

Walk Kansas



When 417 people joined 73 Walk Kansas teams in March to walk the distance across Kansas, little did they know they would log enough miles to circle the globe 2.68 times! Southwind Extension District team participants logged 67,068 miles over the 8 week fitness challenge. This averages 2.87 miles or 43 minutes per person per day. The average of 301 minutes per person per week surpasses the recommendation of 150 minutes of physical activity per week from the US Guidelines for Physical Activity.

Experts know that exercising has many health benefits. Increased energy was the top result reported by participants this year. Participants also reported an increase in endurance, better attitude, improved sleep, increased muscle strength, increased flexibility, decreased weight, and better able to manage stress being. A smaller number reported a decrease in their blood pressure and lowered their cholesterol.

In a parallel challenge to track fruit and vegetable consumption, team members reported eating 61,552 cups of fruits and vegetables during Walk Kansas. This averages to 2.6 cups of fruits and vegetables per person per day. While this is a great effort, it still falls short of the daily consumption advised by the US Dietary Guidelines. The recommendations vary by age, sex and activity level, but most adults should eat 2-2.5 cups of vegetables and 1.5-2 cups of fruit each day, for a combined goal of 3.5-4.5 cups daily.

Forty one of the Walk Kansas teams were from worksites. Work wellness programs, such as Walk Kansas, can have a payoff for employers in decreasing healthcare costs, increased productivity, reduced absenteeism, and improved morale. It is estimated an employer's direct cost from lost time of an employee totals nearly \$0.15 on every \$1.00 spent on payroll. For every \$1 an employer spends in employee wellness has a return of \$3. This year's employer return is \$5,166 for those who participated in the program.

With all the health benefits of physical activity, it is no surprise that experts have determined there are also health costs associated with inactivity. According to research done at North Carolina State University several years ago, the cost estimate for inactivity is \$1,412 in direct and indirect health costs per inactive person per year. By helping Southwind District participants become more active, the potential estimated cost savings of Walk Kansas in the Southwind Extension District is \$588,804.

Water Quality in Southeast Kansas

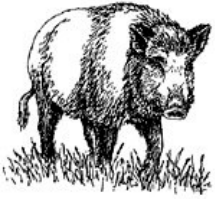
Looking back through history, specific generations have become known for key achievements, traits and ideals. Stereotypes are broadly applied across the United States but what about us? What will this generation of Kansans be remembered for?

In October 2013, Governor Brownback issued a call to action to his Administration to develop a 50-Year Vision for the Future of Water in Kansas stating, "Water and the Kansas economy are directly linked. Water is a finite resource and without further planning and action we will no longer be able to meet our state's current needs, let alone growth."

During the Spring of 2015, K-State Research & Extension Staff in the Southwind District assisted with 5 of the more than 50 goal team meetings and stakeholder outreach events throughout the state of Kansas. Facilitation skills and local resource knowledge greatly assisted the Regional Goal Leadership Team, Kansas Water Office and the Kansas Department of Agriculture better define the water supply future in our State. Participants openly discussed water issues that directly affect Kansans, including: reservoir storage, water quality, and public education on water conservation. Southwind Staff assisted at public meetings in Fort Scott, Paola, Erie, Emporia, and Ottawa.

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Feral Hog Management



Wild pigs (also known as wild hogs or feral pigs) are not native to the Americas. Brought by early Spanish explorers, they have now spread across the United States. Wild pigs are highly adaptable and capable of fending for themselves, making them capable of existing in a variety of habitats. Wherever pigs are present, they become a problem, causing damage to livestock, agricultural fields, forests, and the environment, and threatening native wildlife. In the Southwind District, Bourbon County has been impacted the most by the increasing problems associated with feral hogs.

With the help of K-State Research and Extension Wildlife Specialist Charlie Lee, a public forum was set up to address the topic of feral hogs in the area. Southwind and Marias des Cygnes Extension Districts partnered with the United States Department of Agriculture - Animal and Plant Health Inspections Service (USDA-APHIS) to explain feral hog biology and eradication efforts. USDA-APHIS is the branch of the federal government who contracts with the Kansas Department of Agriculture for the control of feral hog populations within the Kansas border. Landowners had the opportunity, not only to learn about feral hogs and control efforts, but also to express their opinions and ideas on the subject.

This meeting, a collaboration between two Extension Districts and the Federal Government, demonstrated how multiple agencies can work together to inform citizens about issues of public concern. All agencies and individuals involved now have a greater understanding about feral hogs, and how we can work together to help reduce their spread in Southeast Kansas.

Building Leadership through Character Development

In the Spring of 2015, the Southwind Extension District introduced fifteen sixth grade students at St. Paul USD #505 to the leadership/team-building curriculum Let's Play. The purpose of this program was to familiarize each student with K-State Research & Extension, the Southwind Extension District, and 4-H Youth Development.

At the start of the series, only two youth knew about 4-H and not one student knew about Extension. Students were presented guidelines and expectations for the Let's Play series on the first day. Each session was a build on what they learned from previous sessions through group activities requiring a team effort. Students learned about the Six Pillars of Character and the Experiential Learning Model. The different activities provided students with the opportunity to gain important life skills, such as: communication, cooperation, and leadership.

Students reported that as a class they were able to develop friendships outside of their typical group of friends by being able to gain a better understanding of others through communication and patience. At the end of the series, they were able to identify the presenter, organization worked for, and the K-State Research and Extension motto. One of the students asked if this program was going to happen next school year because of how much fun it was. The Let's Play series will add one new school each year in the future.

Kids Can Cook



The Southwind District Family Nutrition Program (FNP) offered our annual *Kids Can Cook* classes in 9 locations throughout the District. Youth must have completed 2nd-5th grades to be eligible to participate in the three-day-long classes. 163 youth registered for the classes offered in the Southwind District for the summer of 2015.

Kids Can Cook is a hands-on class that teaches basic cooking, baking and food safety skills that will last a lifetime. For many of the youth, this is their first real experience in a kitchen. Basics - such as the importance of handwashing, safe use of kitchen equipment, proper measuring, cutting and chopping - are taught and youth are provided the opportunity to practice their new skills.

Several youth have been surprised to discover they liked new dishes even if it had an ingredient that wasn't a favorite. Fresh herbs were introduced into several recipes as a new experience - the youth liked the addition of mint in the smoothies. Each participant gets a Kids Can Cook cookbook with the recipes from class and many parents report that the kids love to show off their new cooking skills at home!

Southwind Extension District

Erie Office: 100 South Main, Erie, KS 66733 (620) 244-3826
Fort Scott Office: 210 South National, Fort Scott, KS 66701 (620) 223-3720
Iola Office: 1 North Washington, Iola, KS 66749 (620) 365-2242

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