West Feliciana Healthy Communities Forum Report
May 22, 2017

Goal
To improve the health behaviors of citizens in rural Louisiana communities using a citizen-participation approach to promote health and wellness which focuses on healthy eating and physically active lifestyles.

Objective
Develop an active coalition of community members who are engaged in identifying and implementing strategies for a community-wide health and fitness campaign.

Purpose of Meeting and Ground Rules
Two groups will form with participants joining the group with the matching color dot on their nametag and table tent card. Elisabeth Altazan will facilitate the first group and Denise Holston-West will facilitate the second group. Groups will reconvene near the close of the meeting to share reports and to prioritize ideas as one group.

Community Meeting Details
- Local coordinator: Kim Coulon
- Participants: 35 key community leaders and stakeholders representing local government, health care, education, LCES, civic organizations, media, libraries, Well-Ahead LA, various citizen groups, and general community members. 24 women, 12 men, and 2 youths.
- Meeting date: May 22, 2017
- Meeting time: 5:30-7:30 PM (beginning with healthy dinner)
- Location: West Feliciana Parish Library
- Facilitators: Elisabeth Altazan and Denise Holston-West
- Healthy Meal – Baked chicken, salad, green beans, hummus, and pita bread
Summary of Process and Results
The group of 35 was split in half and each group participated in a structured group consensus meeting to identify assets and barriers to health in the parish, as well as possible solutions.

1. Participants were asked to grade the overall health of adults and children in the parish with the total group average “C-” for adults and “C” for children. Reasons cited for the grades given include:
   - Children become overweight at a young age and stay overweight throughout adulthood
   - The hospitals are seeing more obese patients
   - Community members noted that overall, things are improving in the parish

2. Strengths

Participants were asked what things are already being done in West Feliciana to help residents become healthier. Responses:
   - Good farmers market and roadside/commercial farmers
   - Lake Rosemound facilities for swimming
   - Good sports park with many assets, including a youth sports program, boot camp, adult programming, and it’s affordable
   - School garden program
   - Food pantry
   - COA – meals on wheels
   - Youths are encouraged to participate in school sports
   - Good Headstart program and pre-K program
   - Audubon market is an asset and has a good produce selection
   - Great roads for cycling and running; St. Francisville attracts cyclists form all over
   - Good non-profit organizations that are actively trying to promote health
   - Excellent doctors and new hospital opening soon
   - Existing hospital offers preventative programs
   - Lower elementary P.E. is very active with children and parents
   - In-school nutrition programming (LSU AgCenter)
   - The library is an asset, and has a nice playground and information about exercise. Will start hosting a farmers market on Fridays
   - Good air and water quality
   - Not a lot of fast food options
   - No naysayers- the community works well together
   - Schools are highly rated
There are several community health events such as bike races, walks and runs, festivals, and health fairs

- Low crime rates
- Great variety of sports offered at middle school

3. Weaknesses

Participants were asked what things are keeping residents of West Feliciana Parish from being healthy. Responses:

- Not a lot of options for exercise
- No affordable gyms, and few venues for group exercise like yoga; jazzercise classes are no longer
- Culture
- Lack of public transportation
- Lack of satellite recreation locations
- Lack of community parks in rural areas
- Unhealthy foods in food pantry
- Cash only at the farmers market
- Price of healthy foods
- School lunches aren’t healthy
- Many fundraisers are selling unhealthy items including candy
- The sports park is not accessible to everyone
- Lack of education to parents about healthy food
- Sports are expensive
- Perception that healthy food doesn’t taste good, and food preferences start early in life
- No active transportation routes for kids to get to school, to the park, or from the park to town
- Lack of “forward thinking” concerning health
- Roads are beautiful but dangerous, pushback from drivers regarding cyclists
- Tax revenue is going down
- Population growth not supporting amenities; the population is not growing because kids are not staying in the parish
- Lack of affordable and mid-range housing
- Lack of job opportunities, leads to population decline
- Stress management is not being taught to children and adults
- Lack of programs for the elderly
- Funding was lost for a diabetes program
- Lack of communication
- No signage at the sports park
- Parish leadership is unhealthy
- Lack of access for lower income families, they often don’t know what resources exist
• Specialized sports are expensive
• School physical education focuses on competitive sports, needs to focus on lifetime sports for kids who will not participate in a competitive program
• Kids in the school do not see health as important
• Recess does not occur in the middle school

