



**TRANSPORTATION
ALTERNATIVES**

Evaluation of the Harvest Home Play Street: Summer 2010

Prepared by the New York Academy of Medicine's
Center for Evaluation

In collaboration with:
Strategic Alliance for Health
Harvest Home Farmer's Markets
Transportation Alternatives

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KEY FINDINGS FROM EVALUATION OF 2010 HARVEST HOME PLAY STREETS

FROM OBSERVATIONAL SURVEYS AND DISCUSSIONS WITH PROGRAM STAFF:

Utilization of Harvest Home Play Streets:

- Over 1200 youth attended two play street locations in July and August 2010
- People of all ages visited the Harvest Home Farmers Market on the same block
- Visible activity encourages participation in Play Streets
- Youth were primarily engaged in programmed physical or educational activities, not socializing

FROM STREET INTERCEPT SURVEYS (N=133)

Play Streets Promote Physical Activity:

- Forty-four percent (44%) of those surveyed at both sites reported engaging in physical activity while at the PS.
- **If not at the Play Street, 64% of Play Street attendees reported that they would have been engaged in a sedentary activity.**
 - 46% of those who reported that they would have otherwise been engaged in a sedentary activity reported participation in a physical activity at the Play Street.
- Twenty three percent (23%) reported that they typically only spend time outdoors once a week.
- People walk to Play Streets and engage in physical activity while on site. The majority of individuals surveyed across both sites walked to the Play Street that day (71%).

Play Streets Engage People Not Necessarily Seeking Out Physical Activity:

- Majority of those surveyed were visiting the Play Street for the 1st time (60%)
- The majority (68%) of respondents reported living within 10 blocks from the Play Street. Eighty-three percent (83%) lived within 20 blocks.
- The majority (77%) of those surveyed reported learning about the Play Street from someone they know, whether it was from friends, family, a teacher, or their colleague.
 - The next largest percent of attendees surveyed learned about the Play Street when they arrived on the scene (17%), including those walking around the area near their home.

Play Streets Engage Local Residents and Build Community Support:

- Eight-two percent (82%) reported that it was either “very important” or “important” to have a Play Street near their home.
- Ninety-two percent (92%) reported they would tell their friends and neighbors to come to a Play Street.
- Ninety-two percent (92%) said that they felt safe from car traffic at the PS.
- Eighty-four percent (84%) reported that they felt the neighborhood is safer with a Play Street.

Play Streets and Farmers Markets Work Well Together:

- 11% of Play Street attendees reportedly learned about it while visiting the Harvest Home Farmer’s Market on the same street.
- Play Streets filled unutilized portions of a street permitted to be closed for a farmers market with physical activities for youth that made the street feel safe. The apparent demand for Play Streets and the bureaucratic ease through which this collaboration occurred speaks to the need for a more streamlined application process for Play Streets more generally.

Background:

The Harvest Home Farmer's Market, Transportation Alternatives (TA), and Strategic Alliance for Health (SAfH), collaboratively developed the Harvest Home Play Street program, and implemented two Play Streets in July and August 2010 in East Harlem and the South Bronx that reoccurred nine times. Play Streets are regular streets that are officially closed to traffic for use by community residents during regularly scheduled times. They feature a variety of activities, ranging from programmed and spontaneous physical activities to arts, crafts, and other educational programs. Play Streets are often developed in order to increase access to open space, improve the health and wellbeing of children, foster childhood development, increase traffic safety and reduce air pollution, and connect residents of the community with one another.

In order to develop the Harvest Home Play Street, the Harvest Home Farmers Market offered the use of free and empty street space available on regularly occurring market days. This offer included coverage under existing street closure permits held by the Harvest Home Farmers Market, allowing Play Street organizers to bypass the complex and lengthy process of applying for a street closure permit with the Department of Transportation. This benefit enabled organizers to focus instead on building community involvement and programming for the two Play Streets.

The main goal of the Harvest Home Play Street (HHPS) program is to increase physical activity among community residents, particularly youth. Both HHPS programs occurred in low income neighborhoods with high numbers of youth under 18 years of age. According to data from the 2000 Census, 38% of East Harlem residents live below the poverty line, and in the South Bronx, the number climbs to 41%. Twenty eight percent of East Harlem residents and 35% of those in the South Bronx are under 17 years of age. Furthermore, the impetus to increase physical activity among youth in these communities comes from the growing rates of obesity. In East and Central Harlem, more than 1 in 4 children in Head Start programs and public elementary schools are obese, and more than 4 in 10 are overweight or obese.¹ In the South Bronx, nearly 1 in 3 children in Head Start programs and 1 in 4 in public elementary schools are obese, and almost half are overweight or obese.² Being situated in the middle of large public housing complexes with nearby under-utilized playgrounds, HHPSs sought to offer a safe space to engage youth in physical activities as well as other creative and educational programming that otherwise did not exist or was difficult to access.

