

SHIRE OF MERREDIN

Move Your Balloon in June

Project Date:

June 2012

Project Location

Merredin, about 250km east of Perth, with a population of almost 3000

Target Group

Adults

Objectives

- Increase physical activity among residents, both in Merredin and the wider Eastern Wheatbelt community
- Establish and promote Heart Foundation walking and running groups
- Increase awareness of the Swap It, Don't Stop It message
- Increase knowledge of healthy eating in Merredin and the wider community.

Methods

To raise awareness and attract participants, four advertisements plus an editorial article appeared in the local newspaper explaining details of the first fun run and the Swap It message. A message board also was created, giving advice on ways to swap and allowing space for the public to detail what they had swapped.

What Happened?

A Fun run was held on the 1 July of 3km, 6km or 9km, followed by a healthy breakfast. More than 100 participated. Two cooking and nutrition classes, led by a dietician from the Eastern Wheatbelt Primary Health, were held on cooking vegetables and how to pack a healthy lunch box. A "Mums and Bubs" walking group met every Friday morning with about 30 women currently attending. A walk was followed by a play in the children's playground in town. Circuit classes were held in the local gym in Merredin, every Wednesday from 5.30pm to 6.30pm.

Results

Erin Kearny, the Shire of Merredin's physical activity program coordinator and coordinator of Move Your Balloon in June says some activities were better supported than others. The walking group was particularly successful.

Tips

- Towns with small populations might struggle to attract the numbers to make programs viable. Merredin has fewer than 3000. Erin Keamy says the different elements of the program ran concurrently and some programs attracted only small numbers.
- Miss Keamy believes it was hard for residents to find time to attend more than one activity and with hindsight, believes a different approach would have worked better. "We should have focused on one activity and finished that one before moving on to the next," she says.
- Miss Keamy also advises on the benefit of getting as many volunteers as possible to stage a fun run.



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SHIRE OF merredin

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What Now?

Erin Keamy says the town would like to participate in a similar program next year. The Mums and Bubs walking group continues to meet and it is hoped two more walking groups, including seniors and school-age children group, soon will be established.

Organization Contact

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