



Center *for* Rural Health

Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota Caring Foundation Rural Health Grant Program Year 12

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ND *Caring*
FOUNDATION

**Blue Cross Blue Shield North Dakota Caring Foundation
Rural Health Grant Program (Year 12)
Funding Period: April 15, 2017 – April 15, 2018
Final Report**

What is the status of the Year 12 BCBSND Caring Foundation funded projects?

In April 2017, Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota (BCBSND) funded **10** rural health grants. The grants were intended to stimulate new thinking among support providers and their communities as promoters of community wellness. The general purpose of the funded grant projects is to demonstrate collaborative efforts involving rural healthcare organizations and their communities in supporting physical activity and overall wellness for all people residing in rural North Dakota.

Overview - Rural Health Grant Projects Year 12

- Fifteen grant proposals were received, requesting a total of \$63,180.93.
- Ten awards were made, for a total of \$40,500.
- The funding period ran from April 15, 2017, to April 15, 2018.
- Awards ranged from \$1,335 to \$5,000.
- All 10 grant projects were completed by the April 15, 2018, deadline.



The focus areas addressed in these projects were:

- Activities that endorse and support physical activity (seven projects).
- Supplies that endorse and support physical activity (eight projects).
- Programs that endorse and support physical activity (three projects).
- Events that endorse and support physical activity (five projects).



Seven of the 10 grantees indicated: They would not have been able to implement this project without BCBSND Caring Foundation grant funds.

Leveraging funds

Four of the 10 grantees indicated that the BCBSND Caring Foundation grant enabled them to leverage more than \$10,000 from other sources.

Number and ages of people who participated in the community projects

The ages of participants ranged from infant to 90+ years. An exact number of participants is not available from all programs. However, it was reported that more than 1,000 people participated in the 10 activities.

Facility experiences

All facilities reported a positive experience with the administration process of the grants (coordinated by the Center for Rural Health) and the project marketing components (coordinated by BCBSND Caring Foundation).

COMPLETED PROJECTS

1. St. Andrew's Health Center, Bottineau

Funds awarded: \$3,175

General purpose: The grant funds were used to construct a disc golf course in the Bottineau Forestry Park, and after the course was built, a wellness event for anyone interested in the disc golf sport was hosted. The course provides wellness activities for individuals of all ages and is also a great activity for families and their children.

Partners: St. Andrew's Health Center assisted with oversight and project

coordination, Bottineau Park District provided park land and labor, and the Turtle Mountain Kiwanis helped with project management of the construction. Additional key partners included Dakota College at Bottineau, the North Dakota State Forest Service, and St. Joseph's Community Health Foundation.



Activities completed:

- The planning and construction of the disc golf course.
- A Grand Opening event.
- An open house wellness event that included blood pressure and blood glucose testing.
- Course usage and statistics gathering.

Focus area(s): Activities, supplies, programs, and events that endorse and support activity.



Number and ages of participants: Ages varied from 3 to 75 years of age.

Impact measurement:

- Number of community volunteers participating in project activities (all projects): Planned for 10 volunteers and had 23 volunteers participate.
- Number of participants at "Open House" wellness event: Planned for 50 and had 38 participants.
- Number of volunteers for implementation and golf course construction: Planned for 10 and had 12 volunteers.
- Number of individuals using the course: It is estimated at more than 120 participants.
- Schools participating: Bottineau Public Schools (physical education classes - 85 students) and Dakota College at Bottineau (golf tournament - 13 students).

Success story: The wellness activity involved the Bottineau ambulance volunteer group that conducted blood pressure checks, displayed the ambulance, and conducted sessions on first aid and first responder skills. The second success story was the use of the course by the Bottineau Public School system for fitness activities. Students are learning about a new sport previously not taught before.

2. Towner County Medical Center, Cando

Funds awarded: \$5,000

General purpose: Towner County Medical Center (TCMC) purchased new playground equipment and fencing for the daycare's outdoor play area. Funding was used to purchase several items related to keeping daycare-aged children active. Items included bicycles, jump ropes, trikes, and other types of outdoor playground equipment.



Partners: The grant-funded project was a partnership of various departments within TCMC. The TCMC daycare's role was, and continues to be, to utilize the equipment to keep the daycare children active and healthy. TCMC administration was, and is still, responsible for searching for and providing funding to keep the daycare open and keep the children engaged in physical activity.

Activities completed:

- The purchase of several items of outdoor playground equipment designed around activities and physical health.
- Utilization of the purchased equipment in order to provide daily physical activities for children attending the daycare.



Focus area(s): Supplies that endorse and support activity.