Programming for each play street was developed in collaboration with a wide variety of organizations dedicated to increasing access to physical fitness and good nutrition in New York City. A local non-profit arts organization also participated in the East Harlem Play Street. A full list of organizations that participated in the HHPSs, and flyers detailing scheduled programming can be found in Appendix A. HHPSs were scheduled as follows:

- The East Harlem HHPS took place on Thursdays at E. 104th between 2nd and 3rd Aves from July 15th – August 26th. Of the seven Play Streets planned, six were successfully implemented and one was cancelled due to rain.

¹Matte T, Gordon C, Goodman A, SelenicD, Young C, DeitcherD. Obesity in East and Central Harlem: A look across generations. New York, NY: New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, 2007.

²Matte T, Ellis JA, BedellJ, SelenicD, Young C, DeitcherD. Obesity in the South Bronx: A look across generations. New York, NY: New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, 2007.

- The South Bronx Play Street on Wednesday's at Forrest Avenue between 156th and Westchester from July 28th to August 25th. Of the five Play Streets planned, three were successfully implemented. One was cancelled due to rain, and the other to due need for greater security at the site. Details are provided below.

Evaluation Methods:

A street intercept survey and an observational survey instrument were collaboratively developed by TA, Harvest Home, SAfH, and NYAM. The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Built Environment Unit also offered feedback and suggestions to the survey instruments. The surveys and protocol were submitted to NYAM's Institutional Review Board, which determined that the research was exempt from review. A copy of the English language surveys can be found in Appendix B. The street intercept survey was also translated into Spanish.

The street intercept survey was administered by interns from the East Harlem District Public Health Office. They randomly sampled individuals attending each play street, with the goal of surveying as many attendees as possible, but no less than 20 within each four hour play street period. Though the street intercept survey was translated into Spanish, limited availability of Spanish speaking staff to administer the survey resulted in only seven completed Spanish surveys. Findings from these surveys are reported along with those in English.

Since programming sought to encourage physical activity, primarily among youth, individuals less than 18 years of age were included within the sample. The youth surveyed were typically over 10 years of age, though surveyors did not ask for exact age, but rather age range. Youth under ten, who were visibly the largest share of the population attending each play street, were not selected for surveying as the survey was not written or intended for small children. All participants in the survey were clearly informed that their participation was voluntary and anonymous. Surveyors were clearly identified with the HHPS program through TA T-shirts and DPHO name badges.

Observational surveys were completed for each of the sixteen Play Streets. They included a mix of quantitative tallies and qualitative subjective observations about the Play Street and its implementation. The observational survey complimented the street intercept survey because it allowed for data to be collected on activities of youth under 10 years of age. Observations of the Play Street were made each day it was implemented by interns who were also administering the street intercept surveys. Observers were instructed to note participation by different age groups across a range of activities, including programmed and un-programmed physical activities, programmed sedentary activity and arts/ crafts; informal socializing; visiting the farmers market, and any other activity. Participant counts were made at a single point in time, and represent the total number of individuals participating across the entire range of activities on the Play Street at that moment in time. Therefore, the observational counts represent a snapshot of activity at the Play Streets, and do not represent the total number of individuals who participated in Play Street activities that day. A separate total daily tally was made as individuals arrived at the Play Streets.

In addition to the daily snapshot of activity tallies, observers were asked to reflect on various questions, including the weather conditions and their impact on the Play Street, the availability of adult supervision for activities, the successes and challenges of the day, the comments they had heard about the Play Street, and descriptions of any other observations of note.

Finally, additional information about program implementation was gathered through discussions with HHPS program staff, volunteers, and their organizing partners. These discussions focused on the process of implementation as well as challenges and successes of the HHPSs.

Findings:

Observational Survey:

A total of 14 observational surveys were completed for the HHPSs. Ten were completed for seven East Harlem Play Streets. More than one person reported observations for two East Harlem Play Streets, and one observation report simply stated the reason it was cancelled. Five observation reports were completed for each of the five Bronx Play Streets, including two for cancelled Play Streets stating the reason.

It is estimated that over twelve hundred youth attended HHPSs in the summer of 2010. The HHPSs offered a wide variety of physical and educational activities, and attracted large numbers of individuals, especially youth, at each neighborhood site. A chart offering a snapshot of programming and attendance at each site can be seen in Appendix C.

HHPS program staff report that they initiated outreach to local summer camps and daycares in order to kick start the play street program. They believed that in order to have a successful play street there needed to be a large presence of youth on the street, and that their presence would in turn draw more youth. This impression was confirmed by camp counselors and day care instructors who explained that they felt more comfortable bringing their youth if other youth were present, and that youth would be intimidated to initiate play if the streets were empty.

It was observed that attendance at the HHPSs varied throughout each day, appearing relatively quite when random individuals and one or two small groups were present to vibrant and crowded when one or more large groups arrived at the same time. Observers noted people of all ages visiting the Farmers Market on the same block as the play street. However, the majority of those engaged in play street activities were estimated to be less than 10 years of age. An overview of activity for this age group can be seen in Table 1.

