

2012-13 PFT Successes

Title: Walk Kansas PFT: Nutrition, Food Safety and Health

The Situation

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that:

- **52%** of people living in Kansas do not meet the minimum goal for physical activity – 150 minutes of moderate activity per week, or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity per week.
- **81%** of adult Kansans report not eating fruits and vegetables five or more times daily.
- **65%** of adults are overweight or obese and **75%** have high blood pressure.

Nationally, chronic disease is responsible for more than 70% of health care expenditures. Poor diet and physical inactivity have been linked to many health conditions – including obesity, diabetes, hypertension, stroke, heart disease, certain cancers, respiratory disorders, joint problems and osteoporosis – as well as to psychosocial problems.

Healthy lifestyle choices such as being physically active, eating more healthfully, maintaining a healthy weight, and managing stress more effectively, can delay onset of chronic disease and even prevent it. Lifestyle habits also play a key role in managing symptoms of these diseases.

Public Value:

Walk Kansas participants lead a healthier life by being more physically active, making better nutrition choices, and dealing with stress more effectively. The public value of this program is realized when participants adopt healthy lifestyle habits which lead to fewer weight-related chronic and acute diseases and improved quality of life. Public cost of health care and health insurance will be lower, and the number of productive contributing citizens in communities will increase.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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What We Did

K-State Research and Extension (KSRE) Family and Consumer Sciences professionals worked with local partners to offer Walk Kansas in 2013. This is an evidence-based program that is adapted each year to reflect current nutrition and physical activity guidelines and research findings.

Participants in the program (co-workers, family members, friends, neighbors) formed teams of six. If each member reached the minimum goal for physical activity during the 8 weeks the team would – collectively - walk 423 miles, which is the distance across the state of Kansas. Teams have the option of setting a goal that goes beyond this minimum.

Participants logged minutes of activity each week, and the amount of fruits and vegetables they ate. Team progress was reported weekly by captains and recorded at www.walkkansas.org.

Each participant received a weekly newsletter and most had the opportunity to attend health and nutrition related classes and activities, offered by KSRE and partnering organizations, in their community. Information was also shared through a program website and social media.

Outcomes:

In 2013, this program reached 15,709 participants. Through program evaluation surveys, the following outcomes were reported:

- **87%** were more physically active as a result of the program and **81%** met goals for physical activity during the 8 week program.
- **69%** were confident or completely confident they would continue this amount of activity during the next 6 months.

Making a Difference

- **95%** agreed they understand the need to break prolonged sitting throughout the day.
- **85%** are more aware of healthy eating recommendations and 76% increased fruit and vegetable consumption during the 8 weeks.
- **71%** were confident/completely confident they would continue this habit over the next 6 months.
- **61%** drank more water every day, replacing beverages high in sugar.
- As a result of healthy lifestyle practices during the Walk Kansas program, these changes were reported:
 - Increased energy - 49%
 - Better attitude – 43%
 - Increased endurance – 38%
 - Improved sleep – 32%
 - Decreased weight – 25%
 - Increased muscle strength – 25%
 - Better able to manage stress – 22%
 - Increased flexibility – 22%
 - Lower blood pressure – 11%
 - Lower blood cholesterol – 6%
 - Better diabetes control – 5%

Success Stories:

We walked, tap danced, hiked, swam, ran marathons, jumped rope and rock climbed our way around Kansas! We feel like our lives have changed for the better and we are very capable of working challenging jobs and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

“Pacing Panthers” Team

My students LOVE Walk Kansas. We go over the newsletters in class. They like the progress maps and healthy classroom snacks.

My daughter invited me to be on her team. We did strength training together twice a week. I am grateful for the time we have spent and look forward to continuing our workouts for as long as we can. I lost inches and gained a closer friend!

The program did motivate me to continue to find ways to exercise even through the wet and cold days that were supposed to be spring.

I'm 83 and have been active in Walk Kansas since 2005. I walk every day starting at 6:30 a.m. using the local school gym or outside. Bring on 2014!

I got my husband to walk and every evening we spent “quality” time together. It was well worth it.

Being part of the Walk Kansas program was a great reminder for me. I found myself making healthier choices while dining out to help myself meet the fruit and vegetable goal.

I lost 17 pounds and my cocker spaniel lost 3 pounds. We did a lot of walking together.

My family is eating healthier and we worked hard to increase fruits and vegetables not only at meals, but for snack time. It is fun to look for opportunities to sneak in fruits and vegetables and to find creative recipes.

I have fibromyalgia and it flared during Walk Kansas. The walking and moving toward a goal helped me walk through the pain.

This is a great program that motivates us to make a lifestyle change.

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