

Bicycle Racks: Physical Activity on the Move for Omaha Residents

by: Aminatu Issaka

SUMMARY

Creighton University along with its community partners have sustained a solid partnership which have allowed the residents of Omaha, Nebraska unlimited access to physical activity opportunities throughout the city. Omaha residents explore various modes of transportation and of those bicycling is one that offers a supplementary form of physical activity. Accordingly, using CPHHE-REACH contractors, bicycle racks were installed at community partner locations to promote physical activity by way of bicycling throughout the Omaha community.



CHALLENGE

According to the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans Fact Sheet for Health Professionals on Physical Activity Guidelines for Adults released by the Centers for Disease and Prevention, adults who are active are healthier, are less likely to develop many chronic diseases, and have better aerobic fitness than adults who are inactive. About 1 in 2 adults live with a chronic disease and only half of adults get the physical activity they need to help reduce and prevent

chronic diseases. By way of environmental improvement, installation of bicycle racks throughout the Omaha community will have a huge impact on the prevalence of chronic disease by encouraging the use of bicycles while simultaneously promoting physical activity. The challenge would be the actual use of the bicycle racks; are there bicycles observed at the bicycle racks and are community members riding them?

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

This initiative is supported by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) cooperative agreement. Additional ways to increase physical activity in a community are exciting and encourages a healthier lifestyle. Omaha's community partners and residents use of the bicycle racks for both work and leisure promotes an environment of living well by being active. For more information please visit <https://www.creighton.edu/health/cphhe/reach/>.

"The Omaha Housing Authority observed an increase of residents using bicycles as a means of physical activity since the installation of bicycle racks at the 11 OHA Towers. Safe place for a bicycle paired with promoting a healthy lifestyle - why not?"

- Rachele Tucker - CPHHE-REACH OHA Coordinator

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SOLUTION

Community partners approved bicycle rack installation at respective locations in areas critical to their success i.e. near exterior walking trail signage, near entrances and near on-site recreational spaces. The aim was to reduce the risk of developing a chronic disease and enhance cardiovascular health by promoting physical activity (bicycling). Each partner location received four (4) bicycle racks that were available to all nearby community members. To aid in this endeavor, messaging was delivered by community partners explaining the importance of physical activity and the role the newly installed bicycle racks played in reducing chronic disease in Omaha.

RESULTS

Creighton University understood that bicycle racks were an economical way to promote physical activity; hence, the bicycle rack initiative was launched. Members of the Omaha community embraced the presence of the bicycle racks and its promotion of physical activity as displayed through continued use. Residents of the Omaha Housing Authority, congregation members of neighboring faith-based organizations and staff have demonstrated consistent use of the bicycle racks as a mode to increase physical activity within the community. Individuals have been observed bicycling to church service, bicycling on designated trails, bicycling to work and selecting bicycling as another mode of transportation despite the availability of other options i.e. automobile.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

Creighton University and its community partners will continue to deliver positive messages (verbal and non-verbal) throughout the community that center around active and healthy lifestyles. More specifically, inform residents, congregation members, staff and others of the importance of physical activity, its health benefits and how bicycling is yet another form of productive physical activity that results in improved cardiovascular health. And through this messaging, the use of the newly installed bicycle racks will remain on an incline.