What is the Force for Health Program?

The Force for Health is a versatile curricular enrichment program that provides students with online content for personal and community health advancement. As a part of the program, students will form a Force for Health team to implement self-driven service learning projects that encourage students to think critically and become more involved in the community. Importantly, our Force for Health service learning projects allow for highly individualized experiences that let students use and advance their particular skills, such as writing, the arts, music, dance, theater or film, through the utilization of STEM content, social media advocacy, and community engagement. Upon the completion of their projects, students will have the opportunity to share their good works with others at the Force for Huntingdon Leadership Conference in the spring.

In Ohio last year, the spring leadership event involved 1000 students from 100 high schools in 30 counties at a local medical school. This year's event will take place in May at Juniata College, where the students will have a chance to share their projects with each other, faculty and staff, and visitors from colleges and healthcare systems.

The program will be supported by professional development workshops this year in conjunction with the Tuscarora Intermediate Unit. Instructional support will be provided by Juniata College students trained to help mentor the students throughout their journey of creating a culture of wellness within the local schools and broader community.

The Force for Health Mission Statement

Through a community centered approach that identifies all of the socioecological factors that affect health, the Force for Health encourages individuals to live healthier lives, while helping friends, family, and community members to do the same. Utilizing service learning projects to promote health education and health advocacy, we aim to foster better health outcomes through meaningful service to the community.

Goals and Objectives

Program goals:

- o To promote health equity and cultural diversity by enabling individuals to gain a greater understanding of the social determinants of health and their impacts;

- o To empower individuals to make an investment in their health by giving them resources to become more health literate;

- o To provide leadership and development opportunities for students through service based learning projects;

- o To enable students to work with community agencies and become more involved in the community;

- o To facilitate a pipeline to professional experience in which students are exposed to the opportunities in the health professions

To meet the above goals, the program has the following objectives:

- o Assist individuals looking to identify personal and community health concerns

- o Provide resources for increased health literacy and advocacy

- o Recruit undergraduates students who are willing to facilitate Force for Health service learning projects in the local high schools

- o Prepare the students to engage in meaningful service and provide support when questions arise

- o Encourage interdisciplinary learning by allowing students to integrate and apply what they are learning to benefit the community

The Force for Health Experience

1. ## Get introduced to the Force for Health as a new Member

   Students become "Members" by taking a pledge, a simple self-assessment, and setting a personal goal. Students utilize our LEARN IT, LIVE IT, SHARE IT, approach to increase their own health literacy through the Force for Health resources, including an online health academy and community health directory.

2. ## Become an Ambassador

   Students become "Ambassadors", gaining the opportunity to study topics more in depth through online courses on the Force for Health Academy. Topics include fitness, nutrition, tobacco, common chronic diseases, bullying, and community health worker training, with additional content being added regularly. Students also have access to STEM related content, augmented reality tools, anatomical models and physiologic instructional videos.

3. ## Conduct an IDEAS service learning project

   I   Identify a community need

   D   Design and Develop a plan for a project to advocate for a heath concern

   E   Engage and Execute the project with others

   A   Assess and Analyze the outcome and impact of the project

   S   Share the outcome of the project with the community

4. ## Attend The Force for Huntingdon Leadership Conference in the Spring

   Students will have an opportunity to present their IDEAS projects, receive feedback, and interact other students who completed IDEAS projects at a leadership conference held at Juniata College in the spring.

Program Execution

o The Force for Health will provide online educational resources to facilitate increased heath literacy and service learning

o 8th – 12th grade students from schools in Huntingdon County will be encouraged to complete the Force for Health Program's IDEAS projects

o Force for Health Mentors from Juniata College will provide biweekly support to the students completing IDEAS projects

o The Force for Health will host a leadership conference in the Spring for students to present their projects and learn with students from other schools

Requirements:

The program requires computers with internet access to utilize the Force for Health online resources

o Membership: requires 1-2 hours of online experience

o Ambassadorship: self-paced and can be as little as one hour online to a 100 hour Community Health Worker training, commencing in January

o The TEAM I.D.E.A.S projects are set to have an hour a week face to face meeting to accomplish the project and presentation by the end of the school year, with about 20 anticipated sessions

Outcomes:

Student Co-Curricular Learning Outcomes

1. Improved student attitude toward service
2. Increased health literacy and sense of empowerment
3. Identification of community needs and resources
4. Increased critical thinking skills and interpersonal development

Community Impact Outcomes

1. Increased public awareness of key issues
2. Strengthened partnerships between schools and community organizations
3. Community needs met through the service projects conducted