



Inter-Generational Dance Program

Target Risk Factor:

Physical Activity

Target Population:

School age (6-12 yrs)

Older adults (50-69 yrs)

Seniors (70+ yrs)

Project Lead(s):

n/a

Community:

Treherne, Holland & Cypress River

RHA:

Assiniboine

Project Partners:

MILES for Seniors Senior Support Service

Tiger Hills Recreation District

Treherne, Holland & Cypress River Elementary Schools

Project Details:

Multiple event or ongoing project

Description:

The program involved older adults/seniors in the community providing traditional social dance instruction to Grades 5 & 6 students (also Grade 3 & 4 in Cypress River) in the school setting.

The program was initiated in 2007 and was held for three consecutive years. The six-week sessions of lessons concluded with a Family Dance where students, volunteer instructors, participants, parents and members of the community were invited to come together to enjoy dance.

The program was well received by the volunteer instructors, participants, parents and school staff. The program allowed the participants to learn new physical activity skills, provided an opportunity to engage in the physical activity of dance and encouraged social interaction between the seniors and youth.

Time:

The first year was more time consuming with regards to planning and program development. The schools were approached to become involved, schedules were coordinated, volunteers solicited and planning meeting held in each community with the volunteers. As well, resources were gathered and a music CD created to utilize for the program. These tasks were completed over a few months. Subsequent years were less time consuming as the footprint for the program had been set.

The initial program was held over an eight-week period while in subsequent years the program was adjusted to a six-week session. Volunteers provided instruction during the physical education classes, once per week for the duration of the program (February - March). A group of volunteers was pooled from each of the three participating communities. Each year the program culminated with an evening Family Dance where all the students, volunteers and families gathered at one location.

Objectives:

- Increase physical activity opportunities for youth and older adults/seniors.
- Encourage social interaction amongst youth and older adults and reinforce positive attitudes of the generations.
- Pass the skills and knowledge of the senior population on to the younger generation (from surveys, talking with target audience, etc.) in order to maintain traditions and active pursuits

Planning Supports:

Discussions with seniors and school administration reinforced the potential of the program. The program format was developed based on knowledge of previous youth instructional programs.

Results:

- There were approximately 50 participants per year, a group of 20 volunteers and attendance at the Family Dance ranged between 100 to 225 annually over the three years of the program.
- Feedback was requested from the school staff and volunteers, and some family and students offered their comments as well. All were very positive.
- The program generated new support of traditional social dance amongst the youth and a desire among parents to also learn themselves. The program also helped to build mutual respect and understanding between youth and seniors. Many personal connections between the two generations were made and a comfort level developed.

What worked:

The Family Dance was a good vehicle to promote the program to the community at large and to involve the parents in the student learning. Holding the sessions as part of the school program allowed for more comfort amongst the youth and limited peer pressure as all students were involved.

What didn't work and any changes made:

The program was found to be perhaps a little too long the first year. It made it difficult to get the program completed due to other school events, weather, etc. As a result the sessions were reduced to six weeks in the following years.

Unexpected Outcomes:

The overwhelming response and positive feedback received by all those involved. Upon completion of the program, the students/schools requested further inter-generational programming activities.

Other notes:

The program continued for three years based upon the positive feedback received. It was decided to make 2009 the final year and initiate other inter-generational programming, allowing a new group of volunteers to become involved with a varying skill set.

Resources**Volunteers:**

A group of approximately seven volunteers per community were utilized for the program. This allowed for those that could not make all the sessions. One or two volunteers took the lead to provide for continuity. Staff members of the agencies involved were also helpful in providing assistance to ensure technical support, etc. was provided.

Facilities:

The school facilities were utilized as this was a program run during school hours. Community Halls were rented for the program finale dance.

Equipment:

A CD player was made available at each facility. Music CD's were provided to all the groups so that there was no need to search for music.

Other:

Pre-planning of the dances that were to be taught allowed us to prepare CD's in advance. The core dances were the same in each community but some did an additional dance or two.

Total Costs:

The majority of costs were associated with program finale dance. Silver collection was utilized to offset the expenses as well as \$200 per year from CDPI funding.

Contact Information:

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