

Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church Healthy Spirits, Healthy Bodies

STEPS TO SUCCESS

SHARE THE LOAD

Establishing a committee or grant leadership team early on is helpful in shaping plans, coordinating support within the church and managing the administrative needs of the grant. This also means that the work load can be shouldered by many, instead of a few.

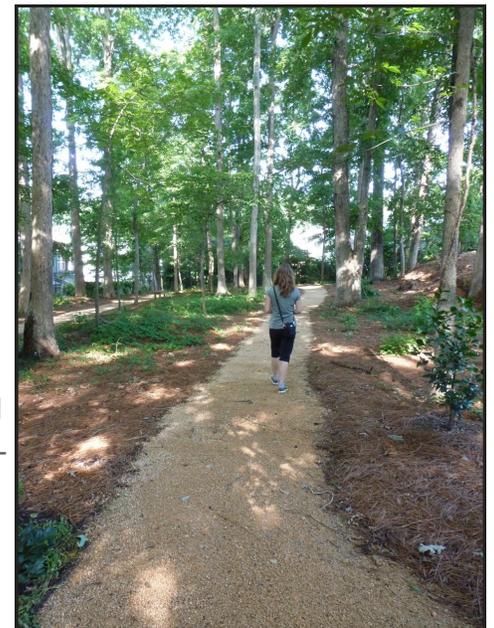
IDENTIFY COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

Community champions, or “gatekeepers”, are individuals that understand local community issues and have existing relationships with individuals you are trying to reach. Invite them to participate and seek their advice when shaping project plans. Eliminate obstacles that could prevent them from attending such as providing transportation, childcare or dinner.



Grant funds allowed them to install a basketball court, improve their playground, and provide a walking trail with the assistance of the PGUMC Boy Scout Troop. Community events, such as The Grove Block Party, and physical activity programs, such as basketball and bike clinics, have been offered to promote and attract usage. Healthy cooking classes have also been offered through a partnership with the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program. Most importantly, kids and parents from the community can be seen throughout the day, shooting hoops or walking the trail, even when there are no programs being offered. What’s more, the secret is out! Kids and families from other neighborhoods in the surrounding community are joining in the fun.

If the saying, “kids vote with their feet” is true, then Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church (PGUMC) is winning by a landslide. This is according to the kids that live in the Stonecrest subsidized housing community. Ever since PGUMC started Greatminds 15 year ago, a volunteer-led program that supports kids and families of Stonecrest through tutoring, mentoring and special events, they’ve looked for ways to expand their offerings so that health could also be a focus. With limited access to public transportation, recent demolition of the neighborhood playground and policies that prohibit play equipment likes bikes and skateboards in Stonecrest, PGUMC believes they are a natural resource, since their facilities are so close to the community and relationships with church and community families are strong.



A grant-funded initiative to increase active living and healthy eating for underserved youth in Wake County. Administered by the Community and Clinical Connections for Prevention and Health Branch in the NC Division of Public Health and the N.C. Public Health Foundation. Funds provided by the John Rex Endowment.

"We had a couple of moms with their babies walking the trail. We had a full pickup game of basketball going and lots of children on the two playgrounds. This was the perfect example of what the three years had been about—to come on a given night to the church and see church members and community members using what the grant provided. It didn't matter what our age, race or financial standing."

Debbie Allen, Grant Coordinator



Activities & Accomplishments



- NC Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program; Inter-faith Food Shuttle Cooking for Budget and Nutritious Meals for Preschoolers
- Bicycle clinic
- Basketball clinics
- Walk to Bethlehem and Walk to Jerusalem walking challenges
- Meet the Pediatrician event
- New partnerships built
- Garden club established
- Color Me Healthy Program training for PGUMC preschool teachers
- Shared-use policy adopted, allowing community use of outdoor play/recreation areas when church is not using the facilities
- Policy adopted stating that water will be the default at meetings and events

Lasting Impact

Access to physical activity opportunities will be available for years to come, as a result of the shared-use policy adopted by PGUMC. The grant team and Greatminds educational and outreach program from PGUMC, will continue to lead efforts within the church to coordinate programs and outreach efforts with children and families from the Stonecrest Community. A plan has also been established that assigns various groups within the church maintenance responsibilities, such as the Boys Scouts continuing trail maintenance and the Preschool program maintaining playground equipment and areas.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

On February 23rd, WRAL featured a story on one of the Boy Scouts who had been involved in the PGUMC trail construction and planning of a prayer garden that would be part of the trail. The boy was in hospice care for a rare bone cancer. To his great disappointment, he did not expect to live long enough to see their troop's project vision realized. After the story aired, volunteers and donations poured in. Troop members and volunteers completed the garden and planned a very touching surprise reveal.



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