

Activate Your Health

Background

Laverton is a remote community, situated 1,000km north east of Perth and has three large mines close by, with fly-in fly-out workforces. Excluding the mines, the town's population is approximately 400 people and very transient. It has a large Aboriginal population, especially youth.

Barriers to physical activity include; a lack of recreational infrastructure with no indoor court facility and minimal lighting on the oval; hot summers and cold winters; no dedicated sporting teams or competitions; and limited knowledge among volunteers to run different sports.

A collaborative multi-agency approach was adopted to combat low physical activity and consequent health problems within the Shire. A range of strategies were identified to educate the community about the benefits of physical activity and a healthy diet.

Project Objectives

- Increase capacity of local community to run physical activity initiatives.
- Increase child/youth physical activity levels by 5%.
- Increase awareness among the community of the importance of physical activity and a healthy diet.
- Establish community walking groups, social sporting competitions and fitness classes.
- Establish Curtin University's Healthy Lifestyle Program.

Project Strategies

- In partnership with Curtin University, conduct courses to train people in sport management techniques and collaborate with Wongatha Wonganarra to run two culturally specific physical activity education programs.
- Curtin University to establish Healthy Lifestyle Program and run community forums and fitness programs on a fortnightly basis using nursing, health promotion and physiotherapy students.
- Encourage local community members to attend sport coaching courses run by the Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR) in Kalgoorlie or by teleconference.
- Assist Laverton school to provide a structured physical activity education program and increase opportunities for student participation.
- Introduce after school activities, annual have a go days and a corporate challenge competition 'Walk to the Top'.
- Conduct school holiday programs, monthly youth disco and introduce dance training.



- Conduct hospital sponsored information sessions about the importance of physical activity.
- Community health nurse and local GP to work with high risk members of the community to educate and prescribe physical activity.
- Use local monthly paper to place articles on physical activity and suggested routines.
- 'Find thirty' signs to be placed around town as community reminders.
- Establish two social walking groups to target older adults and mothers.
- Conduct a survey to establish preferences for flexible, regular sporting competitions, preferred times and sports.
- Provide data projector for virtual aerobic classes in the local hall.

Project Results

With community collaboration and a wide range of strategies in place the project has achieved some important results. This includes 250 active participants with an average duration of 45 minutes per activity session.

Training

- A one week skate workshop was attended by 22 youth per session at the new skate park that was completed in July.
- Dance training workshops with 10 students performing at the regional youth festival Crocfest.
- Football and netball development officers ran workshops with all school year groups.
- 7 participants in a football development scheme run by Curtin University contributed to NAIDOC week and three of the participants attended the Meekatharra carnival as coaches.



Capacity Building

- Sportsfun training was coordinated with 15 high school students.
- 25 participants attended a netball umpiring course.
- Shire staff attended the Leaders in Sport Conference 2004.
- A trainee community event manager and coach has been employed.



Promotion

- 11 project newsletters placed in local newspapers.
- 20 posters painted by youth and placed in the Library and around the town.

Events

- School sport activities involved the whole school for 2-3 hours per week.
- School and interschool carnivals in swimming, basketball, softball and athletics.
- After school sessions in basketball, soccer and junior football.
- School holiday program activities attended by 15 youth per day and focussed on physical activity. Nine young people attended a reward camp which included workshops with the Wildcats, Dockers and a wide range of physical activities.
- 40 gymnastics sessions were held by Curtin University.
- Walking groups conducted by local physiotherapist for the elderly and the Home and Community Care (HACC) group.
- Pedometers available in the library for loan.
- Youth Advisory Council assisted in the planning and delivery of sport activities and 10 discos (300 people attended the discos).
- Seniors competitions were held in football, touch rugby and netball.



- 140 seniors participated in the NAIDOC Week basketball and football carnival.
- 25 community members attended sporting competitions at the Meeka Muster.
- 6 tennis sessions over four weeks.
- 30 contestants in the *Wheelie Bin competition* and forty children took part in other activities.
- 25 other competition sessions of mixed netball and basketball were held.

Community Education

- Weekly health checks were run on community members and Shire staff.

Where to from here?

- Activities will continue as funding has been secured from DSR for the next two years.
- Continued liaison with Laverton Sports Club and the mining companies to provide further support for the delivery of physical activity programs within the community.
- Ongoing development of the holiday program.
- Pedometer hire will continue through the local library.

Lessons learned

- Due to the dynamic nature of this type of project, it is important to keep a high level of communication with all agencies
- Good participation outcomes are achieved by giving youth a say in what is provided.
- Hip hop dance was an outstanding success and attracted boys and girls.
- Giving young people the opportunity to develop posters and display them in the town had positive outcomes for participation and self esteem.
- Casual sports competitions were a good strategy with a transient population, however, inconsistent numbers can still be an issue.
- New games need to be introduced to older groups to maintain and develop interest.
- Local community issues and changing priorities can interrupt the commitment by some agencies.
- The partnership with HACC was critical in gaining the participation of the local older indigenous population, however, greater focus is needed to further increase their participation.

Total project cost: \$136,000 (including \$20,000 Local Activity Grant)

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