

**MCH Grantee (*check box*):**

- Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health
- Fargo Cass Public Health
- Grand Forks Public Health Department
- North Dakota State University
- South East Education Cooperative

**North Dakota Maternal and Child Health Priority Area (*check box*):**

- Increase the rate of breastfeeding at 6 months
- Reduce overweight and obesity in children

**In a sentence or two, describe the problem you were trying to solve or the reason why your intervention is needed.**

Childhood obesity continues to be an issue at the state and national levels. North Dakota surveillance data has shown that children are not meeting the recommendations for vegetables, fruits, physical activity and other key lifestyle factors linked to healthy weight. Research has shown that overweight children are more likely to become overweight adults more prone to diabetes, heart disease, stroke, cancer and other chronic diseases.

**In a brief paragraph, please share what you implemented and how it made a difference.**

NDSU Extension has worked to address capacity gaps in reaching children, families, and communities in much of western North Dakota. To bridge some of these gaps, individuals in four counties in western ND (McKenzie, Williams, Morton, Stark) were contracted to deliver programming in the targeted counties. Training was provided to the contracted people to uphold program fidelity. Programming included On the Move to Better Health, On the Move Jr., On the Move to Stronger Bodies, and On the Move Cooking Schools, which were delivered to elementary aged students. Additionally, Smarter Lunchrooms Movement (SLM) Technical Assistance Providers (TAPs) implemented 10 strategies in 2 separate schools, along with multiple trainings to school foodservice staff to garner additional support and awareness for SLM. As a PSE change effort, the process is slow and steady while gaining momentum. To further increase capacity, a train the trainer model was used in afterschool programs and a youth camp. In afterschool programs, 55 teen leaders reached more than 600 elementary students with nutrition and physical activity programming. Eight (8) trained trainers (teens and young adults) reached about 500 participants through the ND Healthy Camp Program. Evaluation results show that children and families are increasing fruit and vegetable consumption and increasing minutes of physical activity. School lunchrooms are improving the atmosphere with SLM strategies to increase fruit and vegetable consumption. Teen leaders showed increased confidence in teaching others about nutrition and physical activity and served as role models for the younger children.

**Are there any specific NUMBERS or OUTCOMES you can share as a result of your work?**

As a result of having contracted individuals in western North Dakota, an additional 420 students participated in nutrition education, physical activity opportunities, and/or cooking school programs. Among 4th grade participants in On the Move, 61% reported drinking more water, 44% increased vegetable consumption and 51% increased physical activity. Ten SLM strategies were implemented in two different schools. Both schools plan to continue efforts. In train-the-trainer afterschool programs, 83% of teen leaders felt more confident after being involved with teaching the activities in the afterschool toolkit. Many teen leaders indicated increases in their ability to teach (10%), lead (20%), speak in front of a group (17%), and plan programs (22%). The teen leaders felt like they can make a difference (77%), value community service (78%), act as a mentor (92%), and utilize skills gained for their future (70%). Participants in 4-H camp challenges reported eating more fruits (40%), more vegetables (31%), drinking more water (62%), and getting more exercise (65%).

**Were there any “AHA” or “lightbulb” moments you can share?**

Train-the-trainer programs and volunteer leaders represent an option for educational outreach, especially during times of budget cuts. Reaching children, families and schools takes a concerted effort and many community partners. Knowing the community and having community connections helps with education and potential sustainable changes.

**Are there any “quotes” from anyone benefitting from this that you can share?**

According to parent observations, these were some of the favorite parts of the nutrition education programs:

- “Trying to keep track of the fruits and vegetables he ate each day.”
- “She told me about vegetables which I know she does not like. So that new interest in her young life makes me very happy!”
- “She was concerned that we weren’t eating enough vegetables – so she makes sure every meal we have one now!”

When students were asked what they liked or disliked about the program:

- “I like that I can push myself to be healthier.”
- “I liked the activities and games, but disliked giving up some of my favorite snacks.”
- “I liked that we could set goals for ourselves to eat healthier foods.”

**Is there anything else you want to share?**

Vacant positions have proven to be a challenge, in addition to finding people to fulfill contractual duties. The number of Technical Assistance Providers dropped from 10 to 6 in western ND as a result of staff changes. Budgets are slimmer than previous years. Knowing the community and having community connections helps with education and potential sustainable changes.