

OUR MISSION
& VISION

Fitness Forward is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to *lead youth to live well*. Integrating scientifically grounded evidence, web-based technologies, and targeted social marketing, we aim to reverse the dangerous rise in childhood obesity, diabetes, and mental illness. We envision a day when all children, regardless of background or circumstance, will grow up with the knowledge, motivation, and tools to live healthier, happier lives.

THE CHALLENGE

Many of the leading causes of death in the United States and abroad, such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, and suicide, are largely preventable. Lack of physical activity, poor nutrition, inadequate sleep, and mismanaged stress are intricately tied to poor health outcomes and quality of life. At a time when childhood obesity, diabetes, and mental illness continue to impact millions of children, the need to facilitate healthier lifestyles among youth is profound.

Extensive research demonstrates that healthy habits, particularly those learned in childhood, can prevent unnecessary illness, improve quality of life, and have a significant impact on other areas such as academic achievement and modifying high-risk behaviors. However, social inequities block many children and parents from access to the opportunities, knowledge, and resources that can help them live healthier, happier lives.

OUR SOLUTION

Fitness Forward's *5 Wellness Targets* are the basis of our programs and communicate the value of safe, enjoyable physical activity (*Be Active*); appropriate nutrition (*Eat Smart*); balanced sleep (*Sleep Well*); stress-reduction (*Stress Less*); and drug, accident, and self-awareness practices (*Be Aware*).

Our signature program, *Drive 2 Fitness (D2F)*, motivates and empowers children and their families to lead healthier lifestyles through education, personalized tracking tools, social marketing, and rewards. With the encouragement of parents, school leaders, after school mentors, and D2F Volunteer Corps members, elementary school students are challenged to achieve key health behaviors, for which they earn *D2F Points*, on a daily basis. Children monitor their progress year-round via interactive web-based tracking tools and paper scorecards and earn rewards as they reach certain point benchmarks. By bridging the school, out-of-school, and home environments, Drive 2 Fitness reaches children where they spend the majority of their waking hours.



- ✔ 1 hour or more of moderate to vigorous physical activity
- ✔ 1 hour or less of TV, computer or videogame time
- ✔ 5-9 servings of fruits and vegetables
- ✔ No sugar-added drinks
- ✔ 8-11 hours of sleep

OUR IMPACT

We continuously evaluate our programming, methods, and technologies in order to maximize our impact. After successfully launching Drive 2 Fitness in North Carolina elementary schools over the last two-years, we are now in the process of expanding D2F across the Boston Public Schools. Currently, D2F reaches over 10,000 children across North Carolina and Boston. A recent cross-sectional study demonstrated that students participating in D2F, relative to their peers, (1) watch less TV, (2) are physically active more days per week, (3) are more aware of how to live healthy, (4) eat more fruits and vegetables, and (5) are tired much less often.