



Center *for* Rural Health

# **Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota “Official Sponsor of Recess” Rural Grant Program Year 10**

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**Blue Cross Blue Shield North Dakota  
Rural Health Information Technology Grant Program - (Year 10)  
Funding Period: February 16, 2015 – February 16, 2016  
Final Report**

**What is the status of the Year Ten BCBSND funded projects?**

Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota (BCBSND) funded **seven** rural health grants in February 2015. The grants focus on supporting providers and their communities by offering funding that stimulates new thinking around providers championing activities and programs as part of its launch as the **“Official Sponsor of Recess” – promoting daily, physical activities as a break for all ages of North Dakotans**. The general purpose of the funded grant projects is to demonstrate collaborative efforts involving rural providers and their communities to support physical activity for all people residing in rural North Dakota.

**Overview - Rural Health Grant Projects Year 10**

- Seventeen grant proposals were received, requesting a total of \$73,407.
- Seven awards were made, for a total of \$20,000
- Funding period: February 16, 2015 – February 16, 2016
- Awards ranged from \$2,500 - \$3,000
- All seven grant projects were completed by the scheduled February 16, 2016 end of grant.

**The focus areas addressed in these projects were:**

- Activities that endorse and support activity: five projects
- Supplies that endorse and support activity: six projects
- Programs that endorse and support activity: two projects
- Events that endorse and support activity: five projects



**All seven grantees indicated:**

- They would not have been able to implement this project without BCBSND grant funds.

**Leveraging funds:**

Four of the seven grantees indicated that the BCBSND grant enabled them to leverage funding from other sources. Of those, over \$10,800 was leveraged.

**Number and ages of people who participated in the community projects:**

The ages of participants ranged from six week old infants to 80+ years. An exact number of participants is not available; however, we know there was over 1,000 people who participated in four of the seven activities.

**Facility experiences:**

All facilities reported they had a positive experience with the grant administration (coordinated by the Center for Rural Health) and the project marketing components (coordinated by Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota).

**COMPLETED PROJECTS**

**1. Ashley Medical Center, Ashley ND** **Funds Awarded: \$3000**

**General Purpose:** Ashley Forward Fitness has renovated and updated the weight room located at Ashley Public School. The room was converted from a class room (removing chalkboards) to a fitness room and a fresh coat of paint was added to the walls. The group also purchased two rowing machines to be added into the already existing cardio room at the school.

**Partners:** Ashley Public School provided the space for the weight room, Ashley Medical Center provided the expertise in equipment, and Ashley Forward Fitness provided the labor to complete the project.

**Activities that were completed:** They renovated and updated the weight room, organized the current equipment, and purchased new equipment.

**Focus Area(s):** The focus area of this project was supplies that endorse and support activity.

**Number and Ages of Participants:** All ages.

**Impact Measurement:** The weight room was already established in the school but it needed to be updated and additional equipment needs met. They feel that with the updates, more people will access the room as it is a much nicer environment in which to work out.

**Success Story:** After completion of the project they had many community members use the room, and they were very complimentary of the project. They were pleased with the outcome and stated that it was a great improvement. They feel this will promote more people to work out in the community.

**2. St. Andrew’s Health Center, Bottineau ND** **Funds Awarded: \$2500**

**General Purpose:** St. Andrew's Health Center (SAHC) worked with Bottineau Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and the Building Blocks Learning Center to develop an outdoor playground for the childcare center. SAHC helped secure grant funding to assist with the purchase of playground equipment at the Bottineau EDC-owned childcare center. The center was developed to help meet the needs of the community's growing population for more

childcare. Previous to its construction in 2014, the citizens of Bottineau county were facing a childcare crisis due to growing demand and the lack of access and availability.

**Partners:** St. Andrew's Health Center secured the grant funding to assist with the purchase of playground equipment. Bottineau Economic Development Corporation (EDC) researched and purchased the playground equipment for installation at their owned childcare center facility. - Building Blocks Learning Center (BBLC) leases the building and operates the childcare center and preschool facility. Bottineau Park Board is partnering with the EDC to share the expense of ground materials and assist with volunteers for the playground's installation.