4. Opportunities
Participants were asked what things could be done in the parish to improve health. Responses:

• Improve PE in schools, focus on lifetime sports
• Identify who is obese
• Tax on tobacco/alcohol to provide funds for health promotion
• Add tables and a restroom at the boat launch and signage for the canoe trail
• Promote bike safety for both drivers and cyclists
• Add bike stations with bike parking and restrooms
• Add signage on the Beast trail, along with benches and maps
• Increase transportation options to sports park
• Paved trails that connect the parish for biking and hiking
• Connect parish school campus to the parish park and town park
• Rails to Trails
• Build neighborhood parks
• Open a gym, or more facilities for exercise opportunities
• Organize fun race events (like the Color Run) to attract kids
• Expand nutrition education, including programming in schools and general community workshops
• Improve shoulders on roads to make them safe for cyclists
• Bike trails in town
• Swimming pool
• Incorporate school gardens into school lunches
• Encourage small home gardens
• Subsidize healthy options
• Client Choice food pantry
• Grow/expand the farmers market. Add in more days/times
• Provide easy healthy recipes to community
• Put recess back in schools
• More PA opportunities and events for adults
• Make healthy foods more affordable
• Teach stress management classes in school and adults
• Seek out grants for healthy programs for kids
• Support farms/farmers, and connect them via social media
• Improve general communication around healthy events (social media)
• Improve PE in middle and high schools

5. Threats
Participants were asked what things would hinder the success of an initiative to improve health in West Feliciana. Responses:

• Poverty
• Lack of Participation
• Trouble agreeing on a common goal/focus
• Lack of Collaboration
• Leadership
• Infrastructure

Each group voted on the top opportunities that would have the greatest impact on the community and the top opportunities that would be the easiest to implement, then the groups joined and voted collectively. Results:

Opportunities that would have the greatest impact:
- Improve infrastructure and connectivity
- More opportunities/access for physical activity
- Education and Outreach

Opportunities that would be the easiest to implement:
- Expand and grow the farmers market
- Education and Outreach
- Identification of those at risk or already obese

Open Forum Process Outline and Facilitation Plan

1. Welcome & introductions of facilitators (5 minutes)

2. Purpose of meeting & ground rules (5 minutes)

    Ground Rules:
    • Take turns speaking.
    • Hear other's opinions.
    • Everyone is encouraged to participate.
    • Every idea and comment is valid.
    • We can agree to disagree.
    • Keep cell phones on silent or vibrate.
3. Break into groups according to colored dots on name tags. Each group should have 1 facilitator and 1 helper and ask the following questions

**Question 1: Grades (20 minutes)**
Ask group to briefly introduce themselves (name and group they represent) and ask:

“Using a standard grading scale, (A, B, C, D, F), how would you grade the overall health of adults and children in the parish and why?”

- Assigned separate grades for each adults and youth
- Ask the group to cite reasons why and record them. Mark items with an * when specifically mentioning or in regards to children
- Record grades on flip chart and average later

**Question 2: Strengths (10 minutes)**
“What are some things that are already being done to help people in the parish become healthier?”

Optional: “What other things does the parish have going for it to help a healthy community initiative to succeed?”

- Pose question; allow free discussion
- Generate list on flip chart
- Encourage participants to give specific examples

**Question 3: Weaknesses (10 minutes)**
“What are the things that are keeping people in the Parish from being healthy?”

- Pose Question: allow free discussion
- Generate list on flip chart, encourage participants to give specific examples

**Question 4: Opportunities (45 minutes)**
“What are some things the community could do to help improve the overall health of its residents, both adults and children?”
• Have participants write down 3 ideas on large sticky notes; 1 idea/notecard with their initial at the bottom. Explain the initials are in case clarification is needed
• Participants will post their ideas onto the wall
• Read all responses and make sure everyone understands each one
• Group duplicate ideas together with permission from the author and the overall group
• After everyone has posted, allow everyone a chance for a 30 second “stump speech” on their idea. Use a timer
• Use the Nominal Group Process
  o Ask participants to use their red dots to vote on the top three ideas they think will make the greatest impact
  o After everyone has voted, ask participants to again vote with their blue dots on the top three ideas they think would be easiest to implement

4. Groups come back together and report (15 minutes)
   • Groups place their top 3 impact items and their top 3 easiest to implement items on the wall. Have someone in the group willing to speak on behalf of the group.

   • Facilitator – eliminate duplications, combine and group. Use the Nominal Group Process again to vote again on top 3 items which have the greatest impact potential using yellow dots and the top 3 that are the easiest to implement using green dots.

5. Threats (5 minutes)
   With the large group still together in one room, ask:

   “What are some things that could keep a community health program from succeeding in the Parish?”

   • Record responses on flip chart

6. Count Me In & Next Steps (5 minutes):
   Ask participants interested in working on any of the above ideas to place their name tag on the flip chart, or to write down someone’s name who isn’t at the meeting but should be involved. Explain the next steps (formation of a work group).
7. Adjourn

Supplies Needed
- Sticky flip charts
- Easels—2
- Markers (at least 1/person)
- Sticky dots in 4 colors
- 6X8 post-it notes
- 3X3 post-it notes
- Sign-in sheet
- Butcher paper (if you cannot stick things to walls)
- Name tags
- Ground rules sheets