Relay races were among the most popular programmed physical activities of the Play Streets, followed by rugby. Each was organized by a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting that sport. Impromptu activities such as singing and dancing, jump rope and hula hoop were also highly popular. Creative activities such as drawing with chalk, arts and crafts, and scheduled performances were available and attracted attendance as well.

Table 1: Attendance Estimates at Play Street by Location

	Total	East Harlem	Bronx
HHPS Attendance Count (youth)	1215	855	360
Visiting Farmers Market all ages	310	265	45
Snapshot of Activity Counts: <10 YRS			
Physical Activity			
Relay Races	387	292	95
Rugby	196	121	75
Dancing/ Singing	166	53	113
Jump Rope	156	113	43
Hula Hoop	139	97	42
Soccer	125	97	28
Yoga	68	68	n/a
Hopscotch	48	19	29
Montefiore Throwing Zone	24	n/a	24
Boot Camp	15	n/a	15
Karate*	12	12	n/a
Double Dutch	12	12	0
Creative/ Educational Activities			
Drawing with chalk	179	130	49
Dance Performances	122	90	32
Nutrition workshops	62	28	34
Arts workshops	54	54	n/a
Communities Diabetes Center	23	23	n/a
Socializing/ Talking	20	8	12
Recycling Workshop*	9	9	n/a

*Denotes activities that were offered on a limited basis.

Program staff described teaching youth how to jump rope, play hopscotch, and hula hoop. They explained that most youth did not know how to double-dutch, or jump between two jump ropes, yet when performed, it was noted. HHPS program staff noted the low number of children who spent their time socializing and talking with their friends. Instead, the majority of kids enjoyed participating in the many available activities with their peers.

It was visibly observed that the majority of youth engaged in the HHPSs came from local summer camps recruited by HHPS program staff in the preceding days and weeks. Camps would often confirm the time that they planned to bring their youth so that the HHPSs program staff could avoid overcrowding and encourage consistent rather than sporadic attendance at the HHPS throughout the day. A complete list of participating camps can be found in Appendix D. Camp counselors would bring 20-30 kids to the HHPSs at one time, and allow them to engage in its programmed activities. Camp youth and counselors were often identified through t-shirts of a single bright color bearing their camp's logo. The large number of youth under 10 may be attributable to the involvement of summer camps.

Though children under 10 were the dominant age group, the HHPs did attract and engage youth over 10 as well (Table 2).

Table 2: Average Number of Individuals Estimated in Physical Activities at Daily Measurement Time by Age Range

	<10	11-15	16-20	21-30	31-59	60+
East Harlem	158	11	1	1	0	0
South Bronx	183	23	4	0	1	0

Youth between 10 and 15 years of age appear to be the next largest group of individuals engaged in play street activities, although significantly fewer in numbers than the younger children. Though many of the youth were part of summer camps, HHPs organizers and program staff explained that many camp youth would otherwise not have been exposed to many kinds of structured physical activity offered at the Play Streets, such as relay races, rugby, and soccer. They contend that local summer camp programs mostly supervise youth engaged in unstructured outdoor activity, such as playing in a designated area of a city park or going to a swimming pool, or they engage youth in indoor activities. With limited number of slots available in summer camps in each target neighborhood, many youth are left without any kind of structured activity. As the HHPs proceeded from week to week, an increasing number of non-camp youth were seen in attendance.

Both East Harlem and the Bronx experienced one cancelled play street due to rain. The Bronx also cancelled a play street on August 18, 2010 due to an incident that took place the week before (August 11, 2010), in which an adult male from the neighborhood parked his car in the middle of the play street and played loud, explicit music. Though he was convinced to play more child friendly music, SAfH sought police protection for the remaining weeks, and it was not yet in place by August 18th.

This incident appeared to be an anomaly; observers were directed to note anything they found to be unsafe or illegal and no one reported such activity except on this one day. The most common assessment of the situation was that “it was safe.” One person noted that cars were moving in the area of the play street and that may have been “dangerous” for children (7/22/10). All observers noted that adults were actively supervising children and youth on days when the Play Streets were implemented.

Observers were asked to describe one success of each play street. Some days observers would simply note, “soccer” (E. Harlem 7/29) or “yoga” (E. Harlem 7/22). Other days observers provided more detail. On 8/11, an observer in the Bronx noted: “Zumba dance was very popular. The instructor was full of energy and the kids loved it. In fact, we had people of all ages (very young to over 60 years old) participating in Zumba dance.” On 8/26 an observer in E. Harlem noted “Senator Serrano stopped by the play street to talk to the volunteers and see the play street in action. Also, a reporter from the NY Daily News stopped by at 10am to see the play street since she had heard about it.”

The most common challenge noted by observers was the parked cars. Cars reduced the space available for play street activities and created a hazard if moved during the play street. Though “No-Parking” signs were placed on cars the day before informing residents of the impending play street, cars remained parked on the street at the beginning of each play street. By August, the police department began towing cars that remained in the HHPs area, moving them to a nearby parking lot without giving them a ticket. This was likely in response to efforts by SAfH staff to raise awareness of Play Streets, including visiting the police department and inviting the Police Captain to visit the HHPs. The police

started towing cars in the third week, after the Captain's visit. Play Streets were delayed half an hour to an hour until the car removal had been completed. The only other challenge noted was overcrowding at play street activities. This was also a testament to its success.

