

*Special Action Group
Meeting Minutes
July 31, 2002*

Welcome & Introductions

Marilynn welcomed the group members and had everyone introduce themselves.

Border Health SI Technical Team Update

Joel Miester extended an open invitation to all SAG members to join the Community Advisory Board Meeting Thursday, September 26, 2002 at the Rio Rico Resort for the Southwest Center, Health Promotion. The Community Advisory Board will meet from 11:00-4:00 pm and lunch will be provided. The Border Information for Action Conference will begin that evening. This is a border wide conference. Jill mentioned that registration would be paid for members interested in joining the advisory board meeting and the conference. Those who are interested please give Marilynn your full name and organization. Marilynn will contact Mary and she can fill out the registration form.

Joel spoke about the community advisory board that has been in operation since before the Border Health SI Grant. As they looked at the activities going on in each county, they saw an overlap and they realized that it would be a great opportunity for all SAG members from the three counties to get together. This structure provides opportunities for sharing of information, ideas, brainstorming, and advice. He said that a couple of years ago the community advisory board had a strong sentiment to look at policy issues, sustainability, issues for public health programming along the border and looking at diabetes as a case model for prevention. In that particular meeting CDC attended and took the sentiment to heart. The University received an appropriation from Congress that went through CDC, the Southwest Center focused funding for diabetes and SAG's that included a model of policy changes within community level. In this way the Advisory Board serves as a super SAG.

Jill de Zapien gave some detail as to what the agenda was for the conference and guest speakers. Speakers are from the United States and Mexico with plenary sessions of speakers from both countries as well. The four tracks for the conference include: environment health, community health, gender and health and adolescent. Sponsors for the Border Health Conference are: The College of Public Health, the Arizona Department of Health Services Health Sciences Minority Program, Colegio de Sonora, Mexfam and la Red de Medio Ambiente and Salud, and SEAHEC. These are all volunteer efforts. Joel mentioned that it is an excellent opportunity to learn about all of the border health programs, and its important that all those not directly involved in Public Health be involved in this meeting. It will provide great ongoing communication and interactions after Border Health SI is gone.

Jill de Zapien reported that Douglas had their last meeting as a Diabetes working group and is now a Special Action Group. They have done their brainstorming and in the last meeting they looked at their brainstorming ideas about policy. They will be targeting vending machines in the schools. They will be looking to add nutritious items in vending machines instead of taking them out of schools.

They will be launching an effort to determine how to make Physical Education mandatory in the State of Arizona. They will also target meals in schools.

Jill reported that in Yuma they have a sub-committee that's been looking at avenues for developing many parks and recreational sites. Many small groups have been successful. They are organizing a forum for their community for the Policy Makers. What they will be presenting to that audience will be what they have done and how they have been successful. They will try to influence the political process in a way to show that if they work together there are no limits to what can be done. They are planning this for the fall before the election.

Joel then explained the follow up questionnaire for their research and that Jill had found a great user-friendly questionnaire that would take about twenty minutes to fill out. The questionnaire is not anonymous, but confidential. Jill then explained the human subjects consent form that would be handed out with the questionnaire because it is mandatory by law and a regulation of the University of Arizona. The questionnaire was handed out to the members of the group and members took about twenty minutes to fill it out.

Jaime Arrieta – Youth and Exercise

Karen Halverson explained that Jaime Arrieta is working with the interdisciplinary training project at SEAHEC. One of their components is to update every semester the Community Assessment of the City of Nogales. They have eight city sub sections that they look at, but also work with targeted communities. They worked with the Summer Youth Institute from Mariposa Community Center. Therefore his target was the adolescent community and in the Transportation and Safety component.

Jaime Arrieta reported on an assessment he conducted with Nogales youth. He asked a series of questions about transportation services provided in the City of Nogales for kids. The following is an outline of that assessment.

What knowledge did the youth have of public transportation?

They have knowledge of a bus service.

What kind of transportation is provided for youth?

They don't feel the bus service is provided for them.

They feel the service is for people from Nogales, Sonora.

They feel the bus service does not take them to where they need to be

They basically feel stranded.

Concerns they have

Youth are afraid of riding the bus because of people who ride the bus.

They are afraid of the bus drivers.

They perceive the buses as being dirty.

They have no air conditioning

The seats are torn

The bus driver is reckless.

Kids don't believe the buses are regulated by emissions control.

Bus doesn't access neighborhood streets only main streets.

Walking miles from their home to get to the bus stop.

Transportation alternatives?

Nowhere safe to them to ride their bikes.

The street isn't safe for them to ride.

There are not enough sidewalks to ride their bikes.

What kind of changes would they make?

Add more sidewalks.

Create bike paths.

Safety Issues?

Reckless driving. Most kids begin driving at the age of thirteen years and develop bad habits.

Children are not in car seats.

Drivers Education should be mandatory prior to receiving their driver's license

Teenage drinking is a major problem.

No marking on the street for bicycle lanes.

What kind of role do they play in the community?

The best response was from youth at the skateboarding park. They believe they have great power, because they asked for a skateboarding park and they got one. They believe the people of the community and city officials are listening to them.