**Activities that were completed:** The Bottineau EDC and BBLC researched various playground options. They selected a playground that best suits the age groups of the children attending the childcare center. Funds were secured for the project through this grant and donations from the community, which will cover a portion of the total project cost. Bottineau EDC, BBLC, and the Bottineau Park Board agreed to share the cost of necessary ground materials. The EDC and BBLC have coordinated a volunteer effort to assist with the playground installation with volunteers from the Bottineau Park Board, Dakota College of Bottineau, and God's Work Our hands. The equipment arrived in October 2015 and was put in storage until weather allowed for its installation in Spring 2016.

**Focus Area(s):** The focus areas of the project were activities, supplies and support activity.

**Number and Ages of Participants:** BBLC serves approximately 50 children ranging in ages from six weeks to nine years old.

**Challenges/Barriers:** Funding for the project was a challenge. Donations were slow to come and that affected the timeline of when they had enough funds to purchase the equipment.

**Impact Measurement:** The first level of project measurement occurred when the equipment was installed and children had improved access to physical activity. After installation, they also measured if the BBLC is meeting the state guidelines for suggested time of exercise per day for the children in their care. The BBLC staff documented how often the children are using the equipment.

A true and meaningful benefit of this project is engaging children in outdoor play. The playground equipment offers different activities geared towards a range of ages helping stimulate appropriate developmental stages of children. Play is fun and it provides activities that have a lasting effect on a child's development.

**Success Story:** Upon the installation of equipment, the physical activity and camaraderie between the children was a success story!

**General Purpose:** Carrington's implementation project had two goals: to enhance the health of their community through nutrition, and increase opportunities for physical activity in the community. These goals were achieved through Carrington Health Center and its medical staff, partnering with seven additional healthcare providers in Carrington, the Foster County Fairgrounds, SuperValu Foods, and KDAK 1600AM. Activities included nutritional food preparation classes and grocery store tours, Foster County Fair Kids Day activities, and a 12-week Health Talk & Walk program hosted by community healthcare providers. The Health Talk & Walk program combined a weekly radio segment on Tuesday mornings followed by a Tuesday evening walk in the park, hosted by various community medical professionals.

**Partners:** Foster County Public Health, Garr Dental Center, Carrington Dental Care, Family Vision Center, Central Pharmacy, Carrington Drug, and Galt Chiropractic were all partners in this grant project. Each hosted one week of the Health Talk & Walk program. They worked with Carrington Health Center to determine the date, topic, and preparation for the presentation/walk. They also promoted the walking program through their current marketing efforts.

Carrington Health Center planned/facilitated/promoted the Health Talk & Walk program; provided a water station, snacks, and blood pressure checks for walk attendees; planned/facilitated/promoted the dietitian-led grocery store tours and cooking classes; sponsored the 2015 Foster County Fair Kids Day; and submit all required documentation to the Center for Rural Health at the conclusion of the grant period per grant requirements.

The Foster County Fair Board provided use of the Food Building and associated equipment for the cooking classes. They also allowed Carrington Health Center to plan the 2015 Foster County Fair Kids Day activities.

Super Valu Foods provided use of their store and a central meeting area for grocery store tour participants to gather, tour, and discuss healthy food selections. They also promoted the tours through posters.

KDAK 1600AM hosted the already existing weekly radio segment, Health Talk, on Tuesday mornings and promoted it in conjunction with the evening walk part of the series.

**Activities that were completed:** Completed activities include nutritional food preparation classes and grocery store tours, Foster County Fair Kids Day activities, and a 12-week Health Talk & Walk program hosted by community healthcare providers. The Health Talk & Walk program combined a weekly radio segment on Tuesday mornings followed by a Tuesday evening walk in the park, hosted by various community medical professionals.

**Focus Area(s):** The focus area of this project were activities, supplies, programs, and events that endorse and support activity.

**Ages of Participants:** Ages 2 - 80+ years

**Challenges/Barriers:** There were no attendees at the fall grocery store tour. To address this, they scheduled their dietitian to present the material to the local Kiwanis Club at one of their noon meetings. This allowed a large group of participants and generated very good discussion.

The selected time for the Health Talk & Walk program was a challenge. They would adjust to offer a staggered walk schedule so half were in the mornings and half were in the evenings. They would also move the night because it conflicted with summer sports schedules more than anticipated.