Finally, observers were encouraged to paraphrase and document any comments that they heard about the Play Street. On July 29th, an observer in E. Harlem noted, "they like these activities and they want more of them." On August 5th, an observer in E. Harlem noted, "People thought it was neat that we had SO many activities going on. Art for Change was making tie-dye flowers, yoga for the children, Road Runners' obstacle course, etc". On August 11th, an observer in the Bronx noted that she heard someone saying "as long as you keep having Play Street, we will keep coming." Also on that same day, someone told her "we came on Monday looking for Play Streets but you weren't here." She informed them that it only operated on Wednesdays in that location.

Intercept Survey:

A total of 133 individuals completed the HHPSS street intercept survey at one of the nine implemented Play Streets that took place in July and August 2010. Seventy eight percent (N=104) of the surveys were completed by participants in East Harlem, which had twice as many days on which to draw a sample.

Play Street Access:

The majority of those who completed the survey were female (67%), and over 18 years of age (74%) (Table 3). More youth under 18 were sampled in the Bronx than in East Harlem (34% vs. 23%). The majority at both sites were surveyed on their first visit to the play street (60%).

Table 3: Play Street Access

	% East Harlem		
	% Total (N=133)	(N=104)	% Bronx (N=29)
Gender			
Female	67	65	72
Male	33	35	28
Age group			
Under 18	26	23	34
18 to 30	31	34	24
31 to 59	39	39	38
60 or above	4	4	3
First time at Play Street			
Yes	60	63	48
No	40	37	52
Attended Play Street			
Alone	13	12	17
With Own Children	19	21	10
With Someone Else's Children	23	21	28
With Teacher/ Counselor	40	36	55
With Friends/ Family	10	13	0

Of those attending the HHPs, 13% attended on their own, without accompaniment; 11% of those attending alone were under 18 years of age. Forty two percent attended with their own or someone else's children, and 40% reported attending the Play Street with their teacher or counselor. Sixty percent of those who attended the Play Street with their teacher or counselor were under 18 years of age. These responses were not mutually exclusive.

The majority of individuals surveyed across both sites walked to the play street (71%), followed by subway (23%) (Table 4). None of the participants rode their bike or took a taxi. The majority (68%) of respondents reported living within 10 blocks from the play street; 83% lived within 20 blocks. Only 17% reported living in another borough.

Table 4: Respondent Characteristics Regarding Attendance

	% Total (N=133)
Arrived at PS by	
Walking	71
Subway	23
Other	5
Estimated # of blocks from home to PS	
0 – 1	21
2 – 7	27
8 – 10	5
11 – 19	5
Around 10 (2-10 unspecified)	15
Around 20 (with same borough)	10
In another borough	17
Learned about PS (from)	
Friend, family, teacher, workplace	77
Upon arrival	17
Harvest Home Farmer's Market	11
Newsletter, flyer	6
Other	2
Planned to stay at PS	
Less than 1 hour	33
1 – 2 hours	48
2 – 3 hours	16
Don't know/ prefer not to answer	3

The majority (77%) of those surveyed reported learning about the play street from someone they know, whether it was from friends, family, a teacher, or their colleague. The next largest percent of attendees surveyed learned about the play street when they arrived (17%), including those walking around the area near their home. Eleven percent learned about it while visiting the Harvest Home Farmer's Market, and a small percentage (6%) learned about it through a newsletter or flyers. One individual male over 60 years of age reportedly "noticed it by looking out the window" of his home; he subsequently came with his kids and planned to stay about an hour.

Contextualizing Activity at the HHPSs:

Among those surveyed, 44% across both sites reported engaging in physical activity while at the play street (Table 5). The majority (55%) of the survey respondents reported that they were watching kids as they played; this response captures activities of camp counselors, parents, and others who brought children to the Play Streets, and who were the largest share of those surveyed.

Table 5: Activity at the Play Street and Beyond by Location (N=133)

	% Total (N=133)	% East Harlem (N=104)	% Bronx (N=29)
Reported activity at Play Street*			
Exercising or playing games**	44	38	69
Watching kids while they play	55	52	66
Visiting farmers market	8	11	0
Reported possible alternative to Play Street			
Physical Activity	36	34	43
Sedentary Activity	64	66	57
Reported frequency of use of outdoor space			
Every day	62	61	64
A few times a week	12	12	11
Once a week	23	23	25
Once a month or less	3	4	0

*Total is greater than 100% because multiple responses were allowed
 ** Statistically significant ($p=0.003$)

As can be seen in Table 5, the number reporting engagement in physical activity at the Play Streets was higher in the Bronx than in East Harlem (38% vs. 69%). This difference was found to be statistically significant ($p=0.003$).

