University of Missouri Extension’s Healthy Lifestyle Initiative

Building Partnerships for Healthy Communities

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In 2007 University of Missouri Extension envisioned:

- A multi-disciplinary approach to improving the health of Missouri Communities
- An opportunity to link University resources with identified community needs
- An initiative designed to be a partnership with communities at the local level to achieve impact

Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice
Goal and Strategies
Missouri Healthy Lifestyle Initiative

GOAL: Increase availability of healthy, affordable, locally grown food and places for safe, accessible physical activity

- Facilitate the development of local partnerships
- Impact local policies and environments
- Combat overweight, obesity and related chronic diseases
HLI Five-Step Process

1. Enlist and convene leaders and members of the community to begin talking, sharing and building a partnership.
2. Assess the resources, needs and desires of the community.
3. Educate yourselves and learn from others.
4. Develop an action plan with attainable, measurable goals that helps change policies and environments in your community.
5. Seek resources for implementing the action plan.
Healthy Dent County

– Broad community support
– Existing programs
– Rural, resource limited community, with high rates of obesity-related healthy problems
Goals and Strategies
Healthy Dent County

• Increase Community Access to Healthy, Affordable, Fresh Food
  ➢ Increase community awareness of healthy food options
  ➢ Increase healthy food options in schools
  ➢ Increase access to locally grown food
  ➢ Establish partnerships between local gardeners and youth organizations

• Increase Opportunities for Safe and Accessible Physical Activity
  ➢ Increase physical activity options during school day and after school activities.
  ➢ Increase community wellness for an Active Dent County
GOAL #1: INCREASE COMMUNITY ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE LOCALLY PRODUCED HEALTHY FOOD
The kids love getting out there, getting dirty working in the soil, so it's been a very positive experience," said Kim Edwards, South Central Missouri Community Action Agency coordinator. "Our hopes are that we're producing gardeners to come for the future."
GOAL #2: INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SAFE & ACCESSIBLE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
Photovoice Missouri

Robert, Dent County - "Parking Lot"
This is a parking lot. It is also the place where many teens go to “hang out.” I think that the city should work with local businesses to make the city a safer and more fun place for teens. The city should also encourage safe businesses to open in our city that would appeal more to a younger group of individuals.

Rachel, Dent County - "Upkeep"
This picture shows multiple holes in the wall and the phone hanging sideways on the wall. Why can we not fix simple things such as upkeep in our school?
Dustin, Dent County - “Open Gym Please”

Gyms give kids a chance to play sports and exercise. I think we need open gyms before and after school so kids can practice sports or exercise.
Council for a Healthy Dent County

501c3 non-profit organization

- Full-time Executive Director with 2 part-time staff.
- Partnership with TCRC for expanded programs and services
- Walking trail plan developed and submitted for grant funding
- Annual Women’s Health and Wellness Fair
- Babysitting Academy
- Fitness Center/Community Center
- County-wide wellness initiatives
Benefits and Challenges

**Benefits**

- Funding to kick-start activity
- Reduced Duplication – communication between health organizations
- Enthusiasm for local health projects
- Community building
- Economic development

**Challenges**

- Finding a kick-start activity/limit time planning
- Image of the “Extension” project
- Interaction between campus/field faculty
- Terminology used
- Sustaining the partnerships
- Interface with emerging but related projects
2012 Lead Communities Impact Assessment

• 90% agreed the HLI process provided direction for action in the community.
• 87% agreed that HLI planning process led to more collaboration in the community.
• 83% agreed that the HLI process led to other efforts/improvements in the community.
• 64% agreed that the HLI process helped leverage other funds.
  – “Local businesses now contribute to help continue projects begun by the initiative.”
HLI Facilitated Community Improvements

• 73.4% of survey respondents indicated that the majority of the improvements in the area of healthy living were only achieved because of the Healthy Lifestyle Initiative.
Environmental Changes

- Healthy, local foods used in school lunch service
- Education on healthy foods to service workers and students
- Community garden expansion
- Sidewalks and walking trails developed

“The local farmers market has expanded twice.”
Policy Changes

- Joint-use agreement allows community members and the school to use a storm shelter as an exercise facility

- School wellness policies have been implemented

- Vending machines switch from soda to juice

- Businesses offer work out breaks
Other Impacts of the HLI Process

“I see more and more people walking so their health **awareness** has been raised. Just drive through town and see the number of new gardens.”

“Raised **awareness** among city officials & community leaders in regard to ways to make community more walkable and helping them realize that expanding Farmer's Markets, improving sidewalks & walking trails make community more attractive for economic development efforts.”
Questions?

http://extension.missouri.edu/healthylife/

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