The kid's day activities at the fair were well attended, but it was very hot. They moved the kids into a building with more shade and better air circulation for the second half of the activities.

**Leverage Funding:** They were able to leverage funding through the fairgrounds donating the use for their Food Building (\$1,000 value) for cooking classes in exchange for doing Kids Day at the Fair.

**Impact Measurement:** The impact of the proposed project was measured by the number of attendees at the nutrition class and grocery store tour; feedback through evaluations of those attending the group classes; attendance at the Foster County Fair Kids Day activities; improved blood pressure readings through self-reporting by Health Talk & Walk participants; and, attendance at the Health Talk & Walk series.

**Success Story:** An attendee recently had bariatric surgery and was able to have good take-away lessons from the cooking class. A recently widowed person also attended the cooking class and learned healthier meal options to cook for one person.

Kids Fair day provided healthy physical activities at the fair, in addition to the prizes that encouraged outdoor activities and swimming.

Health Talk & Walk attendees learned in-depth information in a unique setting with medical providers. Questions and answers during this time were very dynamic.

#### 4. Jacobson Memorial Hospital Care Center, Elgin ND

**Funds Awarded:** \$3000

**General Purpose:** The purpose of the grant was to implement a Fitness for Life program by offering free health screenings to the public during a health fair and providing multiple fitness-related activities. These activities include establishing fitness routes in the community, hosting a series of weight training classes and lessons on how to use the equipment, encouraging participation in 5k walks and walks at the school, and encouraging sports participation.

**Activities that were completed:** They held a health fair with free screenings and discounted labs, established fitness routes in the community and provided info to the public, hosted a

weight training class open to the public, encouraged participation in local 5k walks and walking at the elementary school, and encouraged sports participation.

**Focus Area(s):** The focus area of this project was activities, supplies, and events that endorse and support activity.

**Impact Measurement:** They continue to encourage people to see providers based on their lab results. They tracked how many people participated in 5k and other activities.

**Success Story:** Participation in the elementary schools walking program was well received. Kids really enjoyed it and liked the t-shirts provided for completing the walks.

#### 5. Sakakawea Medical Center, Hazen ND

**Funds Awarded:** \$2500

**General Purpose:** The goal for this project was to provide opportunities designed to improve population health specifically related to obesity, physical inactivity, and its effect on wellness. Being physically active is one of the most important steps to being healthy. Their community can help make physical activity an easy and fun option for youth as well as adults.

**Partners:** Sakakawea Medical Center in Hazen was the lead agency. They provided project coordination, implementation, some funding for costs incurred that were not covered by the grant, and provided staff for the various events.

Coal Country Community Health Center in Beulah provided additional funding for some of the supply costs not covered by grant funds, assisted with project implementation, and provided staffing for various events.

Knife River Care Center in Beulah and Custer Health District assisted with implementation of the Healthy Halloween Bash wellness fair and provided staffing to assist in various events. They also provided door prizes for the events.

Mercer County Ambulance participated and provided staffing for the Grocery Store Demonstration and Healthy Halloween Bash wellness fair. They also provided door prizes for events.

#### **Activities that were completed**

Grocery Store demonstrations were held in June. They staffed educational booths at grocery stores in Hazen and Beulah that had two baskets put together containing food that is common to summer camping, picnics, etc. They compared one that had the healthier option in it to the one that was not very healthy. They also had a comparison written up of fat, carbohydrates, sugar, fiber grams, as well as a comparison of calories per item. This provided an opportunity to educate people about the healthier choices available to them for the same foods. Examples: turkey hotdog vs regular hot dog—baked chips vs regular chips. They had handouts as well. This was well received by the public.

In July, during the Mercer County Fair, they set up an educational booth at the county fairgrounds with the same baskets they took to the grocery stores and also had a demonstration showing how many teaspoons of sugar are in the popular drinks. Examples: cola, Gatorade, orange juice, milk, StarBucks drinks, smoothies, slushes, etc. People were very surprised and the coordinators felt the education was worthwhile. They also had several handouts that were appreciated. They had an 11-year-old boy stop and talk about being recently diagnosed with pre-diabetes. It was a great opportunity to educate this individual about how to change his behavior and avoid becoming a diabetic. The booth also emphasized the importance of regular exercise as well as good nutrition, and fair-goers were provided with a variety of incentives to take home with them to encourage them to get started on a healthier lifestyle.

