

*Essay: Innovation Program, Service or Ongoing Activity
To be considered for the Best of the Best
Kids Fit For Life*

Kids Fit For Life, is a new program created especially for kids by the staff of Coston Funeral Homes, Inc. This program was designed to encourage young children to get active while learning key components to leading healthier, stronger lives. Our goal is to raise awareness about childhood obesity, by providing fun activities centered around health and wellness.

For three Saturdays this summer (June 25, July 23, August 27), children will enjoy Hip Hop Dance, Soul Line Dance and African Dance along with healthy snacks, games and prizes, and health and wellness information.

Coston Funeral Homes, Inc. is located in the East Liberty section of Pittsburgh and was excited to offer the program to the children of this impoverished inner city neighborhood. The event was an excellent opportunity for local teens from the Neighborhood Academy and the Pittsburgh Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc. to volunteer their time and energy as team leaders.

Local businesses and churches also partnered with the funeral home to help provide services needed the day of the event. Wolfe Farms, a vendor at the local Farmers Market, committed themselves to providing fresh fruit for all 3 sessions, donating strawberries for the June session. Nurses from Lincoln Avenue Church of God and Mt. Ararat Baptist Church volunteered at the Nurses Station. The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) Children's Hospital also volunteered for the event, providing a food wheel game and provided prizes for the children.

The two-hour program began at 12 noon with parents registering their children. Next, kids enjoyed a group exercise led by a certified hip-hop aerobics instructor (Jim Weaver) who took the kids through a warm-up, full work-out and cool-down.

At 1:00 pm, the children were split into three teams (Red, Green and Blue) where they rotated throughout three stations.

Station #1 was a kick ball game; Station #2 featured water relays with jumping jacks and a bean bag toss; and Station #3 was an obstacle course set up with hula hooping, a tunnel crawl, jumping rope, agility hoops, and ending with a 50-yard dash.

Afterwards, the children played the food wheel game sponsored by UPMC Children's Hospital. Each child answered questions pertaining to healthy eating and were given prizes.

The event concluded with the children eating fresh strawberries, watermelon and grapes along with Capri Sun juice boxes and bottled water.

Both the staff of Coston Funeral Homes, Inc. and volunteers benefitted so much by creating joy to the children in East Liberty. The staff danced with the kids and enjoyed being one on one with the community.

Because the neighborhood is crime ridden, children seldom get to experience any special, fun programs geared toward them. The children learned about healthy eating, spent 90 minutes exercising and playing fun games, ate a healthy snack and walked home with great prize giveaways. Parents also stayed and participated, making the event a family and community event.