Number and ages of participants: 28 children ranging in age from 2 to 12.

Impact measurement: Impact of this project was measured by observing an increase in the amount of time the children spent outdoors, but also staying active while outdoors.

3. Carrington Health Center, Carrington

Funds awarded: \$3,383.25

General purpose: Carrington Health Center (CHC), Carrington Public Schools (CPS), and Carrington Senior Citizen Center (CSCC) collaborated to put together a four-week mini-summer recreational program as well as age-appropriate cooking classes and a booth at the local County Fair focusing on healthy snacks.

Activities completed:

- A “Cooking for One or Two” class held at the CSCC – With attendees, Brooke Fredrickson, a licensed registered dietitian and certified diabetes educator, cooked three healthy meal recipes made to serve one or two people. She demonstrated how to use a veggie spiral slicer in meals and provided expert nutritional advice.
- “Mini-Summer Recreational Activities” Guest instructors helped youth who had completed kindergarten through fifth grade to learn about and participate in yoga, soccer, kickball, and an arts and crafts scavenger hunt. Each activity was featured on Thursday mornings, bridging the four weeks between the summer baseball and reading programs ending and the school year beginning.
- “Snack Building at the County Fair” – The CHI St. Alexis Health booth at the 2017 Foster County Fair featured healthy trail mix recipes and ingredients for attendees to make and take with them.
- A “Healthy Snacking” cooking class with the Carrington Elementary School after-school program.
- A “Healthy Substitutions” cooking class, with samples for the community.



Focus area(s): Activities, supplies, programs, and events that endorse and support activity.

Partners: CHC partnered with the Carrington Park Board, Carrington EMS, and the CSCC. The Carrington Park Board provided green space and equipment for youth activities in the park. Two mini-summer recreational program volunteers



provided expert instruction to the youth on yoga and soccer activities. The CHI St. Alexius Health Carrington EMS crew provided help and medical assistance if needed. CSCC provided space for the cooking class and assisted in finding attendees.

Focus area(s): Activities, supplies, and programs that endorse and support activity.

Number and ages of participants:

- Snack building at the Foster County Fair: ages 2-92, (148 people).
- Youth activities: ages 5 – 12 (94 children).
- Senior Citizens Cooking Class: ages 70-90 (16 people).
- Community Cooking Class: ages 35-55(3 people).
- Elementary School Cooking Class: grades K-5, 5-11 years old (27 students).



Impact measurement:

- Number of attendees at each youth activity.
 - Yoga = 29
 - Soccer = 29
 - Kickball = 16
 - Scavenger hunt = 20
- Number of completed snack mixes at the fair.
 - 148 snacks made
- Number of attendees at each of the cooking classes.
 - Senior Citizens Cooking Class: 16 people.
 - Community Cooking Class: 3 people.
 - Elementary School Cooking Class: 27 students.

Challenges/barriers:

Because of CHI's purchasing agreement contract, there were challenges with food items required for the trail mix activity. This was addressed by purchasing the items with a procurement card versus ordering through the facility.

There were also difficulties with high school student scheduling. One of the two high school students hired to assist with the youth activities had a state baseball tournament and an injury that prevented the student from participating in two of the four weeks' activities. Another high school student took the lead, supported by hospital staff and the activity volunteer, to address this issue.



Success Story: Yoga inspired some youth to look at alternative activities that produce lifetime learning skills. Since the summer session, those young people continue to practice yoga..

4. St. Luke's Hospital, Crosby

Funds awarded: \$5,000

General purpose: St. Luke's Third Annual Crosby Color Splash 5k Fun Run/Walk was a community-driven family fun event. The event, held August 5, 2017, was co-sponsored and coordinated by St. Luke's and local volunteers. The profits from the event were used to provide a tumbling floor for the only community gymnastics and fitness facility in Divide County. There were 233 participants, and \$9,671 was raised. Bi-weekly meetings were held early in the planning stages and once-a-week meetings were held as the event moved closer. Those involved in the steering and planning committees were members of the hospital staff, providers, and community business owners. Their target population was all ages residing in or traveling to Divide County. Community and visitors participated in the daylong event filled with fun family entertainment. In addition, the total number of participants increased over last year.



Partners: St. Luke's hospital providers and human resources department and community volunteers and businesses, including Prairie Tumbleweeds and the local Fitness Center, worked together on this project.

Activities completed: St. Luke's Third Annual Crosby Color Splash 5k Fun Run/Walk held on August 5, 2017.

Focus area(s): Supplies that endorse and support activity.

Number and ages of participants: 233 participants— from infant to residents more than 60 years of age.