Basically teens don't feel the transportation provided in Nogales is for them and it's not safe to ride the bus. They would like to use their bikes if they had proper bike paths in the community. Mr. Arrieta also mentioned that the skate boarding kids have formed their own transportation pool to transport youths. Mr. Arrieta commented that he had spoken with Mr. Dabdoub the owner of the bus service and he stated that most of his business comes from people of Nogales, Sonora.

Marilynn stated that this related to our long-term goal to contribute to the comprehensive plan and that's why she asked Karen Halverson to have Jaime Arrieta speak about these issues. The members of the comprehensive plan committee, Dean Fish & Dina Sanchez did not attend the SAG meeting, but she asked that Mr. Arrieta write a summary of his finding for Dean Fish.

George Liniero reported that on the fourth of July they had a public participation pamphlet that was handed out to members of the community. Answers to the questions will be pooled and reported to the Growing Smarter planners.

Community Walking Groups

Andrea Dunn and Rosie Piper gave an introduction to what Alicia Sander would be talking about: the barriers to walking in Nogales. What works and what doesn't work. They had promotoras get together to give their input on their client's barriers.

Alicia Sander reported that the biggest barrier is that the clients simply don't want to walk.

When they simply don't have the will they can't find places to walk and exercise. They always find excuses of why not to walk and exercise.

Barriers include the following: poor lighting, lack of access to public restrooms, loose dogs, incomplete sidewalks, summer heat-no indoor facilities for walking/exercise, and community perceptions.

Example: The lack of access to public restrooms was a barrier for walking groups when walking at Pierson Middle School. An excuse often used by clients was not having public restrooms near the field. That barrier has been fixed, because they have added port-a-potties near the walking areas. It is believed that they were added because of the frequent interruptions to the Pima College and Nogales School Administration. Barriers for clients that walk in their communities are the loose dogs in the area. Another barrier is clients walking with children in strollers have a difficult time, because of unfinished sidewalks or no sidewalks at all.

Clients often find friends within their groups to continue walking and exercising after they have finished the program, but others find friends to walk with but lose the interest because that friend could walk at a faster pace than them. Others just find new friends that walk at their pace.

Alicia spoke about a new client they have in the new walking group. Her biggest barrier was community perception. She felt embarrassed because she thought people were going to think of her as being poor. That if they saw her walking it was because she couldn't afford a car. Now that she has been going through the program her perception has changed.

She no longer cares about those who see her walk. She has been walking on her own everywhere and anywhere. The way she perceives it now is that she feels good and that is what counts. This program opens the clients' mind and changes their perception about walking, exercising, and nutrition. If they find the will within themselves to exercise and nutrition they are going to accomplish it no matter what. This encouragement should come from promotoras.

Andrea Dunn also spoke about the Housing Authority gym on Western Ave. Marilyn had asked if they were still using this particular facility for indoor walking. Alicia responded that the new group did not like the facility because it was too dull and too dark. Andrea then wanted to know if perhaps anyone knew how they can go about changing the colors to make it a more livable place. Marcel Bachelier reported that the lady in charge of that facility faces a great challenge due to the boxing ring and the funds that are available come from the boxing. So basically she is accommodating those people when perhaps she could be accommodating a lot more people out in the community.

Andrea will also be writing a summary of their findings for Dean Fish. George Lineiro pointed out that the county controls the loose dog situation in the city and county.

Rosie Piper commented that barriers can be made, but can be removed by the individual will. The will comes from awareness and that is where Alicia and promotoras play a big role in the community.

Community Reports/Announcements

Marilynn announced that Santa Cruz County will be applying for a ADOT Grant to build a walking trail near Cuatimundi Dr in Rio Rico and connect to the de Anza Trail.

Marilynn reviewed the charts she had posted on the walls. These were from the action planning last year. She wanted everyone to look at the five policies that the group had chosen to target which are: Long term: infrastructure plan, increase walking & recreation sites, vending machines, DES & Food Stamps, and sustaining programs,. Of those five, the one that has not been addressed by the group is the DES/food stamps program. She also spoke about the long term and short-term goals. The long-term goal was to be involved in the comprehensive plan. We then became aware of the Growing Smarter plan in which we have made an impact in memberships in the committee working with Planners Ink. George Lineiro mentioned that the comprehensive plan is a living document, legislation calls for it to be updated every ten years minimum but it is up to the community. Mr. Lineiro mentioned that state legislature extended the deadline to March. The City of Nogales is still planning to prepare their document by December of this year. It would not get the vote of the public by December but they still plan on completing the document for local government.

The short-goal is to prepare three different plans for recreation facilities and walking areas. This will come up in the comprehensive plan as they are looking for open space. Information like Jaime Arrieta's could be great influence in how the kids get to facilities in town. Andrea Dunn, Rosie Piper, and Alicia Sanders could report on the gym and the barriers affecting the short-term goal.

Karen Halverson reported and shared with group the report on the School Health Index by the schools that have completed. She handed out the copies and encouraged members to look at the schools priorities section. Their major goal is having P.E. in schools. They are looking at nutrition and vending machines in the schools. They are hoping on having booklets of recipes for the schools to use by next year. University Students like Jaime Arietta will compile them to include lots of healthy recipes.

Jill de Zapien mentioned that the grant writing position open in September and start work in October.

Please Note:

The next SAG meeting will be September 4, 12-2 at the United Church Village, Billy Hagler Hall.