

CATCH “Whole Child” Programs to Help Michigan Schools Boost Students’ Physical and Mental Wellbeing

CATCH Global Foundation will train community ambassadors to bring Whole Child wellness programming to K-8 Michigan schools, thanks to a \$481,000 grant

AUSTIN, TX, USA, September 14, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Schools across Michigan will be able to receive high-quality health and wellness programming thanks to a generous \$481,000 grant from the [Michigan Health Endowment Fund](#) (Health Fund) to [CATCH Global Foundation](#) (CATCH),

expanding the reach of the “CATCH Michigan” project, which was piloted last year. In addition to bolstering academic achievement, the evidence-based Whole Child programs from CATCH have been proven to improve dietary habits, increase daily physical activity, and reduce obesity, all of which are factors that can directly impact immune health and mental wellbeing.

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Duncan Van Dusen, Founder & CEO of CATCH Global Foundation



CATCH will help schools focus on a Whole Child approach to education

The grant brings Whole Child programming to K-8 schools across the state by building a network of local ambassadors and guides who will provide implementation training and technical assistance for years to come. CATCH's unique coordination framework features embedded, school-wide Social & Emotional Learning (SEL) culture building alongside activities and resources to teach and reinforce healthy eating, physical activity, and other positive health behavior adoption.

Local campus wellness champions, several of whom come from pilot schools, will serve as “CATCH Guides,” coaching incoming school teams on

implementation. Speaking about her experience in the pilot year, elementary school physical education teacher Rachel Oswald remarked, "I felt that the support from CATCH with the check-ins and training was fantastic. In this odd school year CATCH really helped us have something positive to move towards."



"As schools and communities continue to cope with COVID, Whole Child efforts that promote kids' physical and mental wellbeing are critically needed," says CATCH founder & CEO Duncan Van Dusen. "We look forward to partnering with school districts and community-based organizations around the state to guide them in implementing CATCH to support students' health and learning."

This latest Health Fund grant will build on the success of the pilot year of the CATCH Michigan project, which involved 16 schools and laid the groundwork for a community-driven, scalable, and sustainable model for expanding CATCH Whole Child programming in Michigan. The CATCH Michigan advisory board of local stakeholders from the public health and education sectors will continue to support the project, while awareness building and recruitment activities will be bolstered through statewide partnerships with SHAPE Michigan – the professional association for health and physical education teachers – and the Michigan School Health Coordinators' Association (MiSHCA). Also completed during the pilot year was the identification of multiple state and federal sources of sustained funding support, which will ensure that progress made during the grant period will endure for years to come.

"The Health Fund is thrilled to continue our partnership with CATCH, extending the reach of the Whole Child model to thousands of new students," said Laurie Solotorow, program director at the Michigan Health Endowment Fund. "By coordinating with and bolstering existing health initiatives like SNAP-Ed, CATCH has a head start for sustainable success."

Schools and districts can learn more about the CATCH Michigan project and enroll as participants at catch.org/catch-michigan

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About the Michigan Health Endowment Fund

The Michigan Health Endowment Fund works to improve the health and wellness of Michigan residents and reduce the cost of healthcare, with a special focus on children and seniors. You can find more information about the Health Fund at mihealthfund.org.

About CATCH Global Foundation

The mission of CATCH Global Foundation is to improve children's health worldwide by developing, disseminating and sustaining the CATCH platform in collaboration with researchers at UTHealth. The Foundation links underserved schools and communities to the resources necessary to create and sustain healthy change for future generations. Learn more at catch.org

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