



UnitedHealth Group®

## Giving Kids a Grant, and a Workout

### Overview

UnitedHealth Group serves more than 75 million people worldwide, touching nearly every aspect of healthcare. Since its inception in 1974, UnitedHealth Group and its affiliated companies have led the marketplace through innovations that make healthcare services more accessible and affordable for customers, improve the quality and coordination of healthcare services, and help individuals and their physicians make more informed healthcare decisions.

### Social Responsibility Challenge

According to the Centers for Disease Control, more than 30 percent of young people are overweight or obese, and a staggering 60 percent have at least one avoidable risk factor for heart disease. Among low-income and minority children, obesity rates are even higher than the national average.

“With UnitedHealth HEROES, we are helping young people take action to improve their overall health and quality of life in a way that’s not only educational, but beneficial for their communities. As people become more aware of health issues through health literacy and advocacy initiatives, they will make positive changes to live healthier lives,” said Kate Rubin, UnitedHealth Group vice president of social responsibility.

### Solutions

UnitedHealth HEROES seeks to reverse these daunting statistics by encouraging young people to design creative solutions that will break unhealthy living patterns.

UnitedHealth Group, through a collaboration with Youth Service America, has awarded more than 700 grants of up to \$1,000 each to schools and community centers in 49 states and the District of Columbia. These HEROES projects must demonstrate a clear understanding of the health risks associated with pediatric obesity, propose creative solutions to fight obesity in their communities, and most important, be youth-led.

The hands-on, peer-to-peer service-learning format of HEROES grants helps kids retain new information and can lead to improved behaviors and better educational outcomes, says Rubin.

For example, 750 students in Maryland created an indoor greenhouse at their school to teach students about nutrition, food, and growing plants. And at the Greater Peoria YMCA in Illinois, 55 seventh graders led 350 younger kids in heart healthy games and conversations about why and how to choose healthy foods.



### Measurement/Results

- During 2010, more than 20,000 children and youth logged more than 436,000 volunteer hours serving more than 100,000 people in their communities to help reduce childhood obesity.
- More than 330 additional grants were awarded for 2011 projects.
- In a recent survey, more than 99 percent of respondents agreed that UnitedHealth HEROES projects improved youth participant knowledge and awareness of childhood obesity, and helped students adopt healthier behaviors.
- In that same study, nearly 98 percent of respondents agreed that their UnitedHealth HEROES projects helped improve overall health and well-being, reduced the risk of childhood obesity in their communities, and enhanced student participant workforce and civic engagement skills.

### Other SR Involvement

- Seventy-seven percent of employees and 95 percent of UnitedHealth Group executives volunteer each year.
- Employees surpassed an annual volunteer hours goal two months early, with a total of more than 200,000 hours logged in 2010, worth more than \$4 million.
- A partnership with Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit educational organization behind Sesame Street® was recently launched, creating a bilingual educational outreach program to help low-income families make food choices that are affordable, nutritional, and lay the foundation for lifelong healthy habits.

**Organization:** UnitedHealth Group

**Location:** Minnetonka, Minnesota

**Website:** [www.unitedhealthgroup.com](http://www.unitedhealthgroup.com)

**Founded:** 1974

**Employees:** 87,000



*Photos: UnitedHealth HEROES grants help children gain hands-on nutritional education.*