

HEALTHY GIRLS/HEALTHY WOMEN

In partnership with

Cherokee County Community Health Coalition

Project Goal/Objectives:

1. Increase the awareness of young girls and their mothers (or care-givers) about the need to adopt healthy lifestyles of a proper diet and exercise while young.
2. Increase the families' long-term adherence to healthy lifestyles.
3. Increase motivation of families to change their lifestyles.
4. Assure that the Body Works classes for girls and their mothers can continue after the initial grant period.
5. Develop a referral system through **WIC clinic**, and physicians' offices to connect at-risk or overweight girls with the nutrition/exercise classes offered in the community in order to help these individuals improve their health behaviors.
6. Increase parents' awareness of the need for their children to be more physically active, and improve the parents' understanding of nutrition and the problems with eating too much fast food.



Testimonial:

"I am getting my dad to change how he shops and the kinds of food he eats."

Project Scope/Narrative:

Four organizations agreed to each offer eight week classes using the Body Works curriculum (from National Office of Women's Health) to the target audience. Kid Connection, Zoe Institute (for low-income, single moms,) Boys and Girls Club, and Cherokee County Health Department. The classes promote developing healthy lifestyles through nutrition education and increased physical activity. (Each organization works with low-income or minority families.)

A culture of health will be developed through community activities with families who have recently adopted healthier behaviors. The girls range in age from eight to thirteen years old.

Following the eight week classes the mothers (or care-givers) and daughters from all the agencies' classes had a celebration healthy potluck at the municipal center and following the lunch, they took a long walk along the new city trail. To help develop a culture of health, personal success stories will be printed in the newspaper. The Tahlequah Daily Press has been very responsive in printing articles that promote healthy lifestyles. Stories will be written about those families (who are willing) and who participated in the nutrition program and have had success with changing to healthier lifestyles.

NeoHealth had physicians that referred girls with health problems to the class. Parents and their children will be invited to monthly programs held at Cherokee Elementary School in Tahlequah. The programs will provide time for families to play together in the gym and have a nutrition class for children and one for parents.. The teacher at the Boys & Girls club is teaching the families kick boxing, and they have asked for 30 minute sessions. **Funding was provided by the state WIC program.**

Testimonial:

"The class teaches women and girls about the importance of a healthy diet and being physically active. The mothers and daughters developed strategies that have helped their families begin healthier behaviors. Without the grant provided by **WIC**, we would not be able to touch so many lives and ensure a healthier future for our families."

-Carol Mckiel, Health Educator

Project Outcomes:

During the summer classes, they found that 3/4 of the girls had elevated blood pressures. They took the measurements on two different nights because they thought the girls were nervous, but both nights showed elevated blood pressure.

By the end of the class, the girls' pressures were down.

One of the mother/daughter teams is taking the class for the second time. They have started a daily walking routine. They also jump rope several night a week. They stated before the program they didn't eat vegetables, but now make sure they eat several servings a day.

The mother has an afternoon childcare program. The daughter is getting the elementary children in the program to exercise with her. The mother and daughter leave their exercise equipment (exercise ball and small trampoline) in the living room where they workout during commercials. Another mother and daughter team joined the class and their family is now taking regularly walks, and are increasing their vegetable intake. Local physicians referred three families to the class.

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