

A University-School-Community Partnership To Enhance High School Student Wellbeing

A Project by the **PURDUE UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR HEALTH EQUITY AND INNOVATION** | West Lafayette, IN

In Partnership with **PURDUE POLYTECHNIC HIGH SCHOOL | ENGLEWOOD CAMPUS** | Indianapolis, IN

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BACKGROUND

- Adolescent wellbeing in the United States remains a concern due to low physical activity and an increasing prevalence of mental illness
- In 2019, only 23.2% of high schoolers met federal physical activity guidelines and 22.1% of adolescents (12-19 years old) are obese in 2019 and 22.1% obesity prevalence in adolescents aged 12-19¹
- From 2018-2019, 15.1% of adolescents had a major depressive episode, 36.7% had persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, and 18.8% considered suicide, with 8.9% attempting²



Photographer: Carly Kimiecik, May 2022



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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- Built on previous collaborative efforts, the University-School-Community partnership piloted a 6-week Health Immersion Program offered to PPHS Englewood students from April 2022-May 2022
- Program components included **cycling**, **nutrition**, and **mindfulness**
- **Cycling:** Students engaged in both indoor and outdoor cycling twice a week that included bike rides, bike simulators, and education about bike safety, maintenance, and knowledge
- **Nutrition:** One day a week students worked alongside a Purdue University Marion County Extension Educator to learn about nutrition
- **Mindfulness:** Once a week a certified yoga and mindfulness instructor facilitated guided breathing and stretching exercises

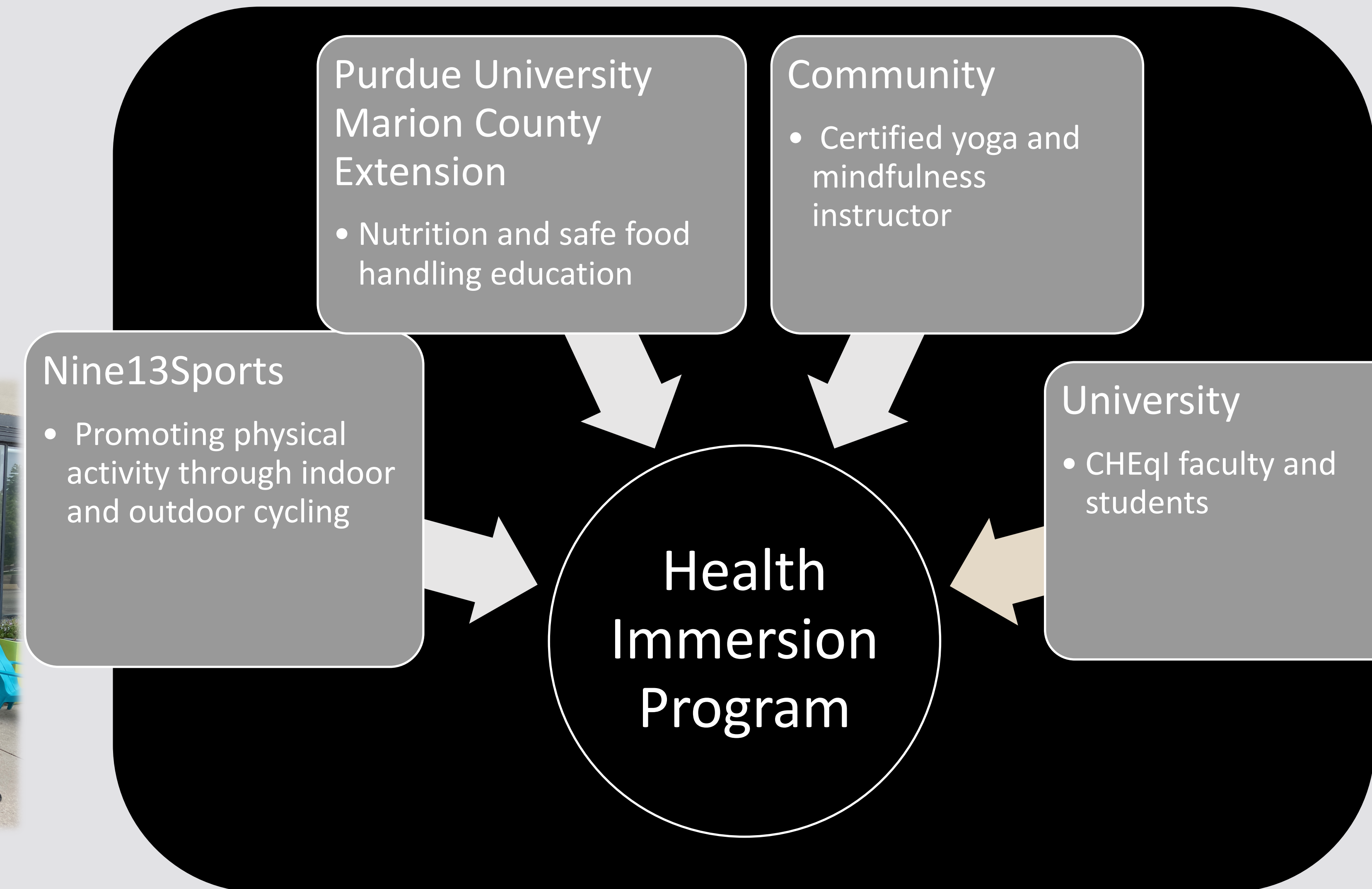
PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The goals of the Health Immersion Program were for students to:

