

Thank you all for being here and it's a pleasure to welcome the First Lady, Mrs. Michelle Obama to Gwen Cherry Park here in Miami-Dade County.

Let me begin by saying that this park is named after a pioneer African-American woman, Gwen Sawyer Cherry.

She was not only the first African-American woman to practice law in Dade County, but she then went on to represent Dade County as the first African-American woman ever to serve in the Florida House of Representatives.

This park continues her legacy by helping people stay active and thrive.

We face a growing issue in our communities. Between 1997 and 2012, the U.S. adult obesity rate increased almost 50%. This rate is higher among minorities.

And for the first time in decades, the life expectancy of Americans is projected to decrease as a consequence of obesity alone.

One-out-of-four Floridians are classified as obese and at risk for heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, and depression. And here in Miami-Dade County, two-thirds adults are either overweight or obese.

With this beautiful weather, we have no excuse to not be outside exercising!

And we also have no excuse to taking action to prevent youth obesity.

This is why I encourage our residents to sign up your kids our Miami-Dade Parks Fit2Play Program.

Fit2Play is a community- and park-based model that has been scientifically proven by the University of Miami's Miller School of Medicine to help children achieve healthy weight, cardiovascular health, fitness, and health-and-wellness knowledge.

And, with recent articles in the American Journal of Health Promotion and the Journal of Disability and Health, the national medical community has also taken notice, and cast its ballot in favor of the Fit2Play strategy and methodology.

Fit2Play addresses the problem at its root: physical inactivity and poor eating habits.

It makes fitness and nutrition easy to understand and fun for kids.

It's been scientifically proven to work by The U.

And it teaches our children the knowledge and life-skills they'll need to become healthy adults.

Let me thank our Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department for its passion and commitment to the children of Miami-Dade County.

They created Fit2Play back in 2007, and it's impressive to see the real impact it continues to have to this day.

Let me also thank the partners that have come alongside the County to help support this program, and they are:

The University of Miami

The Gwen Cherry Parks Foundation

The Boys and Girls Club

Communities in Schools

Finally, I encourage the entire community to take advantage of Fit2Play and to support it, because it's truly making a difference in the health and welfare of our children, who are the future of Miami-Dade County.

Let's take advantage of our beautiful weather and parks, and let's get out there!

Mrs. Obama, I thank you once again for being with us, and for helping us understand that investing in the health and well-being of our young people is the greatest investment we all can make.

Thank you!

