

Marsing's Community Conversation utilizes teen and adult input in decision-making

AT A GLANCE

University of Idaho Extension facilitates youth and adults to investigate the current health culture in Marsing through photo analysis conducted at a community conversation.

The Situation

According to Academic Medicine: Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges, the United States spends \$2.7 trillion a year on health care, more than any other country by far, and yet we are not healthy. In fact, we lose \$227 billion in productivity each year because of poor health. This is not sustainable — and is the reason behind the national Well Connected Communities initiative.

The purpose of the Well Connected Communities effort is to build a culture of health. When referring to building a Culture of Health for all Americans, it is more than simply “not being sick.” A true culture of health means embracing a definition of health as outlined by the World Health Organization — a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not just the absence of sickness or frailty. Additionally, this means shifting the values — and the actions — in the United States so that health becomes a conscious act in all that individuals do.

Our Response

Idaho understands the need to act with a Culture of Health initiative. Therefore, Idaho communities have taken efforts to investigate and take action in



Youth and adults present at the Marsing Community Conversation to analyze photos and provide input.

identifying their current health situation. In Marsing, one of these communities, this exploration began with the creation of a specifically focused Health Task Force to discuss how the current health situation would be determined. Health Task Force members convened and determined members would take photographs they felt represented the health situation of Marsing, such as sidewalks, grocery stores in the community, etc. Health Task Force members were youth and adult residents in the Marsing community.

Over a series of three months, Health Task Force members convened for updates, captured photos and submitted these photos to the family and consumer sciences Extension educator in Owyhee County for

compilation for discussion at a scheduled Marsing Community Conversation event.

The Marsing Community Conversation consisted of invested youth and adult community stakeholders and the purpose of this organized community event would be to conduct a photo analysis that would encourage discussion surrounding the current health situation of Marsing, specifically the physical environment. It was planned that at this event, photo analysis would encourage discussion to examine the current health situation of Marsing.

Program Outcomes

During the Community Conversation, hosted at the University of Idaho Extension office in Owyhee County, a 4-H teen health advocate guided more than 18 youth and adult participants through the discussion of 37 photos. Adult participants included a county commissioner and school district staff, along with community members with various perspectives and experience.

Strong youth-adult partnerships are essential in building well connected communities. Through Health Task Force activities and the community conversation, youth were actively involved in the collection and submission of photographs. Additionally, leading facilitation by youth represents a true youth-adult partnership.

The Marsing Community Conversation report was presented to the Health Task Force (January 2019). When this report was presented, members unanimously agreed with the assessment report and to transition into a health coalition. It was determined that the Marsing Health Coalition would continue efforts with youth contributing an integral role. The Marsing Health Coalition determined that analysis of the community health situation will continue, emphasizing additional health priority areas.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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University of Idaho Extension Healthy Living Teen Advocate Annie Miller co-facilitates Marsing's Community Conversation.

The Future

By completing an initial examination of the current situation in Marsing, assessing the readiness level, and using evidence-based resources such as the county health rankings, Marsing is positioned to move forward in building a culture of health. The health coalition will have the opportunity to explore the physical environment and other areas as they develop a health action plan that engages youth and adults in partnership.

Moving forward, Marsing will utilize the Community Conversation report, generated from discussion at the event, to prioritize health focus efforts as the Health Task Force transitions into a Health Coalition. By completing an initial examination of the current situation in Marsing, the readiness level will be a valuable tool in creating the framework and a call to action can be implemented. Through the Community Conversation and efforts that carry forward, Marsing will have the opportunity to explore environmental areas that should be addressed and prioritized to positively change Marsing.