

RELEVANCE

Excessive weight and inactivity are consistently linked with increased incidences of chronic diseases. More than two-thirds of adults and nearly one-third of children and teens are obese or overweight. According to County Health rankings, Texas ranks as the 11th most obese state in the nation. The report shows that 31 percent of adults are obese, and 25 percent are inactive contributing to obesity.

Increased physical activity and improved eating habits have been associated with a greater ability to manage the complications of certain chronic diseases and delay the onset of the disease in individuals at risk.

Texas Community Futures Forum in 2019 identified health and wellness as one of the top issues. The Leadership Advisory Board and Family and Community Health Committee felt that obesity and increased activity for better needs to be addressed.

RESPONSE

The Parker County Family and Community Health Committee identified Healthy Texas - Parker County to be an in-depth program for 2022. The program addressed obesity and encouraged healthy lifestyles in the county.

The goal of Healthy Texas was to increase physical activity and improve eating habits that have been associated as a way to delay the onset of chronic diseases. Also reduce and manage disease complications. The best practices would encourage participants to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

The main programs conducted were: Walk Across Texas and Cooking Well: Mediterranean Diet.

TARGET AUDIENCE

- Healthy Texas targeted the public that included Parker County Employees, schoolteachers, fitness groups, retirees, civic groups, schools and churches.

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATORS

- Parker County Schools, churches, Cook's Children's Healthy Coalition, The Weatherford, Azle and East Parker County libraries. Local newspapers.

Walk Across Texas

There were teams of up to 8 who had a goal to walk 832 miles across Texas. The objective was to help participants establish the habit of regular physical activity. Regular physical activity is known to reduce weight and reduce health risks.

- Promoted and marketed the event through several media outlets.
- Targeted county, cities, school employees, schools, churches, retirees.
- The program included a kick-off, midpoint and celebration. Each group conducted their own events.
- Weekly newsletters focused on encouragement.
- Incentives were given.
- The top teams and individuals were recognized.
- All teams that walked 832 miles were recognized

VALUE STATEMENT

Walk Across Texas

The eight-week fitness and health program challenges participants to adopt a healthy habit of regular exercise.

Research indicates that a walking routine of this duration is more likely to lead to continued moderate exercise. This improves the quality of life and reduces the risks of chronic diseases. The program yields public value in the forms of reduced health care costs and healthier, more productive workforce



Parker County

Obesity - 33%
Inactivity - 26%



RESPONSE EXAMPLE

Cooking Well: The Mediterranean Diet

This was a program that taught participants how to eat healthy following the Mediterranean eating pattern. This included eating whole grains, legumes and nuts, fruits and vegetables, lean protein, healthy oils and fats, and using herbs and spices. Participants were encouraged to participate in regular physical activity as part of the Mediterranean diet.

- Promoted and marketed the program through newspapers, emails, Facebook and flyers.
- Participants prepared several recipes that were popular in the Mediterranean region.
- Participants were given recipes booklets.
- They were also given resources to help them follow the Mediterranean eating plan.

Exhibits:

Participated in a church health fair and community event that promoted nutrition and health

News articles:

Timely News articles were prepared related to health and staying active

Social Media

Created and shared timely topics and tidbits related to health and food through Facebook



EVALUATION STRATEGY

Walk Across Texas Pre and post program assessments were used to evaluate the program. Participants were asked "During the last 7 days, on how many days were you physically active for at least 30 minutes per day? Participants were also kept track of their walking and reported the results.

Cooking Well: The Mediterranean Diet included participants learning about the Mediterranean diet and measured knowledge by preparing dishes and observing what they were learning.

RESULTS

Walk Across Texas- Adult

- Total Miles Walked: 10,562.31
- Total Participants: 79
- Male Participants: 8
- Female Participants: 71
- Participant Benefits: 3.0
- Diabetes Savings: \$273,677
- CVD Savings: \$267,635
- Economic Impact: \$541,312

Walk Across Texas - Youth

- Total Miles Walked: 2128
- Total Youth Participants: 345

Cooking Well Mediterranean Diet

- There were 3 classes conducted with a total of 38 participants attending/
- Participants learned about the Mediterranean eating pattern.
- They demonstrated their knowledge by testing recipes and tasting them.



SUMMARY

Walk Across Texas continues to be a successful program. The groups continue to like the challenges.

Cooking Well the Mediterranean Diet was very popular and will be offered again. These programs are reaching new individuals who have not been involved in an Extension class before.

"Mediterranean food is delicious"

FUTURE PROGRAMMING

Walk Across Texas will be offered in March along with other teams in District 3. A greater effort to encourage other teams to be formed.

Will offer more Cooking Well classes that encouraged healthy eating.

Reach out to homeschool groups to participate in youth Walk Across Texas.



For more information:
Kathy Smith
County Extension Agent - FCH
Parker County
817-598-6168
kl-smith@tamu.edu