
LIVEWELL COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

AUGUST • 2007



West Denver Walking Club Offers a Host of Benefits



The group support not only benefits adults, but also the children. One of the young adolescent participants commented, "I don't like my mom getting us out of bed so early. But, I like it once I get here. I know it will help to keep me from getting fat."

Initially, walking club members listed weight loss and physical health as primary reasons for joining the walking club. Although increased cardiovascular health and weight loss may be a result of participation, the staff at DPH believes the social networks, coupled with the mental health benefits the participants experience, will contribute to the sustainability of the project.

The Barnum and Rude Recreation Center Walking Clubs, facilitated by Denver Public Health (DPH) in West Denver, are proving a great success. The majority of our walkers are Latino "work-at-home" moms. We consistently have 11-15 mothers and up to 20 pre-teen children walking during the formal walking club meetings. Several participants also gather to walk on additional weekdays and weekends.

These women have found a social network through our walking clubs, which addresses their physical, as well as emotional and mental health needs. One of the walking club participants said, "I used to feel so isolated and depressed. This walking group helps to get me out of the house and I feel like I have friends now."

Another female walking group participant reported, "I felt like I was going crazy. I was so irritable and anxious all of the time. Since I started walking the change in routine and the exercise have really helped me feel better. My husband says I am more like my old self."

The women have also expressed a desire for nutrition education and a soccer league for their children and spouses, in an effort to get everyone exercising more.

