



Articulating our Department's Stance on Physical Activity and Nutrition Revised 5/11

1. Facts:

Physical Activity

- ◆ Despite the proven benefits of physical activity, more than 60% of American adults do not get enough physical activity to provide health benefits (source: CDC).
- ◆ More than a third of young people in grades 9–12 do not regularly engage in vigorous physical activity (source: CDC).
- ◆ Health researchers have found that residents, especially women, who live in low income housing in neighborhoods considered unsafe at night, are less physically active than those who live in safer neighborhoods. In addition, the study, conducted in the Boston area, found that feeling unsafe may also diminish confidence in the ability of residents to become physically active. Researches recommended further study. *Safe To Walk? Neighborhood Safety And Physical Activity Among Public Housing Residents.* Bennett GG, McNeill LH, Wolin KY, Duncan DT, Puleo E, Emmons KM; Department of Society, Human Development and Health, Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, Massachusetts, USA. *PLoS Med.* 2007 Oct;4(10):1599-606; discussion 1607 NJ
- ◆ Physical inactivity among children can lead to the same chronic diseases that inactivity does in adults, including high cholesterol, high blood pressure and type-2 diabetes. *Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Accessed online at www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/index.htm in June 2005.*

Nutrition

- ◆ Only about one-fourth of U.S. adults eat the recommended five or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day (source: CDC).
- ◆ More than 60% of young people eat too much fat, and less than 20% eat the recommended five or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day (source: CDC).

The Impact on People

- ◆ Unhealthy diet and physical inactivity play an important role in many chronic diseases and conditions, including type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, stroke, breast cancer, colon cancer, gallbladder disease, and arthritis (source: CDC).
- ◆ Obesity in the United States is truly epidemic. In the last 10 years, obesity rates have increased by more than 60% among adults. Approximately 59 million adults are obese (source: CDC).
- ◆ Since 1980, obesity rates have doubled among children and tripled among adolescents. Of children and adolescents aged 6–19 years, 15%—about 9 million young people—are considered overweight (source: CDC).

The Cost

- ◆ Among children and adolescents, annual hospital costs related to obesity were \$127 million during 1997–1999 (in 2001 constant U.S. dollars), up from \$35 million during 1979–1981 (source: CDC).
- ◆ In 2000, the total cost of obesity in the United States was estimated to be \$117 billion, of which \$61 billion was for direct medical costs and \$56 billion was for indirect costs (source: CDC).
- ◆ Among U.S. adults in 1996, \$31 billion of treatment costs (in year 2000 dollars)—17% of direct medical costs—for cardiovascular disease was related to overweight and obesity (source: CDC).

2. Observations:

Physical Activity

- ◆ Many adults and kids do not engage in regular physically activity of at least 30 minutes a day.
- ◆ P.E. standards have been reduced over the past 20 years; in some cases P.E. is not a required course each semester.
- ◆ Sedentary recreation activities (TV watching, video games) have replaced many outdoor recreation activities that, to a certain degree, are physically demanding.
- ◆ Transportation is done mainly by car: today, fewer children walk or ride their bikes to school; most trips of between one quarter of a mile and a mile are made by car.
- ◆ Between work & family obligations, adults don't take or make the time to engage in enjoyable physical activity.
- ◆ Adults and children don't plan their discretionary time to explore and develop leisure interests.

Nutrition

- ◆ Poor nutrition choices made by parents and children.
- ◆ Families are “on-the-go”: parents purchase cheap fast food, both out of convenience and because they know their children will eat it.

3. Problem statement:

Kids and adults, on average, are less physically active today than they were 20 years ago. Combined with poor nutritional options, choices and habits, many residents may experience a variety of health problems, both minor and serious.

4. Inventory: What West Sacramento Parks & Recreation does/has now

Programs

- ◆ Youth sports (basketball, flag football, baseball, street hockey, skills events)
- ◆ Adults sports (softball and basketball)
- ◆ Aquatics (swim lessons and recreational swimming)
- ◆ Special interest classes (karate, youth gymnastics, youth tennis, Jazzercise)
- ◆ After school and summer kids programs (Kid Zone, K.I.D.S. Camp, and Camp Lakeside)
- ◆ Adaptive Recreation/Special Olympics
- ◆ Teen programming (cheerleading, hip-hop, etc.)

Facilities

- ◆ Parks with open turf areas
- ◆ Parks with play structures
- ◆ Athletic fields/courts (baseball, softball, soccer, flag football, track, Cricket, basketball, horseshoe pits)
- ◆ Skate park
- ◆ Swimming pools
- ◆ Spray ground
- ◆ 36,500 sq. ft. indoor recreation center (opens January '09)
- ◆ 56,800 sq. ft., three (3) pool aquatic facility (opens February '09)

Current Resources

- ◆ NRPA's Step Up to Health initiative (we are an official SUTH agency)
- ◆ Statistics/information provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), including VERB campaign.
- ◆ CPRS – Leading the Way to Promote Health & Wellness
- ◆ CPRS Communications Tool Kit
- ◆ Summer Food Service Program (USDA)
- ◆ Youth Sports partners (NFL, MLB, NBA, Giants, Sharks)
- ◆ Yolo County Health Coolaborative
- ◆ Other like-minded agencies, professionals and educators.

