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2008 YMCA / Steps Community Collaborative Projects

Overview

In FY2008 YMCA of the USA entered the fourth year of it's partnership with the CDC Steps Program. Changes were made in the focus of the community partnerships to reflect the policy and environmental strategies of the CDC's Steps Program. Recognizing that many YMCA/Steps partnerships had differing capacity and capability to do this type of work, applicants were eligible to apply for one of two levels of funding.

Level 1, in the amount of $12,000, was awarded to eleven communities who demonstrated awareness of environmental change and policy work that could be accomplished within the community or worksite. An additional seven YMCA/Steps sites were awarded with Level 2 funding at $2,500, to continue to strengthen their partnerships and focus on internal policy and environmental strategies such as vending policy and healthy snack policy at YMCA operated after school sites.

In previous years forty projects were awarded and this year only eighteen received funds. It is important however to continue to stimulate and support communities when they are ready to utilize policy and environmental strategies and actions to ensure sustainable health and wellness changes. Additionally, of the twenty-two projects that were not awarded this year many had already been engaged to some extent with internal or external policy work over the course of their partnership, and thirteen of them verified that their partnerships would continue to flourish without the mini-grants indicating sustainability of their partnerships.

The information in the following sections briefly describes the YMCA/Steps Community Collaborative activities of the sites funded in year four of the on-going national partnership with CDC. These community partnerships continue to be strong and serve as evidence that community partners are willing to collaborate in building healthier communities.

LEVEL 1 PROJECTS ($12,000/Community)

Broome County YMCA & Broome County Steps

The Broome County YMCA will work with Broome County Steps to a HealthierNY to establish a corporate wellness project. By working with the human resources departments of twelve local businesses, the YMCA and Steps program will help adapt existing, create new, and implement wellness policies such as walking breaks, smoke-free initiatives, physical activity areas and healthy vending. The efforts will include establishing an onsite Wellness Committee that will work to build policy and environmental strategies through wellness

lectures, onsite group exercise and fitness testing. The committee will work with management to establish these as ongoing initiatives within each worksite

Uniontown Area YMCA & Steps to a Healthier PA – Fayette County
Utilizing the model they used to help schools develop wellness policies, the YMCA and Steps program will partner in an effort to promote worksite wellness in the county. Their goal is to work with twenty-five county employers to develop at least ten policies that can be adapted and adopted by each of the employers. Walkability will be promoted by establishing and advertising safe community-based walking routes and conducting workshops to improve employee nutrition. The Worksite Wellness committees will be self-reliant and internally supported to ensure that worksite wellness will be continuous, but the YMCA will offer ongoing technical assistance to the employers.

Wenatchee Valley YMCA & Steps to a HealthierWA – Chelan, Douglas and Okanogan Counties
Last year the Steps program conducted a walkability study for the Wenatchee School District's seven elementary schools, but the study has not yet resulted in policy change as planned. For this reason, the YMCA/Steps partnership plans to use its funding to work with stakeholders to create policy change at two or more of the district's elementary schools. The YMCA and Steps program will provide regional training on safe routes to schools for stakeholders such as administrators, transportation staff, and volunteers. The plan is for the policies developed to result in the schools incorporating the four "E's" of safe routes to school– Education, Engineering, Enforcement and Encouragement. Ongoing involvement of community stakeholders and the YMCA will create sustainability.

Jamestown YMCA & Chautauqua County Steps to a HealthierNY
These two organizations have worked together in the past on a successful worksite wellness initiative that included recognition for worksites that made positive changes. The YMCA will work with Steps on "Y Moves: Active Community on the Move." Assets will be conducted in selected schools, community groups, and neighborhoods allowing them to identify a policy or environmental change strategy they can implement to help the county's citizens be more active. Activities of the selected groups will include environmental audits, working on zoning issues, safe routes to schools or antismoking policy.

YMCA of Delta County & Hannahville Indian Community
By developing partnerships with four key entities in the Hannahville Indian Community, a variety of policies and practices will be changed in the community in the areas of healthy eating and physical activity. By working collaboratively with the largest employer, the Department of Health and Human Services, schools and the Executive Indian Council, they will have an opportunity to engage the community at-large with plans to make the changes

to ensure sustainability. This year's focus will be to change vending and restaurant policies for more healthy options, create wellness groups and walking trails.

