

RILEY HILL FAMILY LIFE CENTER

Fitness, Food, and Faith

STEPS TO SUCCESS

BRING FAITH LEADERS TO THE TABLE

Engaging faith leaders in all stages of the health initiative is vital to its success. Although they may not have time to serve on a committee, keeping them informed and asking for feedback about the plans and progress is valuable.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Not all faith communities have the resources, facilities or staff capacity to support a comprehensive community health initiative. A collaboration with multiple faith communities and other partners can help maximize the resources.

COALITION CAPACITY

Technical training and assistance can greatly increase the capacity of faith and community leaders participating in the coalition. Training and education improve participation in the coalition, enhance cultural competency and expand leadership for healthier communities.

Ask anyone from Riley Hill Faith Partners for Healthy Communities (RHFP) how wholeness is realized, and they will tell you that strong faith, a kind heart *and* a healthy body are key. The RHFP collaborative was formed on the heels of a health initiative led by partners, Riley Hill Family Life Center (RHFLC) and Riley Hill Baptist Church (RHBC). Riley Hill is located outside the incorporated area of Wendell and does not have access to safe public areas to be active. The health initiative began with the installation of a walking trail, playground and basketball court located at the church, accessible to all members of the community.



The church offered walking programs and promoted community walk and play days throughout the year. In addition to providing supports for more physical activity, they focused on existing practices within the church that would help promote health. Church members now enjoy healthy foods options during potlucks, meetings, and events, thanks to adopting a healthy foods policy. As members wait for the service to start on Sunday mornings, they can read health-related messages that are inserted into their bulletin.

While support and participation from the church was strong, the health initiative coordinators were dissatisfied with the level of community participation. Health initiative leaders believed that working together with other churches to reach the larger community would not only expand the reach of their health initiative, but would also leverage new resources and strengthen partnerships. As a result of this vision, a multi-church collaborative, the RHFP, was formed. RHFP participants meet monthly and strive to bridge the issues of faith and health together for the citizens of Wendell and surrounding areas of Zebulon and Knightdale. The collaborative is excited about the accomplishments of RHBC and RHFLC, and are looking for ways they can adopt similar health initiatives in their respective churches as well as provide events and resources to improve the health and quality of life of the greater community.



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.

ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

“..there have not been any places for me to take my kids to play outdoors that was convenient for the whole family. Now I can walk and the boys can play [basket]ball and the girls enjoy the swings. There was nothing around here for a long time after the community park closed. Its nice to have a place to go as a family to be outdoors.

Now I see the connection to health. My kids see me changing my behavior and now want to do healthier things too.”

- Mother in the Wednesday Walking group.



- Adoption of healthy food policy
- Permits and promotes community use of their outdoor play spaces
- 10 events offered to promote the health initiative such as: Community Walk and Play Day, Nutritional Demonstration and Physical Fitness Event, Dance N2 Shape and Gospelcize Line Dancing
- Estimated reach through various promotional events: approximately 400
- 9 partnerships established
- The Riley Hill Faith Partners for Healthy Communities collaborative established

LASTING IMPACT

Fitness, food and faith will continue to be a primary focus at the Riley Hill Family Life Center and Riley Hill Baptist Church. The church continues to look for ways to reinforce their new policies. They promote the playground and walking trail by encouraging youth and adult Sunday school teachers to use them while they are discussing the lessons, and if they finish early. Community events continue to be offered to encourage others in the surrounding community to join in. The collaborative promotes their mission through the Riley Hill Faith Partners for Healthy Communities Facebook page. They are expanding to include representatives from parks and recreation, business owners, and local public health. They continue to explore funding opportunities intended to help expand their impact.



RECOGNITION

The RHFP Healthy Communities Collaborative has already become a recognized resource in the community. They have worked with the Town of Wendell to promote their new walking facility. They are also partners with Duke in development of a cancer curriculum and with the local parks and recreation department.



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