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# Allina Health Neighborhood Health Connection™

*Findings from the 2014 Healthy Activity Grant Program Follow-up  
Evaluation Survey*

D E C E M B E R 2 0 1 5

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# Background

## The role of social connectedness in influencing health

A growing body of research demonstrates that social connections, the relationships that individuals have with their family members, friends, and neighbors, can contribute to positive health outcomes in a variety of ways. Social connections can improve health indirectly, such as when positive behavior change is supported through the development and reinforcement of positive social norms or when residents with different backgrounds organize to influence policy decisions that impact health. There is also research demonstrating that when individuals feel connected with others, they can experience direct physical benefits, including reductions in stress and other symptoms associated with social isolation. Health outcomes can also improve as a result of people accessing resources that support health. Therefore, social connections between residents who share different backgrounds can open doors to new sources of information and health resources in the community.

## About Neighborhood Health Connection

The Neighborhood Health Connection (NHC) Healthy Activity grant program is directed through the central office of Allina Health Community Benefit and Engagement (noted as “Allina Health”), but largely administered at a regional level by the Allina Health community engagement leads. Through the program, grants ranging from \$500 to \$10,000 were awarded to organizations and groups of neighbors through a competitive grantmaking process. All funded organizations and groups of neighbors were required to implement activities focused on a) increasing social connections and b) improving healthy eating and/or physical activity behaviors for adults of all ages and families. Because of earlier evaluation results suggesting a positive relationship between changes in health behavior and social connections and frequency of participation, all grantees were required to offer a minimum of six activities for the same group of participants. Beyond this requirement, there were no restrictions on the types of activities which could be offered. As a result, the funded activities varied widely (e.g., community gardening, sports and exercise groups, cooking and nutrition classes), and all aimed to reach different populations.

In 2014, Healthy Activity grants were implemented by 54 organizations and groups of neighbors in Minnesota and western Wisconsin. Together, these funded projects reached 2,886 participants through their collective work. NHC grantees received funding to implement their NHC activity during an 8-month period (July 2014- February 2015).

# About the evaluation

## Evaluation questions

The evaluation for Neighborhood Health Connection was designed to answer the following key questions:

- Were the NHC grant-funded activities successful in increasing social connections among participants at the conclusion of the grant period and six months post-grant?
- Did participants report an increase in healthy eating and/or physical activity at the conclusion of the grant period and six months post-grant?
- Did participants report increased use of resources and information to support their health at the conclusion of the grant period and six months post-grant?
- What were the barriers groups faced in implementing projects to increase social connectedness and healthy eating and/or physical activity, and how can those barriers be avoided or mitigated?

To answer the key questions, initial surveys were administered to both grantees and program participants at the end of the activity or at the end of the NHC grant funding period (whichever came first). Follow-up surveys were administered to both groups six months after the end of the funding period to measure changes over time.

## Methods

### *Initial surveys and response rates*

- Initial grantee survey. Grantees were asked to share their perceptions of their project's success in helping participants increase social connections, improve healthy eating and physical activity behaviors, and gain access to health resources.

Surveys were gathered from 50 of the 54 grantees, a response rate of 93 percent.

- Initial participant survey. Written and/or online surveys were administered to adults who participated in two or more project activities. The participants were asked how their participation in the activities impacted their connections with others, their own health behaviors, and their knowledge about other health resources. The survey was available in three languages: English, Somali, and Spanish.

The participant survey was completed by 682 of the 1,209 eligible participants (i.e., adults age 18 or older who participated in an activity at least twice), which is a response rate of 56 percent.

### *Follow-up surveys and response rates*

- Grantee follow-up survey. Grantees were asked via an online survey if their activity continued beyond the grant period and, if yes, about any changes they made to the activity. They were also asked about the impact the grant had on their activity.

The follow-up grantee survey was sent to 53 grantees and completed by 48, a response rate of 91 percent.

- Participant follow-up survey. Written and/or online surveys were sent to adult participants. The participants were asked whether they continued participating in the activity and about the impact of the activity on their social connections and health behaviors. The survey was available in English and Spanish. Participants were given a \$10 gift card if they completed the initial and follow-up surveys.

The follow-up participant survey was sent to 621 participants and completed by 380, a response rate of 61 percent. Participants from 43 NHC activities responded to the survey. During the initial survey, 682 participants responded. The number of respondents to the follow-up participant survey represents about 56 percent of the total number of respondents to the initial survey. Not all participants who responded to the initial survey were sent a follow-up survey because they did not provide a mailing address or the address was incorrect.

### Statistical significance

For the results of the initial survey, chi-square tests were conducted to measure the statistical significance of dosages (i.e., the number of times an individual took part in a Neighborhood Health Connection activity) and their relationship to social connections, changes in healthy behaviors, and the use of resources that support health. Chi-square tests were also used to measure the significance of differences in participants' social connections and health behaviors between the initial and follow-up surveys. All differences are statistically significant at  $p < .05$ .

## Limitations

While the overall response rate for the initial participant survey was strong, there was some variability in responses rates across Allina Health's community engagement regions. As a result, some caution should be used when interpreting the participant survey results, as they may not represent the thoughts of all participants who were eligible for the survey.

Participants who responded to the follow-up survey tended to be white women, age 40 and older, and in good health. Caution should be used when interpreting the follow-up survey results, as they may not represent the thoughts of all respondents to the initial survey.



# Orientation to the report

This report is organized into four separate sections, including: key findings from the initial and follow-up surveys, recommendations, and an Appendix with data tables including: participant demographic information for initial and follow-up surveys, and all follow-up survey question results and responses to open-ended questions.

# Key findings from the initial survey

## Success building social connections and healthy behaviors at the end of NHC funding period

Overall, the findings from the initial survey suggest positive changes in social connections, physical activity, and healthy eating for a majority of participants at the end of the NHC funding period. In addition, participants who took part in a higher number of activities were more likely to report positive changes.

### Impact on social connections

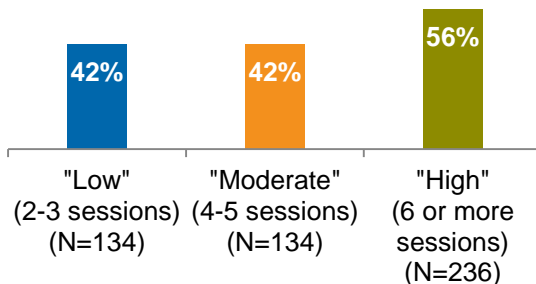
**The NHC grants helped many participants feel more connected to others.** A majority of grantees rated their activity as “very successful” in helping participants strengthen existing relationships (73%) and build new relationships (61%). Most participants also reported that, as a result of participating in a NHC activity, they strengthened their current relationships (80%) and built new relationships (75%).

**Participants who took part at a high frequency<sup>1</sup> were significantly ( $p < .05$ ) more likely to indicate they were very confident they would stay in touch with at least one of their new connections (56%)** compared to those who participated at a “moderate” or “low” frequency (42% each) (Figure 1).

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#### 1. Percentage of participants who are "very confident" that they will stay in touch with a new connection, by frequency of involvement

Participants reporting being "very confident" that they'll stay in touch with a new connection



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<sup>1</sup> Frequency of participation in the NHC activities was categorized as “high” (participants attended 6 or more activity sessions), “moderate” (4-5 sessions), or “low” (2-3 sessions).

## Impact on health behaviors

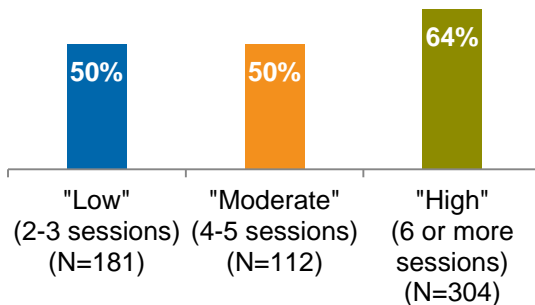
**Participants made changes in their physical activity and healthy eating behavior as a result of the NHC grants.** A majority of participants reported eating healthier meals and snacks (64%) and being more physically active (57%) compared to six months earlier.

**Participants who took part at a “high” frequency were significantly ( $p < .05$ ) more likely to report increased physical activity (64%)** compared to those who participated at a “moderate” or “low” frequency (50% each) (Figure 2).

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### 2. Percentage of participants who reported changes in their physical activity, by frequency of involvement

Participants reporting being "more physically active than six months ago"

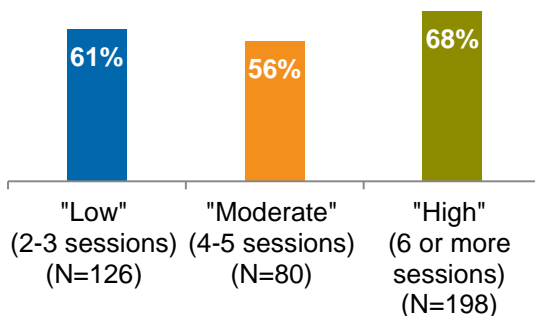


**Participants who took part at a “high” frequency were also more likely to report increased healthy eating (68%)** compared to those who participated at a “moderate” or “low” frequency (56% and 61%) (Figure 3). These differences were not statistically significant.

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### 3. Percentage of participants who reported changes in their healthy eating by frequency of involvement

Participants reporting eating healthy meals and snacks "more often than six months ago"



**Seventy-one percent of grantees reported that their NHC activity was “very successful” in increasing participants' levels of physical activity, and 35 percent indicated they were “very successful” increasing participants’ healthy eating behaviors.**

(All results from the initial participant and grantee survey, including detailed data tables, can be accessed in the [Findings from the 2014 Healthy Activity Grant Program evaluation report](#).)

# Key findings from the follow-up survey

## Success building social connections and healthy behaviors six months after the end of NHC funding

Overall, the findings from the follow-up survey suggest positive changes in social connections and healthy behaviors occurred for a majority of respondents approximately six months after the NHC grant period ended. Often, these changes were more likely among respondents who continued to participate in an activity after the NHC grant period ended.

### Continued participation in a NHC activity

**A majority of grantees (79%) who responded to the survey reported that they continued to offer their activity after the NHC grant period ended.** This was somewhat surprising, as the program did not place a large emphasis on long-term sustainability. Most grantees decided to continue their activity because participants wanted it to continue (79%), and it had a positive impact on participants' health (76%).

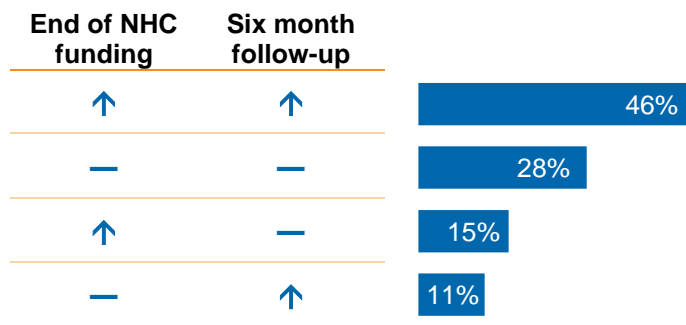
**A majority of participants (60%) who completed the follow-up survey reported that they continued to take part in the NHC activity that they were involved with six months ago.** Most continued participating because the activity helped improve their health (86%) and they liked spending time with others (54%). The most common reason individuals stopped participating was because the activity was no longer offered (79%).