Kandiyohi Area County Family YMCA & Steps to a Healthier Willmar
This collaborative partnership will increase the YMCA and Steps program's impact on local policy makers to support improving walkability of the community. A committee of community leaders and representative will be convened to identify improvements and policies that will support walkability. To increase community awareness about the importance of physical activity, the YMCA and Steps program will continue to implement "Healthy and Well Seminars" and "Healthy and Well Women's Fitness," which are participant driven and help to keep community members actively engaged.

YMCA of Greater Boston – Wang YMCA of Chinatown Branch & Boston Steps
The issue for Boston is not creating a good school wellness policy but ensuring that the policy is enforced. Boston has physical education requirements, however, they are often not met due to funding issues in the schools. The partnership will work with a school in the Chinatown community to offer year-round physical activity to students who only receive one semester of P.E. in school. YMCA staff will contribute time and staff to instruct swimming lessons for elementary school children. Each child will participate in lessons either during the fall or spring semester. Additionally, the YMCA will collaborate with the Quincy School Parents Group and others who are working to help implement and enforce the existing physical education requirements. This collaborative effort will work to build community support for current policies and push community and education leaders to consistently follow these policies for the health of the children and the community.

YMCA of Greater New Orleans & Steps to a Healthier New Orleans
The YMCA is committed to working with the Steps program to implement the Safe Playspaces Program in the new, post-Katrina playgrounds built at Recovery School District schools. These environmental changes will facilitate more opportunities for physical activity for children and families by making playgrounds and parks safer and by increasing the hours they are open during the week and on weekends. Implementation of the program will ensure that six playgrounds remain open for children who attend the schools and that community members have access to them as well. Policy changes will be put in place by engaging the superintendent and principals in increasing safety, keeping playgrounds open longer, and working toward providing better transportation to the sites.

Ed and Ruth Lehman YMCA & Steps to a Healthier Weld County
The partnership will focus on increasing community-based opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating. The YMCA and Steps program will work to expand physical activity and nutrition programs in SW Weld County. Through partnerships with community leaders, developers, municipalities, schools and others, efforts will focus on finding additional

opportunities to expand available space for healthy lifestyle activities that will increase residents' access to these programs. These relationships will be cultivated and utilized to help identify and develop new facility space with the intention of increasing access to physical activity and nutrition classes for area residents.

Montgomery Metro Board YMCA & Steps to a Healthier Alabama – River Region
Recognizing that their past collaboration which focused on bringing the community to the YMCA for programs could be more effective, the partnership will shift to be more externally oriented and with a focus on improving walkability in the underserved community in the River Region. Montgomery County Parks and Recreation serves as a key partner in this collaboration to increase the number of walking trails in county parks from five to seven by 2009. The YMCA will help improve the trails to increase use by providing environmental enhancement such as benches, grills and garbage cans. Additionally, the use of the trails will be promoted though outdoor nutrition and physical activity programming.

YMCA of Greater San Antonio & Steps to a Healthier San Antonio
To date, the Steps program, the YMCA, and San Antonio Independent School District have not had much success in identifying long term changes to impact children's nutritional status. After much consideration, they decided to expand the cities' Healthy Vending initiative, which has been used in worksites, to include all elementary schools. The intended outcome of this policy initiative is to create a healthy school vending policy. They will work with additional community partners to revise healthy vending guidelines to include appropriate options for youth and redesign healthy vending marketing tools to be kid-friendly. The schools involved will designate at least one machine per campus to healthy vending as a first step toward policy changes that will lead to wider adoption of the healthy vending policy.

LEVEL 2 PROJECTS ($2,500/Community)

South Sound YMCA – Briggs Branch & Steps to a Healthier WA
The YMCA has been engaged with the Steps program since 2005 when they began their *STEPS That Count* program. *STEPS That Count IV* is a community engagement program that encourages worksites to develop walking teams to support employee wellness. Each year the program has evolved, and this year participants will be referred to the Thurston County Health Department's "WorkWell" project. The healthy workforce project will assess the participating worksites and facilitate action planning for wellness policies.

