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YOUTH FITNESS COALITION



Join us for our 36th annual  
global event on  
May 1, 2024  
during National Physical Fitness  
and Sports Month!  
Be Fit, It's Fun.

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## Who We Are:



Len Saunders, MA  
Director  
Project ACES

Len is a retired Physical Education Teacher in New Jersey after 40+ years of service. He has won awards for his contribution to children's fitness at the local, state, and national level. He has been a guest speaker at State Universities, as well as state and national conventions. Currently, he is concentrating on writing and coaching.

He has contributed articles to magazines such as Muscle & Fitness, as well as writing articles for Human Kinetics Publishing, the most respected publisher in the health and fitness industry. Some of Len's articles have been used for nationally syndicated television shows on ABC-TV.

Sports Illustrated has called Len "high spirited", and Ladies' Home Journal says, "nobody is more committed to children's fitness than Len Saunders".

Honors include: Outstanding Teacher of Physical Education - New Jersey; Outstanding Citizen Award – Mayor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports; Achievement Award from The President's Council on Physical Fitness & Sports.

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H.J. Saunders, MA, CET  
President and Founder  
Youth Fitness  
Coalition, Inc.

H.J. has been involved in the medical, health, fitness, and recreational industries for over 45-years as a diversified exercise physiologist, consultant and sole proprietor of Coordinated Fitness Systems, Ltd.

He is a nationally recognized fitness innovator and crusader, developing comprehensive exercise and well-care programs for individuals, and organizations ranging from neighborhood elementary schools to multi-million-dollar corporations, institutions, and Government initiatives such as The National Physical Activity Plan. Articles and interviews have appeared in local and national newspapers, magazines, periodicals, on-line, radio, and television.

Now, semi-retired, H.J. is an Associate in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Rutgers-New Jersey Medical School in Newark, NJ. Shihan Saunders is a practicing 6th degree black belt and teaches Isshinryu Karate to people of all ages. H.J. is also a Personal Trainer and Lifestyle Coach.

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## What We Do: PROJECT ACES

*An acronym, for All Children Exercise Simultaneously, effectively, “The World’s Largest Exercise Class”.* Since 1989, the first Wednesday in May, at 10:00 AM local time, has been Project ACES Day, when millions of children, parents and teachers all over the world exercise simultaneously in a symbolic gesture of fitness and unity. It underscores the need for quality Physical Education in our nation’s schools. Think the “Earth Day” of Fitness meets the Exercising “Hands Across America”.

Project ACES is a community outreach program proven to be non-competitive, educational, motivational, and fun. When we first began, we had no idea that it would reach the magnitude and success of today. The program has received praise by presidents of the United States, governors, senators, and celebrities from sports and show business.

Year after year, Project ACES reaches millions of participants around the world, including all 50 United States of America and at least 49 other countries. Praise and support have also come from dozens of organizations in and out of the fitness industry such as ACSM, SHAPE America and The President’s Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition which are supporting partners of the non-profit Youth Fitness Coalition, Inc.

## Why Do We Have PROJECT ACES?

We believe as we hope you do too, that *physical fitness is preventative medicine*. Surgeon General reports have continually emphasized the potentially avoidable health risks associated with a sedentary lifestyle and obesity, especially in young people. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has stated that childhood obesity has reached epidemic proportions.

Exercise, physical activities, proper nutrition, active lifestyle, and adequate rest can lower the chances of developing diabetes, coronary heart disease and stroke, which include risk factors such as high blood pressure and poor lipid/cholesterol blood profiles.

Current research also indicates the positive role physical activity plays not only in prevention, but also treatment of diseases such as diabetes, certain cancers, osteoarthritis, and heart disease. Mainstream media has focused on these issues repeatedly. School systems, many of which have lost funding for regular physical education classes, have begun to look at dietary interventions in the school cafeteria, as well as after school programs as viable alternatives.

Project ACES activities supplement these efforts to combat obesity and physical inactivity by making FITNESS FUN! Project ACES may save lives by helping offset this obesity epidemic and potentially preventable tragedy. The Youth Fitness Coalition has partnerships with the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and Shape America, The Society of Health and Physical Educators.

## What Do the Children Do During the PROJECT ACES PARTICIPATION ASSEMBLY?

Walk, jog, dance, do martial arts, aerobics, calisthenics, or a combination of any of the above. Whatever physical activities you like. Do it your way. Each site organizes its own Participation Assembly for the 15-45 minutes the program runs.

Many sites choose to invite local politicians, celebrities and athletes to their events. The majority of schools will get their entire population outside on to a play field, put on music, and everyone has some fun by moving and exercising together. If it rains, they pump the music on the PA system, and hold activities in classrooms, or in the gym. Many invite the local media to cover the event. Proclamations from the mayor and/or governor’s office may also be read.

## Why Do the PROJECT ACES Programs Work?

It’s simple. The motivation for the children is to know that there are people all over the world exercising and moving along with them.

As a Project ACES leader, you decide how big or small an event to host locally. You decide the theme such as Healthy Nutrition, Active Lifestyle, Stress Management, as alternatives to alcohol, tobacco, and/or substance abuse. Or, maybe even safe sex, or anti-violence topics. Then, decide what special guest speaker to invite. Many sites have successfully invited Mayors, Governors, Doctors, Exercise Professionals, and even local sport and celebrity personalities. After the pep talk, it’s time for some action. It’s all geared to be fun, generate excitement, and physical activity for everyone, especially the children.

There are now PROJECT ACES CLUBS in many states that have Daily, Weekly, and/or Monthly Project ACES Participation Assembly Programs with different Health, Fitness, Nutrition, and Lifestyle Related Themes Yearlong.

States such as New Jersey, Maine, New Mexico, Illinois, and Michigan have led the way with State Coordinators. In May 2018, there were nearly a half million participants in the state of Michigan alone.

Become a PROJECT ACES State Coordinator.

For more information, please visit: [www.projectaces.com](http://www.projectaces.com) or [www.cofitness.net](http://www.cofitness.net).

*Be sure to sign up for yearlong PROJECT ACES CLUBS and subscribe to our newsletter.*

*Inquiries regarding financial contributions, in-kind donations and corporate sponsorships are always welcome.*

Thank you for your support. Youth Fitness Coalition, Inc. is a 501-C-3 non-profit educational organization.