### Impact on social connections

**Many participants maintained newly made social connections after the NHC funding ended.** Sixty-five percent indicated that they met new people through the NHC activity. Most (81%) reported that they still talk to or meet with at least one of the new people they met. Participants who continued taking part in an activity were significantly ( $p < .05$ ) more likely to report feeling more connected to the community (61%), compared to those who did not continue to participate (48%).

**Over half of participants (56%) reported that they feel more connected to their community since taking part in the NHC activity six months ago.** Almost half (46%) reported an increase in their connection at the end of the NHC funding and at the six month follow-up (Figure 4).

#### 4. Participants' change in their connection to the community (N=369)



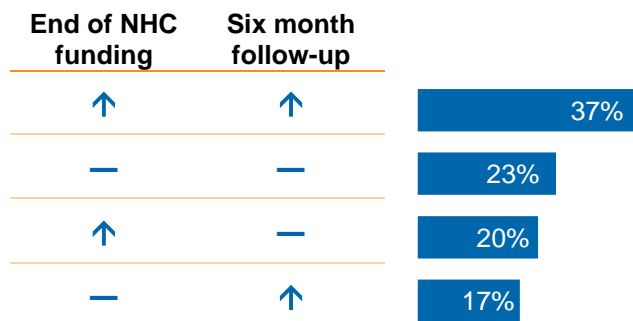
↑ = connection increased, — = no change in connection

Note: At the six-month follow-up, one participant reported being less connected to their community compared to before the activity.

#### Impact on physical activity

**Over half of the participants (53%) reported being more physically active six months after the NHC funding ended.** Over one-third (37%) reported doing more physical activity at the end of the NHC funding and at the six month follow-up (Figure 5).

#### 5. Participants' change in their physical activity (N=323)



↑ = physical activity increased, — = no change in physical activity

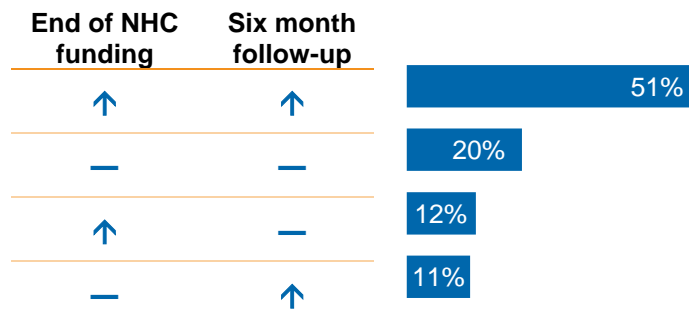
Note: About three percent of participants reported being less physically active at the end of funding or six months later.

**Participants who continued taking part in a NHC activity after the funding ended were more likely to report increased physical activity over the past six months (58%), compared to those who did not continue to participate (47%).** These results were not statistically significant.

## Impact on healthy eating

**Sixty-four percent of participants reported eating healthy meals and snacks more often six months after the NHC funding ended.** Over half of participants (51%) reported eating healthier foods at the end of the NHC funding and at the six month follow-up (Figure 6).

### 6. Participants' change in their healthy eating behavior (N=180)



↑ = healthy eating increased, — = no change in healthy eating

*Note: Six percent of participants reported a decrease in healthy eating at the end of funding, but an increase in healthy eating at the six month follow-up.*

**Participants who continued participating in a NHC activity were significantly ( $p<.05$ ) more likely to report increased healthy eating (69%),** compared to those who did not continue to participate (54%).

## Impact on overall health

**A majority of participants (56%) reported that their overall health has not changed much compared to six months ago.** Forty-three percent indicated that their health was better than six months ago.

**Participants who continued taking part in a NHC activity were significantly ( $p<.05$ ) more likely to report improved overall health (50%),** compared to those who did not continue to participate (32%).

## Follow-up grantee survey results

**Most grantees decided to continue their activity because participants wanted it to continue (79%) and it had a positive impact on participants' health (76%).** The most common reason grantees did not continue their activity was because they did not have other funding sources (70%).

**Most grantees reported that their NHC activity helped them better meet the needs of their participants (81%) and become more aware of how social connections can support health (75%).** They reported that the activity helped them build their capacity to do future work focused on social connections and health (65%) or made them more visible in the community (63%).



# Recommendations

- **Consider exploring the strategies that some grantees have used to sustain their efforts after NHC funding ends.** The follow-up survey findings suggest participants who continue to be involved with an activity are more likely to experience greater connectedness and improved health. It may be informative for other organizations to learn how some projects have been able to sustain their work and/or for Allina Health to offer some technical assistance support to organizations to consider long-term sustainability.
- **Consider whether more targeted grantmaking approaches are needed in order for the NHC program to have the greatest impact.** The follow-up survey findings are largely positive, demonstrating that many of the funded projects have continued to offer programs that improve the health and well-being of many participants. However, most of the survey respondents are white women already in good health. If a goal of the NHC project is to reduce inequities in social connectedness and overall health outcomes, Allina Health will need to consider ways to encourage applications from organizations who are interested in and able to engage a more diverse group of participants in its work, including residents entering the program in poorer health.
- **Share and discuss the follow-up evaluation findings with community engagement leads and other Allina Health staff.** The findings should be shared with leads and other staff to demonstrate the intermediate impact of the NHC program. They could also be valuable to reference as leads are making funding decisions for the 2016 NHC grant.
- **Look into different approaches to evaluating the experience of participants who do not speak English or are unable to read and write in their primary language in order to gather feedback from a more diverse group.** While the participant evaluation survey has undergone multiple edits to reduce the number of questions and adjust the reading level, there are still challenges faced by some participants who do not speak English or are unable to read and write in their native language. Allina Health could explore administering the survey over the phone or having it orally administered in-person by a native speaker. In addition, other evaluation tools could be explored such as focus groups or more informal group discussion formats or key informant interviews.

- **Revisit the NHC logic model.** Drawing on the initial and follow-up survey data, Allina Health is able to see the outcomes reached in the NHC logic model, particularly those related to improved health behaviors and strengthened social connections six months after the end of the NHC funding period. Based on the survey findings and other recent changes (e.g., the timeline) to the NHC program, Allina Health staff should adjust the logic model to reflect changes in activities and/or anticipated outcomes.

# Appendix

## A. Detailed data tables of participant demographic information for initial and follow-up surveys

The demographic information in this section includes data from the initial and follow-up surveys for comparison of those who responded to both surveys. The Ns for both surveys differ as not all participants answered the follow-up survey.

**The distribution of follow-up survey participants' ages closely mirrors that of all participants who responded to the initial survey, differing by only a few percentage points.** The average age of respondents to the follow-up survey was 49 and the range of ages was 18 to 94. Ages were fairly evenly distributed within the range (Figure A1).

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### A1. Age of respondents to initial and follow-up surveys

| What is your age? | Initial survey (N=622) | Follow-up survey (N=351) |
|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 18-29             | 63 (10%)               | 31 (9%)                  |
| 30-39             | 142 (23%)              | 85 (24%)                 |
| 40-49             | 137 (22%)              | 78 (22%)                 |
| 50-64             | 162 (26%)              | 89 (25%)                 |
| 65 or older       | 118 (19%)              | 68 (19%)                 |

**Follow-up survey respondents' gender also closely aligns with that of all participants who responded to the initial survey.** In the follow-up survey, 84 percent of participants identified as female and 16 percent as male (Figure A2).

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### A2. Gender of respondents to initial and follow-up surveys

|        | Initial survey (N=661) | Follow-up survey (N=370) |
|--------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Female | 544 (82%)              | 311 (84%)                |
| Male   | 117 (18%)              | 59 (16%)                 |

**The follow-up survey included a greater share of white participants compared to the initial survey (87% versus 81%).** Most follow-up survey participants reported being born in the U.S. (86%) and spoke English in their household (94%), similar to the initial survey (Figure A3).

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**A3. Race, languages spoken, and nativity of respondents to initial and follow-up surveys**

| <b>Race</b>                              | <b>Initial survey<br/>(N=642-661)</b> | <b>Follow-up survey<br/>(N=372-380)</b> |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| White                                    | 523 (81%)                             | 327 (87%)                               |
| Of color                                 | 131 (20%)                             | 37 (10%)                                |
| <b>Languages spoken in the household</b> |                                       |   |
| English                                  | 589 (90%)                             | 351 (94%)                               |
| Other language                           | 117 (18%)                             | 29 (8%)                                 |
| <b>Country of birth</b>                  |                                       |   |
| United States                            | 529 (85%)                             | 325 (86%)                               |
| Other country                            | 93 (15%)                              | 55 (14%)                                |

**The follow-up survey included a greater share of participants in “very good” health compared to the initial survey (53% versus 39%).** Across both the initial and follow-up survey, participants rated their overall health highly (Figure A4).

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**A4. Self-reported health status of respondents to the initial and follow-up surveys**

| <b>In general, how would you rate your overall health?</b> | <b>Initial survey<br/>(N=681)</b> | <b>Follow-up survey<br/>(N=377)</b> |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Excellent  | 97 (14%)                          | 44 (12%)                            |
| Very good  | 267 (39%)                         | 201 (53%)                           |
| Good   | 259 (38%)                         | 110 (29%)                           |
| Fair   | 51 (8%)                           | 22 (6%)                             |
| Poor   | 7 (1%)                            | 0 (0%)                              |

## B. Detailed data tables of participant responses from the follow-up survey

### *Participants' participation in a NHC activity after the NHC funding period*

A majority of participants (60%) reported that they continued to take part in the NHC activity after the NHC funding period ended. Most continued because the activity helped improve their health (86%) and they liked spending time with others (54%). The most common reason individuals stopped participating was because the activity was no longer offered (79%) (Figure B1).

#### **B1. Continued participation in a Neighborhood Health Connection activity**

| <b>Have you continued to participate in the Neighborhood Health Connection activity you were involved with about six months ago? (N=380)</b> | <b>Number</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| Yes  | 228           | 60%            |
| No   | 150           | 40%            |
| <b>If yes, why did you continue to participate? (N=228)</b>  |               |                |
| It helped me improve my health   | 195           | 86%            |
| I liked spending time with others  | 124           | 54%            |
| The information presented was helpful to me  | 107           | 47%            |
| Other <sup>a</sup>   | 25            | 11%            |
| <b>If no, why did you not continue to participate? (N=149)</b>   |               |                |
| The activity was no longer offered   | 117           | 79%            |
| The activity was offered at a place or time that was not convenient  | 20            | 13%            |
| The activity didn't help me make changes to my health  | 7             | 5%             |
| I didn't feel connected to the other participants  | 6             | 4%             |
| The activity was too expensive   | 3             | 2%             |
| Other <sup>b</sup>   | 15            | 10%            |

*Note:* Total percentage equals more than 100 percent as respondents were able to choose multiple responses.

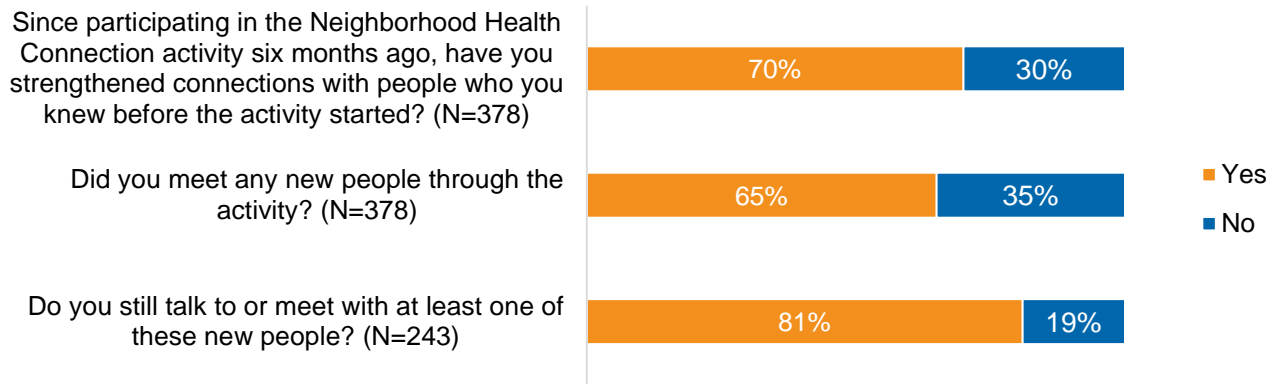
<sup>a</sup> Includes: having fun/enjoying the activity, feeling motivated, and setting goals.

<sup>b</sup> Includes: issues with physical health, maintained physical activity on their own, or issues with the weather.

## Participants' social connections

**Many participants strengthened or maintained newly made social connections after the NHC funding ended.** Seventy percent reported strengthening connections with people who they knew before the activity started. Sixty-five percent indicated that they met new people through the NHC activity. Of those who met new people, most (81%) reported that they still talk to or meet with at least one of the new people who they met (Figure B2).

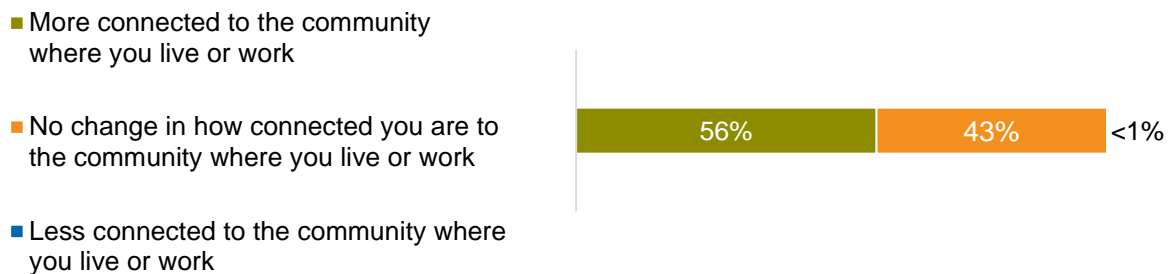
### B2. Self-reported changes in strengthening current relationships and forming and sustaining new relationships among participants



**A majority of participants (56%) reported feeling more connected to the community where they live or work.** Forty-three percent indicated no change in their connection to the community (Figure B3).

### B3. Self-reported changes in participants' connection to the community (N=378)

Since participating in the activity six months ago, do you feel:



Participants who continued taking part in a NHC activity were significantly ( $p<.05$ ) more likely to report strengthening connections with people who they knew before the activity (78%), compared to those who did not continue to participate (58%) (Figure B4).

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**B4. Percentage of participants who strengthened their current relationships, by whether they continued participating in a NHC activity**

| Since participating in the Neighborhood Health Connection activity six months ago, have you strengthened connections with people who you knew before the activity started? | Have you continued to participate in the Neighborhood Health Connection activity you were involved with about six months ago? |            |
|--|---|------------|
|  | Yes (N=226)   | No (N=150) |
| Yes (N=263)  | 176 (78%)   | 87 (58%)   |
| No (N=113)   | 50 (22%)  | 63 (42%)   |

Participants who continued taking part in a NHC activity were significantly ( $p<.05$ ) more likely to report still talking or meeting with at least one of the new people who they met through the activity (89%), compared to those who did not continue to participate (68%) (Figure B5).

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**B5. Percentage of participants who sustained their new connections, by whether they continued participating in a NHC activity**

| Do you still talk to or meet with at least one of these new people? | Have you continued to participate in the Neighborhood Health Connection activity you were involved with about six months ago? |           |
|---|---|-----------|
|   | Yes (N=148)   | No (N=93) |
| Yes (N=195)   | 132 (89%)   | 63 (68%)  |
| No (N=46)   | 16 (11%)  | 30 (32%)  |

**Participants who continued taking part in a NHC activity were significantly ( $p < .05$ ) more likely to report feeling more connected to the community (61%), compared to those who did not continue to participate (48%) (Figure B6).**

**B6. Percentage of participants who sustained their connection to the community, by whether they continued participating in a NHC activity**

| Since participating in the activity six months ago, do you feel:                   | Have you continued to participate in the Neighborhood Health Connection activity you were involved with about six months ago? |            |
|--|---|------------|
|  | Yes (N=227)   | No (N=149) |
| More connected to the community where you live or work (N=211)                     | 139 (61%)   | 72 (48%)   |
| No change in how connected you are to the community where you live or work (N=163) | 88 (39%)  | 75 (50%)   |
| Less connected to the community where you live or work (N=2)                       | 0 (0%)  | 2 (1%)     |

*Participants' participation in community groups and use of resources*

**A majority of participants reported that they took part in community groups (59%) and used resources to support their health (56%) about as often as they did six months ago.** Thirty-seven percent indicated that they took part in community groups more often and 42 percent indicated that they use resources more (Figure B7).

**B7. Self-reported changes in participating in community groups and using resources among participants**

| Please think about how often you do each of the following things now, compared to six months ago. Which rating best describes how often you do things to improve your health and to feel connected to your community? | I do this about as often now as I did 6 months ago |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
|   | I do this more now than I did 6 months ago         | I do this about as often now as I did 6 months ago | I do this less now than I did 6 months ago |
| Take part in community groups or activities (N=377)   | 140 (37%)  | 221 (59%)  | 16 (4%)                                    |
| Use resources and materials (e.g., books or websites) to support my health (N=374)  | 157 (42%)  | 209 (56%)  | 8 (2%)                                     |



**Participants who continued taking part in a NHC activity were significantly ( $p < .05$ ) more likely to report participating in community groups more often (42%), compared to those who did not continue to participate (30%) (Figure B8).**

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**B8. Percentage of participants who take part in community groups or activities, by whether they continued participating in a NHC activity**

| <b>I take part in community groups or activities:</b> | <b>Have you continued to participate in the Neighborhood Health Connection activity you were involved with about six months ago?</b> |                       |
|---|--|-----------------------|
|   | <b>Yes<br/>(N=226)</b>   | <b>No<br/>(N=149)</b> |
| More now than I did 6 months ago (N=138)              | 94 (42%)   | 44 (30%)              |
| About as often now as I did 6 months ago (N=221)      | 127 (56%)  | 94 (63%)              |
| Less now than I did 6 months ago (N=16)               | 5 (2%)   | 11 (7%)               |

**Participants who continued taking part in a NHC activity were significantly ( $p < .05$ ) more likely to report using resources and materials more to support their health (48%), compared to those who did not continue to participate (33%) (Figure B9).**

---

**B9. Percentage of participants who use resources and materials, by whether they continued participating in a NHC activity**

| <b>I use resources and materials (e.g., books or websites) to support my health:</b> | <b>Have you continued to participate in the Neighborhood Health Connection activity you were involved with about six months ago?</b> |                       |
|--|--|-----------------------|
|  | <b>Yes<br/>(N=223)</b>   | <b>No<br/>(N=149)</b> |
| More now than I did 6 months ago (N=156)   | 107 (48%)  | 49 (33%)              |
| About as often now as I did 6 months ago (N=208)                                     | 112 (50%)  | 96 (64%)              |
| Less now than I did 6 months ago (N=8)   | 4 (2%)   | 4 (3%)                |

## Participants' physical activity

**Most participants (90%) reported that their NHC activity included physical activities such as walking, gardening, exercising, or playing sports.** Ten percent indicated that their activity did not include physical activities (Figure B10).

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### B10. Inclusion of physical activity in the Neighborhood Health Connection activity (N=379)

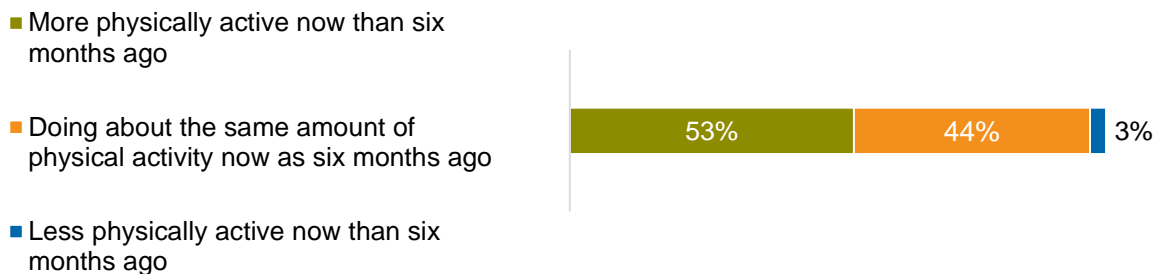


**Over half of participants (53%) reported being more physically active six months after the NHC funding ended.** Forty-four percent reported doing about the same amount of physical activity as six months ago (Figure B11).

---

### B11. Self-reported changes in physical activity among participants (N=340)

Since participating in the activity six months ago, are you:



**Participants who continued taking part in a NHC activity were more likely to report increased physical activity.** Fifty-eight percent of those who continued to participate in a NHC activity reported increased physical activity over the last six months, compared to those who did not continue to participate (47%). These results were not statistically significant (Figure B12).

---

**B12. Percentage of participants who reported changes in their in physical activity, by whether they continued participating in a NHC activity**

| Since participating in the activity six months ago, are you:                   | Have you continued to participate in the Neighborhood Health Connection activity you were involved with about six months ago? |            |
|--|---|------------|
|  | Yes (N=207)   | No (N=132) |
| More physically active now than six months ago (N=181)                         | 119 (58%)   | 62 (47%)   |
| Doing about the same amount of physical activity now as six months ago (N=148) | 87 (42%)  | 61 (46%)   |
| Less physically active now than six months ago (N=10)                          | 1 (<1%)   | 9 (7%)     |

**Participants of varying levels of health reported increased physical activity.**

Improved physical activity was reported by respondents who rated themselves in “excellent” (54%) and “very good” (60%) health, as well as those who rated themselves as being in “good” (46%) and “fair” (31%) health (Figure B13). No participants reported being in “poor” health.

---

**B13. Percentage of participants who reported changes in their physical activity, by self-reported health status**

| Since participating in the activity six months ago, are you:                   | In general, how would you rate your overall health? |                   |             |             |
|--|---|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
|  | Excellent (N=41)                                    | Very good (N=189) | Good (N=92) | Fair (N=16) |
| More physically active now than six months ago (N=182)                         | 22 (54%)  | 113 (60%)         | 42 (46%)    | 5 (31%)     |
| Doing about the same amount of physical activity now as six months ago (N=146) | 19 (46%)  | 71 (38%)          | 48 (52%)    | 8 (50%)     |
| Less physically active now than six months ago (N=10)                          | 0 (0%)  | 5 (3%)            | 2 (2%)      | 3 (19%)     |

*Participants' healthy eating*

A majority of participants (58%) reported that their NHC activity included a focus on healthy eating. Forty-two percent indicated that their activity did not include healthy eating (Figure B14).

