Engaging Faith Based Partners in Childhood Obesity Prevention

Weight of the State
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Session Objectives

• Learn about a successful local initiative to engage faith community leaders in the battle over obesity

• Present strategies to engage faith based and neighborhood organizations

• Review available resources to help promote healthy choices
Agenda for this Session

• Background  *Sandy Thompson*

• Case Study: HEAL Summit  *Sarah White*

• Other ways faith communities and neighborhood organizations are involved  *Sarah White/Sandy Thompson*

• Take Away points  *Margaret Goldberger*

• Questions and Answers  *Margaret Goldberger*
Northern Virginia Healthy Kids Coalition: Mission

• Implementation of an evidence-based public health program
  • comprehensive
  • grassroots in nature
  • involves multiple stakeholders from diverse segments of the community

• Engage the entire Northern Virginia community in collaborative, family focused efforts to promote better health via the 9-5-2-1-0 for Health message for children of all ages. The message provides a simple way to remind our children about five healthy daily habits which can help them maintain a healthy weight and overall good health.
  • 9 - Get at least nine hours of sleep a night
  • 5 - Eat five servings of fruits and vegetables
  • 2 - Limit screen time outside of school - no more than two hours
  • 1 - Get at least one hour of physical activity
  • 0 - Eliminate or minimize consumption of sugary beverages
Community Partners

2007

- Local Governments
- Parks & Recreation
- Public Health Divisions
- Public officials and agencies
- Schools

2008 – 2013

- Child Care Providers
- Faith Communities
- Families
- Food Services
- Foundations
- Health Care Providers
- Individuals
- Leadership Organizations
- Media
- Parent Organizations
- Youth Organizations
Accomplishments: The Numbers

- > 283,000 students in Northern Virginia exposed to *9-5-2-1-0 for Health* message
- **Fairfax County Public Schools**: In October 2010 *9-5-2-1-0 for Health* message was expanded throughout the school district: 139 elementary schools sent out 6000 teacher packets and 95,000 Bookmarks. The message reached a total of 95,000 elementary students.
- **Arlington Public Schools**: Promoting healthy choices is one of Claremont Elementary School’s priorities. P.E. teacher Renee Seay talked about Claremont’s participation in the *9-5-2-1-0 for Health* program and a video was produced: [http://youtu.be/bW5Bvt2ubug](http://youtu.be/bW5Bvt2ubug)
- **Prince William County Public Schools**: The PWCS Nurses Health Awareness Committee, in cooperation with the Wellness Advisory Committee, promoted a division wide awareness campaign of the “*9-5-2-1-0 Tipping the Scales For Better Health Program*” during National Nutrition Week in March 2011. As part of the campaign they produced 5 public service videos: [http://www.youtube.com/user/PWCSchools#p/u/18/R8nljtGlbdE](http://www.youtube.com/user/PWCSchools#p/u/18/R8nljtGlbdE)
Accomplishments: The Numbers

• > 283,000 students in Northern Virginia exposed to **9-5-2-1-0 for Health** message

  • **Manassas City Public Schools**: The entire division has embraced the **9-5-2-1-0 For Health** message. Family Fitness Nights promoting this message have been held at all elementary schools. The schools nurses and Wellness Chairs serve as ambassadors at each site to promote the health message. The message has extended to reach 6,900 students. A kick off campaign occurs each fall. A major launch took place in October 2010.

  • **Alexandria City Public Schools**: The school nurses at each school have held contests and unveiled what each number means as a way to promote the **9-5-2-1-0 for Health** message. The entire learning community has embraced the health message of **9-5-2-1-0 for Health**. Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology created a video: [http://www.acps.k12.va.us/videos/95210/](http://www.acps.k12.va.us/videos/95210/)
Let’s Move the Needle on Childhood Obesity

- Inova Health System
- The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia
- Northern Virginia Healthy Kids Coalition
- Event that convened local Northern Virginia business, community and government leaders to further the engagement of our community-at-large to move the needle on childhood obesity
HEAL: A Case Study in Engaging Faith Communities in Reducing Obesity

Healthy Eating Active Living

Northern Virginia Healthy Kids Coalition
HEAL: Initial Assumptions

- Obesity is a winnable health battle
- Faith Communities have a role to play
- Targeting the decision makers within faith communities will have the greatest impact
- Information from a variety of points of view will be needed
- Free registration and free lunch will increase attendance
Goal: Empower leaders of faith communities to address healthy eating and active living in the following ways:

- Internally
- Externally
- Spiritually
HEAL: Conference Agenda

- 9:00 – 9:20 Opening remarks, Welcome, Interfaith Prayer
- 9:20 – 10:00 Keynote Address
- 10:00 – 11:15 Plenary Panel
- 11:15 – 12:15 Workshop One (Attendees choose one)
- 12:15 – 1:00 Lunch and Healthy Cooking demonstration
- 1:00 – 2:00 Workshop Two (Attendees choose one)
- 2:00 – 2:15 Get Involved, Make a Difference
- 2:15 – 2:45 Achieving Success in Your Community

Vendor exhibits available in-between each session
HEAL: The Panel

Jewish, Christian, Hindu and Muslim
HEAL: Workshops

- The Stigma of Obesity
- Preaching and Teaching Health
- Engaging Youth
HEAL: Workshops

- Role of Community in Social Health
- Best Practices in Houses of Worship
HEAL: Exhibitors

