

**On Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup>** the Atlanta Public School's Nutrition Department, in collaboration with Sutton Middle School, the APS Office of ESOL and World Languages, and the APS Physical Education Department, held its 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Wellness Ambassador (SWA) Leadership Academy. This year's carnival themed event was hosted by Sutton Middle School at its Northside campus by its group of more than 65 Student Wellness Ambassadors.

Over 500 students, teachers, and community members, representing 21 APS schools, attended this year's event. Upon arrival, attendees were welcomed by a host of vendors, student volunteers, and community partners. The 27 vendors then guided students, teachers, and their families through interactive, educational games and exhibits focusing on nutrition, physical fitness, and healthcare; concepts which are embedded in the foundation of the SWA Program-mission. It is through creative health promotion initiatives and peer modeling that SWA students are able help implement the school's Wellness Plan not only on special event days, but also throughout the school year.

Under the leadership and supervision of Sutton's Assistant Principal Michelle Bouldin, Sutton's SWAs actively contributed toward planning and executing the day's many happenings. Not only did the Sutton SWAs assist with setup and decorations in preparation for the event, but also served as greeters, event guides, translators, game supervisors, and speakers during the SWA Program.

Each of the day's activities were presented in both English and Spanish, as this year's event included outreach toward the Latino Community. This initiative was sparked by a newly developed partnership with the Office of ESOL and World Languages. Bilingual interpreters from ESOL, Sutton's bilingual SWAs, and student volunteers from North Atlanta High School's Hispanic Organization Promoting Education (HOPE), were available to translate for Spanish speaking families. Vendors contributed to this new initiative by providing information in both English and Spanish for distribution.

Another addition to the SWA Leadership Academy was the Inaugural Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) Pageant. Here, two students were named the Nutrition Department's first ever District Garden Princess and Veggie Man superhero. These "*Hero's on a Mission to Promote Good Nutrition*", were selected based on an essay response they submitted answering the question, 'What does being APS Garden Princess or Veggie Man mean to you'. After careful consideration, congratulations were awarded to newly named **Garden Princess - D'mya Brooks of Slater Elementary School** and **Veggie Man – Darrian Rye Jr. of D.H. Stanton Elementary School**. Both students also received a gift card and prize pack from Monkey Joe's. Furthermore, these students will also be featured in an upcoming FFVP video promoting fresh fruit and vegetable consumption, which will be displayed on the APS Nutrition website.

Also included in this year's Leadership Academy was the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual SWA Video Contest. Special thanks to Parkside, Jackson, and Kimberly Elementary Schools for entering. All three schools did an exceptional job capturing their efforts to promote wellness throughout the school year. Ultimately, it was the **SWAs of Kimberly Elementary School** that snagged both the win and vouchers for free admission to the skating rink compliments of Sparkles Family Fun Centers.

The program portion of the 2016 SWA Leadership Academy concluded with an exciting performance by Jump with Jill Nutrition & Dance Show—the world's only rock & roll nutrition show that uses music and dance to celebrate healthy habits. The captivating performance used various beats, songs, and dances, to teach students and their families how to respect and care for their bodies by choosing healthy foods and beverages. This incredible addition to the year's Leadership Academy was made possible through a partnership with the APS Physical Education Department and funds received from the Atlanta Falcons Hometown Grant Award. The Hometown Grant was developed by Fuel Up to Play 60 and the NFL, and provides funds to schools in an effort to achieve their student focused health and wellness goals. In addition to the performance during the SWA Leadership Academy, the \$10,000 grant award was also used to fund additional Jump with Jill performances in the Washington Cluster elementary schools – M. Agnes Jones, Bethune, Connally, and Venetian Hills; ultimately exposing over 2,300 APS students to powerful health education messages, and tools for families to integrate healthy behaviors into their everyday lives.

The Atlanta Public School Nutrition Department is greatly appreciative to all of its community partners who helped create such a spectacular event! We would also like to recognize the Georgia Food Bank Association for funding APS bus transportation, the Office of ESOL and World Languages for their assistance with our Latino community outreach initiative, the APS Physical Education Department for their assistance in coordinating the Jump with Jill performances, Boyd Elementary School's tumbling and cheer squad for their stunning performance, and last but not least, Sutton Middle School's Assistant Principal Michelle Bouldin, and her exceptional SWAs for hosting such an AMAZING day.

[Click here](#) to view a video capturing all the smiling faces at this year's carnival themed 2016 SWA Leadership Academy!

**Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup>**  
**Sutton Middle School**  
**2875 Northside Dr. NW**  
**Atlanta, GA 30305**

