

HUSKY STRENGTH PROGRAM REPORT 2016 - 2017



GET ACTIVE!

CHANGE THE GAME!



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HUSKY STRENGTH PROGRAM REPORT



Program Overview

The Husky Strength Program engages young men in grades 7 & 8 at Fred D. Wish Museum School and Sarah J. Rawson STEAM School. Using sport based youth development (SBYD) practices that enable the development of life skills and leadership traits, integrated with positive coaching and intentional lessons, Husky Strength provides the young men with structured opportunities to learn, practice and apply transferable life skills and leadership traits within the program, inside the classroom, and in their everyday lives.

2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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*Get Active!
Change the Game!*

SCOPE

While this was the first year Husky Strength was implemented within Wish and Rawson schools, Husky Sport and the Neag School of Education's Ph. D graduate assistants researched, gathered information, and brought forth best practices and experiential knowledge gained through previous years program implementation to engage these new youth in the development of leadership roles through sport. Husky Sport program leaders put forth a sport-based authentic leadership program, with the goal of instilling and building upon the leadership traits of the many young men at Wish and Rawson. Working with key teachers and administrators at both schools, open tryouts were held for 7th and 8th grade young men interested in the program. With the support of school administration and teachers, a weekly schedule was developed that allowed the 7th and 8th grade young men to participate twice a week for 45 minutes each session for the duration of the 2016-2017 academic year.



PARTNERSHIPS

The foundation of Husky Strength is communication from UConn and both Wish and Rawson's Administration and Teaching Staff. Without these four groups consistently being on the same page issues with scheduling, testing, conflict with other programs, location and behavior of students the climate would not allow for the weekly implementation and impact of the program. Through email, formal and informal meetings, and constant support from Wish Administration and Wish Teachers, all partners were able to establish a consistent and reliable means of communication to ensure the success of Husky Strength.

Our Partners



HARTFORD
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Where the future is present.



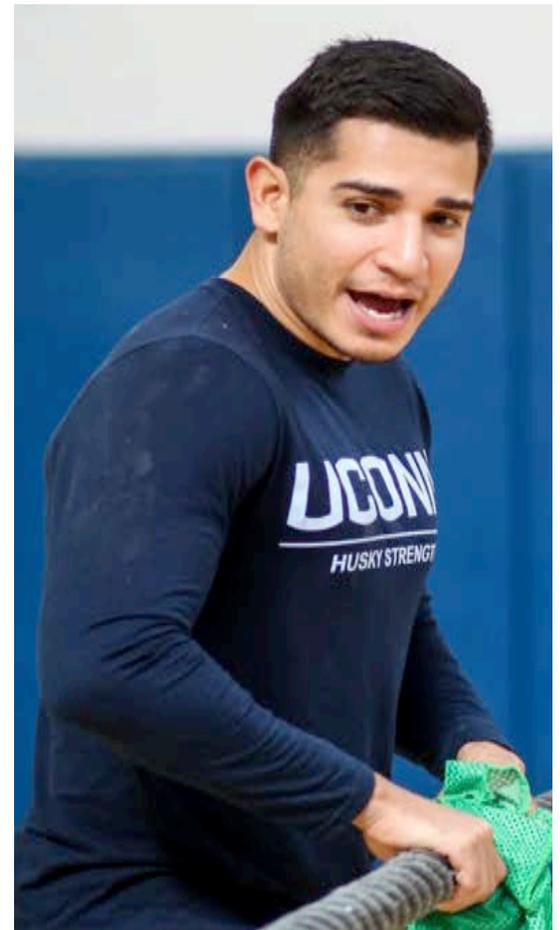
RAWSON
Lighthouse
School

**Fred D. Wish
Museum School**

PROGRAM LEADERS' HIGHLIGHTS



“I am putting myself in the position to try and make sure kids don’t feel abandoned the way I did as a young student. The reason I do this work, the reason behind the research that we are conducting, is to empower people that are in the same position as I was. It’s based in the belief that every person, that every human being, has a capacity to learn and to achieve at high levels. It’s my way of giving back - educating myself and using this research to impact policy.” - Jesse



“In doing this work, I have to be careful not to perpetuate an acceptance of the existing, broken system. We still need to address standardized testing, grades, how teachers confront cultural difference on many levels, and every other component of this broken educational system. At the same time, we can’t forget our obligation to teach our young people to navigate a broken system as best they can, we can’t sacrifice generations of students combating an institution. Not accepting any strategy as an end all be all, but understanding this is what we need to do right now to give these students any chance. I am figuring out the balance of those two components. Working in this current system but continuing to push it to change.” – Michael