Survey participants were asked what they would be doing if they did not attend the play street. The options could roughly be divided into activities that were physical vs. sedentary. The only physical activity option was “playing at a playground or park.” Non-physical or sedentary activities included “watching tv”, “playing video games”, “playing/ working on a computer”, “taking a class”, “shopping”, “eating out”, “hanging out on stoop with friends.” Participants were also given an option to write in an “other” response, and many listed “at work” or “at home.” By grouping responses as “physical” or “sedentary” activity, clearer distinctions can be made showing how participants reported they would have spent time.

Overall, 64% reported that they would have been engaged in a sedentary activity, and 36% reported that they would have been engaged in physical activity. Sixty two percent also reported that they spend time in an outdoor space like a park or playground every day. Twenty three percent reported that they spend time outdoors only once a week. There were no significant differences by HHPS location for either of these variables.

Interestingly, 46% of those who reported that they would have otherwise been engaged in a

sedentary activity (n=83) reported participation in a physical activity at the play street. This figure differs by location (39% East Harlem; 75% Bronx) though not with statistical significance.

Among those who reported engagement in physical activity at the HHPs when they would have otherwise been inactive (n=38), 42% were under 18 years of age. Though inconsistent with the observational data, thirty seven individuals over eighteen reported engagement in physical activity at the HHPs; twenty two of those reported that they would have otherwise been doing something sedentary had they not come to the play street. HHPs program staff suggest that adults may have simply benefited from being outdoors on the play street watching and possibly playing games with youth, and therefore reported to be engaged in exercise and/ or physical activity.

Participant Assessment of Play Streets

Participants were asked to assess the importance of living near a street with no or very light car traffic. Responses ranged from “very important” to “not important at all” plus an option if they did not know or preferred not to answer. There was consistency among respondents of all HHPs surveys regarding the importance of having a street closed to traffic near their home. Eight-two percent reported that it was either “very important” or “important” to have live near a street with light or no car traffic (Table 6). The implication of this question is that such a street could be used as a play street if community organizing could supply the appropriate programming. Ninety-two percent reported that they would tell their friends and neighbors to come to a play street. Ninety-two percent also that they felt safe from car traffic at the play street. Eighty-four percent reported that they felt the neighborhood is safer with a play street. Several people commented that it’s not safe at night, and one person cited gun shootings. Another person explained, “the more children who come out, the more people feel secure in a safe environment”, and another explained that “it keeps kids out of trouble.”

Table 6: Importance of Play Streets, Combined Locations

	% Total (N=133)
Importance of living near street with light or no car traffic	
Very important	59
Important	23
Sort of important	8
Not important at all	8
Don't know/prefer not to answer	2
Tell friends and neighbors to come to Play Street	92
Play Street safe from car traffic	92
Neighborhood safer with Play Street	84

Finally, an open comments section allowed participants to freely express their thoughts about the Play Streets. Nearly half of the sample (n=67) offered comments about the play street. Most of them were positive, such as:

“Great job”

“I think it’s awesome”

“Like having a safe place”

“Looks nice, like that this play street is next to the park and seeing people work out there”
(referring to adults exercising on equipment in the nearby park)
“I like it, there’s no traffic, and many activities”
“Gives kids something to do, good if they’re 13 years old”
“Good location, appreciate the effort to bring activity to the neighborhood”
Very nice, don’t have to put kid in day care”
“As long as you keep doing this program, we will come”

A few were a little more lukewarm, saying, “activities are ok,” or “keeps me out of trouble”.

Others offered suggestions. The most common was “want more activities.” A few people offered ideas such as “basketball”, or “water sprinkler”, “relay running should be bigger and more complicated.” A few asked for activities for specific age groups, like “small children” or “the youngest children.” Others said that there should be more volunteers. This is in contrast to those who commented that it is “very organized.” One person suggested that they “get rid of the barriers blocking part of the street. Make it more like a live festival.”

Discussion:

Harvest Home Play Streets were effective at attracting local community members in each target area, and this evaluation offers more details about who attended the Play Streets and what they were doing. Observational surveys confirm that the majority of those attending the Play Streets were less than 10 years of age, and engaged in some type of physical activity. Survey data confirm that the majority of youth attended Play Streets with their teacher or counselor, and were under the supervision of adults throughout their stay. It also demonstrates that Play Streets can provide opportunities for physical activity among those who would otherwise choose to do something sedentary. There was general agreement among those that participated that Play Streets are important, and that they are safe places to be within each target neighborhood.

There are a number of limitations to the data. Most importantly, observations and surveys were conducted only with people in attendance at the play street. This is obviously a biased sample and their opinions do not necessarily reflect the opinions of community members who opted not participate. Among this larger group, there are likely individuals that prefer recreational activities in other settings, as well as those that object to the traffic disruption and lost parking spaces. These concerns are legitimate, particularly when the Play Streets are located near to public parks and empty playgrounds.