5. What we'd like to do/have in the future

Programs

- ◆ Youth sports camps
- ◆ More adults sports (traditional and non-traditional)
- ◆ Nutrition education component (classes, workshops)
- ◆ Leisure education component (classes, workshops)

Facilities

- ◆ More parks with open turf areas
- ◆ More unique & challenging play structures
- ◆ More athletic fields/courts (baseball, softball, soccer, flag football, walking/jogging trails, basketball)
- ◆ Another skate park
- ◆ One more indoor recreation center
- ◆ One more outdoor aquatic facility
- ◆ More spray grounds
- ◆ A tennis complex

Staff

- ◆ Become the experts (increase knowledge and articulate message)
- ◆ Lead by example
- ◆ Research trends
- ◆ Expand resources and partnerships

We would like to increase our role in the community as a health & wellness destination through our recreation programming and park design.

6. How can we help the problem?

- ◆ Train all staff (full-time, part-time, contract employees . . . even volunteers, coaches, and commissioners) on the importance physical activity and good nutrition. From clerical to parks division to recreation division, all staff members should be educated on this topic and be able to articulate it to others in the community, especially users of both programs and facilities. To do so an orientation/training program should be developed.
- ◆ Develop a minimum exercise and/or nutritional message requirement for all programs. Example: If a program is 60 to 90 minutes long and does not involve any moderate physical activity, at least 10 minutes would be spent in some level of physical activity, like stretching, walking or light exercise. If a program is 60 to 90 minutes long and is physically active, then at least 5 minutes would be spent in talking and/or snacking on a healthy snack, like fruit. For every 60 minutes of the program, 10 minutes will be allocated for physical activity or 5 minutes of nutritional education (for sedentary seniors, getting to the program may be all the exercise they need or are capable of doing, thus the idea of simply getting to the program could be figured into the activity itself).
- ◆ Include health messages in all department department/program literature, psa's and department web site. Similar to "It's Your Time to Play" that currently runs in the newspaper once a month, include fitness and nutritional facts and tips on all flyers, electronic communication, and in the activity guide. Let it be known that we support physical activity and good nutrition!
- ◆ Develop a rating system for all recreation programs. Depending on the level of physical activity a participant could expect to receive, the program would be rated (scale to be determined) which would be indicated on department/program literature, psa's and department web site.
- ◆ Market ourselves as an activity destination for the community. When they want to be active West Sacramento residents should think of West Sacramento Parks & Recreation as the agency that can meet their needs.
- ◆ Develop an educational component for the parents. In addition to providing the programs, messages and facilities whereby children and teens can develop positive lifestyle habits, parents need to become partners in encouraging physical activity and providing and encouraging proper nutrition for their children. Our department will need to develop a program where we can provide nutritional and physical activity information, ideas, and action steps that will help increase their potential for success as partners in fighting physical inactivity and obesity.
- ◆ Make physical activity and good nutrition fun! Celebrate the benefits! This can be done by establishing priorities (fun over winning) and by creative planning. Develop new programs and events that promote increased physical activity and good nutrition.
- ◆ Recognize and celebrate our successes. Document our progress, communicate our efforts and successes, recognize and reward outstanding efforts and achievements.

7. Our philosophy (We believe that . . .):

We believe that every resident has the right to be happy and healthy; this can be achieved through moderate physical activity, proper nutrition, and a balanced healthy lifestyle.

We believe that a healthy park is a place that has a balance of programmed and self directed recreation that uses attractive design and amenities that appeal to a diverse, multigenerational community that encourages the development of healthy lifestyle habits.

8. Vision statement:

The West Sacramento Parks & Recreation Department provides the programs, facilities, and education that allow residents to engage in a level of physical activity appropriate for their needs, while advocating good nutrition and living a balanced, healthy lifestyle.

9. Obstacles to overcome?

- ◆ Habits and choices (both staff and public)
- ◆ Attitudes & perceptions (both staff and public)
- ◆ Lack of education regarding the benefits of regular physical activity, good nutrition, developing a variety of leisure interests and living a balanced healthy lifestyle.
- ◆ Corporate media and marketing (commercials for fast food, video games, miracle weight loss supplements, etc.)

