



HealthMatters

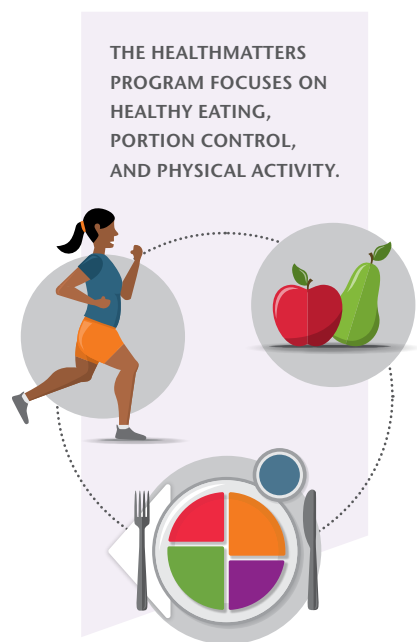
The Fight Against Obesity Rates in Individuals with Intellectual Disability

THE HEALTHMEET® PROJECT strives to improve the health and wellness of individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID). Through this project, The Arc provided free health assessments in five states throughout the U.S., created and disseminated resources for families and individuals with ID, and created an array of training events for individuals with disabilities, caregivers, health professionals, and the general public. One of the most popular training activities was the HealthMatters™ program.

HealthMatters

HealthMatters was developed by the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). This 36-session, 12-week course is an **EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM** designed specifically to meet the needs of individuals with ID. The program focuses on healthy eating, portion control, and physical activity. Each session concentrates on a different health message and includes an exercise component that encourages participants to stay active. The curriculum includes learner objectives, materials needed and trainer instructions to support the successful implementation of the program.

Between 2012 and 2016 The Arc hosted ten **HEALTHMATTERS TRAIN-THE-TRAINER COURSES** taught by UIC personnel. The seven in-person courses (Chicago, IL, Boston, MA, Austin, TX, San Francisco, CA, and Indianapolis, IN) and three national webinars were held to certify 236 individuals from 99 organizations throughout the country. The Arc's expectation was that these new trainers and their organizations would implement the HealthMatters program in their local communities.



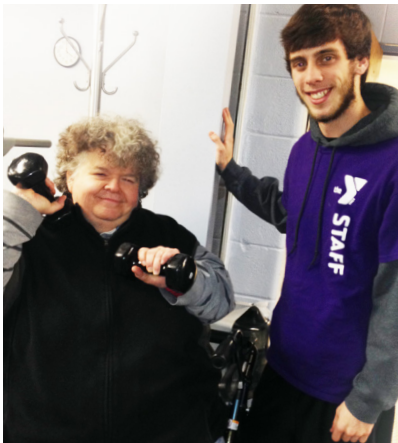
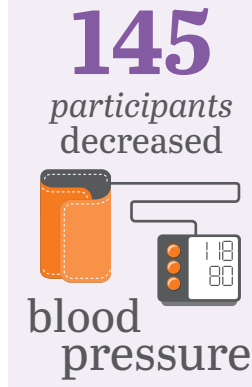
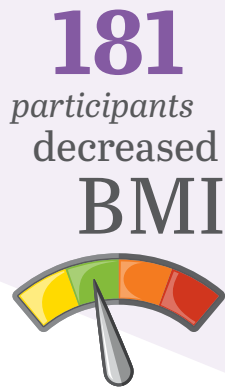


Improved Health and Wellness

In order to understand the impact on health and wellness, The Arc asked organizations to obtain data from participants on the first and last days of the 12-week program. This data included height, weight, BMI, and blood pressure. During the four-year period 50 HealthMatters programs were implemented with 542 individuals with ID. Participant ages ranged from 14 to 75. Throughout the program, these individuals collectively lost a total of 686 pounds and 181 participants experienced a decrease in their BMI levels. Additionally, 145 participants decreased their blood pressure level at the end of the program.



Out of **542** Participants:



Continued Success

The success of this program inspired The Arc to create the **HEALTH AND FITNESS FOR ALL** program, funded by the Walmart Foundation and the Amerigroup Foundation. This program, implemented by five chapters of The Arc in 2015 – 2016, uses the HealthMatters curriculum and additional strategies to continue to educate individuals with ID about healthy eating and ways to stay physically active. The Arc intends to continue to expand the Health and Fitness for All program giving additional chapters of The Arc and other disability organizations throughout the U.S. the knowledge and skills needed to help battle obesity among individuals with ID.