In addition, it should be noted that evaluation of public activities is difficult. Although the design incorporated systematic methodologies, the evaluation results presented here offer more of a snapshot than conclusive findings regarding the impact of Play Streets on increased physical activity and improved health. While it is clear that individuals were engaged in physical activity, better measures are needed of the duration and intensity of their activity, as well as how their play street activity differs from their regular activities. Given that daily tallies were taken only once at each play street, and that street intercept surveys were mostly completed by those over 18 years of age, this report offers an underestimate of the total number of individuals engaged in play street activities, especially among youth. Furthermore, the wide range of concurrent activities made it difficult for the observer to count the number of individuals involved in each. A greater number of observers taking more frequent counts of activities would help with accuracy. Better observational and survey measures would also help better assess the effectiveness of Play Streets in increasing physical activity.

Despite these limitations, it is clear that the Play Streets were well utilized and that those attending did engage in physical activity. Survey respondents expressed a very positive opinion regarding of the HHPSSs.

Recommendations:

The findings also point to a variety of recommendations for those interested in promoting Play Streets as safe places for outdoor activity. The following were developed through discussion of the findings with key HHPSS partners:

- 1) Model Play Streets can be built around existing farmers markets. Farmers markets are natural allies in efforts to increase opportunities for community residents to engage in nutritional, physical and educational activities in public spaces. HHPSSs in particular benefited from Harvest Home Farmers Market's pre-existing permits that closed designated city streets to traffic. Future collaborations could involve greater efforts to integrate market activities with those of the play street. For example, provided participating farmers are compensated, fruits and vegetables could be used as prizes for physical activity competitions. Also, the ease of this collaboration speaks to the need for a streamlined Play Street application process with the Department of Transportation more generally. A streamlined process will help to ensure Community Boards and Local NYPD precincts are aware of play streets and their positive social and health benefits.
- 2) Collaboration with numerous community partners brings vibrant physical activity and educational programming to areas that would otherwise receive only light foot traffic. As such, Play Streets appear to be a low cost/ high impact option available to schools and community. Organizations such as the New York Road Runners Club and Play Rugby USA, made significant commitments of time and resources to the Play Streets, sending two to three staff and equipment to the HHPSSs each week. A yoga instructor attracted eager youth of all ages each week, and a local arts organization engaged both youth and their parents in creative art-making activities. Although these organizations and individuals hold their programming in other parts of the city, HHPSSs offered them a unique opportunity to engage an underserved population in highly visible public spaces in the target areas. The programming was also essential to engaging youth in consistent physical activity.
- 3) Community buy-in is important for creating safe streets closed to car traffic. Though HHPSSs were closed to traffic, parked cars within the play street area posed a danger to youth engaged in physical activities. Residents ignored "No Parking" signs posted the day before the Play Streets, and parked within the area. Police assisted the HHPSSs by removing the cars to a nearby lot, but greater cooperation on the part of community residents would ease the difficulty initiating the Play Streets in the designated areas. Such cooperation may come given on-going play street programming and enforcement of the "no-parking" signage. Official NYC DOT No Parking signs for designated hours and days would also help to enforce no parking regulations and reduce the need for frequent towing.
- 4) Visible activity encourages participation in Play Streets. Many camp counselors and teachers noted that they felt more comfortable bringing youth if there were other youth on the play street. HHPSS program staff reported that people felt intimidated to initiate play if the streets were empty. At the same time, overcrowding could result in restricted access to program activities. Overall, there appears to be a sense of safety in numbers, and also a sense in which youth feel more comfortable being active when collectively there is a high amount of physical activity.

- 5) Youth enrolled in summer camps can enjoy structured play street programming and learn new things. As evidenced by reports from program staff, many youth enrolled in camp did not know how to jump rope, use a hula hoop, or play hop scotch, let alone run relay races or play rugby, until they learned at the play street. This does not mean that Play Streets are the only sites where such skills can be learned, nor that supervised unstructured play time provided by the summer camps is not valuable. However, the experience of implementing HHPs elucidates gaps in community resources directed at increasing physical activity among local youth that might be addressed using multiple approaches, with Play Streets being one of them. Play Streets may provide a platform for collaborative programming for youth in public space, and that in turn may influence programming in private spaces. For example, by connecting non-profit organizations with camps at Play Streets, those non-profits may be encouraged to work with camp youth throughout the year, or to provide training and technical assistance to teachers and camp counselors so that they can teach youth new sports or games. In this way, both the play street and the skills and resources they offer may become institutionalized and sustained in the community at large.

- 6) Greater effort should be made to include local youth not enrolled in summer camps. The dominance of youth who attended HHPs with their summer camps may have intimidated local children who were not part of a summer camp. Approaching a street in which most of the youth were wearing the same color shirt may have given the impression that the street was closed for a privately organized activity that was not open to the public. At the same time, HHPs staff report that participation by local youth not enrolled in summer camps grew over the course of the HHPs programming. Although HHPs appeared to fill a gap for both local camp and non-camp youth, greater efforts to include non-camp youth should be made.

