



For Immediate Release

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Live Healthy, Live Well Launches the Start! Walking Program in Lafayette County

Live Healthy Live Well is partnering with the University of Missouri Extension and the American Heart Association (AHA) to launch the Start! Walking Program for worksites and schools. The initiative aims to stimulate a culture of health and physical activity for area work sites and students.

Here's why: in the U.S., cardiovascular disease is a leading cause of mortality due to lack of physical activity. According to the AHA, 70 percent of Americans don't get enough exercise. For adults, it means that at least 25 percent of health care costs are a direct result of poor nutrition and a sedentary lifestyle.

A simple remedy is 30 minutes of exercise, daily. According to a Harvard University study, individuals who increase physical activity also increase life expectancy. For instance, for every hour of physical activity an individual increases his or her life expectancy by two hours. Other health benefits include increased heart rate, reduced chance of stroke, lower bad cholesterol (LDL) and blood pressure.

This is good for employers, too. The AHA reports that reducing just one health risk factor increases an employee's productivity by nine percent and reduces absenteeism by two percent. Additionally, every dollar spent on a worksite wellness program nets employers \$3.40 to \$7.88 through:

- Reduced health care costs by 20 to 55 percent
- Reduced short-term sick leave by 6 to 32 percent
- Increased productivity by 2 to 52 percent

The Start! Program is a simple way to implement a worksite or school-based wellness program and it's absolutely free. Participating sites map out a walking route on and/or around the premises. Participants are asked to log the distance they walk either at the site or on their own. Special recognition is given to participants who reach these benchmarks: 5 miles, 25 miles, 50 miles, 75 miles and 100 miles.

Additional program activities and resources developed by the AHA are:

- A Start! Walking Guide to help get you started
- Online tools like the My Activity Track set benchmarks and measure progress
- Activities for National Walking Day to increase participation
- Snacking Well resources to encourage healthy food choices
- Sample invitations
- Walking tracker form
- Samples of weekly motivational emails
- Posters, decals, icons and logos
- Plus all the resources you need to ensure your Start! Program succeeds

Here is a growing list of area establishments who have implemented the Start program: Wellington School District, Wellington Christian Community Center, Lafayette County Health Department, I-70 Community Hospital, Lexington Courthouse, Lexington United Methodist Church, Migrant Farm Workers, U.S. Bank (Higginsville), and

Be Active. Eat Healthy. Live Tobacco Free.

Recovery Lighthouse. For more information about Start, contact program coordinator Jennifer Butler at 816.617.5961 or Tom Corporon at 660.259.2440. You may also visit LiveHealthyLiveWell.org.

About Live Healthy Live Well

Live Healthy Live Well partners include Health Care Collaborative (HCC) of Rural Missouri, University of Missouri Extension and the Lafayette County Health Department as well as various stakeholders committed to making Lafayette County a healthier place to live, work and play. Live Healthy Live Well is a Social Innovation for Missouri program funded in part through the Missouri Foundation for Health. HCC serves as the fiscal agent.

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