

MINNEAPOLIS

## Nonprofit opens new wellness facility in north Minneapolis to combat obesity

It is part of a growing effort to address health disparities in the neediest parts of the city.

By Kelly Smith Star Tribune | APRIL 19, 2019 — 9:55PM



JERRY HOLT - STAR TRIBUNE  
Logan Webster 10, left, Amani Powell 10, and Zach Weiner, 14, worked out at the Youth & Families Determined To Succeed facility in Minneapolis.

Melvin Anderson is tackling obesity and diabetes in north Minneapolis one family at a time.

The former Gopher football and NFL player is opening a new wellness facility off Plymouth Avenue N, and Lyndale Avenue to fill a void in fitness classes and nutrition counseling in the community.

"There's a growing demand for our type of service," said Anderson, executive director of the nonprofit Youth & Families Determined to Succeed. "We're trying to meet people where they're at."

It's part of increasing efforts by nonprofits to combat health disparities in the neediest parts of the city. North Minneapolis is a federally designated food desert — a low-income census tract where a significant portion of the population lives more than a mile from a supermarket. And its Near North and Camden neighborhoods have among the highest obesity rates in Hennepin County, with 32% of residents reporting they were obese in a [2018 survey](#).

But nonprofit leaders are hopeful they can reduce obesity and decrease diabetes and high blood pressure over time. On Monday, the Minneapolis nonprofit Pillsbury United Communities will install a new outdoor farm on a grassy North Side field to grow fresh food for its [North Market](#), a community wellness center and grocery store that opened two years ago.

Nearby, Northpoint Health & Wellness' nonprofit arm provides free fruits and vegetables at an outdoor market that opens for the season in May.



JERRY HOLT - STAR TRIBUNE  
Melvin Anderson, executive director, at the Youth & Families Determined To Succeed facility Wednesday in Minneapolis.

It also launched a delivery truck five years ago to bring free food to North Side and Robbinsdale residents in need who aren't able to get to their food shelf.

Anderson's nonprofit is housed in a formerly shuttered bookbinding building that V3 Sports, a nonprofit triathlon program, bought for \$4.7 million in 2017, with plans to open a \$44 million training complex such as a track, training space for wellness programs for the neighborhood and an Olympic-sized pool, which would be north Minneapolis' only public indoor pool.

"I think [fitness is] definitely beginning to be an area recognized as a quality of life thing like affordable housing," said Erika Binger, a former triathlete and philanthropist who founded V3; her great-grandfather, 3M executive William McKnight, started the McKnight Foundation. "[Triathlon is a] really racially segregated sport. We're trying to open it up and give opportunities."

It's part of the growing momentum behind diversifying sports, such as programs at Theodore Wirth Regional Park that [introduce snowboarding and other winter activities](#) to more women and people of color.

# CHILDREN & FAMILY WELLBEING CENTER

701 Plymouth Ave. North, Mpls



Youth & Families Determined To Succeed  
Fitness. Nutrition. Wellness.



**TRANSFORMING HEALTHCARE  
LIVES & COMMUNITY**  
YFDS.ORG





PROVIDE HEALTH, NUTRITION AND FITNESS PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH, IN PARTICULAR THE LIVES OF YOUTH AND FAMILIES SUFFERING FROM OBESITY AND ENHANCE YOUTHS' WELLBEING THROUGH LIFE SKILLS AND ATHLETIC PROGRAMS.

*ESTABLISHED 1999*

**PROGRAMS**

HEALTH  
RESEARCH  
PROJECT

(2017 - Present)

FAMILY4HEALTH  
HEALTH

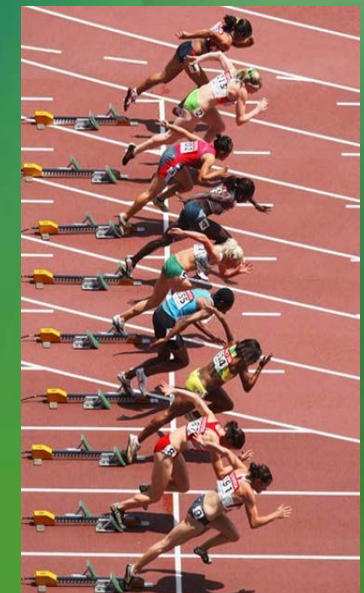
(2009 - Present)

YOUTH  
LEADERS OF  
CHANGE

(2004 - Present)

TRACK MN  
ELITE

(1999 - Present)



## VALUES

RESPECT

SERVICE

EXCELLENCE

DISCIPLINE

LEADERSHIP

## SERVICES

**TRIPLE AIM  
HEALTH  
RESEARCH  
PROJECT**

(2017)

- Comprehensive Pilot & Research Collaborative
- Patient & Community Centered
- Health Equity & Reducing Disparities
- Improve Health & Economic Outcomes
- Enhance Accessibility, Delivery & Quality of Community Health Systems & Care

**FAMILY4HEALTH  
HEALTH &  
WELLNESS  
SERVICES**

(2009- Present)

- Weight Management
- Diet & Nutrition Counseling
- Fitness Training
- Physical Therapy
- Life & Wellness Coaching

**YOUTH  
DEVELOPMENT**

(2004 - Present)

- “Youth Leaders for Change” Program
- Personal/Life Skills Development
- College Prep

**TRACK MN  
ELITE**

(1999 - Present)

- Competitive Track & Field Youth Program
- Athletic & Fitness Training
- College Attainment Assistance & Counseling



# IMPACT

## Families Ending Generational Obesity & Diabetes

## 90% Of Kids Attending College & Graduating

### Results

**4.3**

BMI reduction  
(33.52 to 32.08)

Improved health outcomes and pre-existing acute and chronic diseases



**3-9 lbs**

Average participant decreased weight by 3-9 lbs.



Improved diet, nutrition, and eating habits



Average 1.5% reduction in body fat

**53%**

of overweight youth moved to normal classification

58% of patients with higher than normal heart rates moved to normal averages



Weight loss & improved body image



**56%**

of obese youth moved to overweight classification



27% of patients with high blood pressure moved to normal range



**2"**

Average reduction in Waist Line - 2"

**50%**

of morbid obese youth moved to obese classification

*\*The intervention was 3x more effective for those whom completed 2 to 3 treatment cycles*





**Youth & Families Determined To Succeed**  
**Fitness. Nutrition. Wellness.**

**YFDS.ORG**