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**Integrating holistic health into education: The wellness wheel for life as a model for nurturing children's mental and emotional well-being**

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**Statement of the Problem:** "The Wellness Wheel for Life" is an innovative research project at Desert Garden Montessori School, Phoenix, Arizona, dedicated to nurturing holistic well-being in children. The initiative integrates daily yogic practices, plant-based nutrition, and microbiome testing, aiming to foster balanced mental, physical, and emotional health. This pioneering project, in collaboration with major health institutions like NaviPoint Healthcare and AZBlue Insurance, Desert Garden Montessori, Georgia Tech University spans three phases and has secured over \$100,000 in grants to support its research and implementation.

Phase 1, launched in April 2023, involved employees who voluntarily participated in baseline microbiome testing, lifestyle screeners, and mental health evaluations. Participants received individualized "Life Recipes" based on their results, designed to improve their microbiome health and overall well-being. This phase marks the project's initial focus group

testing, with follow-up evaluations conducted after 12 weeks.

In Phase 2, the initiative, titled "Taking Root," will be extended school-wide, offering students the opportunity to engage in personalized wellness practices. Phase 3, "Growing a Garden," aims to expand the model to the broader public, positioning it as a scalable solution for integrating holistic health practices into educational environments worldwide.

The research underscores the importance of addressing mental health in children through a whole-child approach, focusing on body, mind, and spirit. By creating a balanced wellness wheel for each individual, the project strives to enhance overall quality of life and emotional resilience, fostering a nurturing environment for children's mental health. As a pioneering initiative, "The Wellness Wheel for Life" offers a revolutionary model for embedding mental and physical well-being into the foundation of education systems globally.



I would like to begin with an official disclaimer: Due to the sensitive nature of this project and the stakeholders involved, this initiative remains highly classified and confidential until the completion of Phase 3. While I am providing as much information as possible at this time, it is important to note that contributions to this project extend far beyond what is detailed here.

### Biography

Nagarjuna Reddy Aturi, a seasoned professional with a unique blend of corporate executive leadership, wellness research, and life sciences expertise. His diverse background spans multiple sectors, enriched by his travels to over 48 countries. Currently, he serves as the Wing Director, West - Programs, Americas for Isha Foundation, where he manages program execution and operational excellence across the region. Additionally, as the Program Research Director for Product Development at Isha Life (APAC), he leads the creation of over 300 innovative products, many of which are patented or pending. At Desert Garden Montessori, he directs the "Wellness Wheel for Life" project, integrating yogic practices, plant-based nutrition, and microbiome testing to enhance children's holistic well-being. This initiative collaborates with top universities, health research

centers, and insurance companies in the U.S., and is advancing through its planned phases. My global leadership roles include spearheading impactful movements like the Save Soil Movement, which has reached 4 billion people and influenced policies in 80 countries, and the Cauvery Calling Campaign, which revitalizes rivers and supports 218,000 farmers. As Executive Director of Sai Nidhi Telecommunications, I oversee strategic initiatives in the telecommunications sector. As a certified Isha Hatha Yoga teacher, he've transformed thousands of lives through 500+ workshops, engaging 6,000 participants with 45,000 hours of engagement. His approach integrates ancient yogic and Ayurvedic practices with modern healthcare, focusing on personalized methods for cancer recovery and trauma.

As a recognized Corporate Director (DIN: 10439335) certified by the MCA and IOD, he has expertise in regulatory compliance, governance, and strategic management. His leadership is supported by memberships in global organizations like IICA, IDDB, IOD, NACD (USA), EXIN, and PMI (USA). His research spans AI, healthcare, and holistic wellness, including peer-review and conference judging. Outside of professional achievements, he has a passion for heritage culinary arts, equestrianism, and music. His journey also includes a unique Arctic Circle expedition, further showcasing my diverse interests and experiences.

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