

## Healthy Communities, Healthy People Program Success Story

| <b>Title</b>               | <b>Creating Walking Paths to Healthier People in Sarasota County!</b>  |
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| <b>Public Health Issue</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the last twenty years, the percent of obese adults doubled.</li> <li>• Inactivity is closely linked to obesity.</li> <li>• A growing body of research reveals significant benefits for individuals, employers, health plans, public health agencies, and other organizations that support walking programs.</li> <li>• Walking programs require only a modest investment, are easy to start and continue, and can lead to significant increases in health and decreases in health care costs.</li> <li>• Walking is the most popular physical activity in America. It encourages high participation among all ages, and can be an introduction to other forms of exercise.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Action</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Sarasota County Health Department and the Sarasota County School board partnered to produce walking path signs at various sites throughout the district.</li> <li>• The Sarasota County School Board is the largest employer in the district.</li> <li>• Staffs at interested sites are involved in the route planning and the Wellness Coordinator measures and maps the routes.</li> <li>• The graphic design artist at the Health Department designs the signs and a School Board facilities staff member constructs them.</li> <li>• On-site exercise and walking paths are listed in the top five of the Employee Interest Survey.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Impact</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nine Walking routes have been completed for eight sites and two routes are currently in the works; 305 employees have participated in the pedometer loan program.</li> <li>• Six-week pedometer loan programs compliment the established walking routes and have been provided for five of the seven locations, which includes approximately 200 employees.</li> <li>• Plans to provide pedometer loan programs at sites as they receive walking routes will continue throughout the 2012 school year.</li> <li>• Awareness of the routes and program has increased as well as the demand from administrators and staff for on-site routes.</li> <li>• The district Employee Wellness program reports increased interest in walking for fitness and pedometer information.</li> <li>• Some of the routes mapped include paths outside of the school property and encourages family and community to engage in physical activity.</li> <li>• Friendly competition between staff members is reported to be fun and motivational. One principal awarded a day off to the employee who made the most progress.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Lessons Learned</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The partnership between the Sarasota County Health Department and the Sarasota County School Board was critical to the success of this strategy.</li> <li>• Marketing and kick-off to explain the program and set-up pedometers are the first steps.</li> <li>• Weekly emails provide education, support, and motivation.</li> <li>• A point of contact at the site fields to answer question and assist with program management is beneficial.</li> <li>• Creating maps to visually display measured routes on the school campuses and providing pedometer encourages and motivates staff to exercise.</li> </ul>  |