Impact measurement: The measurement was done by analyzing the amount raised, as well as an increase in total number of participants compared to last year's run. There were many more participants this year, and the amount raised, after expenses, was \$2,529 more than last year. The funds raised were used to provide a tumbling floor for the only community gymnastics and fitness facility in Divide County. The Third Annual Crosby Color Splash 5K Fun



Run/Walk coincided with Crosby's 100-Year Celebration. This largely contributed to the success and increased participation in the event.

Success story: Participants, young and old, had a good time while raising funds for the Prairie Tumbleweeds Gymnastics and Fitness Center for a new tumble floor.

5. Sargent County District Health Unit, Forman **Funds awarded: \$4,590**

General purpose: The Sargent County District Health Unit (SCHDU) collaborated with Healthy Sargent County and the Sargent County Historical Society (SCHS) to host a Family Health Fair. The event was held on May 10, 2017, at the Sargent County Museum in Forman, North Dakota.

Partners: The SCHDU worked with Healthy Sargent County and the SCHS to provide a Family Health Fair. The SCHS provided the venue, and helped plan and organize the event. Healthy Sargent County helped fund the health fair.

Activities completed: Nineteen vendors set up booths that offered various health screenings, activities, and educational materials for all ages. Healthy snacks were also provided to all attendees.

Focus area(s): Activities, supplies, programs, and events that endorse and support activity.

Number and ages of participants: 51 people, mostly adults, participated.

Impact measurement: Event participants were asked to complete evaluations where they received their health screenings. It is anticipated that there will be improved health noted in the next community health needs assessment.

Success Story: There has been improved networking with local agencies. In addition, the community is now more aware of the services available.

6. Central Valley Health District, Jamestown **Funds awarded: \$1,335**

General purpose: A 5K walk/run was held during Jamestown's yearly community celebration called White Cloud Days. This well-known celebration was the perfect venue to hold a community physical activity event.

The Caring Foundation grant provided funding for the community to hold and promote the 5K walk/run during White Cloud Days. The 5K was advertised. Most participants registered prior to the event, but there were some last minute entries. The 5K began just prior to the White Cloud Days parade on July 8, 2017. Walkers/runners proceeded down Main Street in Jamestown and continued on the mapped route for the 5K. Coordinating the walk/run with the parade

increased awareness of the event and highlighted the importance of physical activity in the community. The benefits of this grant to the community were twofold; it assisted Central Valley Health District (CVHD) and the Community Health Partnership (CHP) by promoting a culture of physical activity, and it generated money to overcome barriers to physical activity by creating a scholarship fund for memberships to Two Rivers Activity Center (TRAC).

Partners: CVHD managed the grant funding and provided guidance and support to the TRAC facility staff for the 5K event. CVHD served as the fiscal agent for the project. Jamestown Parks and Recreation and TRAC staff are active members on the CHP and were responsible for the implementation of the work plan activities.

Activities completed: CHP and CVHD promoted the 5K walk/run with the development of a flyer. Members of the CHP posted flyers throughout the community, and radio ads and Facebook posts were also a part of promotional activities. The TRAC staff developed the plans and route for the run/walk. The 1st annual TRAC 5K Walk/Run was held July 8, 2017.

Focus area(s): Activities, supplies, and events that endorse and support activity.



Number and ages of participants: 84 people participated in the TRAC 5K walk/run. Participants ranged from young youth to the elderly.

Impact measurement: Evaluation of the project was completed by reviewing the number of registrations and people who participated in the 5K run/walk. Questions were asked on the registration about previous involvement in a 5K event and other physical activity behaviors. Eighteen people requested scholarships, and individuals were tracked according to the various needs that people request scholarships for, such as disabilities, economic hardship, etc. There were 84 individuals who participated in the 5K Walk/Run, and \$2,100 was raised.

Success story: TRAC provided scholarships to a single mother and her four children who had limited resources and who could not have enjoyed the TRAC without financial support.

7. Good Samaritan Society - Larimore

Funds awarded: \$5,000

General purpose: The Wellness Center provided opportunities for community members to receive one-on-one personal training sessions, and community classes offered that focused on personal wellness, including the basics of using a gym, dealing with stress, etc. The funds were also used to provide training for the Wellness Center director.

Partners: The Good Samaritan Society – Larimore partnered with Choice Health and Fitness to provide a personal trainer to provide training for the Wellness Center director and to develop orientation for members of the Wellness Center.



