



Contact: Erica Stimac
Erica@commonthreads.org
312.329.2501 ext. 208

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COMMON THREADS ANNOUNCES 2010 PROGRAM EVALUATION KEY FINDINGS

*National Non-Profit Served 12,333 Healthy Affordable Meals During
After-School, Summer Camp Programming*

CHICAGO (MAY 2011) – Common Threads, the national non-profit organization that teaches low-income children to cook wholesome, affordable ethnic meals, is excited to release the 2010 program evaluation findings. With headquarters in Chicago, Common Threads has impacted over 4,000 students and parents annually in Chicago, Miami, DC and LA.

“With childhood obesity at alarming levels, it is critical for us to focus resources on reversing this trend of generations of non-cookers and educating families on the importance of nutrition and physical well-being. This is really as simple as making home-cooked family meals a priority,” says Executive Director Linda Novick O’Keefe. “We are serious about our theory of change. Our approach to teach, build and empower, positions our families for success to achieve a higher outcome of taking part in the family meal--studies indicate that families that eat together 3-4 nights a week, those children are less likely to be obese, drink, smoke, do drugs and receive better grades.”

Through a partnership with the University of Illinois at Chicago’s Center for Urban Economic Development, Common Threads’ 2010 programs revealed the following key findings:

- 66% of children feel they can cook all the time with the skills they have learned at Common Threads
- 54% of children said that in Common Threads classes they get to do things they usually do not get to do anywhere else
- 91% of children said they learned new things about different cultures at Common Threads
- 66% of families reported they have used the recipes given in class at home
- 79% of parents reported that their child has asked to participate in cooking at home several times since starting Common Threads
- 97% of parents reported that their child has asked to help with grocery shopping at least once since starting Common Threads
- 99% of parents said that they have seen at least some improvement in their child’s self-esteem (67% reported a lot of improvement)

Common Threads measures outcomes through three pillars of impact. First, is **teach** –build knowledge and skills of healthy eating and lifestyle and increase access to tools and resources that promote healthy decision making. Second, is **build** – increase children’s confidence in the kitchen and beyond, inspiring sense of ownership and responsibility through teamwork and inspiring respect and appreciation for new cultures and experiences. Third, is **empower** – inspiring children and parents to make healthy food decisions together, empower families to cook and eat together and raise community support for children’s health and nutrition.

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