



PHILADELPHIA PARKS & RECREATION

After School Program Training Day



On October 24, Recreation Leaders and staff from all of the 82 [After School programs](#) joined nine Program Coordinators and instructors to learn specialty lessons to integrate into their after-school curriculum. These lessons reflected the newest developments in [the REACH system](#).

Launched in the fall of 2013, REACH offers various wellness activities and services to streamline and supplement After School programs and encourages an appreciation for the environment and outdoors, athletics and sports, the arts and establishing healthy habits through fitness. After a successful pilot at 21 After School sites, REACH is expanding and being incorporated into the remaining After School programs. All 82 programs will now have access to trainings, lesson plans, and scheduled visits from the specialty units. This includes Visual Arts, Mural Arts (the Arts & Artists Outdoors program), Sports and Athletics, Performing Arts, Nutrition and Fitness, Environmental Education, and Urban Agriculture.

Each After School program chose one or two staff members to represent their center at the training. These staff members attended a class from each of the Program Coordinators to learn a lesson that they could bring back to their center. Staff learned how to make paper butterflies with Visual Arts and Mural Arts, using supplies that should be available at most, if not all, centers. In the Sports and Athletics class, they learned how to create a makeshift agility ladder to get their students active, even in small indoor spaces. In the Performing Arts class, they were given “Anti-Bored Boards,” a large bingo card paired with a list of detailed performing arts activities. In the Health and Fitness class, all of the staff members got on their feet and learned some new dance moves in a lively session of Zumba. In the Nutrition class, the participants learned about an upcoming partnership with Urban Agriculture to add more gardens at new sites. In Environmental Education and Outdoor Awareness, staff learned about new resources they can access for nature activities. And in Urban Agriculture, they were able to see and smell plants from actual recreation center gardens. Additionally, the staff

members received a binder with a collection of example lesson plans and list of resources and tools compiled by each Program Coordinator to bring back to their center.

The Program Coordinators also had the opportunity to inform staff about the easiest and most effective ways they can access updated information from each program, such as a newsletter or website. Furthermore, coordinators used this time to introduce additional classes, contests and events that will be offered to After School programs. For example, Urban Agriculture will be starting a garden wagon program, where they bring a fully functioning garden in a wagon to any center that requests a visit. Performing Arts will be holding a talent show in December, open to any kid enrolled in an After School program. They will also send staff to specific sites to practice the talents with the participating children. Environmental Education has an assortment of “nature boxes” with tools and resources for outdoor games and activities, which are available to be loaned out to recreation centers. Visual Arts informed and encouraged the staff to participate in the upcoming visual arts contests, where various prizes are awarded to the winners.

In addition to the new activities and lessons, the staff members attended a lesson plan-building and calendar-planning workshop. They learned how to manage and effectively fill the time between 3 and 6pm with new REACH programs and other necessary activities, like homework and snack time. The recreation center staff will be able to bring this new information and resources back to their centers to teach the remaining staff and begin incorporating into their activities. If they like, they can still request supplemental visits from staff members in each specialty program area to teach a lesson or activity. More trainings are being scheduled so that After School program staff will have the opportunity to continue to learn new ideas and updates from the Program Coordinators.

