

IMPACT

University of Idaho
Extension

Bear Lake County, 208.847.0344, Fax: 208.847.0344
21620 US Hwy 30, Montpelier, Idaho 83251

Expanding the *StrongWomen*[™] program in University of Idaho Extension

The Situation

The benefit of individuals participating in a strength training program has been documented by many researchers, but the availability of local health clubs or gyms in Idaho's rural counties is limited. For some individuals, the cost of membership is out of their reach. The *StrongWomen*[™] workshop has proven to be a great way for UI Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Educators to offer this health benefit to their local clientele.

UI Extension has been offering the *StrongWomen*[™] program since 2006. The program involves teaching one-hour workout sessions twice a week for 6 to 10 weeks. Because of the success of the program and the time commitment needed to offer it, the Eastern District's Family and Consumer Sciences working group saw a need to have additional staff members or volunteers trained to assist and/or lead future *StrongWomen*[™] workshops in our local areas.

After exploring the options of sending two or more individuals to a training offered in another state, we concluded that it would be more cost efficient to bring the trainer to us. By holding the training in Southeast Idaho, it would also make the *StrongWomen*[™] training cost affordable for other Idaho Extension Educators, staff or volunteers to attend.

A qualified *StrongWomen*[™] trainer was contacted to offer the training. Supplementary funding of \$2,500 was applied for and received from the Mildred Haberly Endowment through the College of Agricultural and Life Science's Margaret Ritchie School of Family and Consumer Sciences.

Our Response

The *StrongWomen*[™] strength training program was developed by staff at the Hancock Center at Tufts



Trainee learning the *StrongWomen's* Wide Leg Squat and how to teach it to others. Photo by Sharlene Woffinden.

University. Individuals completing their training are qualified to offer the *StrongWomen*[™] program.

Extension Educators who were currently offering the program would have more than one person qualified to lead a class, which would make scheduling this 6 to 10 week program easier.

The Idaho *StrongWomen*[™] training made it possible for up to 20 individuals to be trained at a reasonable cost compared to traveling out of state for the training. Those attending from the Eastern District were able to drive to the training and did not incur the additional cost of overnight lodging. An additional benefit for Eastern District Counties' office staff was less time out of the office. They were only away from the office for one day as compared to attending an out-of-state training that would require three or more days away from the office.

Program Outcomes

The Eastern Extension District had 10 volunteers/staff from seven counties and five volunteers from Boundary County complete the training. Three Eastern District counties without a UI Extension Family and Consumer Sciences educator, Bonneville, Caribou and Oneida, sent staff/volunteers to receive the training with plans to offer *StrongWomen*TM sessions in 2012.

With the endowment funds and attendee fees, all of the expenses from the training were paid. Boundary County *StrongWomen*TM program received a travel scholarship of \$125.00 to assist with their cost of driving down from Northern Idaho. The remaining surplus funds were divided between the two new *StrongWomen*TM programs in Caribou and Oneida Counties, as equipment scholarships, to be used to purchase weights.

Since the training in November 2011, fourteen (14) of the 15 Idaho trainees have lead or assisted with 25 *StrongWomen*TM sessions in seven counties. Five sessions were 6 weeks and two sessions were 10 weeks in length. A total of 258 women participated in these seven sessions. The following chart shows, by county, the impact of the trainees.

County	# trainee	# Sessions	Total participants
Bannock	1 Staff	2 x 6 weeks	35
Bear Lake	2 Staff	2 x 6 weeks	16
Bonneville	3 Volunteer	4 x6 weeks*	24
Bingham	1 Staff	5 x 6 weeks	60
Caribou	1 Staff	No sessions	0
Franklin	1 Staff	2 x 6 weeks	60
Oneida	1 Staff	2 x 10 weeks	15
Boundary	5 Volunteers	8 x 10 weeks**	48
Totals	15	25 sessions	258

*Session offered one morning and one evening.

**Sessions were offered at 6:30 am, 8:30 am, 10:30 am and at 5:30 pm.

Participants Outcomes

Boundary County has offered *StrongWomen*TM session's continually for over 7 years, with several individual repeating the sessions. Two participants credit their continued participation in *StrongWomen*TM with saving their lives. One individual experienced acute pulmonary edema in the spring of 2011 and was told by her physician that her participation in the program directly impacted her survival of such a severe

case. She had attended sessions for 3 years prior to her attack. At her 1-year anniversary of the attack she was back using her pre-illness weights.

The strength training classes, according to the doctors and therapists of four ladies, also from Boundary County, who had knee or hips replaced felt that their recovery was much faster because of their participation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Sharlene Woffinden, 4-H/FCS Educator
 University of Idaho Extension, Bear Lake County
 21620 US Hwy 30
 Montpelier, Idaho 83254
 Phone: 208.847.0344
 Fax: 208.847.0344
 E-mail: sharlene@uidaho.edu

Laura L. Sant, MS, RD, Extension Educator
 University of Idaho Extension, Franklin County
 561 W Oneida
 Preston, ID 83263-1293
 Phone: 208.852.1097
 Fax: 208.852.2812
 E-mail: lsant@uidaho.edu

Marnie Spencer, MS, RD, Extension Educator
 University of Idaho Extension, Bingham County
 583 W. Sexton
 Blackfoot, ID 83221
 Phone: 208.785.8060
 Fax: 208.785.2511
 E-mail: marniers@uidaho.edu

Carol Hampton, Extension Educator
 University of Idaho Extension, Boundary County
 6447 Kootenai, PO Box 267
 Bonners Ferry, ID 83805
 Phone: 208.267.3235
 Fax: 208.267.3056
 E-mail: champton@uidaho.edu