In addition to the booth at the fair, staff members from their collaborative spent a couple of evenings walking the fairgrounds, talking to fair attendees, and handed-out (depending on age) jump ropes, stress balls, and thera-bands (with the Jumpstart to Wellness logo) as an incentive to promote physical activity.

In conjunction with the fair was the Mercer County Fair parade, in which over 30 staff members participated in doing exercise demonstrations on the collaborative float and provided parade attendees with Jumpstart to Wellness jump ropes, thera-bands with exercise handouts, and a variety of other promotional incentives.

Wellness education was provided at the Sport Physical Clinics in July and August. Two of their clinics had tables set up with information on eating healthy and being active, using handouts and the same educational board mentioned above on the teaspoons of sugar in what people drink. They served healthy muffins and meals at this event as well, and staff emphasized the importance of good nutrition and its effects on physical activity. Some of the additional education provided at the Sports Physical Clinics included – Sports Drinks, Teens & Protein, Choose MyPlate, and Choose Healthy Pre-and Post-Game Meals.

In August, a community jam session was held. They provided education to the senior citizens about the SilverSneakers (an exercise program for seniors) and handed out stretch bands with instruction sheets as how to use them for strengthening. A demonstration was also provided using these bands in different ways. A short talk was given regarding the importance of being active and eating healthy as we grow older. There was a question/answer opportunity given to the attendees as well. The event was well-received.

A Color Run was coordinated with the community Harvest Festival schedule. They also partnered with a local bank, for which they previously helped develop a Wellness Program. The bank was excited to take an active role in sponsoring the event. They had a great turnout for this event. All ages were represented from toddlers to the elderly. The weather was perfect and the group enthusiastic. There were 82 participants and after the run they provided a healthy breakfast for everyone. They heard many positive comments after the race was over. This event will continue to happen in the future.



The Halloween Bash was the best attended event that they sponsored, with over 450 attendees. They set up booths with education on different health issues and handed out “Healthy” snacks and “Healthy” toys such as Frisbees, jump ropes, balls, etc. at each table. There were grandparents, parents, and children in attendance and everyone loved the event. They took blood pressures and made referrals if results were abnormal. They had great “Healthy” snacks, game events, a costume contest, and door prizes. It was a great opportunity for them to reach a large portion of the population focusing on education in regards to obesity, physical activity, and nutrition. It will take place again next year.

**Focus Area(s):** The focus areas of this project were activities, supplies, and events that endorse and support activity.

**Number and Ages of Participants:** Wellness bash – 450 participants (255 children/195 adults). Ages ranged from toddlers to the elderly. Specific numbers for the other events are not available.

**Leverage Funding:** \$2,500 in Quality Improvement Supplemental Funding was received by Coal Country Community Health Centers (CCCHC). The funding is to be used for improving overall population health criteria for FQHCs. CCCHC matched the BCBS funding as an in-kind contribution.

**Challenges/Barriers:** Some of the staff had family emergencies, which prevented them from hosting their spring community Wellness Fair. Instead, they moved the event to the end of October, which worked out well for everyone. They incorporated the Wellness Fair with a Halloween Theme to entice children and parents to the event and it was a huge success.

**Impact Measurement:**

- Number of people enrolled in and/or attended the program events
- Observation or counts (ex. number of encounters at the Grocery Store program, Mercer County Fair, Community Jam Session)
- Number of referrals (whether a self-referral or a referral by a provider) in programs such as the SMC Wellness Program, Physical Therapy Athletic Training Program, Silver Sneaker Program or Fitness Club memberships

**Success Story:** At the Mercer County Fair event, a 13-year-old boy, who was very overweight, and his grandma stopped at our Healthy Eating booth and started to ask questions. As a result of the conversation we found out this young man was pre-diabetic. Much time was spent with the grandmother and the young man providing education as to why this was very concerning and the effects diabetes has on people’s lives as they get older. He became very sincere in his wanting to change his situation and education was provided as to how what you eat affects your system and results in diabetes. Advice was given as to what to eat, to become more physical, and to follow up with a dietician on a regular basis. When asked to repeat what he had learned, it was very evident that he understood the information given to him as well as how serious he was as to wanting to change his lifestyle and improve his health. It was a very

rewarding experience and had it not been for this booth at the fair, he may have continued to live a very unhealthy life. They really made a difference!

