



Summary of the *Get It – Do It!* Program (2007-2009)

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The “*Get It – Do It!*” program is a multi-organizational community health and social capital initiative begun in 2007 to address the issue of physical inactivity and strengthened youth-adult partnerships through community health efforts. With competitive grant funds awarded in 2007 from the K-State Center for Engagement and Community Development, partnerships were established with Kansas PRIDE, K-State Research and Extension-Family Studies, Healthy Kansas-KDHE Kansas 4-H, and local Extension agents to design and implement a program that would help small towns identify opportunities for built improvements to physical activity places and youth-led health promotion activities.

Need for Physical Activity Opportunities in Small Towns -

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Healthy People 2010), not only is an individual's health affected by their community, but the health of whole communities may be inseparable from the health of individuals and families. Consequently, community based organizations must be involved in preventing obesity and promoting a physically active lifestyle. “Whole community efforts that include informational, behavioral-social, environmental and policy approaches have been found to be effective in increasing the physical activity levels of targeted audiences,” (HHS/CDC, 2006).

Unfortunately, many small towns lack access to the knowledge “experts” or resources necessary to identify effective programs, adapt them to the uniqueness of their community and implement programs for sustainment. Consequently, *Get It – Do It!* provides small towns with the resources, support and “coaching” necessary to improve opportunities for physical activity and at the same time building leadership skills among youth and strengthening the community’s social fabric.

Program Objectives and Results –

Since its inception, nine Kansas communities have established adult-youth partnerships to improve personal and community health. These communities successfully competed in grant writing, completed needs assessments, participated in health promotion training, implemented projects that promote healthy activity and engaged in a thoughtful evaluation of their work. Adults and youth teams from each community built their capacity through participation at two, two-day trainings (16 contact hours), which equipped them with the skills necessary to adapt and adopt evidence-based health promotion strategies and nationally recognized curricula (e.g., CATCH and 4-H Health Rocks) in their home community. Each “*Get It – Do It!*” community has promoted health through unique micro-projects, using evidence-based strategies founded upon the Association of State & Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors “Cornerstones of Community Health Promotion”.

Examples of these community-based, adult-youth health promotion projects include:

- Melvern- following improving seven miles of indigenous trails, educational activities were designed and promoted through the local grade school. Teachers integrated the trail for physical activity and environmental education. Trail promotion efforts made people more aware of exercise, eating habits and the variety of walking and biking opportunities in Melvern and around. For 2010 Melvern is improving their city’s Railroad Park with youth leaders.
- Glasco - supported walking programs where youth earned high school citizenship credit in collaboration with the school’s Learn and Serve program. Adult and youth leaders enveloped the community with activities ranging from expanded swimming pool hours, increased exercise classes at the Glasco Senior Center, and support of the five intergenerational Walk KS teams. USD 334 was so impressed by the 2009 *Get It – Do It!* project in Glasco that the school district has chosen to include physical activity in their 2010 summer school program.
- Rossville – improvements in the city park’s sandy volleyball court led to a successful project. Through Rossville’s “*Get It – Dig It*” project inter-town volleyball tournaments were a new addition to summer activities, local festivals

became well attended by youth who once drove to Topeka and a \$75,000 park improvement grant was awarded by the KS Dept. of Commerce. "There is contagious energy in Rossville. As the community has seen what can be accomplished together, they are turning their attention to other projects. No longer do people in Rossville feel that everything is good enough, they feel that Rossville deserve better," (C. McKenzie, 2/2010).

- Stafford - blended eco-tourism, health promotion and community networking. The creative collaboration resulted in youth led health games in the park and afterschool, increased participation in annual wildlife events (e.g., Walk America, Bike & Hike with the Birds) and recruited new high school members to the community coalition. A summer program coordinated by an Americorps volunteer provided physical activity opportunities and nutrition education all summer.
- Mt. Hope - 16 new Walk Kansas teams were the first result of Mt. Hope Get It – Do It!. Following Walk Ks, youth will lead summer activities for elementary-age children in the park which will be improved with grant funds. Community dances, "vintage" games and sports teams are all part of Mt. Hope's Get It – Do It! grant for 2010.
- Grinnell – continues to add activity inter-generational equipment to their city park and then hold summer festivals programs to introduce others to the equipment, to improvements in the local walking trail are planned and implemented by youth who receive "credit" in leadership classes and school leadership positions.

In 2008, its first complete year, Get It – Do It! projects reached 988 (unduplicated) Kansans of all ages and generated \$36,285 (@ \$7.15/hr.) in local "sweat equity" to support the projects which is a 2-for-1 return on an investment of \$18,000 in grants. Three of the six original communities have received PRIDE Excellence awards based on their local Get It – Do It! work.

In 2009 Get It – Do It! communities reached 911 individuals the generated \$36,800n(@ \$7.15/hr) in additional support to promote physical activity and make improvements to places such as city squares, parks, walking trails. Volunteer leaders have successfully learned how to write and manage grants and implement a planned, evidence-based project through "Get It – Do It!" These new-found skills have resulted in five communities submitting grant proposals to other funders.

In addition to learning how to foster adult-youth partnerships and compete in grant submissions, "Get It-Do It!" communities have gained collaboration skills by working with their local K-State Research and Extension professionals. Those local Extension professionals, who are required to endorse local Get It – Do It! grant submissions and confirm their active involvement in the projects, have discovered that Get It – Do It! is a viable mechanism to blend effectively and efficiently their community development, youth development and health promotion work. At post-project interviews, Extension agents have responded positively their willingness to continue with Get It – Do It! programs in their communities.

Get It – Do It! uses a 4-faceted evaluation which includes: 1) third-party observational site visits by trained graduate students, 2) telephone conference calls of Extension intermediaries/key-informants, and 3) written, self-reports completed by each community around community development outcome indicators ("Measuring Community Success and Sustainability", 1999; North Central Regional Center for Rural Development), and 4a youth-driven, participatory evaluation using Photovoice technology.

Photovoice References:

- Royce, S.W., Parra-Medina, D., & Messias, D.H. (2006). Using Photovoice to Examine and Initiate Youth Empowerment in Community-Based Programs: A Picture of Process and Lessons Learned. *Californian Journal of Health Promotion*, Volume 4, Issue 3, 80-91
- Strack, R.W., Magill, C., & McDonagh, K. (2004). Engaging Youth through Photovoice. *Health Promotion Practice*, 5; 49, pp. 49-58.
- Wang, Yi, Tao & Carovano (1998). Photovoice as a participatory health promotion strategy. *Health Promotion International*, Vol. 13 (1), pp 75-86.).