List of Collaborating Organizations:

Play Rugby, Inc
New York Road Runners
Spoons Across America
Nourishing Kitchen
Harlem RBI
Uptown Dance Academy
Art for Change
Vanderbilt YMCA
Sports Foundation, Inc.
Communities IMPACT Diabetes Center
City Soccer Initiative

HARVEST HOME FOREST AVENUE PLAYS STREET



Wednesdays, July 28th to August 25th

10 am - 2 pm at Forest Avenue Market

FOREST AVE. BETWEEN 156TH ST. & WESTCHESTER AVE.

Every Week

- 10am—12pm
 - Flag Rugby (Play Rugby USA)
- 10 am—2 pm
 - Running Games (NY Road Runners)
 - Pick-up Soccer (equipment from City Soccer Initiative)

PLUS—Come anytime between 10 am -2 pm to play with jump ropes, street chalk, hula hoops, hopscotch or just enjoy the space to run, jump, bike, socialize, and play outside!

Special Activities

- August 4**
 - 12:30pm—1pm
 - Dance performance (Uptown Dance Academy)
 - 12pm—2pm
 - Fitness Boot Camp (Sports Foundation, Inc.)
- August 11**
 - 10am—2pm
 - Spoons Food Miles Relay (Spoons Across America)
 - Get Healthy with Montefiore School Health Program
 - 12pm—1pm
 - Zumba (Montefiore School Health Program)
- August 18 & 25**
 - 10am—2pm
 - Spoons Food Miles Relay (Spoons Across America)
- August 25**
 - 10am-12pm
 - Get Healthy with Montefiore School Health Program

Questions? Want to volunteer or get involved?
isogodzeno@health.nyc.gov or 646-672-2385



In case of poor weather, call 311 to find out about closures



Harvest Home 104th Street Play Street

Thursdays, July 15th to August 26th

10 am - 2 pm at Union Settlement Market

East 104th Street between 2nd & 3rd Avenues

Every Week

- 10 am—2 pm:
Running Games (NY Road Runners)
- 10am—12pm
Arts and Crafts (Art for Change)
- 11 am—12pm:
Yoga (YMCA)
- 12 pm—2 pm:
Flag Rugby (Play Rugby USA)
Pick-up Soccer
(equipment from City Soccer Initiative)
- PLUS—Come anytime between 10 am -2 pm to play with jump ropes, street chalk, hula hoops, hopscotch . . . or just enjoy the space to run, jump, bike, socialize, and play outside!*

Special Activities

- July 15:**
10 am—2 pm Recycling Games (GrowNYC)
- July 22:**
10 am—2 pm Eating Education and Fitness Breaks (Communities IMPACT Diabetes)
12:30—1 pm Performance by Uptown Dance Academy
12 pm—2 pm Karate (United Martial Arts Academy)

- July 29:**
12 pm—2 pm Human Body Relay Race (East Harlem Health Outreach Partnership)

- August 19:**
10 am—2 pm Spoons Across America Relay
12 pm—2 pm Karate (United Martial Arts Academy)
12 pm—2 pm Healthy Cooking (Nourishing Kitchen)
12 pm—2 pm Baseball Clinic* (East Harlem Little League)
(*meet up at Play Street—will be held at nearby baseball field)

- August 26:**
10 am—2 pm Eating Education and Fitness Breaks (Communities IMPACT Diabetes)



Questions? Want to volunteer or get involved?
isogodzeno@health.nyc.gov or 646-672-2385

In case of poor weather, call 311 to find out about closures

Surveyor Name: _____

Location: Bronx East Harlem Part of Play Street: _____

Date: _____

Ask: Do you mind if I ask you a few questions about why you're here today? I won't ask or write down your name on this survey. Your answers will be used to help make this Play Street better. We can skip questions or end any time you want, though we'd like you to answer all questions if you can. It should only take 5 minutes. Thank you!

1. Is this your first time at this play street?
 - Yes
 - No
 - a. If no, how many times have you visited this year? _____
 - b. Will you come back?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe/ Not sure
2. How long do you plan to stay today? (check one)
 - Less than 1 hour
 - 1-2 hours
 - 2-4 hours
 - Don't know/ prefer not to answer
3. What are you doing/ did you do here today? (check all that apply/ circle present or past tense)
 - Exercising or playing games
 - Being with my class/ summer program
 - Visiting with friends and neighbors
 - Watching kids while they play
 - Visiting farmers market
 - Other: _____
4. What would you be doing if you weren't here today? (check one)
 - Watching TV
 - Playing video games
 - Playing/ working on a computer
 - Playing at playground or park
 - Taking a class
 - Shopping
 - Eating out
 - Hanging out on stoop with friends
 - Other: _____
5. How important is it for you to live near a street with no or very light car traffic? (check one)
 - Very important
 - Important
 - Sort of important
 - Not important at all
 - Don't know/ prefer not to answer
6. How often do you use outdoor spaces like parks and playgrounds?
 - Every day
 - Once a week
 - Few times a month
 - Once a month
 - Few times a year
 - Never
 - Other: _____
 - Don't know/ Prefer not to answer.