#### 6. Heart of America Medical Center, Rugby ND

Funds Awarded: \$3000

**General Purpose:** The purpose of the project was to acquire different equipment and items that promote physical activity for kids at their employee daycare center, "Kids Next Door." Through the grant, they were able to purchase various things to keep kids active both during the beautiful summer days and indoors throughout the winter. One of the main items they purchased were different size bikes and trikes for kids of all ages at the daycare center. With these, they were able to have a bike-a-thon to promote BCBSND awarding them the grant and to kick off their new commitment to wellness! The kids biked over three miles without stopping! This grant was able to bring so much joy into their lives at daycare and keep them happy and healthy all year long.

**Partners:** The Kids Next Door Daycare Director worked with the Community Relations & Development (CRD) Assistant to identify the types of equipment the kids needed. The director was also in charge of continuing to promote wellness at the daycare by ensuring the staff makes time throughout the daily schedules to allow kids to exercise and play. The CRD Assistant worked with the daycare director to write the grant to acquire the equipment and work with the purchasing department to gather receipts and submit reimbursement forms. The Director of Purchasing for Heart of America Medical Center worked with the daycare director and CRD assistant to order all items and equipment needed with the grant.

**Activities that were completed:** They purchased and acquired all needed supplies and equipment to promote wellness at the employee daycare, having play time or physical activity each day, monitoring kids behavior before and after being active and noticing a positive difference in keeping kids more engaged, and completing the daycare bike-a-thon to kick off the new commitment to wellness.

**Focus Area(s):** The focus areas of this project were activities, supplies, programs, and events that endorse and support activity.

**Number and Ages of Participants:** Children ages infant (six weeks) to 12 years old.

**Leverage Funding:** Because they were able to purchase so many bikes with this grant, the local Eagles donated \$1,500 to build a storage shed for the bikes and the local high school shop building class built a new shed outside the daycare.

**Impact Measurement:** They are currently continuing daily physical activity at the Kids Next Door Daycare, and are monitoring kids' behavior. As a result, they are noticing less behavioral issues and kids are more engaged in the classroom. They are also making fitness charts where kids are able to place a sticker on their chart when they complete a fun obstacle course or jump rope so many times, etc. This keeps kids engaged and involved in their own fitness.

**Success Story:** The daycare children at the employee daycare center, Kids Next Door, are able to really enjoy their time at daycare now that they have games to play and fun ways to stay active. With the grant, they purchased a large bouncy house that they can set up both indoors in a large room and outdoors on the back lawn. This last Fall, parents were able to leave work on their break and walk across the parking lot to see their child laughing and having fun playing with other kids in their large bouncy house. The care center residents really enjoy watching the kids out their windows when they are playing in the bouncy house as well. It is such a great thing to see kids having fun while staying active.

Another success they had was with their bike-a-thon. They had initially mapped out a route about one-mile-long, thinking this would be long enough to ride bike around town, especially with the smaller children. Once they started the kids did not want to quit and they ended up riding over three miles! This was a long distance for such small kids. They mapped out their journey on a map and they had so much fun showing their parents how far they rode their new bikes at daycare. Now they want to do it again next summer for an even further distance.

**7. City-County Health District, Valley City ND** **Funds Awarded: \$3,000**

**General Purpose:** The Let’s Walk Valley City: Healthier People-Building Communities project was designed to target activities through an event that recognized and supported physical activity and wellness for all ages, as well as help new people feel welcome and a part of the Valley City/Barnes County community. The event was held on two specific sites of the expanding multi-use path system in Valley City, where participants received a map and were encouraged to walk/skateboard/run/jog/bike on the paths and visit fun booths along the way.

There were 27 booths split between the two sites. Many local businesses provided free items to give away. Some of those included chocolate milk from the Dairy Association, water from Dakota Plains CoOp, jump ropes from Sanford Health, salsa and chips from ON THE MOVE, yogurt fruit parfaits from Young People’s Healthy Heart Program at CHI Mercy Health; all focusing on health. In addition, one adult dressed as an apple and gave out apples at one locale and another dressed as a carrot gave out baby carrots at the second site—shaking hands, telling jokes, and having fun with the participants.