10. Action Steps & Implementation

Information Dissemination/ Promotion

1. Announce our status as a Step Up to Health (SUTH) agency
 - Council Newsletter – [done](#)
 - City Lights – [done](#)
 - Local newspapers – [done](#)
 - Social Networking (Facebook, Twitter, City iLights) – [in progress](#)
2. Develop SUTH messages ([an ongoing process](#))
 - Fitness/physical inactivity facts; benefits of improved nutrition or increased physical activity messages
 - Nutritional facts
 - Health benefits of parks and recreation programs and facilities
3. Identify where SUTH messages are communicated
 - Newspapers (Fitness/physical inactivity facts are already in West Sacramento Press monthly) ([implemented](#))
 - Parks & Recreation department web site ([implemented](#))
 - Department program flyers ([implemented as programs are promoted](#))
 - letters and other written communication - [an ongoing process](#)
 - banners ([implemented](#)) and signage ([format and posting dates TBA](#))
4. Develop a rating system for all programs
 - A brief description would detail the affect of participation (like increased heart rate) and potential benefits (30 minutes of the activity can burn up to 300 calories) – [implemented](#)

- For those activities where a participant could expect to receive a minimum of 30-minutes of moderate physical activity, an icon would be displayed next to the program information (if on the web or in the activity guide). This icon would correspond to the anticipated level of physical activity a person can expect from a particular activity/class/program (in this case 30 minutes of moderate physical activity, i.e., gets your heart rate up, break a sweat, etc.). It would be a small graphic next to the program name, so it wouldn't be a problem when placing it into program information. – [implemented](#)

Staff and Volunteer Preparation

1. Develop a physical activity and nutrition training orientation program
 - For current staff, new employees, volunteers/coaches, contract employees/instructors, and commissioners – [implemented in November of 2006 during youth basketball coaches training.](#)
 - Training would include a handbook, workshop, and graduation certificate – [handbook, workshop and certificate currently under development](#)
 - Recognition of staff/volunteers for continued promotion of this initiative – [currently under development](#)
 - Celebrate small-wins, milestones, etc. – [on-going](#)

Action Implementation

1. Mandate physical activity and/or nutrition component for all department programs
 - For every 60 minutes of program time, five (5) minutes will be spent in physical activity (walking or stretching) or a brief discussion about how participants can improve their eating habits and choices (this should be an interactive discussion, not a lecture). If physical activity is the nature of the program/class, then the inclusion of the nutritional component would be an acceptable alternative. - [implemented](#)
 - As each program is promoted, its level of anticipated physical activity should be rated and potential benefits listed – [implemented](#)
2. Develop Nutrition standards for all programs - [TBA](#)
 - In order for this to be successful, supervisors will need to be prepared to articulate constraints, if any, which may hinder the ability of their programs to provide healthier snack for participants. Example: 1) It may be very difficult to store fresh fruit as such items are perishable and may require refrigeration. From this point staff is encouraged to seek out and experiment with snack options to determine which items meet new department standards and will be eaten by participants. This process should lead to the reduction or elimination of processed sugars in programs where the department provides a snack.
 - When the department is the snack bar vendor it should provide a selection of healthy options and avoid selling those items that are known to have little or no nutritional value.
 - Provide basic education about the healthy items being offered and their nutritional value.
 - Practice what we Preach: staff should consider the types of treats and snacks they provide for department employees during special events like birthdays parties, department socials, and trainings. This is not to say that we cannot bring in donuts now and then, but consider healthier options that may be enjoyed by staff just as much as items that contain little or no nutritional value.

3. Development of new programs
 - New programs that focus on increasing the physical activity level of all residents should be developed. Some ideas include:
 - * Step Up to Health Community Wellness Program: this campaign would kick-off with a large special event that would feature a physical activity, such as walking, and culminate with a health & wellness fair with vendors and interactive games and activities for all ages. From there the program would focus on getting people out of their cars and living rooms to engage in a minimum of 30-minutes of physical activity a day. – [currently under development](#)
 - * VERB: the CDC has provided the department with some free resources for the development of new physical activity programs for children (or for the inclusion of more physical activity in existing programs). [Implemented in KIDS Camp summer 2006.](#)
 - * Implemented Fitness Challenge through the Recreation Center; January 2011 and May 2011
4. Development of partnerships
 - Step Up to Health Alliance (Phase I) – partnered with 15th Street Gym and Curves to provide value to residents who kept memberships with those businesses by allowing them to add a Recreation Center pass for a nominal fee – [March 2009 to present](#)
 - Step Up to Health Alliance (Phase II) – reached out to local fitness providers to develop partnerships that would allow for the sharing of ideas, information and resources in an effort to help grow the number of people engaged in personal fitness in an effort to strengthen the business climate – [began in May 2011; in progress](#)

11. Conclusion

All West Sacramento residents can benefit from an increased level of physical activity and improved nutritional habits. Combined with a balanced lifestyle and positive attitude, residents increase the likelihood of leading happy, healthy lives. When it comes to health and wellness, the Parks & Recreation Department is best positioned to provide the programs, facilities and opportunities to meet the needs of our residents.