldn't normally be doing as far as a carnival goes. And no one's complaining. Everyone's excited because they have school supplies and people are excited because they want a bottled water because it's hot and it's just good, it's a good feeling.

Some people think and they think of "Oh, dieting" and they have to exercise, and it's so much more than that. Kids just going outside and playing and, you know, rather than eating cookies, eating something else. It's little things as far as health goes, and there's so much you can do when it comes to kids so I thought the carnival idea was a great idea.

>>Narrator: Rosedale is an urban, ethnically-diverse neighborhood in Kansas City, Kansas which is home to 14,500 residents. Despite high rates of poverty, Rosedale has no community center, no parks and recreation programming, and few opportunities for children to stay active during the summertime. Recent research has shown that one out of ever two elementary school children in Rosedale are either overweight or obese.

>>Jane Heide, Pastor, Rosedale Congregational United Church of Christ: When we walk the streets of Rosedale, there are some beautiful streets. But, there are many places where sidewalks are broken, where there are no sidewalks at all, where there's no curbs, where the drainage systems are not working well. Rosedale Park, which is a gorgeous park, but there's no safe way to bring our children to that park because there's no sidewalk leading to that park, there's no crosswalk across a very busy Mission Road to get to that park.

>>Narrator: In collaboration Rainbow Mennonite CDF Freedom School , a Healthy Kids Carnival was planned for the summertime in 2009. Freedom School parents helped plan an event full of healthy foods and physical activity.

>>Daniel Gonzales, Freedom School Scholar: I liked the moves that they did and when I was performing. I was nervous but and then I did it and I wasn't nervous anymore.

>>Narrator: In the second year of the Carnival, parents began teaching other parents about the expectations of the event. When a new parent would suggest ice cream or soda, an experienced parent would explain why the event is health-centered.

>>Wendy Wilson, Executive Director, Rosedale Development Association: Popcorn and apples and granola bars and honey straws, and I have not once heard a kid ask for candy.

>>Rachel Hostetler, Community Service Coordinator, Rainbow Mennonite Church: One time a parent brought candy for the carnival. Her some was with her and right away he said, "Oh mom. You can't use it! This is a healthy kids' carnival. It's just not allowed here.

>>Narrator: The Healthy Kids Carnival has served as a model for other Rosedale community events including the now-annual Healthy Halloween, a candy-free Halloween celebration that also includes a free health fair, the Bike-In Movie at the drive-in movie theater, school carnivals, and International Walk to School Day celebrations. It successfully showed the parents, and us, that children can enjoy candy-free, healthy events and didn't seem to know the difference. Through events like these, the Rosedale Healthy Kids Initiative seeks to promote its goals of increasing access to healthy foods, expanding opportunities for youth activity, and increasing safety and convenience of community routes for bicyclists and pedestrians. To date, the Initiative has helped to launch nine new community gardens, a neighborhood farmer's market, 12 youth programs, more than 10 community healthy events, a community walking trail, and two and a half miles of bike lanes that will be constructed by 2014.

>> Jane Heide, Pastor, Rosedale Congregational United Church of Christ: To be healthy in Rosedale, you need to have safe places to play. You need to be very comfortable sending your kids out on bikes and on walks and playing in the neighborhoods. You need to be able to get food that's healthy and nutritious for a reasonable cost. We want Rosedale to be the place where the healthy choice is the easy choice.