



# Three Stories From the Field





*“Thirty minutes a day of walking will prevent many cases of diabetes, hypertension, and other chronic diseases. Walking is the simplest, easiest way for most people to exercise.”*

*-- Richard Carmona, Surgeon General of the US,  
at the Walk 21 Conference in Portland Oregon, 2002*

## A Healthy Victory! Moon Walk 2008

For the third year in a row the Quad City Health Initiative's Wellness Champions accepted the Moon Walk challenge. This year's goal, 954,800 miles, the equivalent of two round trips to the moon, pitted the Quad Cities against teams from Peoria and Champaign-Urbana in a virtual community race that reinforces the importance of daily exercise.

Moon Walk started in Peoria in 2003 and in 2006 QCHI's Wellness Champions accepted a challenge to join the race, winning in just 5 record-setting weeks and logging in over a million miles. Of course Peoria wanted a re-match and they won Moon Walk 2007 by a narrow margin, reclaiming the rights to the coveted Moon Walk trophy. In January, 2008 the call went out again and Quad City Moon Walk team captains and sponsors were ready to meet the challenge and regain the trophy.



**In keeping with the spirit of Moon Walk, members of Mission Control dressed up as their favorite stellar objects during the official launch.**

## A Celestial Launch!

Moon Walk is a fun way to encourage members of the community to exercise daily and make healthy choices regarding diet and exercise. In keeping with the spirit of the race, the members of Mission Control showed up in costumes depicting their favorite stellar object at the official Moon Walk 2008 launch in the John Deere Planetarium on the campus of Augustana College.

By the launch date teams had already registered and team captains were hard at work recruiting people of all ages and organizing teams at schools, agencies, churches and businesses. Moon Walkers kept daily logs of their mileage and other types of exercise were converted into

“miles walked” using the Moon Walk conversion chart. Every week during the race, Mission Control totaled the community's miles and checked-in on the progress of our competitors.

Mary Acord, a resident of Rock Island's Friendship Manor, was recruited into Moon Walk by Dorothy White, a Parish Nurse at Riverside United Methodist Church. At 89, Mary stays active doing Jazzercise several times a week and in her 70's she was in the Senior Olympics so exercise isn't new to her.

“I was raised on a farm.” says Acord, “I'm used to getting up early and I enjoyed walking on the hills and the curves and seeing the flowers in the spring. It was a little bit of a challenge to keep track of the miles, but I enjoyed it.” Mission Control gave Mary its first ever Inspiration Award for promoting exercise at all ages.

**Moon Walk 2008 was officially launched with mayoral proclamations including one from East Moline mayor, John Thodos.**





96 teams in the Quad Cities, like the one at St. Ambrose University, helped walk our community to victory with many first-time walkers participating.



## A Community Celebration

After 12 weeks of spirited competition, the Quad Cities was declared the winner of Moon Walk 2008. 96 teams and 5,120 individuals participated in the event accumulating a record-breaking 1,250,292 miles and the Quad Cities re-captured the Moon Walk walking stick trophy for another year.

In July a Splashdown celebration at the Rogalski Center on the campus of St. Ambrose University recognized the top performing teams as well as individuals who accumulated more than 1,000 miles.

"We congratulate Peoria and Champaign-Urbana on an excellent race," said Nicole Carkner, Project Coordinator for the Quad City Health Initiative. "We are proud of all the Moon Walk participants and that the number of first-time walkers and participants new to regular exercise increased this year. Everyone is a winner in this event since this community-wide competition has motivated and encouraged individuals to incorporate physical activity into their daily lives."



A victory parade began the Splashdown celebration in the Rogalski Center at St. Ambrose University.



Quad City participants walked a record-breaking 1,250,292 miles and re-captured the Moon Walk walking stick trophy from Peoria.

## Moon Walk Statistics

Moon Walk	2006	2007	2008
# Teams	81	100	96
# Registered Walkers (end of race)	6,349	5,012	5,120
Average Size of Team	78	50	53
# of Participants New to Moon Walk	6,349	2,423	2,758
% New to Moon Walk	100	48	54
# of Participants New to Regular Exercise	n/a	471	808
% New to Regular Exercise	n/a	9	16
Total Miles	1,216,040	1,176,031	1,250,292
Total Miles Per Registered Walker	192	235	244



Mary Acord, a resident of Rock Island's Friendship Manor, was honored during Splashdown with the first Moon Walk Inspiration Award for promoting exercise at all ages.



*“Teeth are meant to last a lifetime. By taking good care of your teeth and gums, you can help protect them for years to come. Tooth decay is not just a problem for children. It can happen as long as you have natural teeth in your mouth.”*

*- Senior Smiles brochure, provided by the Alliance of the American Dental Association*

### **Special Thanks to the following Caregiver Support Groups**

- Moline In-Touch Caregivers Support Group
- Davenport Caregivers Support Group
- Davenport Low Vision Support Group
- Davenport Parkinson’s Support Group
- Grandparents Support Group
- Kewanee Senior Caregivers Support Group
- Moline After Work Caregivers Support Group
- Powerful Tools for Caregivers

## **Senior Smiles**

Educating the Quad City Community about the importance of oral health has always been the goal of the QCHI Smiles For All team. In 2007, Smiles For All was selected to receive a Senior Smiles grant of 250 oral health "kits" for seniors from the Alliance of the American Dental Association. This grant enabled the team to expand its oral health education program to seniors and their caregivers in the Quad Cities.

Caregiver Support groups with regular meetings were identified through the Center for Active Seniors, