

More than Just Baseball Fields: Huntington Township Enjoys Park Enhancements

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Summary

In Lorain County there's a need to increase opportunities for physical activity, especially in car-centric rural areas where many people do not bike or walk due to inaccessibility and traffic safety concerns. While Huntington Park has always been a great place for youth to play baseball, adults and younger children did not have as many opportunities to be physically active. Thanks to a partnership with Huntington Township and the Creating Healthy Communities' Live Healthy Southern Lorain County coalition, the park now includes amenities for people of all ages.

Challenge

According to the Lorain County 2011 Community Health Assessment, rural obesity rates are 35%. The rural population faces active transportation issues and has limited opportunities for physical activity. Families are not able to take their children to parks within walking distance. An environment that lacks support for active living leaves residents of the area vulnerable to obesity and chronic disease. Huntington Township Trustees created a vision to upgrade the park after a risk and safety assessment was completed. However, significant funds were needed to cover the costs of recommended improvements. Working together, partners explored options to overcome financial barriers.

Solution

Mary Beth, a township trustee and member of Live Healthy Southern Lorain County partners shared the vision to improve Huntington Park for people of all age groups, including seniors and small children. The trustees applied for a solid waste grant through the Lorain County Commissioner's office and received over \$8,000. Funding was also leveraged through the Creating Health Communities program at the Lorain County General Health District. Township residents with skills to help with installation and building of equipment helped stretch dollars to get the maximum benefit for their community.



Your Involvement is Key

Take part in creating communities where the healthy choice is the easier choice! Volunteer or collaborate with Creating Healthy Communities' Live Healthy Lorain County Partner groups.

Get your 30 minutes of physical activity every day and be an advocate for active living, healthy eating, and tobacco reduction in your communities! An idea can become a reality with like-minded stakeholders at the table.

Results

Over 1,341 residents living in the Huntington area will have access to park improvements including a new playground, shade coverings, benches, dog clean up stations and fresh drinking water. Residents who come to the park for walking, socializing, playing games and fitness now have amenities for a convenient family-friendly experience. Community members have expressed that they will come to the park more often as a result of the improvements. At a fall walking event, a new Huntington Township resident was introduced to the park and was excited to see all that was offered. She sees the park as a hub where events can be held to promote the Huntington community and opportunities for active living.

Contact

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"It's really nice to see that I don't have to drive a long distance to take the kids to the park. I could bring my kids here to bike while I jog near them on the path."

- Stacey Olive

Sustainable Success

Connections made with Huntington Township and the park have set the stage for future active living, healthy eating and tobacco-free projects that the Creating Healthy Communities program can help facilitate. Tobacco-free park policies, wellness programming, outdoor fitness equipment and healthy concessions are ideas for future improvements to the park. With the key relationships established, the future is bright for continued success in Southern Lorain County.