About REACH

The Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) is a national program administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) aimed at reducing racial and ethnic disparities in health.

Let’s MOVE Let’s REACH Physical Activity Day Event

Let's MOVE Let's REACH brings North Omaha community together for day of physical fitness and fun.

Temperatures in the upper 90s Saturday, June 11 didn't stop several hundred people from the Creighton University and Omaha communities from heading to the inaugural Let’s MOVE, Let’s REACH festival, a physical activity day sponsored by Creighton’s Department of Health Sciences Multicultural and Community Affairs (HS-MACA) and its Center for Promoting Health and Health Equality (CPHHE).

People of all ages gathered along historic 24th Street in North Omaha to participate in a variety of physical fitness activities like basketball, Zumba and Tai Chi. The day began with a 1-mile walk/run along 24th Street from Cuming Street to Lake Street. As R&B music played,
Creighton students, staff, volunteers and community members cheered the group of runners along the route.

The Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention looked to reduce health disparities within the African American population. Creighton University's Center for Promoting Health and Health Equity - Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (CPHHE-REACH) program is a partnership that has joined forces with community stakeholders in Douglas County, to solve this issue.

Community volunteers demonstrated fun ways to get fit. With smiling faces and enthusiastic moves, one outdoor Zumba session at Dreamland Park on 24th and Erskine streets looked more like a group of friends dancing than exercising.

At the George Bryant Center a few blocks south of Lake Street, youth from elementary through high school participated in a 3-on-3 basketball tournament with help from Creighton alumnus and former Bluejay basketball player Josh Jones, BA’13, and former WNBA player, Jessica Haynes, both natives of North Omaha.

Let’s MOVE, Let’s REACH was sponsored by American Heart Association, Center Trophy, CHI Health, Creighton Athletics, CPHHE, HS-MACA, Crown Trophy, Genua Consulting, Heartland B-Cycle, Hy-Vee, McCarthy Building Companies Inc., McDonald’s, Olive Garden, Planet Fitness, and Raising Cane’s.

Event partners were 100 Black Men of Omaha, Butler-Gast YMCA, Charles Drew Health Center, Collective for Youth, Creighton School of Medicine, Douglas County Health Department, Nebraska Center for Healthy Families, Nebraska Center for Healthy Families, and Omaha Housing Authority.

**Adapted from the Creighton University News Center Article dated June 13, 2016**

**REACH Health Ambassadors**

There are a total of 38 health ambassadors for combined Year 1 and Year 2 of the REACH grant. Of the 38 chosen, 33 have been certified in the physical activity train-the-trainer curriculum. In order for the health ambassador to receive a certification, he or she was required to complete 8 weeks of training with the Creighton University’s School of Medicine staff and Douglas County Health Department staff. Each ambassador was required to attend classes for up to 8 weeks filled with curriculum related to physical activity and Policy, System, and Environmental (PSE) improvements implementation.

Health ambassadors play a very important role in the success of the REACH collaborative agreement. These selected individuals have been chosen by the perspective organizations because they are leaders, have strong relationships that will foster their efforts to connect people to physical activity opportunities, and will engage individuals in regular physical events. Health ambassadors are energetic and passionate about creating opportunities that anyone can participate in and are enthusiastic about getting people energized and involved.

Health ambassadors have been instrumental in assisting with evaluation processes, such as Systems for Observing Play and Recreation in the Community (SOPARC) data collection. Several of the health ambassadors participated in the Let’s Move Let’s REACH Physical Activity Day event and assisted with observations including taking a count of the number of people who came out and joined in the events of the day. Notable mentions for assisting with the SOPARC observations are Mrs. Evelyn Gould – Zion Baptist Church, Eric Burgin – Crown Tower, Hope Akwani – Redeemed Christian Church, and Dcn.Tata Kouassi – Redeemed Christian Church. The REACH team would like to extend a special thanks for your assistance in successful collection of data to be used in the evaluation reporting to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.
Destination Signage

One of the many objectives for the REACH collaborative agreement is to connect African-Americans with physical activity opportunities within their neighborhoods. One of the ways this is being done is by providing destination signs within the community indicating places that individuals can walk to for some quick physical activity.

There have been 84 destination signs posted within walking distance of REACH community partner church sites: Zion Baptist Church, Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Redeemed Christian Church, and Pilgrim Baptist Church. Others have been posted around the Omaha Housing Authority Towers: Jackson Tower, Crown Tower, Evans Tower, Park North Tower, and Park South Tower and Charles Drew Health Center. These signs suggest short distances and time frames for walking to the designated locations from the partner site.

There will be maps created that pinpoint the destinations and the maps will be shared with partners and others in the community. The maps will also connect individuals in the community to more than one kind of physical activity opportunity near them.

External and Internal Walking Path Signage

Many of the REACH partners have written policies, put systems in place, and are making environmental improvements to encourage and promote more physical activity. Most sites have chosen internal and external walking paths that can be used by congregants of the churches, residents of the housing towers, and community members as designated walking areas to be utilized year round.

During the winter months, when temperatures outside are too cold for walking, the external walking path, the internal paths are available. The paths will allow individuals to not only walk inside but outside and will allow them to know how far they have walked and know how many times they must walk the designated space in order to have gone a specified distance. In the warmer months when people are more likely to walk outside, there will be an assigned clearly-marked walking area on the property. The distance will also be included on the external walking signs.
Because physical activity leads to improved overall health and has been proven effective in reducing higher incidences and prevalence of chronic diseases among the African-American populous. REACH partners are incorporating simple solutions that can be used by anyone seeking to begin with small steps towards incorporating physical activity in their daily lives. Signs are currently being installed.

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