Activities completed: The program kicked off with a health and wellness seminar "Balanced Exercise Program." Almost all of the attendees signed up for personal sessions with Chris Langei, the instructor from Choice Health and Fitness. During the next weeks each participant was given two personal training sessions. Langei also worked with Gretchen Asperheim, Good Samaritan Society Wellness Center director. Together, they worked on orientation classes for new members and training on the specifics of the machines. The plan was to have four community classes.

Focus area(s): Activities and events that endorse and support activity.

Number and ages of participants: 40 participants, ranging in age 20 to 80+.

Challenges/barriers: Once the kick-off class was completed and the initial people signed up for the personal training sessions, the goals were being actively worked on. In June, it was decided to take the summer off, because classes and a gym are not priorities for people at that time. There seems to be a lack of understanding of wellness, because it is more than exercising and eating healthy. People prefer to come and listen to a speaker, and being interactive is perhaps threatening to some. Therefore, the obstacle was framing the advertising to make it appealing. Figuring out how to reach people and get the word out about classes was also a challenge. Various media outlets (newspaper, website, and social media) were used to advertise.

Impact measurement: The primary measurement was the number of people who participated. Twelve people came to the first class, and four additional people attended a personal training session.

Success Story: One person who did attend the two wellness/decluttering classes with "My Coach Bev" set a goal of decluttering her home. She took bags of clothes to Good Will and is trying to "get rid of something" daily. She is actually following exactly what Bev advised in her class.

The yoga classes took on a life of their own. The course initially started as a six-week class with 13 participants and ended up running for eight weeks. Then, as a group, the participants decided to have a second series of classes!

8. First District Health Unit, Minot

Funds awarded: \$3,700

General purpose: First District Health Unit used these funds to host a wellness workshop to provide tools and resources for individuals to address their personal wellness. This project was done in collaboration with Minot State University, which used their wellness wheel to create an event that provided resources and information to the community. The keynote speaker presented on “Aging Gracefully,” which touched on all aspects of the wellness wheel. Organizations that represent each spoke of the wheel were invited to provide local information to the community. A resource guide was created via Facebook for attendees to receive information to continue their long-term wellness. Two additional breakout sessions were incorporated on “Mindfulness and Meditation” and “Breaking Down the Barriers of Mental Health.” Donations of fruit and water for the attendees were also provided. Community emergency service vehicles (NorthStar Criticair helicopter, Minot Fire Department, Minot Police Department, and Community Ambulance) were stationed outside the event for the public to view. Donations were received to give out as door prizes during the event as well.



Partners: Partners of First District Health Unit included Trinity Health and Minot Air Force Base, and both served on the advisory board and as event vendors. Minot State University hosted the event and served on the advisory board and as an event vendor. Visit Minot was part of the advisory board.

Activities that were completed: The advisory board met four times after receiving the grant. Local organizations were reviewed and were issued invitations to be a part of the resource guide. The advisory board determined the location and date the event was held. Once the initial invitations were sent out, the board reached out to potential sponsors for door prizes and information. Closer to the time of the event, additional information was sent out to each vendor about the event.. A resource guide was created to encompass longer-term wellness and resources information. A survey was created to measure the event’s effect and was handed out after the event.

Focus area(s): Events that endorse and support activity.

Number and ages of participants: More than 150 people participated. The youngest was three months old, and the oldest was more than 90 years old.

Challenges/barriers: The largest barrier was implementing within the proposed timeline and matching all the schedules between college and high school sport seasons. Minot State University was not originally a collaborator when the grant was written, so its event schedules

were not originally taken into consideration. Once the collaboration with Minot State University began, it was ensured its event schedules were not affected by the wellness workshop. Using Minot State University Wellness Center's gym provided a cost-effective space.

Impact measurement: A survey was created to help measure the impact of the event, what people learned about wellness, and to see if people who attended would use the information long term. Publicity for the event was donated by the following: WGO radio, the KXMC Noon Show, and the Minot Daily Newspaper. The event was also promoted on Facebook to nearly 1,500 people. The day of the event, attendees were presented with a survey that measured their knowledge of Dimensional Wellness, as well as a self-assessment of their own wellness. More than 140 surveys were completed, and more than 150 people attended the event. Survey results show that 31% of the attendee's felt their knowledge of Dimensional Wellness had an above average increase.

Success story: There were organizations at the event that do not normally participate in this type of community outreach. A representative from Minot Youth for Christ was complimentary of the event and expressed appreciation for being invited. He stated he was able to speak with many people about his organization. 63 Doors is another organization that does not have much outreach. It brought materials to make mini journals to the event. This group also expressed appreciation for a chance to share with the community.