Clark County Family YMCA & Steps a to a Healthier Clark County
The relationship between the YMCA and the Steps program began in 2003 and continues to evolve and expand. Joint efforts have included promoting healthy vending in the county and

the change of vending standards and guidelines within the YMCA. In addition to their continued collaboration on worksite wellness and walkability, the YMCA will implement healthy eating protocols for all YMCA sponsored after school programs. As a step toward this policy change YMCAs will begin providing healthier snacks and nutrition education for children to increase awareness of health nutritional habits and the importance of physical activity.

Wilkes-Barre Family YMCA, Greater Pittston YMCA and Hazleton YMCA & Steps to a Healthier PA – Lucerne County

The partnership between the YMCAs in Lucerne County and the Steps program began in 2005 and has expanded to include many other organizations. This year the effort will involve YMCAs adopting healthy vending policies, implementation of the "Eat Right, Right Here" program at the YMCA café and adding thirty minutes of physical activity to the "Family Fitness" after school program. The Steps program and the Pennsylvania State Cooperative Extension will work with the YMCAs to begin the "Family Fitness" program and promote the YMCA program throughout the county.

YMCA of Greater Tulsa & Steps to a Healthier Cherokee Nation

Despite the distance between sites (the YMCA is located in Tulsa and the Cherokee Nation is headquartered in Tahlequah, over two hours away) this partnership has worked diligently on the community collaborative and the YMCA/Steps American Indian/Alaska Native Initiative. These efforts continue to build the relationship and strengthen the bonds. The Cherokee Nation is in the process of developing a community recreation center and has asked the YMCA to provide expertise. YMCA is supporting the Cherokee Nation by providing staff an opportunity to participate in YMCA staff trainings relative to health and wellness programming, facility-related management and is providing advice on staffing, management systems and vendor referrals. Additionally, the YMCA is assisting with the Cherokee Nation Policy Workshop which is intended to provide systematic tools for identifying ways to build sustainability and build programs that can be sustained. The YMCA will serve on the Policy Workshop planning committee and assist in developing conference content, helping with logistics and overseeing the inclusion of YMCA Activate America® initiatives specifically around built environment and policy change.

Montgomery Metro Board YMCA & Steps to a Healthier Alabama – Southeast Region

This partnership will continue its eight-week "Healthy Kids" initiative which began last year. The initiative is a nutrition, physical activity and self-empowerment program serving children in the afterschool sites in Pike & Barbour Counties. The program currently serves over ninety children who have been deemed "at-risk" of overweight and obesity and provides opportunities for physical activity, healthy snacks and nutrition education for participants and their parents.

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Central Coast YMCA – Salinas Community Branch & Steps to a Healthier Salinas
In 2004 the YMCA and Steps to a Healthier Salinas forged a working relationship after the findings of the Monterey County Behavioral Risk Factor Survey showed obesity was a major health issue for the Latino community. This collaborative work has prompted new relationships to develop with groups such as the Community Foundation of Monterey County's Women's Fund. This collaboration has resulted in the YMCA being asked to assist in designing a "Girls' Health Summit" and develop healthy vending policies within the YMCA. This year's efforts will encourage nutrition education among YMCA staff and among children enrolled in after school programs and their families by offering healthy snacks and information along with healthy vending options.

YMCA of Pueblo & Steps to a Healthier Pueblo
The YMCA and the Steps program are confident that the twelve-week programs they have collaborated on, "YMCA Fitness on the Riverwalk" and "H.I.P. Kids," will be sustainable because of increasing community support. Funds will be used to support reduced rate enrollment in "H.I.P. Kids", a twelve-week program offered to children ages 8-12 that have been identified as at risk of becoming overweight or obese, and to enable the YMCA to offer no-cost outdoor fitness classes at "Riverwalk." The relationship between the YMCA and the Steps program continues to strengthen through collaborative activities and the YMCA's representation on various Steps committees. The YMCA will work toward policy and environmental change by creating and implementing healthy snack policy for youth programs and create/implement vending policies that strengthen and enhance the existing policy that says only healthy food options will be offered at YMCA meetings and events.