

Our partners are helping kids stay healthy. In communities across America, a strong support network is giving young people the essentials they need for good health from infancy through young adulthood. Hospitals and healthcare professionals are providing immunizations. Pharmaceutical companies are funding dental and medical checkups. Not-for-profit organizations are offering disease prevention programs. State leaders are ensuring that youth and their parents have access to affordable healthcare and health insurance. The result: A healthy start for our children, one they have every right to expect.

EXPANDING WHAT WORKS: PROJECT HEALTH REACHES HARLEM

"I've seen the real change that can come about when communities, professionals, volunteers and medical centers join together around a shared set of goals. It's tremendously exciting."

Rebecca Onie
Founder and Director, Project HEALTH

PROFILE

Growing up with two chronic illnesses, asthma and sickle cell anemia, has been difficult, but when Vincent dives into the pool, he forgets he's sick. As part of the first class enrolled in the year-long, after-school *Asthma Swimming Program*, he now swims with renewed confidence. In just a short time, he has learned to better manage his asthma, understand its triggers and increase his lung capacity. Vincent's mother, Patricia, says the program has made a tremendous difference for Vincent — and she feels better equipped to help him along. "It's teaching me as well," she says with confidence, as she watches Vincent swim, knowing that his medical problems are under control.

BRIDGING THE GAP. This comprehensive exercise and health education program resulted from collaboration among Harlem Hospital Center, Columbia

WHERE IT'S HAPPENING



J.P. Garnier
CEO, SmithKline Beecham

SMITHKLINE BEECHAM. Carol, a 16-year-old from Allentown, Pa., almost lost her smile. Plagued by toothaches after years of irregular dental visits, she was faced with the prospect of wearing dentures. Because of the *Valley Wide Smile* project, supported in part by SmithKline Beecham, Carol now sees the dentist regularly. Since 1997, the company has committed \$2.9 million in healthy start grants to 60 communities. CEO J.P. Garnier says, "The promise of SmithKline Beecham is to make people's lives healthier, which is a perfect fit with the mission of America's Promise. We are proud to support this nationwide effort to provide children with a healthy start in life."

LA HABRA, CALIFORNIA. The Institute for Healthcare Advancement (IHA) serves local needs and extends its reach to communities miles away. Among a host of healthcare initiatives, the institute recently published *What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick*. Available in English and Spanish, the book helps parents better care for their children's healthcare needs. The institute has distributed 70,000 copies through physicians, corporations, not-for-profits and insurance companies. According to IHA President Gloria Mayor: "getting to know all of the other communities involved with America's Promise has been very significant for us," because it has opened up an unexpected distribution channel for the publication.

University, the local YMCA and Project HEALTH. Begun in 1996, Project HEALTH is the brainchild of Rebecca Onie, then an undergraduate at Harvard University. She developed the program as a way for undergraduates to help inner-city kids get a healthy start.

EXPANDING WITH A PURPOSE. Onie and her colleagues could see the program was making a difference in the lives of children with health problems and wanted to expand to other communities. "America's Promise came along at the perfect time, when we were looking to grow," says Onie. As part of its commitment, Project HEALTH pledged to expand to several other cities. "Having the formal structure of this commitment spurred us to realize that vision," she says.

Nearly four years since its inception, this program has grown from 10 volunteers on one campus to 230 on four college campuses in three northeastern cities — Boston, Providence and, most recently, New York. Expansion is planned in seven more cities. And more volunteers — college students, doctors, nurses and physical therapists — are getting the healthy glow that inevitably comes from helping kids like Vincent and their families thrive.



Vincent (left) looks forward to his weekly swimming sessions and time spent with Project HEALTH volunteers.



HEALTH ADVENTURES. When Fred Cole, executive director of Campbell County's Promise, Tenn., read about *Health Adventures*, he contacted the LaFollette Medical Center and suggested a partnership. *Health Adventures* is sponsored by the American Society of Directors of Volunteer Services and the American Hospital Association. The program teaches middle school students about the healthcare field. At LaFollette, two students learned about managing their asthma while visiting the respiratory therapy department. "I used to be afraid of going to the hospital, but after meeting all the nice people who work there and learning about what they do to help people, I'm really not afraid anymore," a student says.



FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES (FCA). This group promotes spirituality and healthy lifestyles through sports, camps and meetings called "huddles." FCA has committed to fulfilling all Five Promises for 700,000 youth at 12,000 high schools and colleges by 2002. The group is also expanding into urban areas and extending *One Way 2 Play*, an anti-drug program. Cary Casey, senior vice president of FCA, explains, "From a teamwork point of view, we really do need each other. We have made these promises, and we owe it to kids to keep them." He adds, "It helps us to be part of something bigger than us, not just in the faith community, but across the country."



BOCA RATON COMMUNITY HOSPITAL. Part of Boca Raton's Promise, the Florida hospital provides two full-time social workers, one to an elementary school and one to a middle school. Working on site, the social workers give kids immediate access to counseling on issues affecting their well-being. One first grader says, "I like it because I can share my feelings. It made me better." This program is an expansion of the school nurse program, which places full-time registered nurses in each of the city's 18 public schools as a free community service. Plans are in the works to build a new community health center. When it opens, Boca Raton's Promise will have a permanent office there.