



Get Fit Itasca Pairs with SHIP

Get Fit Itasca, a coalition of organizations and volunteers including: Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital, Itasca Family YMCA, City of Grand Rapids, Independent School District 316, Blandin Foundation, University of Minnesota Extension, Itasca Community College, Children First, Itasca County Public Health, and Senator Tom Saxhaug, is teaming up with the Statewide Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) to tackle the obesity issue. The goal of SHIP is to help Minnesotans live longer, better, healthier lives by reducing the burden of chronic disease by addressing physical inactivity, poor nutrition and tobacco use through policy, systems and environmental changes.

The mission of Get Fit Itasca is to engage all people of the Itasca Area to make healthy choices and participate in activities that improve their quality of life. Get Fit Itasca is working to make the healthy choice the easy choice through systems, environment and policy change. Over the past summer, Get Fit Itasca has explored adding more nutritious food options to concessions in Coleraine, gathering GIS data on trails and sidewalks for the City of Grand Rapids, and saving River Place Park.

Itasca County Public Health recently joined with 6 other north eastern counties in the SHIP grant application to the State of Minnesota. The 7 county region including, Itasca, Lake, Koochiching, Aitkin, St. Louis, Carlton, and Cook, received \$1.082 million for the first year and \$1.378 million for the second year to work on evidence based interventions that target change in eating, activity, and smoking behaviors. These interventions include:

Nutrition

- Implement comprehensive nutrition policies in schools including: breakfast promotion; healthy lunch and snacks, including classroom celebrations and incentives; fundraising, concessions, and vending; school gardens; and Farm-to-School initiatives.
- Implement breastfeeding practices in maternity care (health care organizations) that provide prenatal, birth, and postpartum services, for example: develop a written policy on breastfeeding, provide education and training, encourage early breastfeeding initiation, support cue-based feeding, restrict supplements and pacifiers for breastfed infants, and provide for post-discharge follow-up.

Physical Activity

- Implement policies and practices that create active communities by increasing opportunities for non-motorized transportation (walking and biking) and access to community recreation facilities.

Tobacco

- Implement a tobacco-free policy to apply to students, staff, and visitors on all post-secondary school grounds, in college housing, and at all sponsored events on technical school, community colleges, and college and university campuses.

- Implement mechanisms that connect students of technical schools, community colleges, colleges, and universities with existing cessation services including quit lines, quitting websites, and face to face counseling.

Healthy Behaviors

- Implement a comprehensive employee wellness initiative in selected communities that provides health assessment with follow-up coaching; ongoing health education, and has policies and environment supports that promote healthy weight, daily exercise, and healthy behaviors.

Get Fit Itasca and SHIP a perfect match to help make Itasca County a healthy environment for everyone!

For more information on Get Fit Itasca or Itasca County SHIP please contact Meghan Bown (218) 327-1161 ext.240

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