

## **Active Kids, Healthy Kids**

### *Successful Story*

**Program Name:** 10000 Steps

**Sponsor Organization:** Millwood High School

**Submitted by:** Charles Blinn

**Description of Activity/program:** To encourage teacher's, students and the community of Millwood to walk their way into a healthy lifestyle. The program focuses or at least attempts to target a population of the public sector that is the most inactive. It does this by providing a pedometer and a profile on a secure website. The pedometer measures the steps taken during the day and the website is used to record and keep track of the steps. It also provides statistics for the entire group. The simplicity of the program is what makes it successful. Participants do not need a particular location, special equipment, special facilities or even other participants to succeed. Research indicates that even people who live sedentary lifestyles walk between 900 – 3000 steps a day. The program is aimed at motivating individuals to increase this to 10000 steps a day, the equivalent of 8.0 km.

The early stages of the program started with two partnerships, one with Dalhousie Outreach Program and the other with Spartan Athletics. Dalhousie provided the expertise necessary to design a PHP website where participants could create a profile and record their information. Spartan Athletics help find reasonably priced pedometers.

**Program/Activity Setting:** Community, outdoor, school, & recreation.

**Target Group:** Students, Staff and Community members.

**Impact of program:** The program had over 181 participants! Of that 109 were students and 72 adults (staff and community) registered. The 72 adults are made up of 25 staff and 52 community members.

**Key elements towards success:** The program does not use weight loss as a motivation but several community members have boasted that they have lost weight by walking on a regular basis. At the very least it will help maintain present weight. There have been other benefits to the program. The 10000 Steps Program is something that families can do together and we have had calls from people in the community asking to register and include they

spouses and younger children. The school decided at an early stage to include all students registered in the PAL (Physically Active Lifestyle) course in the program. These students received marks for creating a profile on the website and entering their steps.

**Challenges and strategies to meet them:** The original phase involved the staff and community members. This was done to be able to work out any problems that might occur with the pedometers and the website. This phase started in January of 2005. The second phase started in March 2005 and included the students.

The problems with the website are minor and were addressed. The website is designed to convert steps to distance and to some degree of accuracy of calories. The improvements are on-going and it should be complete by next November.

Despite having researched the pedometers, they ended up with one that was of poor quality. They had to return a large number of them because they did not work properly. Finally they returned all of them and went to a better model. Unfortunately the new ones also failed their expectations. So they are researching new models. There is also the challenge of replacing the lost pedometers. The committee is considering a small fee next year.

**Comments:** The potential for a much bigger impact on the community lies in what we do in the future. One of the events we are planning is a competition to do a virtual walk across Canada. Trans Canada Trails has provided them with 60: X 72” maps of Canada so that we can help visualize the race.

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