

Wellness Committee and Healthy Workplace Initiatives: Children's Bureau

Kelsey Van Paris



SUMMARY

The Children's Bureau wellness committee hosted successful Wellness Fairs for their employee population throughout the past three years. Each fair included more than a dozen community agencies focused on health and wellness, including Anthem, health care providers, fitness centers, produce delivery services, etc. Attendance at each fair has exceeded 25 percent of employees each year.

The wellness committee also presents healthy habits challenges at least twice per year. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, recent challenges have become virtual. For example, the committee implemented a month-long steps challenge to encourage employees to achieve 10,000 steps per day and also hosted a two-hour virtual run/walk.

Understanding that health and wellness is not purely physical activity and nutrition, Children's Bureau implemented numerous virtual workshops to educate their employees on topics such as:

- Trauma informed self-care for mental health;
- Education/discussion on racism and bias in the workplace; and
- Healthy living workshops via certified health coaches.

CHALLENGE

The organization's staff of nearly 300 represent many diverse populations, crossing racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and generational backgrounds. The work its employees engage in, while rewarding, can be emotionally, mentally and physically challenging. Thus, Children's Bureau recognized the need to encourage healthy habits and self-care for its staff who are arguably at greater risk for stress and environment related illness. This was evident in many ways including rises in the number of employees using the Employee Assistance Program for referrals for personal counseling. The challenges and stress brought by the COVID-19 pandemic have only compounded the need.

COLLABORATION IS KEY

More information about DNPA can be found at:
www.in.gov/health/dnpa.

"I am grateful to Children's Bureau for their wellness initiatives. In a previous challenge, I lost 22lbs and improved my overall health. The most recent challenge has also sparked the desire to improve my fitness level and diet. My hope is that we will continue these wellness options! I lack some personal drive when it comes to diet and exercise and when the agency prompts those improvements, it has a positive impact on my entire life." - *Senior Director*

"Participating in the book club for *The New Jim Crow* was wonderful and allowed me to take in different perspectives from other people. It was great getting together with others and sharing thoughts, opinions, and beliefs about the material we read. It provided sort of a release but came with an understanding of how others interpret the same information differently than you. I really enjoyed this book club and learned that people's personal experiences help shape the way that they see things. There are a lot of things that people just are not exposed to." - *Demarcus Fair*

Contact

Indiana Department of Health, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity

2 North Meridian Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

www.in.gov/health/dnpa

SOLUTION

Due to the Indiana Healthy Workplaces grant program, Children's Bureau has had the capacity to significantly expand the work of its Wellness Committee. Key program components have included: recurring workshops presented both in-person and virtually by health and wellness professionals; three wellness challenges; an annual wellness fair; distribution of wellness kits to all staff members; and the creation of a wellness website for staff.

RESULTS

Participation in wellness initiatives has been high and feedback quite positive. Attendance at the wellness fairs has increased with more than 35 percent of staff participating in the last in-person event. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, staff continue to engage in the virtual offerings and appreciate them. The most popular offerings have included Zumba and yoga classes. More than 30 staff members have also engaged in Children's Bureau's new book club focused on diversity, equity and inclusion. Participants were assigned to groups of five to seven members who participate in recurring discussions facilitated by a peer leader. The groups are currently concluding their reading of *The New Jim Crow*.

FUNDING

This project is supported by the Indiana Department of Health, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity, in collaboration with Maternal and Child Health Title V funding.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

Children's Bureau's health and wellness initiatives were funded for another year of the Indiana Healthy Workplaces grant.

Offerings will still largely be virtual and will include 12 workshops with a focus on trauma-informed self-care; healthy living; and racism in the workplace and interpersonal relationships. This year's program will be particularly targeted at entry level and direct care staff in residential and community-based programs who have more prevalent health disparities and less access to wellness resources.



Indiana
Department
of
Health

Division of
**Nutrition &
Physical Activity**