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**B14. Inclusion of healthy eating in the Neighborhood Health Connection activity (N=379)**



Sixty-four percent of participants reported eating healthy meals and snacks more often six months after the NHC funding ended. Thirty-six percent indicated eating healthy about as often as six months ago (Figure B15).

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**B15. Self-reported changes in healthy eating among participants (N=217)**

Since participating in the activity six months ago, do you eat healthy meals and snacks:



**Participants who continued participating in a NHC activity were significantly ( $p<.05$ ) more likely to report increased healthy eating (69%), compared to those who did not continue to participate (54%) (Figure B16).**

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**B16. Percentage of participants who reported changes in their healthy eating, by whether they continued participating in a NHC activity**

| <b>Since participating in the activity six months ago, do you eat healthy meals and snacks:</b> | <b>Have you continued to participate in the Neighborhood Health Connection activity you were involved with about six months ago?</b> |                  |
|---|--|------------------|
|   | <b>Yes (N=141)</b>   | <b>No (N=74)</b> |
| More now than six months ago (N=137)  | 97 (69%)   | 40 (54%)         |
| About as often as six months ago (N=77)   | 44 (31%)   | 33 (45%)         |
| Less now than six months ago (N=1)  | 0 (0%)   | 1 (1%)           |

**Participants of varying levels of health reported increased healthy eating.** Increased healthy eating was reported by respondents who rated themselves in “excellent” (46%) and “very good” (68%) health, as well as those who rated themselves as being in “good” (65%) and “fair” (57%) health. However, it should be noted that relatively few respondents rated their health as “fair” (Figure B17). No participants reported being in “poor” health.

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**B17. Percentage of participants who reported changes in their healthy eating, by self-reported health status**

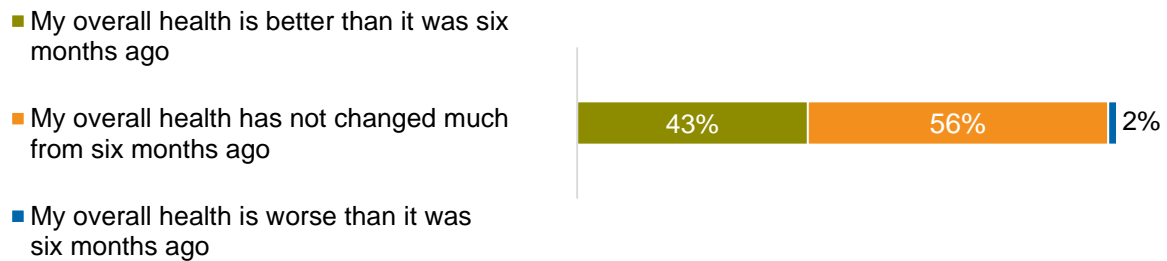
| <b>Since participating in the activity six months ago, do you eat healthy meals and snacks:</b> | <b>In general, how would you rate your overall health?</b> |                          |                    |                    |
|---|--|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|   | <b>Excellent (N=26)</b>                                    | <b>Very good (N=108)</b> | <b>Good (N=69)</b> | <b>Fair (N=14)</b> |
| More now than six months ago (N=138)  | 12 (46%)   | 73 (68%)                 | 45 (65%)           | 8 (57%)            |
| About as often as six months ago (N=78)   | 14 (54%)   | 35 (32%)                 | 23 (33%)           | 6 (43%)            |
| Less now than six months ago (N=1)  | 0 (0%)   | 0 (0%)                   | 1 (1%)             | 0 (0%)             |

*Participants' self-reported health status*

**Forty-three percent of participants indicated that their overall health was better than six months ago.** Fifty-six percent reported that their health has not changed much compared to six months ago (Figure B18).

**B18. Self-reported health status compared to six months among participants (N= 376)**

How would you rate your overall health now compared to six months ago?



**Participants who continued taking part in a NHC activity were significantly ( $p < .05$ ) more likely to report improved overall health (50%),** compared to those who did not continue to participate (32%) (Figure B19).

**B19. Participants' self-reported health status compared to six months ago, by whether they continued participating in a NHC activity**

| How would you rate your overall health now compared to six months ago? | Have you continued to participate in the Neighborhood Health Connection activity you were involved with about six months ago? |            |
|--|---|------------|
|  | Yes (N=226)   | No (N=148) |
| My overall health is better than it was six months ago (N=159)         | 112 (50%)   | 47 (32%)   |
| My overall health has not changed much from six months ago (N=209)     | 111 (49%)   | 98 (66%)   |
| My overall health is worse than it was six months ago (N=6)            | 3 (1%)  | 3 (2%)     |

### *Participants' comments on the impact of the NHC activities and suggestions for improving the activities*

Participants were asked an open-ended question about the most positive thing that happened as a result of participating in a Neighborhood Health Connection activity. The most common themes are summarized below (a list of all responses is located in the open-ended section of the Appendix, page 31):

- **Making new connections with community members, neighbors, or other families through a NHC activity.** Participants also reported strengthening connections with their family members and friends. Others noted discovering common interests in terms of cooking, participating in certain physical activities, or working on addressing issues impacting the community.
- **Becoming more physically active and establishing an exercise routine or sustaining physical activity through a NHC activity.** Others shared that they learned new physical activities, such as yoga or Zumba.
- **Experiencing specific changes to their health such as losing weight or lowering their cholesterol.**
- **Eating more healthy food and increasing their nutrition knowledge.** Participants mentioned learning new healthy recipes, taking the time to read food labels, and reducing their salt consumption and portion sizes.

Participants were asked an open-ended question about what would have made the Neighborhood Health Connection activity more helpful. The most common themes are summarized below (a list of all responses is located in the open-ended section of the Appendix):

- **Having the activities or programs continue beyond the end of the NHC funding period or offering more sessions.**
- **Hosting the activities or programs at more convenient times.**
- **Keeping the activities or programs the same because they had a positive impact.**
- **Attracting more participants to the activities or programs.**

## C. Grantees' follow-up survey responses

**A majority of grantees (79%) reported continuing their activity after the NHC grant period ended.** Most grantees decided to continue their activity because participants wanted it to continue (79%) and it had a positive impact on participants' health (76%). The most common reason grantees did not continue their activity was because they did not have other funding sources (70%) (Figures C1 and C2).

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### C1. Grantees' continuation of their Neighborhood Health Connection activity

| <b>Did you continue your activity after the grant period ended? (N=48)</b> | <b>Number</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| Yes  | 38            | 79%            |
| No   | 10            | 21%            |
| <b>If no, why not? (N=10)</b>  |               |                |
| We did not have other funding sources                                      | 7             | 70%            |
| We did not reach who we had hoped to through our activity                  | 1             | 10%            |
| Our activity didn't have the type of outcomes we had hoped for             | 0             | 0%             |
| Other  | 3             | 30%            |

*Note:* Total percentage equals more than 100 percent as respondents were able to choose multiple responses. "Other" responses included: the course ended, busy schedule, and resident party at program end.

---

### C2. Grantees' reasons for continuing their Neighborhood Health Connection activity (N=38)

| <b>Why did you decide to continue to offer your activity?</b>   | <b>Number</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---|---------------|----------------|
| Participants wanted to see it continue  | 30            | 79%            |
| It had a positive impact on participants' health  | 29            | 76%            |
| It helped participants make social connections  | 26            | 68%            |
| It helped participants feel more connected to their community   | 24            | 63%            |
| It had been offered by our organization or group of neighbors before we received funding from Allina Health | 9             | 24%            |
| Other   | 7             | 18%            |

*Note:* Total percentage equals more than 100 percent as respondents were able to choose multiple responses. "Other" responses included: sustained program through equipment, provided way to connect with homeless youth, and new community partners hosting program.



**A majority of grantees (60%) reported not making any changes to their activity after the NHC grant period ended.** Forty-one percent indicated that they made changes (Figure C3). They shared that they added a new component to their activity such as additional sessions or opportunities for participation or that they removed some components of their activity. (A list of all responses is located in the open-ended section of the Appendix, page 55).

---

### **C3. Changes to Neighborhood Health Connection activities among grantees (N=37)**

| <b>After the Healthy Activity grant ended, did you make any changes to your activity?</b> | <b>Number</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---|---------------|----------------|
| Yes   | 15            | 41%            |
| No  | 22            | 60%            |

**Most grantees reported that their NHC activity helped them better meet the needs of their participants (81%) and become more aware of how social connections can support health (75%).** Others reported that the activity helped them build their capacity to do future work focused on social connections and health (65%) or made them more visible in the community (63%) (Figure C4). Relatively few grantees (10%) were able to secure other funding as a result of their participation in the NHC grant program.

---

### **C4. Grantees' thoughts about how the Neighborhood Health Connection Healthy Activity grant helped their program or activity (N=48)**

| <b>Did the Neighborhood Health Connection Healthy Activity grant help your activity or program in any of the following ways?</b> | <b>Number</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| We were better able to meet the needs of participants  | 39            | 81%            |
| It helped us become more aware of how social connections can support health  | 36            | 75%            |
| It helped us build our capacity to do this type of work again in the future  | 31            | 65%            |
| It made us more visible in the community   | 30            | 63%            |
| We were able to secure other types of funding (e.g., grants)   | 5             | 10%            |
| Other  | 6             | 13%            |

*Note: Total percentage equals more than 100 percent as respondents were able to choose multiple responses. "Other" responses included: able to offer equipment, able to offer low cost activities, ability for moms and kids to work together.*

Grantees were asked to offer any suggestions that could help Allina Health improve the Neighborhood Health Connection Healthy Activity grant program. The most common

themes are summarized below (a list of all responses is located in the open-ended section of the Appendix):

- **Change the grant’s timeline to allow activities to start before or at the beginning of the summer.**
- **Offer more tips or ideas regarding the design of health-related programs or activities.**
- **Offer more long-term funding or guidance on applying for other funding opportunities to help sustain programs.**

Two grantees commented that the initial evaluation survey was difficult to administer to immigrants or refugees who do not speak English and who are not able to read and write in their primary language.

## D. Participant open-ended responses

### D1. What is the most positive thing that happened because you took part in the Neighborhood Health Connection activity? (N=338)

#### Strengthened or made new connections

Met new people since the start of the program.

My son and I spend more time together and we know more positive people.

Spending time in the community with people my age and their children.

Getting to know people and teaching each other a better way to live healthfully.

Meet new people.

Meeting new people - discussing healthy foods - and the general conversation.

Connection with coworkers.

Meeting new people and building relationships.

Spending time exercising with my mom.

Connecting with others more helps us stay committed to healthy activities – accountability.

Increased social connections.

Relationships with people interested in a healthy lifestyle.

Connecting with people more.

Making new friends.

Met new people and had physical activity.

Had fun and got to know participants better.

It was a fun way to share a social connection with people who are from a different culture than me.

Learned about others in my neighborhood.

Formed supportive relationships with neighborhood kids, and with other volunteer adults.

New relationships and new recipes to try.

More involvement with children participating along with me.

I became more social.

Meeting people, getting out of the house, and enjoying physical activities.

Meeting more people and getting together for healthy dinners and Bingo.

I won twenty dollars in the drawing. I got to socialize with others. It is good to know what is in foods.

Met new people.

Connected and met other people, healthier.

Building relationships and creating a foundation for a program to help others.

I was more involved with other people.

---

**Strengthened or made new connections**

---

Met some new people and had good conversations during the weekly activity.

---

I was able to spend time with my son.

