

IMPACT



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Healthy Lifestyles Grant Provides Resources to Teach at the Summer USDA Lunch Programs

The Situation

According to the 2001 Idaho Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 59.3% of Idahoans are overweight. A BMI (Body Mass Index) of greater than or equal to 25 is considered overweight for both men and women. In the Southeastern Idaho Health District, 59.9% of the population is considered overweight, which is one of the highest rates in the state. Overweight prevalence has increased by 30% during the last decade (Idaho Behavioral Risk Factors, 2001, p. 54-57), and anecdotal evidence suggests the problem has reached epidemic proportions. Environment and learned behaviors early in life put people at risk for becoming overweight. These factors may include reduced activity levels because of computer and television time, increased intake of total calories, increased fat and sugar calories with less fruits and vegetables, and unhealthy dieting behaviors to control weight.

Our Response

Last year the District IV Extension Nutrition Programs started teaching youth at the Summer USDA Lunch Programs. With the increase in obesity related issues, we wanted to have a program that would address eating healthy food, balanced with physical activity, to help our youth become less likely to gain unwanted additional weight. We wanted to use the new Wellness in the Rockies Youth Curriculum (WIN Kids), but it was cost prohibitive with our EFNEP/ENP budgets. To get the money we needed to teach the WIN Kids lessons, we wrote for a grant from the National 4-H

Council sponsored by Kraft Foods, and were honored to have the grant funded for \$5,663.

With the Kraft grant, we were able to buy the supplies we needed to teach the WIN Kids lessons at the Summer USDA Lunch Programs. We taught the series of lessons at American Falls, Lava, Downey, Arimo, Shelley, Soda Springs, and five sites in Pocatello. The lessons we taught were on understanding portion sizes, fruits and vegetables, protein, dairy, and whole grains. We provided large muscle activities for the youth using kick balls, jump ropes, Frisbees, and running games. For those youth who came to the park without their parents, we provided a packet for youth to take home so they could tell their parents about our activities. We also purchased pedometers for youth and some of their parents. We encouraged them to keep walking journals to be able to monitor their steps each day so they would continue their activity throughout the week. We challenged them to establish a goal to increase their steps by 10% each week for four weeks.

Program Outcomes

We took a roll and counted the number of parents and children that we taught. A total of 2,570 youth and 632 adults participated in the lessons and activities. Fifteen percent have been from minority populations that have a disproportionate rate of higher obesity levels. Eighty-nine people in 31 families kept walking records for four weeks. The first week we had them track their steps for a baseline number and then set a goal to increase the

steps they took each week by 10%. At the end of the project there was a 28% increase in the average steps of the group from the baseline, many reaching and exceeding their goals. A post-pre test was administered to youth at one session at Alameda Park in Pocatello to assess their awareness of the need to make wise food choices that promote good health, enjoy physically active living, and enjoy the benefits of self-acceptance. Of the youth that took the post-pre test 88% increased their awareness of the need to make wise food choices that promote good health and 63% increased their understanding of the benefits of physically active living and self-acceptance.

The Future

We will continue to look for additional resources to teach youth healthy lifestyle behaviors. With these types of programs, we hope to slow down the incidence of obesity in Southeast Idaho.

For More Information

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