

Taking “Fit” to the Streets

You’re the Cure—Let’s Make Our Neighborhoods “Fit” for Physical Activity

Lesson Plan

Call To Action

Call to Action—You’re the Cure: Let’s Make Our Neighborhoods “Fit” for Physical Activity

Community Need

Safe sidewalks, green spaces, parks and public transportation help lower the risk for developing chronic disease. Studies show that community design and development can affect physical activity and obesity rates. Also, recent study found that people who have parks or recreational facilities nearby exercise 38 percent more than those who do not have easy access.



Many people don't have easy access to safe parks or recreational facilities. Fewer children walk or bike to school than in previous generations. Plus, many communities are dealing with shrinking budgets and may struggle to maintain the infrastructure of towns and cities like they once did. For example, local governments may not have the funds to maintain sidewalks and provide street lights.

We need to give families safe places to be active. Communities can prosper with nearby playgrounds, parks and safe streets to walk or bike. Simple changes can make a big difference in the lives of our children and families.

What can we do about it? “Taking “Fit” to the Streets” engages the group in a discussion about how to provide safe, planned areas for getting physical activity. For example, it supports state and community advocacy to increase walking and bicycling. To help take action, participants are encouraged to sign up for the American Heart Association’s advocacy network “You’re the Cure.”

Three Important Points

Our lives are busy and many of us are on “information overload.” That’s why we focus on three key health messages:

- Other communities have created safe places for physical fitness—we can, too.
- Voices for Healthy Kids helps to create Active Places® for our kids.
- You’re the Cure: Join today; let’s get our community into gear.

EmPowered To Serve Health Check

The EmPowered To Serve Health Check is a way for community members to develop an awareness about their blood pressure and current weight. The goal is to get at least 15 percent of your community organization checking these health measures. And, with it in hand, to complete the My Life Check® personal health assessment using your group's unique URL.

There are many ways you can conduct this optional EmPowered To Serve health check:

- Before the program, ask participants to check their blood pressure and weight at home, Higi Station (portable health kiosk) or at their doctor's office.
- Provide a scale and blood pressure machine on site. Ask participants to check their weight and blood pressure before the program gets under way.
- Invite a local healthcare provider or partner with a healthcare organization to check blood pressure and weight for participants at the start of the program.
- If you can host a screening, try to offer blood glucose and cholesterol checks, too.

Length of Program

- Budget 1 – 1 ½ hours to present the lesson.
- If you are conducting a health screening, add 20 minutes or more before the meeting for participants to get their blood pressure and weight checked.

Program Materials

No Access to a Slide Projector? Print out the slides and put them in a three-ring binder. Use the printed slides as a script to deliver your health lesson.

- Flip chart and markers.
- Handouts (download and make one copy per participant):
 - Youth Can Now Gear Up in San Francisco Lower Income Neighborhoods
 - Shared Use Success: Unlocking the Gates at Arizona Schools
 - States adding bicycle lanes, walking trails into transportation budgets
- Pens
- Goody bags: Reach out to local businesses such as hospitals, wellness centers, local clinics and other health organizations. Ask them about donating giveaways for participants. Also check out the American Heart Association store (shop.heart.org) for brochures to buy in bulk.

Audiovisual Needs

- Projector for PowerPoint slides.
- Internet connection (optional).

Wrap-Up

Reminder! Once your participants have left, be sure to complete the Ambassador Questionnaire. For details, see your Ambassador Guide page 11.

Slide Program with Talking Points and Discussion Questions

The “Notes” section of the PowerPoint slides includes scripted comments for the lesson. Use this to help walk through the lesson. To engage participants, the talking points also include potential discussion questions. For your reference, below is a list of these questions:

- Did you or your kids walk or bike to work or school?
- How many of you know kids who walk or bike to school?
- Please share a couple of sentences describing what the communities did to increase access to safe places for physical activity.
- Please share your group's insights about how this strategy might work in our community.
- Is the Voices for Healthy Kids initiative with out-of-school-time providers an option for our community?
- Are any of the Voices for Healthy Kids infrastructure activities options for our community?
- Do you think the local schools might agree to open up their grounds and facilities to the community for after-school physical activity?
- Do you think a bike-sharing program might work in our community?
- Would increasing bike lanes and walking trails help our community members get out and move more?
- What do you think are some of our challenges in providing safe places to be physically active?
- What types of things can we do as a community to overcome those barriers?
- What action steps can we commit to make TODAY to move forward?