---

It was great to meet new people, make connections with them, and help them, as well as be concerned for their future.

---

The Fitbit obtained has connected me with co-workers and friends who keep us motivated (competitive) through the step challenges and just meeting our daily step/exercise goals.

---

Bonding time with friend and father. Learned about buckthorn removal. Great exercise. Great purpose.

---

Getting connected more with my daughter and her friend.

---

Deeper connections with people in my community and a great opportunity for my daughter to do the same.

---

Meeting people with similar life styles.

---

We are the public library that the event linked with. It strengthened our relationship with the host (Stork House) and created that link between the two organizations to people in the community.

---

Met new people and feel more connected.

---

Better connections with people in the group, new knowledge about gardening.

---

Meeting new people.

---

I know some of the people at the rec center and ask them about up and coming projects. I also enjoy talking to people at the rec center.

---

Meeting new people to work out with.

---

It was fun to do with friends

---

Created more opportunities to get together with friends.

---

Connection with new individuals and additional knowledge on healthy activities.

---

Able to include my family in the activity.

---

Met new people and found a physical activity that my young children enjoy and one that I can do with them! Although the classes we participated in are not formally continuing at this time, my children and I have continued our activity at home.

---

I connected with the instructor who is a great resource for healthy community activities.

---

Spent time with children and neighbors.

---

Meeting people and exposure for my child.

---

Meeting new people and being able to participate with my child.

---

Met some nice people.

---

Made connections to families in our neighborhood.

---

Meeting community members.

---

My kids got to play and have a great time with other families and help prepare healthy meals with one of their parents.

---

Connections with others.

---

The wonderful families we met and are still in contact with.

---

---

**Strengthened or made new connections**

---

I feel a better connection to the community.

---

Spent time with my son, shared conversations. The meal prep was time spent together but equally important was the cooking once we got home and the shared time eating the food we packed and later cooked. GREAT EXPERIENCE!

---

Networking with others who understand my frustrations, and ability to share in our experience and trials.

---

Friendships, support.

---

I was able to get to know co-workers and have something else in common with them besides work.

---

Being able to work out right at work with friends!

---

I loved the opportunity to work out with my co-workers after school.

---

We made connections with new people in the community.

---

Gave us a focus as a family to get out and do some exercise.

---

Stronger connections with members of my children's school.

---

Spending time with my kids and getting the exercise we need.

---

Found a community of active people that my son and I both enjoy being with.

---

Met interesting people.

---

I was able to get outdoors with my friends and neighbors and enjoy winter.

---

Great to see others interested in silent sports and having their children involved in learning the benefits.

---

I made new connections with people who share an interest in skiing and have kids. It is amazing how many different families we have gotten to know through the Hiawatha Ski Club. There is a shared vision for our neighborhood being formed through a shared interest in skiing and creating a community hub at Hiawatha in the winter. In 2014, we all watched the Olympics together after skiing - including races with local Olympian Jessie Diggins. It meant more to the kids because they had participated in training with the Greggs the previous fall. It made a deep connection for the kids between what we were doing and what was on the TV. That would not have happened otherwise.

---

Connection to community and more time with family doing a healthy outdoor activity.

---

Connection with people in the community who enjoy the same activities as I do.

---

After helping organize the race that the health connection sponsored I felt more connected with my community around Nordic skiing and the use of our local golf course park. We are now strengthened in our efforts to continue with and improve upon the success of that race and that connection and that use of our public space.

---

Making friends.

---

Met new people.

---

I now am not afraid to make small talk with my co-workers.

---

I gained a lot of connections and met a lot of great people along the way.

---

Connecting with others who were interested in their own health and the community.

---

I met people in my community that have similar interests.

---

---

**Strengthened or made new connections**

---

Meeting people.

Other person had the same health issues that I have. We discussed realistic things that we could do to improve.

Getting to know new friends, spending more time in the community with others.

I was able to exercise with my son!

---

**Increased physical activity**

---

Tai Chi helped me be more aware of balance and concentration - very good instructor.

I'm more active, I exercise more, I encourage my kids to eat healthy and to be more active inside and outside of the house.

I do more physical activity.

Calculating my heart rate and exercising more.

I need to stay active - because my knees are bad - and my hips aren't doing real well!

I work on muscle tone activities.

Great workout with Zumba.

Being outside with the community doing physical fitness.

It has kept me accountable to show up for myself and others to exercise and "touch base". The consistency was a key factor for me, to feel better and see results.

Keep up exercise.

I participated in yoga - it helped alleviate chronic pain and inspired me to do yoga again.

Enjoying yoga to promote a better me.

I go to the gym more often, 3 times a week.

At age 74 this keeps me active and I like the kids and adults I work with. It helps the community.

More active.

Involved my sons in fitness.

Exercising.

Our entire family plus pets are more active!

Got me to exercise more regularly.

I am more active.

Light exercises for seniors.

Became more active during that time (had leg injury, got me moving).

I am more active and learned yoga.

Actually taking the time (15 min. breaks) while at work to go outside, get some exercise, while also connecting with co-workers.

I exercise on my lunch hour twice a week and take more frequent breaks to walk since my job is very sedentary. Prior to this, I was eating lunch at my desk every day.

---

## Increased physical activity

---

I have more incentive to keep exercising.

---

I enjoy the opportunity to exercise while at work (over lunch). Some days I'm too busy with our kids' sporting events that without this opportunity during the day, I wouldn't be able to be physically active at all.

---

Exercise.

---

More awareness on how I need to continue activity, even if it is a little each day.

---

More active.

---

Walking/swimming more, and more in touch with eating habits and health.

---

Got exercise.

---

Motivate me to get outdoors more often.

---

Trying new activities.

---

The idea of using the parks for exercise.

---

My family was introduced to different ways to exercise.

---

Helped refocus on getting my daily walking/exercise.

---

Increased physical activity.

---

I realize how good walking makes me feel physically and mentally.

---

Got out and walked every day.

---

My love of physical activity.

---

Getting me involved in physical exercise again.

---

I've started walking every day-I can tell if I have to miss a day. For Mother's Day my children gave me a Fitbit and that has given me even more incentive to continue walking.

---

Desire to be outdoors more, walk more, eat healthier and know more people.

---

Motivated me to walk 2 miles EVERY day. Easy to skip days.

---

During the activity it got me motivated.

---

More focused on walking and exercise in general.

---

I look forward to walking with friends.

---

Started walking again even when the weather wasn't perfect.

---

Getting out for daily walks with a friend. We are still doing that.

---

Continued exercise.

---

I walked more than I would have otherwise.

---

Got more exercise.

---

My husband and I walked together almost every day and still have that routine.

---

I have continued to walk 2 miles most days.

---

Made me be more aware of my need to exercise daily.

---

Fun walking related contests!!

---

It made me get out and move.

---

### **Increased physical activity**

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Made me more aware of the benefits of walking as due to lower back issues I rarely run anymore. It also brings me joy to be outside walking on the great trails in the area.

---

It helped establish the routine of daily exercise.

---

Got outside to walk and enjoy the fall weather - helped me to create different walking paths around my neighborhood so I didn't always do the same loop.

---

I have maintained my level of physical activity because the neighborhood activity made me feel good.

---

Held me accountable for walking.

---

I walked more during the activity. Also liked the t shirt.

---

Walk more.

---

I have walked over 5 miles some days.

---

It got me interested in walking outside. Now that it's nice out, I want to walk again.

---

I learned the value of walking.

---

I'm more physically active.

---

Due to activities I participated in, my husband became more active and his health improved as well.

---

It helped put me back into the habit of exercising regularly, even on my own time.

---

Having the opportunity to exercise on a regular basis

---

Yoga and Zumba are much easier for me after all this time. They were not easy at the beginning.

---

Great workout.

---

It gave me a convenient time and location to work out. I also had people ask me if I was going to the class, which made sure that I would be there.

---

I found out about a pre-natal yoga class offered by the instructor through our hospital. I took the class all summer, but am done now because school is starting again.

---

Got back into exercising.

---

I stayed in decent shape while being pregnant because the instructor was willing to show me what I could do to modify each exercise.

---

It encouraged me to try other types of exercise instead of only running.

---

I actually worked out because it was offered at my work place.

---

A consistent place to exercise in a supportive group environment. Also, using resources provided by the lead person (a helpful website to great workout videos I use often).

---

Kids enjoyed being active in the winter more!

---

My daughter is more active in physical activities.

---

I participated in the yoga classes - I feel they have been helpful for relaxation, stretching, meditation, stress relief, and improve sleeping.

---

Learning new physical activities.

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Some knowledge about Tai Chi - I do still practice basic steps.

---

Knowing what to do to stay fit and doing it with other people.

---



---

**Increased physical activity**

---

I learned more yoga techniques, becoming better at it as well as coming together with a group of people to enjoy a relaxing activity together. Everything was very supportive and kind.

I have found a gentle way to keep moving.

Learning more about yoga.

Daughter is enthused about new sport.

I had fun trying new classes and was more motivated to exercise by having a log to track my workouts.

I was able to try different activities/sports that I had never tried. And because there were also other people participating who had never tried the activity, I didn't feel nervous or overwhelmed. It was new to many and they were supportive.

Got to spend time learning and playing a new sport with one of my children.

I learned a lifelong sport.

I replicated the step counting chart on my computer and continue to chart my walking steps daily and total steps for the month.

Kids learned and love yoga.

I was able to try some activities I had never done before.

I learned a lot of new things about yoga. Very positive results from yoga activity.

Learning different exercises.

Improved kayaking skills, met new people, and spent more time on river.

Learned a new form of exercise and have a group that keeps me honest to doing it.

Learning a fun, different way to exercise.

Trying something new and focusing on how beneficial tai chi can be.

I am now in the habit of walking more every day and I sleep better.

Mindful of steps on pedometer.

I am more aware of how much walking I do in a day without realizing it. I am paying more attention to the Health app on my phone and using it to track daily activity.

Live with a step tracker now. Makes me more conscious of my movement.

More awareness to exercise.

---

**Improved health and specific health changes**

---

Weight loss, new friendships; healthier habits

Being outside, fresh air makes my body feel better.

Am more aware of my body after 3 sessions of Tai Chi.

Improved my health, since I retired, I was able to lose over 30 pounds and make a group of new friends.

Decided to lose weight.

I lost weight and became more aware of different health issues that can be a problem.

---

---

**Improved health and specific health changes**

---

Feel like I'm trying to take care of my health more.

I felt better physically - could move better because of the stretching.

My health is getting better.

My blood pressure went down.

I have been losing weight.

My cholesterol has gone down. I've met new friends.

My cholesterol numbers dropped significantly due to the exercise.

Healthier lifestyle including weight loss and healthier eating.

Weight loss and being able to share my success to motivate others.

I became more committed to having a support system to continue making healthy choices, I have lost 15 more lbs.

Lost some weight.

Lost weight and became more involved with extracurricular activities with colleagues in the community.

Simple awareness of my eating choices, resulting in lower blood sugar, lower cholesterol, better blood pressure, etc.

I was encouraged and supported to make healthy lifestyle changes.

I changed my eating habits, have lost 11 pounds, feel better.

I started getting back in shape!

I feel better. I have more energy thanks to the programs.

I'm healthier and I feel better now than I did before.

---

**Improved eating habits and more knowledge about nutrition and cooking**

---

Eat plenty of veggies and fruit.

That I learned to eat healthier.

Eating healthier.

Healthier eating.

More thought about healthy food choices and exercising.

