A recent Alameda County Public Health Department report, “Life and Death from Unnatural Causes,” finds that an African-American child born in West Oakland can expect to die almost 15 years earlier than a White person born in the Oakland Hills. Tiffanee Jones, Outreach Consultant for Hoover Elementary School located in West Oakland, says, “My children should not be subject to an early death just because they live in West Oakland. We’re working hard, and by any means necessary, to bring Hoover students everything they need to live healthy, happy, long lives.”

As one measure to address this stark health inequity, Hoover Elementary School’s Safety Committee (HSC), hosted a health fair on the Hoover campus for every one of their students. The five-day fair included health services such as vision, hearing, and dental screens; and wellness activities such as Body Mass Index (BMI) testing, asthma and nutrition education, and daily physical fitness activities sponsored by “Sports 4 Kids” and the “Triple Threat Academy.” In addition, the unique approach of this week-long health fair allowed for collection of survey data of student health needs. In total, the HSC brought in nearly $750,000 of free services and in-kind donations for this event.

The event was the result of coordination of services from multiple agencies by the HSC. The HSC is an active, dynamic committee convened and facilitated by the Oakland Unified School District. It seeks to improve the health and safety of all members of the Hoover community including the students and their families, the faculty and administration. The committee is comprised of parents from Hoover Elementary, and representatives of local organizations: People’s Grocery, M. Robinson Barker YMCA, Attitudinal Healing Connection, the Interagency Children’s Policy Council, and various programs and units at ACPHD. At ACPHD, Deborah Fowler-Jones was instrumental in coordinating service providers from various programs, including Nutrition Services, Dental Services, Public Health Nursing’s Community Health Team, the Diabetes program, and the Office of Dental Health. Other organizations involved in providing services at the health fair were: the Black Nurses Association, Oakland Unified School District Health Services, Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, East Bay Asian Youth Center (EBAYC), and the City/County Neighborhood Initiative.

“One of the most important aspects of the Hoover Fair,” an HSC member remarked, “is grade‐schoolers will have the chance to make the connection between traditional health services and prevention activities that will help them have longer, healthier lives.”

**Event Highlights**

- 270 students received dental screenings (all grades except 2nd due to field trip).
- 370 students in 17 classroom received dental education.
- 52 students had BMI calculated to screen for overweight or risk of overweight (5th grade).
- 58 students received asthma education & updated asthma action plans (1st grade).
- 175 students received vision & hearing screenings (1st, 2nd, and 5th grade).

The entire student body (340 students, K-5th grade) and teachers were invited to:

- Sample taste seasonal fruits and vegetables, and get great recipe ideas.
- Participate in physical activities and view a basketball demonstration on the school playground.
- Take part in a health parade and rally
The Hoover Elementary Health Fair included data collection to assess health status, current health habits and needs for services. Most of the data was collected through brief health surveys designed by the HSC and/or ACPHD Nutrition Services.

Additional data came from a body composition analysis for 44 5th grade students. Staff from the ACPHD Community Assessment, Planning, Education and Evaluation (CAPE) Unit provided the data entry and analysis.

The Dental Health Screening Survey showed that Hoover students are beginning to establish good dental habits, but the percentage reporting regular screening and dental visits could be improved.

The Vision and Hearing Screening Survey showed that while few children wore prescription eyewear or reported trouble hearing, many reported that they were being screened for these problems for the first time that day.

According to the “Good Eats” survey, about 1 in 5 Hoover Elementary Students did not eat breakfast.

Most students reported eating breakfast and lunch at the school. Many children liked the healthy snacks, and would even choose them over a less healthy alternative.

The body composition analysis found 41% of the 5th graders tested to be overweight or obese. This rate was slightly greater than the rate of 36% observed in Oakland 5th graders during the 2007-2008 Physical Fitness Test.

Overall, the Hoover Elementary School data showed that Hoover students have already established some good health habits, and that they are receptive to Healthy Eating. The data further demonstrate a continued need for nutrition and health programs at the school.

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1 The Body Mass Index is computed from both height and weight. The Centers for Disease Control defines overweight in children as having a Body Mass Index equal to or higher than 85% of children of the same age and gender. Obesity is defined as a BMI equal to or above 95% of comparable children.  
2 http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/PhysFitness/PFTest Dst2007.asp?cSelect=0161259^-- ^OAKLAND^UNIFIED-0000&cYear=2007-08&cChoice=PFTest3&RptNumber=0&Pageno=1