



# GET HEALTHY, GET SMART

## HEALTHY STUDENTS LEAD TO HEALTHY MINDS

**“Student health is a strong predictor of academic performance. Healthy, happy, active and well-nourished youth are more likely to attend school, be engaged and ready to learn. Yet an overwhelming number of students come to school with a myriad of health problems that compromise their ability to learn.”**

*The Critical Connection Between Student Health and Academic Attainment: How Schools and Policy Makers Can Achieve A Positive Impact*  
WestEd and the Philip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies  
University of California, San Francisco



Teachers exhibit and analyze their students’ work at a GHGS professional development workshop

### GHGS Focuses on the Whole Child

Urban Tech’s Youth Leadership Academy® “Get Healthy, Get Smart! (GHGS) initiative is the result of 16 years of research and development rooted in a belief that we must:

- ✓ Make the health and learning connection, and,
- ✓ Leverage technology to provide engaging and powerful learning experiences

The GHGS curriculum is designed to address students’ self esteem, personal development, awareness and knowledge about proper nutrition and the importance of daily exercise. It draws on Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behavior as basic strategy for changing adolescents’ health related behaviors.

- ✓ Increase the awareness of childhood obesity, a leading cause of increases in cases of diabetes, hypertension and cancer, and,
- ✓ teach students how to make healthy choices and adopt new behaviors that will eliminate the root causes.



### New York City Schools Experience Urban Tech’s YLA and Get Healthy, Get Smart! Initiative

From 2009–2011 Urban Tech implemented GHGS in 32 participating schools in 5th and 8th grade classrooms in Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and the Bronx. The curriculum was used in the context of guidance counseling, social work, spe-

cial education and core subject areas, linking to academic standards for Math, Science, Language Arts and Health. Urban Tech emphasizes professional development for teachers and school administrators and outreach to parents.

### Healthy Habits Challenge!

- Try a new fruit or vegetable this week.
- Skip the soda and drink water, tea, or juice.
- Walk an extra 5, 10 or 15 minutes daily - it all adds up!
- Get an annual physical and be sure to check your blood pressure, cholesterol and sugar levels.



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*“We’re focused on reading, we’re focused on writing, we’re focused on mathematics, we’re focused on social studies and sciences. We tend to forget the social-emotional. An initiative such as {YLA’s Get Healthy, Get Smart}, allows students to have some deep conversations with an adult in the classroom.”*

*Gale Reeves, Superintendent, District 5  
NYC Department of Education*

### Proven Results

The evaluation data have shown that students who participated in Get Healthy, Get Smart made greater health, academic and socio-emotional gains than students who have not. (Walker & Finkelstein, 2009)

- 100% of the teachers involved strongly agreed that a reduction in anti-social behaviors had been observed and documented an improvement in attendance records.
- 100% of teachers stated that the GHGS program “has contributed to the development of positive character traits in students”.
- Sixty-six percent of students reported learning that what they eat impacts their health in the future.
- Seventy-one percent of students reported a clear understanding of the link between health and nutrition.



Sixth grade students showcase their Get Healthy tips and health facts at Frederick Douglass Academy, West Harlem, New York City.

### YLA GHGS MODULES

SELF  
DISCOVERY

PERSONAL  
APPEARANCE

CONFLICT  
RESOLUTION

PERSONAL  
RELATIONSHIPS

HEALTHY  
HABITS

SUBSTANCE  
ABUSE  
PREVENTION