Taking care of my health and having more control over food. And taking classes at Assumption church.

Enjoyed new recipes from neighbors and new ideas.

Changed my snacking.

I am trying smaller portions, and less salt.

Better things to eat and easier ways to prepare food.

Have learned to be more selective in types of healthy foods.

I read the labels on products more.

---

## **Improved eating habits and more knowledge about nutrition and cooking**

---

Eating healthy.

To eat more healthy.

Being more aware of foods I eat.

Eating healthy meals.

I know how to eat and stay healthy.

Reading food labels.

Watching what I eat and looking at labels (calories/salt content).

I eat healthier than before.

I make more healthy choices.

Eating healthier and reading up on healthier ways.

I eat much healthier.

Continued to maintain the weight I was at but now gaining weight due to pregnancy. Being Healthy has helped in maintaining a healthy pregnancy.

I talk about healthy eating.

It reminded me about the importance of reading food labels, exercising on a regular basis and incorporating more fruits and vegetables in my diet on a daily basis.

Increased awareness in healthy eating. I helped bring a yoga class to my church.

I have been more conscious of my eating and exercise habits.

Awareness to eating habits and physical activity.

How to read labels, and low workouts.

More strategies for healthful eating.

I learned to try new foods and drink more water.

Got lots of good ideas for better eating habits and quick, healthy meals.

Learning how to make meals for family and for getting to spend one on one time with my kids.

Quick easy meals!

Learned new healthy and good recipes.

Learn fun food facts.

Learning more about calories, plus connecting with other people was very nice and still is.

Free activities, nutrition class.

We learned more about different foods and the food chemistry. Very well presented.

I have been learning to prepare healthy food or meals. I got a lot of info. about what is ok or what I should ration when I prepare food at home.

It gave me more ways to prepare our meals.

Learning better ways to cook and eat healthier food.

I learned to eat healthier.

Learning what is healthy for me to eat and portion.

---

**Improved eating habits and more knowledge about nutrition and cooking**

---

Good information, great group of people, more sensible eating.

I eat a more balanced diet.

Listening to speaker talking about good nutrition.

Access to fresh vegetables is easier.

New recipes.

I have more knowledge about fruits, vegetables, and grains. I learned how to read about fat and calorie contents on labels. I learned about organic food. It has made buying/selecting groceries at the store easier.

---

**Increased motivation**

---

The motivation to complete a goal.

Competition is a good motivator for me. Needing to check in with others helps me get it done!

It was motivating.

I feel motivated to be active and be connected to other friends.

Motivated to do a lot of walking.

I had a goal to reach which made me more motivated to continue with the program.

Inspired to become a better skier after meeting the Olympic skiers! They were super friendly, helpful and positive about setting goals.

I am more motivated to exercise.

Made me more aware of my activity levels and what kinds of activities can increase my activity.

I learned that I can make changes if I choose to.

---

**Other**

---

It was fun. I liked the class and say hello to people from the class.

That I have the opportunity to participate more in programs and volunteer.

Participated with my daughter - it was nice to be able to do together.

A healthy community is a happy community.

Getting to spend more time doing things that I like.

More awareness of programs available.

It opened a new door - possibility for better living in public housing if these programs are sustained, are better channeled, etc.

I had surgery on 3/12/15 in Saint Joseph Hospital. After surgery, I recovered rapidly, and could still catch the bus.

I have a better understanding of the young people in the area and some of the problems they face.

Sense of community.

I help others at work with our challenges.

---

## Other

---

Awareness.

---

"Consume Less Share More Enjoy Life" not my quote - anonymous

---

The presentation of the material and the encouragement from (Staff), our EBH YMCA instructor!

---

Awareness of what is offered in New Ulm.

---

It has forced me to take breaks at work - help prevent burnout.

---

More awareness of community options.

---

I enjoyed the celebration breakfast at the end. It was fun to see others I hadn't worked out with.

---

The 3 or 4 times there was an entree scheduled - it was very poorly organized: Store brought green beans with bacon and almonds paired with boil in bag success rice (high in carbs, sodium & calories).

---

Teaches my kids about growing gardens and serving others.

---

The satisfaction of helping others.

---

New people are joining the group, and contributing new ideas about gardening and distribution of the food we raise, which is at least 3,000 lbs. per season. Getting large quantities to the Food Shelf in Rogers takes a lot of helping hands!

---

I feel like I helped to improve the health of the community.

---

Teaching my son to garden.

---

Use my Fitbit more. Compare with others.

---

I love to people watch so it was nice.

---

I had a great time and I got to see a lot more of the city of Chaska.

---

Got to enjoy beautiful October weather and fall colors.

---

Got a nice T-shirt.

---

I found a lot of new trails to walk and bike.

---

Getting out and enjoying my neighborhood and nature.

---

I got my son out in the community

---

Emphasis on kids, they are more interested in preparing healthy meals

---

Family activities.

---

More positive feelings of our neighborhood and local resources. Getting more involved in local community activities and politics to make sure it stays great.

---

It brought our community closer; we embraced the winter and learned a new sport!

---

The community attitude of all participants and especially the leaders was outstanding.

---

It connected me with more information.

---

Getting students involved in gardening.

---

Working on the community garden.

---

Improved my mental well-being. Learning new things and meeting people.

---

Better balance and concentration.

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---

**Other**

---

Learning a new skill.

---

Received needed info for someone new to diabetes.

---

Learning something new.

---

Assistance to better health.

---

Learned more about the activity itself, resources in the area, and costs involved in continuing or expanding upon.

---

Learned about the environment.

---

Lifestyle change awareness.

---

I am focusing more on my health.

---

I've been more focused on my children's and my health and how we choose to spend our free time.

---

Tracking device to record sleep and exercise.

---

Feel better about myself.

---

**Nothing/don't know**

---

Don't remember

---

Nothing really but that's my fault - I'm too busy :)

---

---

**D2. What, if anything would have made the Neighborhood Health Connection activity more helpful to you? (N=242)**

---

**Having the activity continue or have more sessions**

---

Meet more often.

---

If we could do it more often - also if more people could be interested in the activities.

---

To have kept going - but we need to be independent and hold ourselves accountable.

---

Kept having classes.

---

More often.

---

Having it closer to home. More often than once per week.

---

Continuation.

---

Bring back the program.

---

They could do this activity more than once a month.

---

Increase frequency -> we meet only once a week right now.

---

To continue on with educational classes and check ins to see progress to reaching goals.

---

Longer duration, make it family focused so we could meet other families with young children.

---

If it had continued.

---

### **Having the activity continue or have more sessions**

---

More events that include people interested in the information provided.

---

Continuing with the program for several months.

---

More additional activities. It rained for the scheduled evening group walk to town and back.

---

Do it more often throughout the year.

---

Longer activity.

---

Do this program more often.

---

Continue it on longer!

---

More sessions. As well as an open 10 Minutes before or after for the kids to calm themselves and the adult participants to connect more.

---

The sessions were only one hour - 1.5 hours would have been better. A lot of information to cram into one hour time slots.

---

For it to continue.

---

More sessions

---

Having the event more often.

---

If there were more sessions offered.

---

To be honest we thought they were very well organized and made everyone involved feel great. Everyone really seemed to enjoy participating. I would love for the activity to continue and maybe more days a month

---

Having it continue... or just an open gym for the kids to run and play!

---

It would have been great if it had lasted longer.

---

Make it more available in this venue.

---

I would like to see it offered again.

---

Be offered more than once a week.

---

Continue to offer classes.

---

If it was offered more often for a longer time.

---

It would have been nice to have it go throughout the summer.

---

I wish we again had it continuing this year. It was great.

---

I would have loved to see it continue.

---

I wish it could have continued.

---

I wish it would continue to be offered.

---

More of them!!

---

Offered longer.

---

I would have liked it to take place more often.

---

More events.

---

More options.

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---

**Having the activity continue or have more sessions**

---

Continuing it!! I feel like I was getting comfortable with others that were doing it and we would discuss which classes we should try next but now that it's more expensive, it's not as easy for all of us to try the activities.

More options that focus on healthy eating/meal preparation.

Offer more events.

More training days.

If they had more healthy cooking classes.

Having more programs.

That they teach us to exercise more.

---

**Have the activity at a more convenient time**

---

I would like a little earlier in the day. The cost break was nice.

It was a favorable time - very convenient and I enjoyed and appreciated it.

More convenient time.

If the class were held just 30 minutes later it would work better for me!

Schedule, others keep it going too.

Tai Ji Class is now a hobby, and would like to participate every day which will help me to sleep soundly and good aptitude.

Different times or additional times to see the personal trainer for classes.

If the activities would be available to start in the spring when the weather is nice outside, rather than being scheduled into fall/winter.

Earlier time of evening.

More class offerings at later times. I have small children and it's hard to get to a class before 7 p.m.

---

**Maintain the activity or the activity was positive**

---

Was a very good class and the instructor was terrific.

Everything has been very helpful.

This was a thorough review and learning tool as it is.

The program was perfect the way it was offered.

Gives good ideas.

I can't think of anything. Our Youth First directors have been so informative and accommodating.

It was completely fine with how it was for me.

Everything was good.

Nothing really, they show us how to eat.

Continue to offer healthy 100 club classes.

Continuing to have the passport opportunity.

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---

**Maintain the activity or the activity was positive**

---

Nothing - it was a very informative class - I just need to follow more closely.

It was all good.

They did a very nice job.

At this point can think of nothing

I thought it was done right.

Great experience

I thought it was great the way it was.

It was fine the way it was.

It was great just how it was!

I thought 12 weeks was the right amount of time to focus on healthy eating and promote physical activity. I also felt the 90 minute weekly class was the right length.

I found the three meetings perfect.

It was great as it was.

It was a great activity for what I expected of it.

It was very helpful - not sure I'd say anything!

Nothing comes to mind, I enjoy the connection.

Great opportunity and very helpful!

The personal trainer/yoga instructor obtained isn't very motivating.

I think they are doing a great job. When you know the people that come into the rec center, you begin to feel like you are part of a family. The retired people need this as much as anyone.

It was a great program.

For me, everything was very good.

They are doing an excellent job.

I think that everything has been good.

I think that everything that they've taught us has been really good because I learned many things.

---

**Various suggested changes to activities or programs**

---

More programs dealing with the arts and improving memory.

Cost is always a factor for those of us existing on Social Security.

Work book on food section the second time class or refer to thing in the first book.

A microphone for the instructor.

More free workout events.

More weather activities.

More on what you eat.

Held on the beach outside - would rather not be out so publicly (yoga was outside during summer).

---

## Various suggested changes to activities or programs

---

Offer child care.

If I could walk at my own rate without them waiting for me and taking off again.

Written directions and pictures for exercise.

Teaching us for those who want to be an exercise instructor like myself with the help of transportation.

More volunteers.

Periodic update meetings.

Maybe if you knew ahead of time what we would be eating.

Some follow-up meetings.

More updates or newsletter.

Outside more, team work, exercise more. Doing something I enjoy. Used to have large garden.

Maps and information on where to paddle in the area.

For this particular activity, the only thing I would suggest is an ice breaker at each meeting to help people find a connection with someone in the group.

Better directions/instructions to the site at which it was held. We did kayak sessions, but the meeting place was somewhere I'd never been to and the directions/instructions could have been better/more thorough.

Consistent instructors.

Better volunteer scheduling.

It would be nice to have an online entry for WALKtober so you can see how everyone else is doing :)

More group activities.