9. Mountrail County Health System, Stanley

Funds awarded: \$4,300

General purpose: Mountrail County Health System collaborated with Stanley Public Schools and the Mountrail County Courthouse to implement sit-stand desktop workstations at each location to decrease sitting at work and improve health. Among the needs pointed out in the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) was a need to address overweight/obesity issues in the community of Stanley. Sitting too long is bad for a person's health, and one of the ways to minimize this risk is to limit time sitting while at work. In doing research of the CHNA needs, the coined phrase "Sitting is the new Smoking" came up. Therefore, having the option of standing for a few hours a day at work to improve health is a good way to combat this issue. Partnering with the Stanley Public Schools and the Mountrail County Courthouse, five Flexispot sit-stand desktop workstations were installed at each location.

Partners: Mountrail County Health Center, Stanley Public School, and Mountrail County Courthouse worked with Therapy Solutions to identify which employees needed the sit/stand desks. Therapy Solutions went to all the organizations and met with all employees, identified by their employer, who were interested in a sit/stand desk. A report was written after meeting with each identified employee.

Activities completed: All identified employees at the Stanley Public Schools, Mountrail County Courthouse, and the Mountrail Health Center met with Therapy Solutions, and a review of their workstations was completed. A detailed report was submitted to each entity by Therapy Solutions outlining the needs for each employee. The desks were installed for each employee. A

survey was conducted by Therapy Solutions to query how the employees felt before the desks were installed and after three months of using the desks.

Focus area(s): Activities and supplies that endorse and support activity.

Number and ages of participants: 16 adults.

Impact measurement: Therapy Solutions surveyed the employees before they started using the desks and also after three months of use.

Success story: Tanya Skaar, one of the employees using the sit-stand desk, reported, "I have much more energy and less backaches, especially when I get the afternoon slump!"

10. Northland Community Health Center, Turtle Lake

Funds awarded: \$5,000

General purpose: Northland created a year-round Wellness Program for employees as well as individuals within the communities served by local health centers located in Bismarck, Bowbells, McClusky, Minot, Ray, Rolette, Rolla, and Turtle Lake. The Wellness Program offers and promotes quarterly fitness challenges designed to encourage overall wellness, consistent physical activity, and a healthy diet. The wellness committee will help ensure that the program is responsive to the needs of all participants by tracking participant progress on a weekly basis and conducting quarterly surveys. Northland's goal is to have 70% of employees participate in the Wellness Program and at least 25 community members in each location.

Partners: This was a partnership within the Northland Community Health Centers. Laura Fiedler, Northland outreach coordinator, coordinated program enrollments, tracked activities, and awarded prizes. The patient services representative present at each of the eight Northland clinics assisted with enrollments and delivered prizes.

Activities completed: The first quarterly fitness challenge began May 1 and concluded July 15. One hundred community members and 30 employees participated. Employees and community members completed applications and submitted them to Northland with \$20 fees to register as participants. At the time of registration, participants were weighed and their body fat percentage was measured. Body mass index (BMI) was calculated for each participant and information was provided regarding healthy weight ranges based on individual height, weight, and age. Participants tracked minutes of exercise, servings of fruits/vegetables, and ounces of water consumed and reported the results weekly. All participants who reported each week, were entered in a weekly drawing for small prizes relevant to health and fitness. Eight weekly winners were selected, including one community member from each of the seven local health centers and one Northland employee. At the end of the challenge, participants visited the local Northland facility to complete follow-up weigh-ins and body fat measurements. Points from weekly activities and data collected at the end of the challenge were used to determine grand prize winners. A first-, second-, and third-place winner were selected from each of the seven

local health centers. First-place winners received 50% of the enrollment fee collected; second- and third-place winners received 30% and 20% respectively. Surveys were collected from participants at the end of each quarterly challenge to assess the outcomes, success rates, and overall program management to identify areas for improvement and growth potential. Wellness Program participants received periodic communication through a private Facebook group as well as emails. Participants were encouraged to interact with one another to share recipes, physical activity suggestions, inspirational comments, and advice. The second wellness challenge began October 1 and ran through November 18.

Focus area(s): Activities and supplies that endorse and support activity.

Number and ages of participants: 130 people participated during the grant period. They are all adults between 22 and 75 years of age.

Impact measurement: Northland measured the impact of the Wellness Program in a variety of ways, including the number of employee and community participants, the amount of time participants spent on fitness activities, percentage of body weight loss, reduction in body fat, and program participant satisfaction.

Success story: Employees are drinking more water and are staying more active because of the program. They are also encouraged to eat healthier and pack homemade lunches rather than eating fast food.