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Kids' healthy lifestyle program celebrates important milestone

A free healthy lifestyle program for children is celebrating reaching an important milestone after helping 500 local families to improve their health and wellbeing.

Go4Fun supports 7-13 year olds and their families to adopt long-lasting and healthy lifestyle choices to become fitter, healthier and happier.

The program encourages children, who are above their ideal weight, to take responsibility for their own health and shows parents and/or carers how they can help their whole family make healthier choices.

10-year-old Mac Thow has made significant lifestyle changes since he joined his local Go4Fun program in Hurstville altering what he eats as well as increasing the amount of physical activity he does.

Mac now makes better food choices and he goes for a walk two or three times a week.

He says one of the most important things he has learnt from the program is how to read food labels and what he enjoyed most was the sport and games he got to play.

Mac's mum, Keshena, said she has seen her son become fitter and adopt better eating habits since he enrolled in the program.

"As a family our eating habits and levels of physical activity have improved as have my relationships with my children because we are spending more time together," she said.

Linda Trotter, local Go4Fun Coordinator at the Health Promotion Service, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District said the Thow family is just one of 500 families who have benefited locally from the program since it was established three years ago.

"The program is a really positive and enjoyable family experience and shows how exercise can be fun for children who may not enjoy traditional team sports," she said.

"It focuses on improving eating habits, fitness, teamwork and overall health. Many children who take part in the 10-week program achieve a healthier weight for their age and height, which results in them not only being fitter and healthier but also gives them a boost to their confidence and makes them feel like they've accomplished something really important."

The weekly sessions are held after school or on weekends during term time at locations across the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District. They are delivered by specially trained health and fitness specialists and include informative games, activities, tips on healthy food, how to read food labels and portion size.

They are designed to improve the child's self-esteem and confidence and build a foundation for long-term healthy living.

Local results of the program show:

- An increase in the number of days of physical activity from two to three;

- An extra four hours per week of physical activity;
- A reduction of four hours per week spent on sedentary activities like watching TV.

Registrations for the next school term are now open. To register or find out more about program locations, please visit www.go4fun.com.au or call local Go4Fun coordinator Linda Trotter on 9382 8641.

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For more information or interviews contact Alison Purdy on 9382 8226 or 0482 682 722.