

Care, Comfort and Hope

Wisconsin Hospitals Community Benefits

Physical Activity

The increasing rates of obesity among adults and children are raising concerns because of the dire implications on American's health. In communities across Wisconsin, hospitals are dedicating resources and doing what they can to encourage people of all ages to lose weight and stay active.

The Living Well Series

For many, living well requires a little extra help and support, and the Aurora West Allis Medical Center provides it through a 12-month program. The year-long series includes educational classes and an on-site program coordinator who helps participants make the lifestyle and behavior changes necessary to prevent diabetes, reduce risk of cardiovascular disease and maintain weight to achieve optimal health for a lifetime.

The program is divided into two phases for which participants can enroll separately. The first phase consists of three months of weekly meetings and a three-month gym membership to the Wisconsin Athletic club. The second phase is a nine-month maintenance program with biweekly meetings for two months, then monthly meetings.

For women unable to make two six-month commitments, the Aurora Women's Pavilion teams up with the Karen Yontz Center and provides no shortage of alternatives to help women achieve optimal health through the life span. One example is a six-week course to improve women's cardiovascular fitness, balance, core strength and muscle tone. Instruction is provided at individual and group exercise stations to provide the participants with the experience of interval training.

Aurora West Allis Medical Center

"Motivating People to Move"

Monroe, Wis. event offers inspiration and ideas for healthier living

Good health practices don't always originate in the doctor's office. Sometimes they begin in a high school parking lot under the instruction of an enthusiastic man and his Nordic walking poles.

On March 22, 2010, Monroe Clinic and The Swiss Colony partnered to host a community presentation in Monroe, Wis. The two-part event, called "Motivate Monroe to Move!" featured Robert Sweetgall, a motivational speaker with a passion for active living. Marcey Sink, Monroe Clinic community health education coordinator, and Tracey Meier, The Swiss Colony human resource manager, worked closely together to organize the event that would attract and inspire the community to approach an active lifestyle with a fresh perspective.

"When it comes to healthy living, Sweetgall walks the walk and talks the talk. The man radiates with energy, and it's motivating just to be in the same room with him," said Sink.

The first portion of the event focused on the activity of Nordic walking and took place in the parking lot of Monroe High School. Robert split the crowd of 50 into smaller groups, teaching them various ways to use the Nordic walking—or Exerstrider®—poles, then he organized relay races that allowed the participants to put their newfound skills to work.

The second part of the evening took place inside the school's auditorium, where a larger audience of 120 people listened as Robert shared his personal story of his trek across the United States and offered those in attendance advice on making positive changes in their health and lifestyles.

Among those in attendance for both presentations was Janice Everson of Monroe, who came with her husband, Dennis. While the Eversons were inspired by Robert's story of his walk across America, they particularly enjoyed the earlier Nordic walking demonstration.

"Robert gave us several demonstrations of different ways that we could use the poles, and then we each tried what he had just demonstrated. We divided into groups and had races against the others," said Janice. "We really enjoyed seeing Robert put the poles in motion and show us how to use them."

The Eversons enjoyed the demonstration so much, they both purchased their own poles, which they have grown comfortable using during walks.

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Wisconsin Hospitals Community Benefits (continued)

While “Motivate Monroe to Move!” offered area residents an evening of hands-on fun and information, the overall objective went deeper. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 37 percent of adults report they are not physically active, and only three in 10 adults get the recommended amount of physical activity.

The resulting situation is a local and national example of how doing nothing is actually doing something—something dangerous and damaging to the lives of American adults and children. Diabetes, heart disease and obesity are at epidemic levels, and these serious illnesses are striking younger populations more than ever before.

“Monroe Clinic and The Swiss Colony are the community’s two largest employers. So these statistics aren’t just statistics. They’re the people who make up our workforce, our patients and customers, our communities, and our children,” said Sink. “These statistics are also proof that it’s time to get creative and look for new ways to integrate physical activity into our lives. Hopefully, events like ‘Motivate Monroe to Move!’ can offer a fresh and exciting perspective on exercise. And if one person embraces a healthier lifestyle because of this event, then it’s a success.”

Monroe Clinic, Monroe

Door Weigh to Family Health program

Door County Memorial Hospital in partnership with the Door County YMCA offers their community a unique wellness program opportunity for families.

Door Weigh to Family Health is a program created by a team of professionals from both Door County Memorial Hospital and the YMCA with the intent to take initiative against a growing problem in this country—childhood obesity. Rates of childhood obesity are sky rocketing and Door County is not benign from this epidemic. Door Weigh to Family Health is a multidisciplinary 12-week parent/child class which meets weekly. Classes are lead by a registered dietitian, social worker and physical fitness instructor. Each week, parents and kids together practice ways to increase daily activity and set achievable eating and exercise goals. Children learn exercises designed for their weight levels and families enjoy menu plans with nutritious kid-tested recipes. Parents learn positive ways to coach children to make healthier lifestyle choices. Each class is filled with fun and learning. Kids are referred from their doctor, nurse, school nurse, school counselor or other friends and family who have experienced the program. The main focus is fun, although, in all that fun they are learning about nutrition, making healthier food choices, increasing physical activity and feeling better about themselves. Kids age 6-18 are invited to join, although at least one parent is required to attend with the child.

Several life changes have been made by the families who have participated in Door Weigh to Family Health. Parents report their kids’ physical education teachers notice increased participation in P.E. class. Other remarks from parents are; “We eat out less,” “We cook healthier meals and plan our meals more often,” “We eat more fruits and vegetables.” Parents state they catch their kids reading food labels, and more importantly, they are found making healthier food choices. Kids comment they look forward to class and have fun while parents notice their kids are learning through the games they play without even realizing it. Parents themselves feel the benefit as the whole family is encouraged to make changes and get healthy together.

Door Weigh to Family Health began in February 2008. Plans to continue this program are underway with discussion regarding expanding the program out into the county schools or after school programs. So far, Door Weigh to Family Health has helped improve the lives of about 30 families (approximately 100 people) in our community. Ultimately touching the lives of many more kids/families is our hope and goal.

Ministry Health Care’s Door County Memorial Hospital, Sturgeon Bay

Submit community benefit stories to Mary Kay Grasmick, editor, at mgrasmick@wha.org.



Read more about hospitals connecting with their communities at www.WiServePoint.org.