

The HTN Hub

Healthy Together Now (HTN)
Prairie Mountain Health— Formerly Assiniboine RHA

PRAIRIE MOUNTAIN HEALTH

healthy
TOGETHER NOW

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Local Contest Supports Quit-Smoking Attempts

This year marks the fourth annual ManitobaQuits Contest supported by The Manitoba Lung Association. The contest is being launched on January 20th, 2014 during National Non-Smoking Week (NNSW).

In the past this contest has been for *individuals* who are interested in making a quit-attempt (quitting smoking that is). This year, The Manitoba Lung Association is inviting *Communities* or *Workplaces* to register as a team for the contest.

There is an opportunity for your HTN committee to be involved, by promoting, coordinating and registering you community! Please see the attached letter with details about the contest. A Health Promotion Coordinator is available to assist communities in planning for this initiative if you are interested but unsure how to get started.

If you have any questions or would like to register your HTN community for this please let Tara Smith (tsmith@arha.ca or 204-764-2412 ext 268) know by December 19, 2013. Tara will then forward all interested communities or workplaces from our area into the Manitoba Lung Association.

Congrats!!

Baldur Recreation Centre has something to celebrate; they have recently passed a Healthy Food and Beverage Policy for their facility! By creating a policy, the Baldur Recreation Centre Board has made an instrumental step in helping their community make healthy food choices away from home! Some of the great features of this policy are:

- * Offering Skim, 1% or 2% milk or fortified soy beverages
- * Must offer a choice of fruits and/or vegetables on the weekends
- * Nutritious options are priced lower than less nutritious options if possible (e.g. Apple \$0.50, chips \$1.50)

Baldur's Healthy Together Now group supports this policy by providing fruit and veggie bags to the canteen as an annual action plan.



Building Community Capacity and Sustainability

The ability to work together, draw on each other's talents, and get things done is the most important part of building a successful community group. This is sometimes referred to as community capacity. Community capacity depends largely on the skills and attitudes that members bring to the table. We can improve the performance of our community groups by putting effort into building, supporting, and accessing community members' positive skills and attitudes. The following article highlights the main parts of group capacity building, which are member capacity, group capacity, organization capacity, and program capacity.

Member Capacity

Member capacity means using the core skills and knowledge of the group. It is about working with others to create and build effective programs and the ability of members of the group to build an effective partnership. Members should also try to hold positive attitudes about other stakeholders, about collaboration, and about the group itself. It is also identified as recognizing the importance of supporting other members to get involved and building each member's personal capacity. Member capacity is also improved by having members that are committed to target issues or a target program.



Group Capacity

Group capacity is about developing a positive working climate and making participation in the group feel connected, cooperative, trusting, open and honest. It is also important to develop a shared vision within the community group for making goals, finding shared solutions, and a common understanding of problems. Other ways of improving group capacity include encouraging power sharing, valuing diversity, and developing positive community relationships outside of the group.

Organization Capacity

Organization capacity building includes several areas. Effective leadership and a task-oriented work environment are important. It is also important that all group members are aware of the group's procedures. It is helpful to have clear staff and member roles, responsibilities, and guidelines, and a detailed, focused work plan. Along the same lines, effective communication is key to organization capacity. Good organization capacity comes from members finding reliable sources of input and external information/expertise. It is also important to encourage members of the committee to try to continually improve their work. Evaluation of the work that the committee does is valuable.

Committees can develop surveys or other methods of evaluation. If the evaluations show opportunity for change or improvement, committees can use that feedback to plan programming that better serves their communities.

Program Capacity

Program capacity refers to developing clear and focused objectives and realistic goals for programs that your committee is involved with. Planning programs which fill unmet community needs in new and exciting ways is likely to increase community participation. These types of programs are best chosen if they are driven by community needs and culturally appropriate. Trying to improve your community group's ability to build their own capacity can help make projects more sustainable, as well as ensuring that the community work is fun, fair and addressing the strengths and weaknesses within the community. Building community capacity can also help projects run more smoothly.

Information adapted from:

Foster-Fishman, P.G., Berkowitz, S.L., Lounsbury, D.W., Jacobson, S. & Allen, N.A. (2001). Building collaborative capacity in community coalitions: A review and integrative framework. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 29 (2): 241-260.