- 23 exhibitors
HEAL: Results and Lessons Learned

- Attendance: 218 pre-registered; 162 attended
- Costs: Direct: $2,500; in kind: ~ $13,000
- Overwhelmingly positive
  - Great range speakers/ideas; numerous positives responses on workshops, panel, keynote etc.
  - Lots of interest in church gardens
  - Interest in teaming up with others on specific projects
  - Interest in health fairs
  - Clergy energized
LiveHealthy Fairfax and the CTG
CTG: Strategic Directions

- High-impact evidence based clinical and preventive services
  - Promote solutions for health education and disease prevention and management
- Social and emotional wellness
  - Enhance services that address social and emotional wellness
- Healthy and safe physical environment
  - Community planning policies

**Active living and healthy eating**
- Enhance opportunities for increased physical activity
- Increase availability and affordability of healthy foods

- Tobacco-free living
  - Enhance tobacco free living within the Fairfax Community
Trinity Church provided weekend meal packs for 22 students for 12 weeks in Spring 2011.
MCPS expanded to 42 students for 24 weeks in 2 schools in 2011-12

Expanded for 30 weeks during 2012-2013 school year
Packs promote healthy eating and provide nutrition for students on weekends when school meals are not available.
Joy card included in each pack
Manassas Back Pack Snack Attack Program
Meal Access to Fight Hunger
A Community Engagement project

The Manassas Back Pack Program has enabled us to build a sense of community between the public schools and the neighborhoods in which they thrive. We have accomplished the goal of decreasing hunger and providing weekend access to meals for students living in our community. The Backpacks provide healthy meals for 42 students each weekend while protecting the identities of the students in the school that are participating. Students are able to take part in the back pack program without any stigma attached to it regarding their socioeconomic status and hardships their families may be experiencing. A survey was sent home with each student and included such criteria as emotional response, appropriateness of items packed, and self care of students. Comments from parents were made such as, “Thank you for sending food to my house,” “Thank you for helping my children,” and “Muchas Gracias.”

Healthy Back Pack Contents

• Non-perishable Food Items:
  • Shelf Stable Organic Whole Milk
  • 100% Fruit Juice
  • Fruit Cups
  • Vegetable Soups (Low Sodium)
  • Whole Grain Crackers
  • Hormel Microwaveable, Preservative Free Dinners
  • Oatmeal
  • Snacks: Raisins and Granola Bars

Measurable Outcomes

• Teachers reported that the students were actively engaged on Monday mornings and ready to learn.
• The guidance counselors and school nurses at each school site reported that students did not appear hungry.
• Of the greatest successes has been engaging the students from the National Junior Honor Society and the Key Club in packing the backpacks each week and helping those in the community who may be less fortunate.

Community Partners

• MCPS Health Services and Food & Nutrition Services
• Grace United Methodist Church, Manassas
• Trinity Episcopal Church, Manassas
• Upper Room Christian Cathedral, Manassas Park
• Harris Teeter, Manassas
• Hormel, Inc.
• US Foods, Manassas
• Manassas Lionesses and Lions Club
• Knights of Columbus George Brent Council
• Manassas Pediatrics
• Campbell's Soups, Inc.
• Malt-O-Meal, Inc.
• General Mills, Inc.

Our School Board believes strongly in stewardship and this project has embraced this concept.” ~
Sandy Thompson, MCPS Director of Food & Nutrition Services

Received first place Food for Thought Leaders Virginia School Board Association: Meal Access to Fight Hunger
Examples
Other Faith Based Initiatives to reduce obesity

• Fairfax Presbyterian Church
  • Healthy Congregation Snacks and Meals
  • Promotion of Exercise

• Bethlehem Baptist Church
  • Implementation of Evidence Based Youth Curriculum
  • Healthy Congregation Snacks and Meals

• Grace Ministries – Community Food Distribution Program
  • Youth Education
  • Health Screenings
Changing the Context

- In addition to enhancing programs that already exist, we are looking at ways to involve faith communities in
  Changing the Context

- Goal is to have faith communities engage in making healthy choices the DEFAULT options
Factors That Affect Health

1. **Socioeconomic Factors**
   - Long-lasting Protective Interventions
   - Clinical Interventions
   - Counseling & Education
   - Changing the Context to make individuals’ default decisions healthy

Examples:
- Poverty, education, housing, inequality
- Rx for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes
- Immunizations, brief intervention, cessation treatment, colonoscopy
- Smoke-free laws, tobacco tax, trans fat and sodium reduction
- Eat healthy, be physically active
- Poverty, education, housing, inequality

Resources to Share

• Faith Based
  • List of Faith Based Books and Articles
  • List of Websites
  • Let’s Move Toolkit for Faith Communities

• Additional Resources
  • Northern Virginia Healthy Kids Coalition
  • Wellness items from West Virginia
Take Away Points

• Importance of Community Engagement – so many people are working in isolation
• Figure out who the decision makers are in each faith community and who you know who could introduce you
• Understand the large role that the faith community is already playing
• Understand the competing priorities within faith based organizations (FBO)
• Work with what you and the FBO already are doing and build on both
Take Away Points

• Charge something for workshops, toolkits, etc. so that the FBO has “skin in the game”
• Consider sustainability:
  1. Use a train the trainer model, identifying a “Health Ambassador” from within the FBO
  2. Create a long term master schedule for the healthy initiative that builds in regular check in points to support sustainability
• Seek to understand the FBO leaderships’ personal stories and commitments to living a healthy lifestyle as this can make a critical difference in the adoption/sustainability of initiatives
We are happy to spend the remaining time answering your questions.

Please contact any of us for more information.

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