

Columbus City

Get Moving Central Ohio! Summit Propels Strategies to Increase Physical Activity

Summary

Members of the Central Ohio Alliance for Active Communities came together to explore new ways to implement the strategies outlined in the Franklin County Physical Activity Plan. A national consultant on public health and the built environment, Mark Fenton, inspired the audience to incorporate physical activity changes into existing environments within multiple sectors. Fresh and innovative approaches were shared by members and staff from the Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program at Columbus Public Health helped members move their strategies forward.



Challenge

CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) local data shows that neither adults nor children in Franklin County are getting the recommended amount of daily physical activity. Rates of overweight and obesity have risen over the years. Community partners from allied sectors including education, industry, and development, have been working together in Columbus and Franklin County since 2007 to increase access to physical activity opportunities. They collaborated by developing a local physical activity plan and by rallying behind initiatives such as Complete Streets, Safe Routes to School, and employee wellness policies. In early 2012, key challenges to long-lasting change were identified and a Summit to bring together partners in an effort to create a groundswell of support for new and existing initiatives.

Your Involvement is Key

Joining a coalition such as the Central Ohio Alliance for Active Communities can lead to a positive contribution to the future of any community.

Reaching out to a local health department program such as Creating Healthy Communities is a simple and effective way to gain tools and resources needed to move forward.

Solution

On July 10, 2012, CHC brought together local leaders and stakeholders – including Dr. David Sabgir, a locally recognized physician and expert on physical activity, and Mark Fenton, an internationally known public health and transportation consultant. Together, they explored new approaches to making physical activity a part of daily life in Central Ohio. Following the summit, participants were invited to reach out to CHC staff for assistance in implementing their strategies. Joanne St Clair, local Neighborhood Liaison to the City of Columbus, shared her strategy of training local area commissioners in spreading the message about the importance of physical activity. Jen Morel, of Healthy Columbus, the City of Columbus Employee Wellness program, asked for assistance in researching Qualified Transportation Benefit programs such as pre-tax bus passes to employees.



Results

Participants at the Get Moving Central Ohio! Summit walked away with the tools and knowledge necessary to inspire others to think about physical activity in new ways. New members were drawn to the summit and took the messages back to their places of work, with a new perspective on how their daily work affects access to physical activity in their community. As a result of attending the summit, Ms. St Clair and Ms. Morel were inspired to think more creatively about their possible impact on access to physical activity. Thanks to technical assistance from the Creating Healthy Communities program, they gained even more tools and insights into how their suggested strategies might be implemented. The groundswell of support for making the community more

conducive to physical activity was the result of the summit. Innovative strategies were propelled forward by inspiring and thought-provoking discussions brought about by the convergence of partners from various disciplines and the guidance of Mark Fenton.

“I was transfixed by the ability to act with others in response to the presentation by noted activist Mark Fenton [...] I will continue to spread the word and plant the seeds to help our communities to become more walkable and consequently safer.”

- Neighborhood Liaison, Columbus South Side

Future Directions

The success of the Get Moving Central Ohio! Summit is a call to action for individuals in every sector to support the implementation of strategies to increase physical activity in their community. In 2013, the Creating Healthy Communities program plans to expand the number of schools implementing Safe Routes to School by piloting a standardized crossing guard training in at least three Columbus neighborhoods.



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