



Learn to Square Dance

Target Risk Factors:

Physical Activity
Mental Well-being

Target Population:

Teens (13-17 yrs)
Adults (35-49 yrs)
Seniors (70+ yrs)
Métis residents of Swan River

Project Lead(s):

Virginia Church, Swan River Friendship Centre
Peter Genaille, CDPI Facilitator

Community:

Swan River

RHA:

Parkland

Project Partners:

Swan River Friendship Centre
Swan River Senior's Centre

Project Details:

Multiple event or ongoing project

Description:

Employees and patrons of the Swan River Friendship Centre were interested in learning to Square-dance as it is a cultural activity of the Métis. "Experts" were asked to come and teach and participate with the local learners, mostly Métis community members. Some participants came out to re-learn the skill with their grandchildren.

Time:

Ran between November and February for 6 two hour sessions. Because the Senior's Centre had a regular square dance group they were well equipped to teach the participants at the Friendship Centre.

Objectives:

The community wanted to regenerate square-dancing in their Métis community. The Senior's wanted to have a fun, active evening out to interact with others in the community. Both were able to come together to provide something to each other. Families were able to come out and get active together while learning a culturally relevant skill.

Planning Supports:

- The idea came from an interested community member as there are often displays of square-dancing during special occasions such as Métis days and National Aboriginal Day.
- Community members requested the activity with the support of CDPI to make it happen in locally.
- Participants learned of the opportunity by word of mouth as well as a sign up at the Friendship Centre.
- The Senior's Centre accessed their regular group to attend at the new location with the new abundance of partners.

Results:

- Nearly 30 participants attended over the 6 weeks, with about 20 coming regularly to every session.
- Because of the success of the project the Friendship Centre hopes to run it again, this time incorporating a jigging step with the dance with a local Aboriginal facilitator.
- Excellent feedback was received from everybody who attended regarding the excellent facilitation of the caller from the Senior's Centre as well as how challenging and fun it was.

What worked:

- Bringing in local experts from the Senior's Centre
- Having local support of the program
- Incorporating the cultural significance
- Offering the opportunity for the difference generations to learn from and interact with each other.
- Community-led, Regionally Coordinated Provincially Supported!

What didn't work and any changes made:

Poor turnout of male participants. We'll have to work harder to specifically target more males to participate.

Unexpected Outcomes:

- New relationship between the Senior's Centre and the Friendship Centre, including communication about other opportunities to participate and interact with each other.
- The inter-generational appeal of learning a new skill.
- Other spontaneous requests from the public requesting square dance lessons.

Other Notes:

The cluster is planning on running it again, this time incorporating jigging.

Resources

Volunteers:

Staff from the Friendship Centre volunteered to open and close the hall, and also provided water and tea to the participants.

Members of the Seniors group assist the new learners with the steps and positioning.

Facilities:

The Friendship Centre donated the hall

The Senior's Centre provided the music and music system including a microphone for calling

Equipment:

Music, microphone, speakers

Total Costs:

\$500 for facilitator to teach the skills and coordinate the participants

Contact Information:

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