Attendees were given a ‘passport’ when they arrived at either site and were invited to visit at least 10 booths, and if they did, they could drop their passport into a drawing box for various prizes, either adult prizes or child/teen prizes, that were donated by local businesses/organizations.

ADULT PRIZES: Fit Bit, one pair of sports shoes, one-month membership to the Fitness Center, a cholesterol screen, an ON THE MOVE 2016 membership.

CHILD PRIZES: 20 inch boy’s bike, 20 inch girl’s bike, AmericInn Swim Pass (worth \$80).

There were 528 adults and kids that attended the event. Many adults and kids walked from Pioneer Park (one of the sites with booths), on the multi-use path, over to Jefferson School (the

second site with booths), or vice versa. The distance from one location to the other was about one mile.

Evaluations completed by booth participants and the planning committee identified the event was a success. Comments from attendees were very positive and many asked if the event would be held again next year.

**Partners:** The Let's Walk Valley City Event was sponsored by the Barnes ON THE MOVE Partnership and the City County Health District. ON THE MOVE consists of 18 members--nonprofit and governmental organizations. The Young People's Healthy Heart Program at CHI Mercy Health took the management lead with the City County Health District taking the finances lead. Valley City Public Schools and the Valley City Park and Recreation Department allowed the use of their facilities and were active in the publicity. Valley City State University involved a segment of their freshmen to register, welcome, and facilitate the day of Let's Walk. The faith partner promoted the event with all area churches. Seven of the partners had booths at one of the locations. The city staff volunteered to put up the 24-foot banner twice.

**Activities that were completed:** Several planning meetings were held with a very passionate group of 14 people in attendance who were excited to help. The event was shared on social media (via Facebook) where at least 1500 people were reached! Ads were placed in the local newspaper and their website, as well as the local radio station and their website. Posters were put up around town and a 24-foot vinyl banner was hung up above one of the busiest streets in the downtown area with two smaller banners placed in areas where a more diverse population lives. Free radio interviews were completed and newspaper stories were written. A list of organizations who had a booth at the Let's Walk event was printed with their location on the path and what activity they had at their booth. A passport was designed and printed that included a map of the multi-use paths for the event. The event was held on Saturday, September 12 from 9 am to 1 pm. Registration tables & booths were set up the day of the event at each location with 528 people attending one or both of the sites. A brochure was printed with the complete multiuse path system around Valley City and was given out to the adult participants at registration. After the event, thank-you letters were sent to all volunteers who helped with the event or donated prizes. One hundred percent of the committee members completed an evaluation after the event; booth participants also were asked to complete an evaluation.

**Focus Area(s):** The focus area of the project was events that endorse and support activity.

**Ages of Participants:** Ages of those using components of the program varied from babies in strollers to people over 80 years old.

**Challenges/Barriers:** 1. The wind blew the 24-foot banner down twice; the city put it up the second time, and when it blew down again, they moved the location to a chain link fence. 2. One goal was to reach a diverse population and people new to Valley City. They found it difficult to know how to reach this population to invite them to attend. They put banners up in

a part of town where many new people live, and made personal contacts with people who may work with them, along with the regular advertising that they did. They do not feel that we reached the diverse population, and now have initiated a special committee, after the Let's Walk Event, to continue to work on that goal.

**Leverage Funding:** The grant enabled them to leverage funding from other sources.

**Impact Measurement:**

1. They gave out a 'passport' to each attendee and counted them to identify the number of people who attended the event.
2. They asked each of the 14 committee members and each of the 27 booth participants to complete an evaluation, then tallied the results.
3. They listened to/recorded verbal comments of Let's Walk Event participants.
4. They recorded the amount of both paid and earned media, getting the message out to the community.

**Success Story:** One success story was the number of people and the wide range of ages of the people who attended—528 individuals from babies to a gentleman over the age of 82 years! One goal was to introduce the community to the new multiuse paths that have been recently built in Valley City. People could 'enter' the event at two different locales and were invited to walk between the two sites. The success was that during the entire four-hours, people were actually walking between both sites which was approximately one mile, hence getting some good exercise and experiencing the paths!

