

Evaluation of a youth-focused initiative to facilitate park usage, discovery, and physical activity in Greenville County, SC

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Background

Childhood Overweight and Obesity: 6-11 year olds
United States, South Carolina, and Greenville County

United States
31.8%

South Carolina
33.7%

Greenville County
35.0%

Only 1/3 of children are physically active on a daily basis

Living near parks leads to more physical activity

Why Parks?

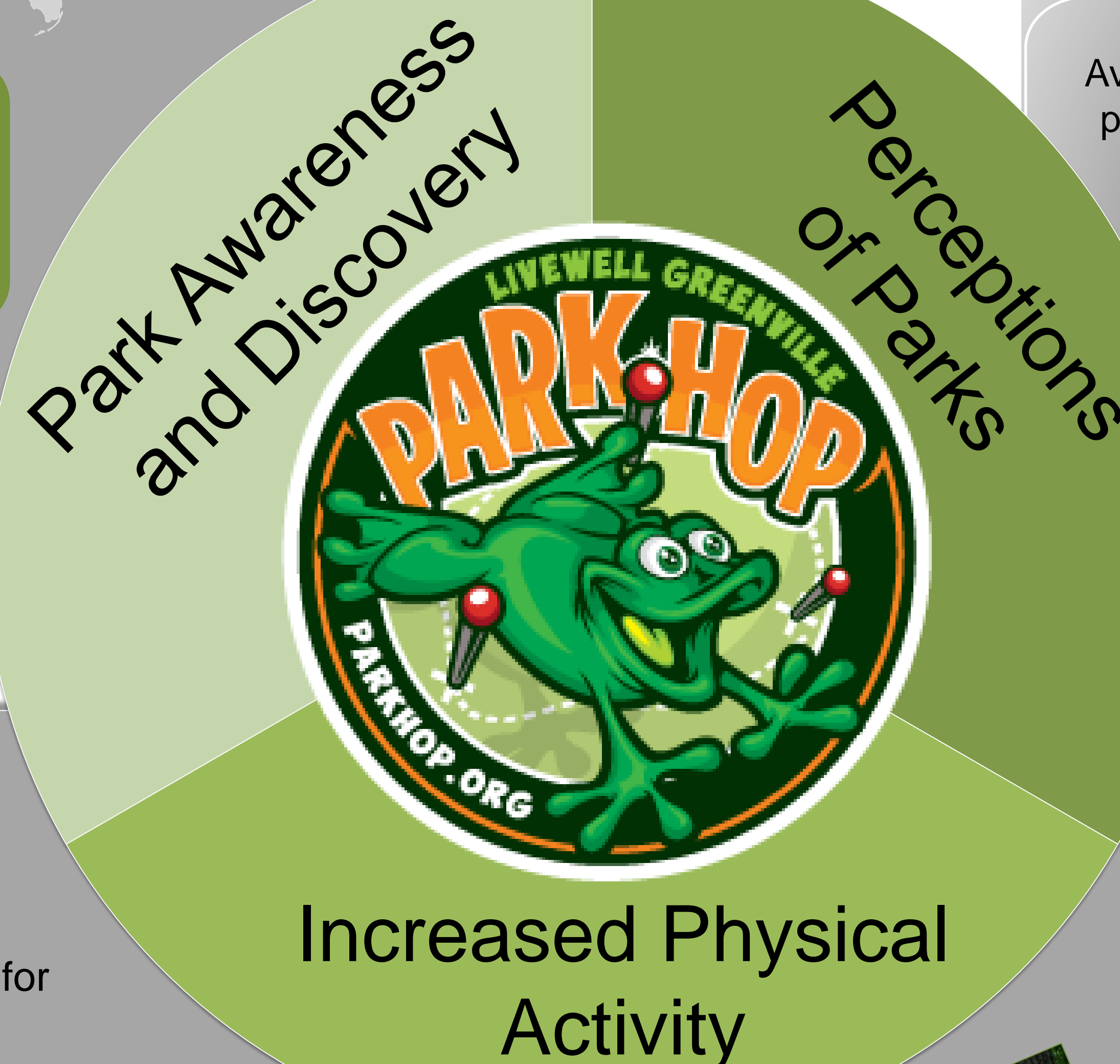
100+ parks in Greenville County

Facilitate social interaction among neighbors

Provide free or low cost venues for physical activity

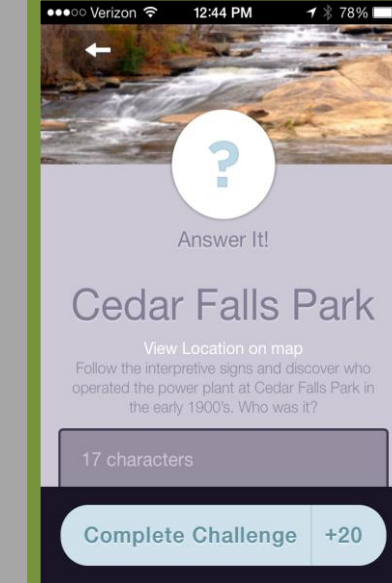
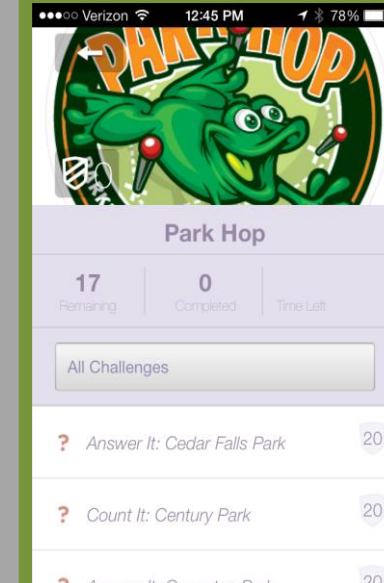
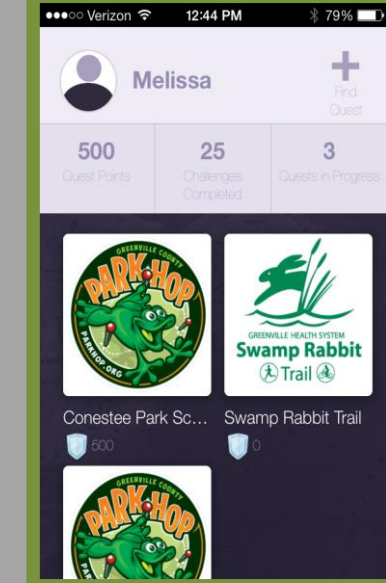
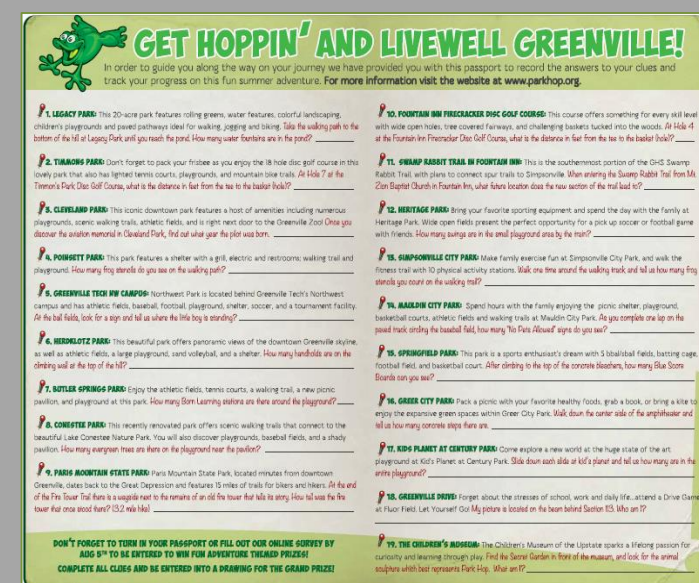
Park programming and outreach strategies may increase PA

Few scalable interventions targeting youth and families have been evaluated to improve park-based PA



Description

- Partnership with seven Parks and Recreation agencies
- Summer-long incentivized scavenger hunt of selected parks in Greenville County, SC
- Answer PA-themed clues using Passport or Mobile App for a chance to win adventure-themed prizes
- Kick-off celebration with local organizations offering opportunities



Pre and Post-Survey

- Matched pre- and post-intervention surveys (n=77) completed by parent/guardian
- Self-report information about participants' demographics, park usage, park discovery, park-based PA, and perceptions of parks

SOPARC Observations

- Direct in-park observations (n=891): System for Observing Play & Recreation in Communities
- Differences in youth park users' PA levels (sedentary/moderate/vigorous) were compared between a select Park Hop (n=2) and matched control (n=2) parks
- Four simultaneous observation periods (9:30, 11:30, 3:30, 6:00) on four separate days

