

5-30-2017

Health & Kinesiology News

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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Health & Kinesiology News" (2017). *Health and Kinesiology, Department of - News*. 39.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/health-kinesiology-news-online/39>

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Getting Physical

May 30, 2017



Three Georgia Southern faculty have partnered with Bulloch County's Transitions Learning Center (TLC) to offer an optional physical activities program for 16 sixth through twelfth-grade students. Christina Gipson, Ph.D., assistant professor of sport management in the School of Health and Kinesiology, Bridget Melton, Ed.D., associate professor of physical activity in the School of Health and Kinesiology, Dawn Tysinger, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Leadership, Technology and Human Development, and first-year school psychology graduate student, Laura Veasey spent this past spring implementing the physical activity program. The TLC is an alternative school in Bulloch County that currently serves the general education needs of students who have been referred to the program and need a more non-traditional learning environment.

With no access to a gym, the physical activity program was held four times a week in the school cafeteria. "The school had minimal physical activity equipment," noted Gipson. Tony Pritchard, Ph.D., program coordinator for the School of Health and Kinesiology's Graduate Physical Education program, and CrossFit Boro helped supply equipment for the participants.

Before the physical activity program was implemented, students attended school from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with little to no physical activity. "Due to students being strictly on the computer for their classes, there was very limited opportunity for movement," noted Renee Perry, TLC school counselor. "The program encouraged students to become active and try new activities."

With the guidance of Gipson, Melton and Tysinger, Veasey developed the curriculum and workouts for the students. "I attempted to make the workouts fun for the students," stated Veasey. "Students are required to wear a uniform of khaki pants and white shirts while attending TLC, and on the days I demonstrated the activity, I dressed to match the students."

Activities were designed based on the student's age and skill level. Each activity included rules that encouraged participation of every student. Students were required to attend the physical activity program in the same structure as their general class structure and were only provided the opportunity to participate if they were in good-standing.

Perry expressed the students' excitement over getting to attend "PE" several times a week. Perry recalled one student in particular, who was new when the physical activity program was implemented, having an unsuccessful start at the TLC. "During the student's first time participating in the physical activity program, the student really got into the running and circuit training and would exceed the requests of the instructor. The student expressed liking to exercise and we began to see a difference in his classroom behavior. The student was proud of his skills in physical activity."

Students enrolled in the Introduction to Exercise Science course at Georgia Southern University were provided the opportunity to observe and assist with the first half of the program. The program received funding from the School of Health and Kinesiology in the College of Human Sciences and Tysinger donated the protocols needed for the research.

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