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Reclaiming A City Park for Kids

Marta Bermudez of Adonai Community Services is named a Healthy Hero by the Greater Rochester Health Foundation, (GRHF) for bringing recreational equipment for kids into an urban park. The Festival of Fitness on Peck Street, was a nine-week program that brought; music, inflatable moonwalks and healthy food into a low-income neighborhood, so that kids could increase their physical activity and have fun in a safe area.

“Unsafe playgrounds and neighborhoods have caused the decline of outdoor play for many of the city's children. At Adonai Community Services, we want to empower parents to take back the playgrounds in their community," says Bermudez. "Through the Play By Play-Example Fitness program, parents and children in the Peck Street area were brought together this summer to rediscover the joy and wonder of simple outdoor games. Parents were encouraged and expressed much appreciation for the activities, teachings and healthy foods introduced."

“At the Foundation, we have heard many urban parents express concern that there are very few safe places in which their children can play,” says John Urban, President of GRHF. “What Bermudez and family volunteers have done is to show how neighborhoods can reclaim their parks for a few hours each week with low-tech, low-cost activities, such as obstacle courses, parachute games and sack races. This program was enjoyed not only by the children but by the parents as well.”

The Foundation recognizes people who go beyond their normal duties to help kids ages 2-10 in the Greater Rochester area stay healthy through improved children’s nutrition and/or increased physical activity. People interested in nominating Healthy Heroes may visit www.beahealthyhero.org. Healthy Heroes are awarded $250 to be donated to the organization of their choice.

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