



For Immediate Release
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WPXI's Here's To Life explores the health of Pittsburgh's Class of 2010

Channel 11 continues its annual celebration of African American History Month with a look to the future. "Here's To Life" examines the new wellness philosophy of inner city students by focusing on their immediate goals for long range success. The half-hour special, which will air on WPXI-TV, Saturday, February 23rd at 7:30 and be rebroadcast on PCNC, Sunday, Feb. 24th at 3:00 and Monday, Feb. 25th at 7:30 pm, will highlight a seven-year campaign designed to promote the health and well being of students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

WPXI's unique partnership with Pitt's Center for Minority Health gives viewers an insightful perspective on the urgent need to initiate the Healthy Class of 2010 project. CMH Director, Dr. Stephen Thomas, and HC 2010 Project Director Dr. James Butler examine solutions aimed at bringing childhood obesity levels down from epidemic proportions. "One of the major problems, says Dr. Thomas, is that many African American children live in food deserts. Access to fresh foods and full-service stores are in limited supply or do not exist at all. It's not uncommon, unfortunately, for many kids in particular to have their breakfast come from the local gas station shop and the long term consequences are now becoming evident with an epidemic of type 2 diabetes among children."

Professional athletes such as former Olympic gold medal winner Roger Kingdom and Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Charlie Batch share their own wellness techniques with grade school and college level students. Kingdom, now the head track coach at California University of PA, reminds his runners, "Your body is a highly tuned machine. You don't put diesel in a Porsche." Batch admits he didn't start paying attention to diet and nutrition until he entered college, "At that point training tables and nutritional guides helped me get a more competitive advantage."

Students give their reaction to BODIES The Exhibition at the Carnegie Science Center. Others talk about their first ever overnight bicycle tour while one young 9th grader from Taylor Allderdice shares her feelings about her mother's struggle with obesity. "One reason, I pay attention to my own health is cause of my mom, she's about 300 pounds and it's really hard for her to walk and she's really big and I really don't want to end up like her," says the student.

In addition, the program will feature reaction from Pittsburgh Schools Superintendent Mark Roosevelt, Carmen Anderson of the Heinz Endowment and HC 2010 consultant Ernestine Reed.

“Here’s to Life” is the third special in a three-year long partnership with the Healthy Black Family Project, a program of the Center for Minority Health and the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health.

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