1. Engage in interactive activities to meet PPHS 2-credit physical activity requirement
2. Enhance self-efficacy to promote healthy behavior choices
3. Build life skills to support health nutritious and behavior choices
4. Practice positive coping strategies to reduce stress and anxiety



METHODOLOGY



Participants

- PPHS Englewood High School students (N = 20);
- Community partners (N = 5)

Evaluation

- Focus group with partners (N = 5)
- Focus group with students (N = 7)
- Pre/Post surveys with students



Photographer: Nine13sports staff, May 2022

IMPACTS

Twenty students participated in this program. From evaluation data taken before and after the immersion program, student surveys showed a positive change in mental health, physical activity, mindfulness, cycling ability and knowledge, and food handling. More students reported eating breakfast at least four days a week, eating more vegetables, less screen time, feeling confident riding a bike in urban and private areas, navigating hazards on a bike, and how to stay safe during a bike ride. Students also reported an increased mindfulness competency, including their ability to be present instead of focused on the past or future.

"I didn't know you could put milk in eggs. That's something I learned."

"Practicing yoga is something I strive to do on a daily basis now because of this passion project."

IMPACTS

Scale/Concept	Pre-Survey (n = 13)	Post-Survey (n = 7)
Cognitive Competence Likert-scale 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)	3.72	3.63
Critical Thinking Likert-scale 1 (never) to 4 (always)	3.02	2.75
Mental Health + Likert-scale 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)	3.21	3.50
Physical Health + Likert-scale 1 (strongly disagree) to (strongly agree)	3.31	3.59
Cycling Ability + Likert-scale 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)	3.71	3.86
Cycling Knowledge + Likert-scale 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)	3.03	3.63
Food Handling Likert-scale 1 (never/rarely) to 4 (usually/always)	3.86	3.50
Mindfulness + Likert-scale 1 (always) to 5 (never)	2.11	3.04

Table 1. Student Pre- and Post - Survey Results on Likert Scale

REFLECTION & CONCLUSION

- Program evaluation demonstrated positive outcomes for the students and overall positive feedback from the project partners involved
- Suggestions for improvement included finding new opportunities to expand the immersion program, making it available to as many students as possible, higher level cooking skills in the nutrition component, bike mechanic curriculum, and more time dedicated to the program
- Recommendations for future partnership efforts are to:
 1. Continue to offer similar wellbeing immersion programs
 2. Pilot similar programming at other PPHS campuses
 3. Explore new community partnerships to enhance wellbeing
 4. Integrate wellbeing content into curricular content at PPHS

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REFERENCES

1. The US Department of Health and Human Services "Healthy People 2030". Office of Disease Prevention & Health Promotion. (2023). *NWS-04 & PA-06*. Healthy People 2030. Retrieved February 15, 2023, from <https://health.gov/healthypeople>
2. National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, June 3). Data and Statistics on Children's Mental Health. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved February 15, 2023, from <https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/data.html>