Updates for run/walk.

More follow-up.

I don't know. Maybe it would have helped if I was available for any of the group walks.

It would have been nice to have more ideas of where to walk. Maybe maps of trails or articles featuring areas to walk/bike.

More opportunities to get together as a group - I was unable to make any of the opportunities last fall due to scheduling conflicts.

To be able to meet the other participants and what their challenges are.

More group walks that I could have participated in after work or with my family and met new people / explored new trails with.

Location was terrible.

If the teacher was a little more flexible with younger kids.

Follow-up sessions every month with additional info for support in efforts.

More updates along the way.

More involvement.

---

**Various suggested changes to activities or programs**

---

More structured.

Some kind of activity to encourage new neighbors with similar interests to introduce themselves to each other.

More garden activities during school year.

More interaction with the other participating companies.

More community based events. More access to coaching would be helpful as well.

Offering community exercise classes at a low cost during convenient times for working parents.

If the Neighborhood Health Connection activity was offered at least two or three times to really strengthen the connections to new individuals and additional knowledge.

More sessions on food.

---

**Have more people involved**

---

More participation by neighbors.

Ask participants which activities they like. It was poor to have chosen the Tai Chi class, not popular here.

Getting started with more people I know.

More people to sign up.

Larger group ("we" were only 4 = all seniors).

If more people came together.

Continued connections with more people.

More people participating.

More people from the wider community participating.

More ways to get to know other people.

If there had been more people in my group or if I could have participated in the one also offered at my church (was on days I could not attend).

I was attending a group outside of my home area so I did not have the opportunity to connect with others on a continuing basis.

---

**Other**

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I learned about healthier foods.

The positive input - it's catching!

Keep in contact with friends.

It was close to my home and free of cost.

Commodity.

I am already active.

Self-affirming self-care which is not selfish!

Discount coupons pertaining to purchase of healthier foods at local area stores.

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**Other**

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Half the food was good but everyone has different tastes and fruit is costly.

Being ten years younger.

Programs and share experience with others.

Physically the Zumba class. Prepare healthy meals.

The programs.

Some of the activities were for younger people.

Life ideas - exercise - eating and motivation can be changed and improved at any age - (84)

Strengthening relationships between black and white!

It made me realize how important it is to stay active and to take the time to exercise and walk.

Being able to advertise the opportunity more to the community.

It would have been nice if we actually had the activity! No garden last year - NONE this year.

Knowing more about the programs that are out there to participate in.

Still like to have a walking club early at the high school.

I can't think of anything offhand. We did start using SignUpGenius for volunteer scheduling. That may have come from reading Allina websites and links.

They "compartmentalized" the garden this year which will be easier to participate.

Better shirts for incentive.

Better weather outside, which they could not control.

A couple of the walking activities included things I don't normally participate in. One was to go on a long walk in a big group and stop by a store and get coffee. Because of my religion, I do not drink coffee. One of the other things I do is not play poker or any type of gambling. Another walking activity involved some type of poker game. Although it probably didn't involve money, which made it harmless, I didn't participate. Most people probably love these activities, but with my conservative religion, I felt inclined to not participate.

Good friends. I appreciate the encouragement to participate in a healthy lifestyle.

Some type of follow-up communications (via e-mail or website articles that could be accessed) to me from the program leaders..... it would give a little encouragement or provide additional resources for ongoing habit forming exercise.

It was well planned...however weather impacted one of the events, and that is hard to control. Maybe a guest speaker would have been a good addition that would have been educational and also given people a place to meet new people.

Being accountable.

The activity was not actually in my community, so it is hard to say.

Live closer.

Several of our ski practices were cancelled due to lack of snow. The City of Minneapolis Parks and Rec is looking into renovating our ski site, Hiawatha Golf Course. Our ski club has composed a petition with some great ideas to create a year round outdoor recreation destination, which includes a snow maker so our ski season is more consistent. Here is the petition:  
<http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/the-future-of-hiawatha-golf-course>

---

**Other**

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Continuity and consistent funding. This vision is growing and as the children of this initial effort age into other ski programs, we will want to have enough consistency of funding to support adding more families. We were lucky to be included, but the demand is growing each year and there is limited capacity within the group to meet the demand. We hope to open the lodge on Saturdays and create the ability for a second day of lessons to build off what was started. But that will require adding more skis and equipment and widening the leadership circle to include new families with younger kids. Support from NHC will help us sustain what we started long enough for it to gain real, long-term traction as a staple of the community.

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We need snow making capabilities and the chalet to have food to sell.

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More support from the MYSL league to improve snow conditions at the Hiawatha site.

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A weekly survey such as this.

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**D3. Other comments (N=138)**

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**Positive reflections on participating and thanks to Allina**

---

I believe the Tai Chi class was beneficial.

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I enjoyed trying Tai Chi but I enjoy the Silver and Fit Yoga and exercise classes at the Chaska Community Center even more.

---

I enjoyed it!

---

I enjoy change to keep my mind working.

---

I enjoyed the class and also the diabetic cooking class. (Chef) was very helpful and made the class very enjoyable and made me look forward to the following week.

---

I enjoyed the activities I was introduced to due to these programs.

---

Thank you for caring!

---

Thanks for being a great team!!

---

Zumba was great. Did not participate in yoga - unable to do all of the back arching (back issue with vertebrae) and did not care for the outside venue.

---

The instructors that our Y. F. directors hired have been wonderful. They all had expectations but were friendly and open to all levels of knowledge in Yoga, Tai Chi and Zumba.

---

We are incredibly lucky in Annandale - this is a very special town because of these opportunities!

---

Great programs! Great people organizing and running them!

---

Well organized.

---

I'm eating better thought out meals and walk more. Also diabetes is getting under control and even losing a few pounds.

---

I think this is a wonderful program and I only stopped going because of a change in my family's schedule.

---

The Monday night yoga is a great program - excellent instructor - I hope it continues!

---

Leadership was very welcoming and dedicated!

---

Loved it, but also play handball up to 3 times a week, work in warehouse, not always home.

---

**Positive reflections on participating and thanks to Allina**

---

A rewarding experience.

---

A wonderful program.

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Keep doing great work, as a community will keep passing the info about these great programs.

---

It was fun to do. Can we do it again?

---

(Staff) our coach was wonderful. Our church held a session for others.

---

A worthwhile program well done - enjoyable with lots of great ideas and information - wonderful food and exercise info and literature.

---

Our instructor was knowledgeable, encouraging, and so friendly.

---

Was an awesome program to be a part of and the grant is still proving to be an amazing blessing to our group as we continue to build and grow.

---

It really opened my eyes to portion control

---

I appreciate healthy opportunities offered during work breaks and lunch breaks.

---

I enjoyed participating in the activity and overall it was a very positive experience. Met some neat individuals and enjoyed being out in nature / kayaking.

---

This activity was a great opportunity to find other people who are currently involved in or have an interest in this specific activity, and to find connections along the way to lend support to others in our community.

---

I'm appreciative of the time devoted by the instructor and the willingness of the kayak business in town to participate. Since our activity was weather-dependent, I also appreciated that they communicated AHEAD OF TIME whether or not the activity was going to take place if the weather wasn't cooperative. Much better than planning for and traveling the distance only to find out the activity wasn't going to be held.

---

Nice grant, glad we could participate.

---

Great opportunity!

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Thank you for offering this opportunity.

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Thanks for all the efforts and opportunities.

---

Really did enjoy this activity and feel it did help my lifestyle.

---

The Buckthorn removal was a very strenuous workout, but I felt very rewarded both mentally and physically.

---

Thank you! I continue to enjoy pickleball & now try to play several times a week!

---

Please continue with this program, very valuable to small towns. Thank you for the opportunity.

---

Allina has been a big help, and we are getting people outdoors more to raise healthy food! We also have been approached by residents in the neighborhood asking about individual garden plots, which may be possible in the next few years. Our site is blessed with lots of sunshine and good soil, unlike many residential gardens in Maple Grove, which are heavily shaded.

---

People were very nice.

---

I am now motivated to walk and truly like to walk.

---

Enjoyed the goal setting - got me committed to complete the activity.

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---

**Positive reflections on participating and thanks to Allina**

---

Thank you for sponsoring the event. It gave me more incentive to walk and my friend joined me because of it. We are working on getting another friend to join us!! Thank you for sponsoring the event.

---

Thanks for doing WALKtober - I love doing it in the fall!

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Great program, thanks for supporting it!

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Thanks for helping me be more healthy.

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Good event and it is too bad the rain hampered participating in the walk downtown.

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Great event especially at that time of year.

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Thank you for offering this Neighborhood Connections Activity. I am hopeful that you will offer this again. One time was good, but to really reinforce positive activities this should be done multiple times. I would be willing to help organize if you need help.

---

Very enjoyable

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Thank you for getting me moving.

---

WALKtober is an awesome program, and I will be participating again!

---

The walktober is a great program. I have done it the last 2 years and it makes me get out and walk, even the days I'm tired and don't feel like it. It's fun to do the program with others. We put it on our fridge so we can see how others are doing as well.

---

Thank you for offering this activity.

---

This is a nice program for people who need to have some motivation to get out and walk. Thank you!

---

I liked this activity because it was time I could spend with my older children (9 and 13 years old).

---

It was nice to take part in. Thank you for making it possible.

---

It was a wonderful opportunity to have this offered to us. There is nothing better than to be able to participate with your child and be able to watch, learn, and grow!

---

The activities provided due to grant kept healthy eating and activity a priority in my daily life, which improved mine and my family health! Thank you!!

---

Making healthy choices is a high priority for me and I know I need that component of a support person - I am thankful I have found that person, because it's an on-going struggle to consistently make healthy choices.

---

I appreciated all the information I was given and have the book to give me a resource. The instructor was excellent and well informed. I have the information I need; now I need to make use of it.

---

The instructor was energetic and enthusiastic about the material taught. As a group we bonded well. It was a very positive experience for me.

---

Instructor of the course was well organized and very easy to approach with questions.

---

My family was so grateful we got to be a part of this activity and I do believe we as a family got closer and our kids really looked forward to each event.

---

Play, pack and snack were so much fun!!!

---

It was an excellent program and I hope they offer it again!!!

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---

**Positive reflections on participating and thanks to Allina**

---

It was a very positive experience, and I wish we could have had it longer - particularly during the winter months.

Great activity. I enjoyed doing new exercises and have tried to continue with it on my own. However, I realized exercising in a group is a lot more fun!

I really appreciated (Staff) putting the grant together for all of us. I also really appreciated (Staff) energy and support as our fitness class instructor and how she taught us 4 different classes in a rotating schedule. I was sad to quit, but didn't feel I could keep up--very tired during 1st trimester of pregnancy.

Thanks for the opportunity it was very much appreciated!

I loved that I could take a fitness class with my coworkers in the building I worked. I am disappointed it is no longer offered.

Great experience! I hope this continues this year and the school sends out more reminders for this opportunity.

Thank you! This has truly helped us create deeper connections in the Standish and Ericsson Neighborhoods that are impacting our schools and parks for the better.

Thanks for your support!!

I truly enjoyed doing this program and would love to participate again in the future!

Great, great way to use money. It involved a lot of people doing a lot of physical activities. It promoted people to care about their health and try new activities.

Thank you for the opportunity it was fun to try new things!

Great program, thanks.

