

Border Health ¡SI!  
Special Action Group  
April 23,2003

**Welcome & Introductions**

Minnie Almader thanked and welcomed the group. Minnie was the facilitator for the meeting. Marilyn attended the Preister Conference in Phoenix, to give a PowerPoint presentation about SAG and forming advocacy groups.

**Border Health ¡SI! - Action Planning**

**Andrea Dunn**

Briefly, spoke about Jill de Zapiens' presentation of the diagram in the handout. The diagram shows a road map of where SAG needs to go, where SAG members stand, why the creation of SAG came about and where SAG members want to go.

**Jill de Zapien**

Jill de Zapien described the goals of SAG in the next four months as: Initiative, to combine and direct activities already happening in the community to SAG.

In the beginning, policy was the role of the SAG. SAG members came together decided and agreed to make a difference in policy around chronic disease prevention within the community. Then, the group identified what they believed to be their most important goals and divided into two subgroups, the short term and long term. The short-term goal was to get people to participate in activities within Border Health ¡SI! As well as, identify walking areas in Nogales and Rio Rico. The long-term goal was to intersect with the process of the Growing Smarter Plan to include, in their agenda, the need of physical activity. In which, both sub-groups succeeded. The short-term group identified and mapped out walking areas in the community. The group empowered people to walk through the Border Health ¡SI! Initiative and began mapping out new walking areas in the community. The long-term group included members of SAG in the planning committee for the Growing Smarter Plan. In addition, SAG members helped with public participation, other things required from legislation, and to comply with regulations. After these successes, suddenly SAG members asked themselves what they were to do now and took a step backward to awareness. (See diagram)

However, we want to stay in policy and make things happen. In the diagram is a column that says, where to go (goals), the goal should be to get as many people walking in the community as we can, get more resources from local government supporting physical activity; not just from parks, but have personnel provide activities from other programs in the community, and have more changes in the schools.

How can we do it?

There is data, time, and resources that will be useful for both the policy and activity piece. Jill mentioned that there is a window of opportunity and SAG members should take advantage of it.

The summer, the fall and part of December are enough time to plan and prepare activities. There is outcome data available from the walking clubs, family component and the School Health Index from Border Health SI. As well as, the recent compiled data from the eye screenings by Dawn Medler from the University of Arizona, Department of Ophthalmology.

Having activities happen, as the policy group compiles and present themselves before policy makers will be of great benefit.

Most importantly, when creating policy change, is to want to make it happen.

Policy Makers do not know what we have learned about the walking clubs, family interventions, and ongoing screenings. Therefore, if changes do not happen in the community, policy makers are not accountable; because they are not aware.

The policy group must approach policy makers with information on why these things are important, what is happening and most importantly, why we want to walk down the road with them to find resources for the community. The group will approach city council, board of supervisors and other policy makers, as a group, not as an individual or SAG member. Broader initiative is what we are trying to accomplish.

What is the task of the policy group?

The policy group will need to compile and synthesize the available data. Prepare a concrete proposal, with in depth key points. Then present it to city council, board of supervisors and the mayor. The proposal can include but is not limited, to work with policy makers in getting new grants for parks, staff, parks & recreation, etc. Marilyn is looking into social marketers as well. The U Of A team will be part of the policy group to help compile other available data pieces specific to the community. For example: available data from Proyecto VER.

What is the task of the activity group?

The activity group has a broader umbrella. They will have to connect to three things, get more people walking, get more resources for physical activity, get more physical activities and nutrition in schools. The brainstorming of possible activities began at the SAG meeting March 26.

The subcommittees could meet before the SAG meeting or after the SAG meeting, but should meet as often as possible in between SAG meetings to organize. As Jill had mentioned before, Marilyn is quickly in search of a social marketer. Jill suggests having a social marketer in place before the policy group meets.

### **Discussion:**

Concerns were expressed about the local government's financial capabilities and being able to contribute the resources to SAG's goals. How will the group collaborate with the city? Will the group write grants for the city? What exactly is the role of the activity group and the policy group? What does the future hold for the SAG group? Does Jill see the SAG group transforming into a clearinghouse in the future? Another concern was about promotoras being overwhelmed with other projects at Platicamos Salud and personal commitments. Another was about children having a variety of food choices for lunch but in the end the choices are not healthy. As a school board member, how to encourage other school board members to make that change. Some also thought that people in this particular community, are not thinking about physical activity, their thought is surviving and putting food on the table; working 2 jobs to support their families. Some concerns were expressed about the difficulty in the local political process and creating the change needed locally.