PROGRAM LEADERS' HIGHLIGHTS



“I think this is the best type of work to be doing. We are leveraging the relationships that are already built to work with boys that might be starting to feel disengaged from the system; [boys who may be] feeling like it’s a process and not feeling like anyone cares about them. Hopefully we are able to create research that captures that re-engagement, to prove why we can’t write off these boys or these communities. [Research] showing that it just takes a more effective approach. That’s what I want to do, not just do research, but do research that’s grounded in social justice and supports change and equity. Who cares about creating research at the end of the day? The value is in creating positive impact and making kids feel loved and cared about.” - Charlie

“It’s important to provide guidance and be the mentor that I had when I was younger. I have the potential to have a real impact on these young men and their trajectory. That was primarily the reason why I wanted to work with Husky Strength. I am uniquely positioned to have an impact on this specific group of boys. There aren't many Black people working in the school, for one, having people that look like them working in the school is important.” - Isaiah



DATA COLLECTION

*Husky Strength guiding framework identifies attributes of authentic leadership and distinguishes them into **4 categories:***

- Self Core
- Empathetic Core
- Trust-Building Core
- Community Core

2 Hartford Public Schools located in the North-End hosting Husky Strength

6 Program Leaders leading the development and delivery of lesson plans

118 Engagements over the course of the school year

16 Teachers involved and administrators involved

At Fred D. Wish School:

16

7th & 8th grade students in Husky Strength

At Sarah J. Rawson School:

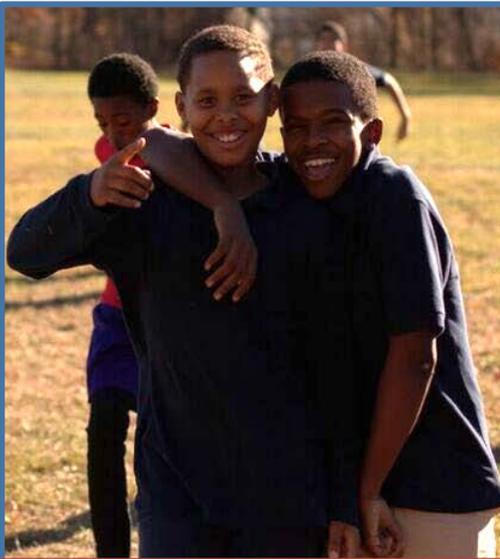
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7th & 8th grade students in Husky Strength

160+

Minutes of intentional leadership development through a sport every week

TESTIMONIALS



Question to Students: What did you learn by participating in Husky Strength?

- “I learned how to control [my] temper. Especially when we’re just playing games.”
- “[I] learned about teamwork, how to work with people that aren’t my best friends, and have confidence in yourself.”
- “I learned how to get along better with people that I didn’t really like that much before. How to work through things when they [are] hard like when we are working out.”

Question to Teachers: “Did you see any changes in your students?”

- “A student in the beginning of the year would just join in the negative behaviors in class, now he has the awareness to remove himself from those situations.”
- “Definitely saw changes in some of the boys. Even last week, one of the boys avoided a fight who I thought would’ve fought.”
- “With the 7th grade boys, self-regulation really improved. A student would get ready to do something negative, but would stop and focus.”
- “I remember one of the boys cheering on his classmates, when it would’ve never happened earlier.”

Question to Students: “When have you applied the skills you learned in school?”

- “I try to tell other people that were doing bad, I would tell them to stop.”
- “It helps with me focusing in class.”
- “I learned how to say no to other people, when they tried to get me to do some bad things.”
- “I definitely learned honesty too, cause before the program we used to be roaming around the hallways without a pass, lying about where we were going.”

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Teachers at Wish & Rawson schools have observed meaningful changes in the behaviors of the young men who participated in Husky Strength; they noted the positive influence of the Husky Strength Program Leaders.

All young men in the program reported to learn leadership traits and positive life-skills through participating in the program. Some even reported forming bonds with young men they would have typically not

By tapping into the power of sport, positive relationships and leadership skills, life skills can be further developed, which can transfer to the classroom and other facets of daily life.

Resilience Honesty
Leadership Responsibility
Respect Encouraging
Positive Caring



LOOKING AHEAD

With Husky Strength having such a positive impact on various measures for the young men, we look forward to:

- Partnering with the administration and teachers of North End elementary and middle schools, to engage youth.
- Providing a meaningful program for the schools and the youth that we serve.
- Challenging the youth to develop important life skills, so they can grow into positive leaders in the school and become future leaders of the community.