Personally, I have gotten more into the habit of spending time in the community and doing activities with other people. I try to participate in Neighborhood Health Connection's activities although right now I can't participate as much in sports because of a knee injury.

Thank you for the support for the Latina community.

Thank you for having me participate in this program. I hope that we have more like it.

In reality, it's really good to participate in programs like they offer and to learn more about how to take care of the whole family. Thank you very much!

Thank you for these programs because before participating in them, I felt tired and without energy and now I feel better and I hope that they don't end these programs, thank you.

Thank you for the program!

Thank you very much for everything that you taught us. May God give you strength to continue teaching us many things, thank you.

I'm very grateful for the opportunity that you gave me to make my work with my family easier.

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**Improvement/suggestions comments**

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A carbohydrate counter or list of protein fats and what veggie has carbs. Are useful other than potatoes and breads. Also menus with portion with numbers.

The heart of NU project has made me more aware of eating fruits and vegetables. Wish the cooking classes weren't on Tuesdays when I work late. We could use good cooking tips, watched the grocery store shopping video...helpful!

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**Improvement/suggestions comments**

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I would like to see even more exercise classes offered.

If it was at 10 AM, it would have been easier to participate.

Seat building need public space, activities, particularly during the six months of winter, like a health and fitness center, also a walking track without obstruction like chair, table, decorations, etc.

The class only lasted 6 weeks needs to be longer to make it part of my routine.

The works were very good, helpful, and that made class a lot easy. Pizza, eggs, tacos were good, maybe change some of the meals. We never got to go to store, too many disabled people for rides there.

Learning new and healthier ways to cook. There seemed to be a lack in participation from a lot of the community.

I'd like to see something like this offered again.

It helps to do exercises with others.

We as a community need to come together with other communities.

With several buildings in our complex it's hard to keep in touch with people I met on one night. Often there weren't many people.

People without the knowledge of gardening to help them learn. Also the exercise and pride of doing it.

More choices ~ convenient times.

I think more people would have participated if it were offered at a different time of day.

It would be nice to have a yoga class early morning at the park.

Get cuter shirts.

Plan to do it next year maybe get a better looking shirt, "walktober".

Have this program again at the Chaska community center.

Continue programs like this.

If another grant can be obtained to continue the program, that would be a very good thing!

This Project is really good but we should have more training days in order to reach our goal. Our trainer works really hard but we felt that we needed tools/equipment to be a bigger and stronger group.

Keep doing this for the community. We are getting more information about health in general and exercises.

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**Other comments**

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We, at the Ellsworth Sr. Ctr. hope to continue this program into the future - we have a good core group and we support each other in our efforts.

Attending this class for me meant learning the techniques of Tai Chi, not meeting new people.

We have had a variety of activities that should motivate a variety of people.

I had open heart surgery in Feb.

As long as I live, I will persist doing Tai Ji Class every day.

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**Other comments**

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How do we get the ones that never sign up to participate?

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The YMCA at 1000 University Ave in St. Paul, MN 55104 They are rebuilding 1761 University Ave, St. Paul MN 55104

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Following are my personal comments: I have been involved in the YWCA for many years. Became involved in EBHYMCA in September 2001. I continue there now, twice a week, water exercise, good programs; I have a whole new set of friends. I always take part in grants offered by EBHYMCA and Allina.

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N.H.C. was a significant part in building trust and friendship with the others in this large building.

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They no longer provide free dinners at Garden View.

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I missed doing a couple of things they had because I had other commitments but I like many of the things they have and all I can say is keep up the good work.

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The goal of completing it within a certain time frame motivated me to go more often.

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We had a goal that pushed us and the group walking was fun too.

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I love our Chaska Community Center; it truly is one of the top 5 reasons we will not move out of Chaska.

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We hope the ski program will continue to grow at Hiawatha. We need a snow making machine given the lack of snow last year really decreased participation.

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My foot is much better than 6 months ago, so I will be able to be more involved.

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It's an opportunity to take care of our health and to share community with other people.

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## E. Grantees' open-ended responses

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### E1. Please describe the changes you made to your activity and why you made these changes (N=12)

#### Added new components

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Added a 5K walk, 1 each month for 5 months.

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We have a new instructor this session incorporating some different games into the learning session to make it more fun.

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We created new activities, new opportunities to get together and be active.

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We did continue our overall health programming at our drop-in center following the 2014 grant period. And we started a new initiative in May of this year (2015) that we call the Health Challenge. (We are funding this initiative with donations from Allina Health, NAMI, and a private benefactor. We sought out these resources mainly due to timing factors. We had our health fair at our drop-in center with health screenings performed by the Allina Health Mobile Clinic. We wanted to introduce our Health Challenge at that time. (If we waited to apply for a Neighborhood Health Connection grant it would have delayed us for at least 2 months. We felt it important to get our clients "up and moving" and "connecting with others" just as summer was starting and thus having more time to try and create lifestyle change over a 4-month activity time range.) Additionally, we established specific behavioral goals (with incentives at completion each month) to promote exercise, improve social connections, trying healthier foods, and participating in a monthly volunteer activity. At the same time, we also are targeting specific populations in an attempt to address poor diabetes management as well as use of tobacco products.

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We asked for a free-will offering to cover the cost of the yoga instructor.

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#### Removed some activity components

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We offered organized exercise classes at one location after grant period ended.

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We could only do the planting part - did not have funds to do the food prep part.

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We were not able to have fall dryland training this year, because we didn't have the money to do it without the grant. Otherwise, we are largely the same.

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#### Other

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Our intent when we first received our grant was the total community involvement which did occur to some degree. Our greatest impact was for our employees and our residents. Many of our employees are still walking and numerous residents are walking our designated path outside and also inside. I did not feel as successful as I had anticipated in the community involvement but very happy on the involvement of our employees and residents. Our activity director and I are working on some additional group walks complete with healthy snacks.

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Touched base with Somali community leaders to be more aware of timing/scheduling conflicts with community events/religious observances.

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They played indoors and we needed to rent gym space.

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We invited parents to attend to see their children in action preparing healthy meals. These meals and recipes were shared with parents.

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**E2. Please use the space below to offer any additional suggestions that could help Allina Health improve the Neighborhood Health Connection Healthy Activity grant (N=29)**

**Change the grant's timeline**

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I wish the time on it was longer so I can schedule the facility more staggered.

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One suggestion would be to have the timing of the grant start June 1 instead of July 1. Just because the summer in Minnesota is a great time to add activities and without it starting to later in the summer we were limited to keeping activities outside. Also would be nice to have the deadline early so we could add advertisements in publications that come out months before programs start.

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As noted, the Neighborhood Health Connection has gotten us off onto an important start in making "holistic health" part of what we do. It's becoming part of our organizational culture. One suggestion is that the grant period be shifted to allow applications soon after the beginning of the year with funds distributed by March perhaps. This would allow more opportunity to plan the programming for the entire summer. It seems "summer" is when we come out of our caves in Minnesota, and our clients are no different in this regard. Not knowing if one will be selected for a grant until July just doesn't work as well. Thank you so much for the opportunities and incentives your program has created for us. They have made a real difference.

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Be flexible on start and end dates.

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An extension on the deadline of the grant spending would have helped me a great deal. My group didn't start until Sept, and the funding had to be spent by Jan. I lost over 1/2 of the grant because of this.

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**More tips and ideas on program design and what the grant covers**

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You already do a great job; maybe give more ideas on programs or health related ideas for grants that groups might try -- like maybe focusing on areas of health you want to see improved in the general population, like obesity. Let participants who want to apply know what might be covered by the grant -- supplies, speakers, etc. Thank you again for the grant we received -- many people in the community benefited from our community garden.

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More tips on other community activities to bring residents together. Links to web sites for healthy eating for those raising a community garden.

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**Offer more long-term funding or guidance regarding funding**

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Offering funding for paid staff time to increase capacity for long term program growth would be helpful! We are so grateful for these types of community focused grants. Funding for program supplies is extremely helpful in the short term, but, long term, we need the focused funding to be able to build the consistent, quality relationships and programming that will grow within the community all year long!

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Allow for grants possible to keep existing programs running like ours.

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Some sort of guidance on funding options for expanding programs and partnerships. For example, if there is a program that is gaining great momentum and funding is running out, we could use assistance finding sustainable resources to continue support of program.

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### **Issues regarding the evaluation survey**

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The surveying of participants was very time-consuming and difficult. We work primarily with Latino immigrant and Somali refugee communities -- many do not speak English, and literacy levels are low in Spanish and Somali. Trying to get participants to complete the extensive surveys was not very successful.

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The participant survey process was cumbersome, especially when working with populations who are illiterate, non-English speakers, and/or non-native English speakers. It would have been helpful to have surveys (in hand) at the time of the events for participants to take. For this reason, we could provide support to large groups of people in navigating the survey.

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### **Overall positive feedback about the program**

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I think Allina does a fantastic job with this grant program!

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I felt the program was excellent.

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We love the program

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Our participants really enjoyed the two part class: first the textbook and the information sharing, which allowed them to bond as a group and learn from each other as well as from the instructors; the second part involved demonstrations of creating healthy meals using vegetables and grains that the members often were not familiar with, combined with sharing experiences with each other again. Many members of the class commented that learning from each other was almost as important as the formal instruction so it would be important to build that opportunity to share insights and experiences into the class.

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It is really great to have this funding opportunity. The current grant that funds our work has gaps where we aren't able to meet the needs of the community in the way the community is asking - which is where the NHC Grant comes in to help us really meet the needs of the community. It would be great to learn more about what other grantees are doing with the NHC grant in other parts of the community.

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We greatly appreciated it and it got us doing something different and useful to families and the community.

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I am so thankful for the opportunity to build rapport with the community and parents. This grant helped support the fitness nights and also my physical education program with being able to purchase equipment and use it for many years. Thank you!!!

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This was a very helpful tool for our staff to engage with our clients for a positive and different approach to their health concerns. Because of the making of a new vegetable/flower garden it will continue to develop yearly and help others who will reside at our shelter in the future.

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Community Services benefited greatly from this grant. While programming used to cost one person or an entire family an immense amount of money, the grant made programs affordable, especially for entire families. Thank you for offering this wonderful opportunity!

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Our Staff really appreciates the programs we are offering due to this grant.

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Grant opportunities like this one are excellent for small organizations like ours. The proposal was simple to write, the evaluation and reporting was made simple and straight forward and the grant allowed us to fund activities of great interest and benefit for the community. As an organization, we find that sometimes we simply cannot compete with bigger organizations for grants because we lack the grant writing resources that these organizations have. This was not the case. The experience was very positive but we were very disappointed that we were not funded. After building momentum and a waiting list, it was hard to go back to the community and tell them that this year there were no funds.

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**Overall positive feedback about the program**

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Your support of offering a grant "healthy activities for seniors" was a huge success for a small town Senior Citizen Center, we would never have been able to offer such a program, therefore, we believe your continued offering and support of programs such as these would be most beneficial to others as well as Ellsworth. Thank you Allina Health!

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The process was easy to follow and understand. We are so very thankful for the grant and wish more funds were available.

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This program was very much appreciated by the community of Westside School. At the conclusion of the event, I produced a summary video with candid participant responses and presented it to the local Allina Community Engagement committee. Because of the success of the program, they are considering offering it again within the community with a small participation fee.

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**None**

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Nothing.

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None - I think it's a great way to fund grassroots efforts.

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Nothing! Such a fantastic grant and so easy to deal with. We are VERY thankful for the opportunity!

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