Results

Park Perceptions

Significant increase in perceptions of the quality of park amenities

Changes in Perception of Parks				
	Pre	Post	t	p
Safety in parks	4.31	4.36	0.75	0.45
Quality of parks	4.39	4.47	1.03	0.31
Quality of park amenities	3.53	4.27	6.83	<0.01*
Child enjoyment of parks	4.84	4.87	-0.63	0.53

* Indicates a statistically significant change

Park User PA Levels

Significantly more youth users observed in the intervention (n=586) versus control (n=304) parks

Likelihood of youth observed in MVPA was greater in control (74%) than intervention (64.2%) parks (OR=1.61, 95% CI=1.19-2.20)

Average of 12.1 (SD=6.11) per participant; 2,064 total family park visits

Participants discovered an of average 4.6 new parks (SD=3.74)

Park Usage, Discovery, and Physical Activity

Increase (1.06) in number of parks visited in most recent 30 days at program completion (p<0.05)

Increase in proportion of time engaged in PA during last park visit at program completion (p<0.05; 13% increase; average of 95.1 min)

Conclusions

- Incorporates innovative and relevant technology through the Park Hop Mobile App
- Vast potential for further development, including permanent park clues, 'push notifications', and expansion throughout the state and region
- Direct observation results suggest that greater attention to individual-level measurement is needed to further elucidate the role of Park Hop in facilitating physical activity among youth participants



"What you are doing for the families of this community is beyond words. You are opening existing Greenville families as well as new residents to all the parks and amenities this great city has to offer."
-parent of Park Hop participant



Park Hop represents a successful community collaboration through a coalition workgroup who have built key partnerships to promote active living through parks and recreation