7. Will you tell your friends and neighbors to come to the play street?

- Yes
 No
 Maybe/ Don't know

8. How did you hear about the Play Street?
(check all that apply)

- Friends, Family, Teacher (someone I know)
 Newsletter
 Presentation
 Harvest Home Farmers Market
 I didn't know about it till I got here
 Other:

9. Do you think this play street is safe from car traffic? (Check all that apply)

- Yes
 No, why not?

Maybe/ not sure

10. Does this neighborhood feel safer with a Play Street?

- Yes
 No
 Maybe/ Not sure
 Why or why not:

11. **COMMENTS:** Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about the Play Street?

Demographic Information

Now I want to ask just a few brief questions about you.

1. What's your age: (Check the range)

- Under 18
 18-30
 31-59
 60 or above

2. Did you come here today with anyone?

- No
 My kids
 Someone else's kids
 Teacher/ Counselor
 Friends/family
 Prefers not to answer

3. What are the nearest cross streets to your home? Write response/check if they don't know:

- _____
 Don't Know/ Prefer not to answer

4. How did you get here today?
(check all that apply)

- Walked
 Biked
 Subway
 Bus
 Drove
 Taxi

5. Gender

- Male
 Female

Thank you!

Observer Name: _____

Location of Play Street: Bronx East Harlem

Date: _____

Time: _____

Instructions: Please complete this form assessing activity on the play street for the entire day. Review what needs to be documented before you begin making observations. Participant counts may be made throughout the day, and added together on this form. Please attach a program schedule for the day to this form.

1. Describe the weather:

a. Is it affecting the play street at all, and if so how?

2. Anything special or different about the day (holiday, etc):

3. Estimate the total number of people who attended the Play Street on this date:

4. How many people in each age group were engaged in the following types of activity?
(Write estimated # of individuals doing each type of activity in appropriate boxes)

Age Range	Programmed Physical Activities	Unplanned Physical Activities	Programmed Sedentary Activities	Informal Socializing/ Talking	Arts/ Crafts	Visiting Farmers Market	Other (write # and describe in box)
Under 10							
11-15							
16-20							
21-30							
31-59							
60 or above							

5. Does it look like people shop at the market and engage in activities at the play street?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

6. Are adults actively supervising children and youth?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

▪ If no or unsure, please explain _____

7. Did you have the sense that the Play Street was a safe social environment for children and youth? Did you see any kinds of activity that may be considered illegal or dangerous? If so, please describe.

8. Describe one success for today’s Play Street. It could be a particular activity, or participation by a particular group, or something you found interesting.

9. Describe one challenge or difficulty that affected the Play Street today, and how it was it addressed or not.

10. NOTES: Please note anything else of interest or comments about the Play Street that you may have overheard.

Harlem Play Street 17 programming partners 855+ kid visits

	Dawning Village						
	NYCHA SCAN		YMCA - TAG Site				
Children's Aid Soc.	YMCA - Tito Puente	Children's Aid Soc.	YMCA - Tito Puente			NYCHA SCAN	
	East Harlem Tutorial Program		Magic Johnson CEC			Magic Johnson CEC	
	Union Settlement	Oasis Dream Camp	Union Settlement			YMCA - TAG Site	
July 15 122 kids	July 22 300+ kids	July 29 100+ kids	August 5 131 kids	August 12 Rained out (0)	August 19 88 kids	August 26 114 kids	
New York Road Runners							
Play Rugby USA - Flag Rugby							
Vanderbilt YMCA - Yoga							
City Soccer Initiative - Pick-up Soccer Equipment							
GrownNYC		Art for Change					IMPACT Diabetes
Vanderbilt YMCA - Youth Leadership Volunteers							
	East Harlem Tutorial Prog. (Volunteers)	Harlem RBI				Spoons Across America	
	United Martial Arts	E. Harlem Outreach				E Harlem LL	
	IMPACT Diabetes	McCloskey (Volunt)				Nourishing Kitchen	
	Uptown Dance					United Martial Arts	

Bronx Play Street 9 programming partners 360 kid visits

	St. Margaret's Camp						
	Eastside House		Minds Unlimited				
	Anna Lefkowitz Daycare						
	SE Bronx Neighborhood Centers						
July 28 72 kids	August 4 143 kids	August 11 145 kids	August 18 Safety Cancel (0)	August 25 Rained Out (0)			
New York Road Runners							
City Soccer Initiative - Pick-up Soccer Equipment							
Bronx DPHO							
Montefiore Health	Uptown Dance						
Zumba(Montefiore)	Sports Foundation	Montefiore Health					
		Zumba(Montefiore)					

List of Participating Summer Camps:

Anna Lefkowitz Daycare Center
Eastside House
Minds Unlimited Summer Day Camp
Southeast Bronx Neighborhood Centers
McKinley Center
St. Margaret's Summer Camp
Children's Aid Society
Dawning Village
East Harlem Tutorial Program
East River Family Center
Union Settlement Daycare
Vanderbilt YMCA TAG Site
Youth Action
Magic Johnson CEC
NYCHA SCAN 102nd Street
Vanderbilt YMCA Tito Puente Complex