In response to these concerns, Jill responded by saying that the group should have realistic changes to succeed. In regards to the group's future, the Cooperative Extension has made a commitment and perhaps partner with SEAHEC to continue after December. The group should decide how they could collaborate with city officials.

For example: What kind of programs do Parks & Recreation have, how do they use their resources; not create new ones, but collaborate with them, how and if we can train their employees to use curriculums already in place, that could benefit Parks and Recreation and the community. In regards to the financially strapped budget; bottom line, there will never be good times or bad times, politicians will always say there is never enough money. The political will has to come from both parties.

This group can become a clearinghouse for the City; if we make a big enough impact, a politician would want to find funding for the group. Although we will not make an impact on every politician, at least an impact will be made with one and that is all it takes.

Karen Halverson commented that the group should focus and agree on one or two specific small events and not focus on many large events. The SAG group may think we want more people walking in the community; however, what we want is more infrastructures that support all type of exercise, not just walking.

Jill and Joel then spoke about Platicamos Salud. Personal responsibility is already happening at Platicamos Salud; personal testimonies can vouch for that. Personal responsibilities include knowing the environment, what the living conditions are and knowing the needs for change. If people do not like the environment they live in, they should take action by getting city and county government to make the necessary changes for a better environment.

In response to the difficulties of people working 2 jobs and being physically active, Jill said this is where the window of opportunity comes in. First, Border Health SI can show productive outcomes of people who live under those circumstances and are able to be involved and able to improve their health, because of the program existence. Second, people who made personal changes for themselves are usually hard to find and identify, however, some of those people are available for personal testimonials.

After Jill responded to the concerns and questions, the group then volunteered members into a group. Enclosed is the list for each group. Gwen Gallegos is the chairperson for the Activity Group and JoJean Elenes is the chairperson for the Policy Group. Sandra will call Gwen and Minnie will call JoJean to set a meeting date for the activity group and the policy group to meet before the next SAG group. (May 28) Sandra will provide a list of members from each group to Gwen and JoJean.

In regards to the concern about school boards and creating policy change for nutrition in the schools, these were the responses: Parents should express their concerns about nutrition issues. Then have the School Director and School Board Members agree with her; SEAHEC could be of good benefit for Rosie, because SEAHEC is putting together an information book that identifies useful curriculums and activities in the community. When Rosie decides to address the Board Members and the Director, SEAHEC can provide that information.

In addition, implementing the School Health Index is another benefit. Mountain View since completing the SHI has increased the lunch hour for student; students have more time to choose healthier meals and proper eating habits. The school has made other great changes. Rosie would need to decide what her focus in policy change would be.

Before she goes before the School Board a well-prepared document with key point information on healthy eating habits and nutrition, should be available. Introducing the School Health Index and working through it helps the school look for other funding resources to replace the loss of monies from unhealthy bake sales, etc. Schools work through and complete the SHI, receive fifteen hundred dollars.

Most communities do not know of the existing school tax credit; this would be another great resource for the school. The downfall is before schools can benefit from the tax credit exemption for existing programs, the school must charge a fee to students who enroll in activities. Therefore, small fees were implemented last year at Rio Rico Schools.

In the March SAG meeting, Rosie commented that she had contacted the Superintendent and the project manager in charge of the construction, about adding a walking trail within the schools parameter. She has not heard from them yet, but at this point, it could be a possibility. It would not be a paved walking trail because the school district does not have the monies within their budget for that cost. Rosie would encourage middle school and high school clubs to be involved; students in the club can clear the perimeter of the walking trail and outline it with rocks.

In conclusion, having proper organization and a well-written policy document will influence our policy makers and organizations. The activity group should develop and well planned menu of ongoing activities in the community. This menu should supply activities, dates, times, when and where, so the policy group, ahead of time, can plan the dates to attend city and county board meetings. Our efforts will take time and money, to prepare and create changes, but there is plenty of time, other available resources, and SAG members have the will to commit.

#### Announcements:

Dean Fish announced that the Santa Cruz County Comprehensive Plan meeting Monday 28 changed from 3:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

### **Group Assignments:**

#### **Policy Group**

JoJean Elenes – Chairperson  
Karen Halverson  
Rich Polheber  
Dean Fish  
Marcel Bachelier  
John Maynard (phase II)  
Ila Tittelbaugh  
George Lineiros  
Mayor Lopez (phase II)  
Manny Ruiz (phase II)

#### **Activity Group**

Gwen Gallegos – Chairperson  
Rosie Piper  
Rosie Simpson  
Marcel Bachelier  
Kathleen Vandervoet (phase II)  
Dina Sanchez  
Steve Arrellano (Chamber of  
Commerce)  
Suzanne David  
Bob Lee (KMSB)