

Case Study: Complete Streets Montello

Who:

In many Wisconsin communities, nutrition and youth educators lead Youth Advocates for Community Health (YACH) projects. YACH is a University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension program. In each community, middle and high school students sign up for YACH and work together with the educators. These young people study why people in their community do not eat healthy or exercise enough. Then, youth leaders plan how they will teach the community what they have learned and help make changes to improve health.

The Battle:

In Montello, Wisconsin, YACH youth leaders thought that people living in their town did not exercise enough. To learn more, the group visited many places where citizens could be active outside, like parks and hiking trails. Then, using Google Maps, they looked at the best way to get to these places by walking or biking. The youth leaders saw that entrances to these outdoor spaces did not have crosswalks or that the crosswalk needed fresh paint. They believed people would use these outdoor spaces more if they could get to them safely.



YACH youth leaders paint crosswalks to promote use of garden and walking path in their community.

Raise Awareness and Engage

Others:

YACH youth talked about the crosswalk problem with the City Council Safety Commission. Then, on Montello School's registration day, youth leaders used a poster to talk about walking, outdoor spaces, and crosswalks.

Make Your Plan:

To help community members be active outside, the youth planned to paint two Creative Crosswalks near Montello School. Creative Crosswalks are normal road crossings that are also artistic. The youth planned to paint crosswalks outside the main entrance of the school and near the garden and walking path. They hoped people would use these

crosswalks to walk to school or visit the garden and walking path more. Youth Advocates designed the crosswalks themselves and scheduled time to paint them in late August. The group met with the City Council, because they needed their plan to be approved by city officials. The City Council approved it and even offered the youth some supplies for painting on streets. To paint the crosswalks, youth planned to make a template to outline the design before painting. Finally, the youth planned an event to show off the new crosswalks and inspire walking for exercise.

Implement Your Plan:

The youth followed their plan, but one major challenge came up. In August, Montello and many nearby communities were flooded by storms with heavy rainfall. During the first week of school, city officials closed the school and the street in front of the school. Youth Advocates were flexible with their plan, changing the date to paint the street after school resumed. The group also re-scheduled their event for a later date instead of the first week of school.

Evaluate Your Plan:

One short-term goal of this project was to that community members support the new crosswalks. At registration day, people who heard about the plan were very excited. Painting the crosswalks was the medium-term outcome of the project. The YACH youth reached this goal in September when they painted two beautiful crosswalks. Finally, the project will reach the long-term goal if community members use the crosswalks to get to outdoor spaces and be more active than they were before.



Extension

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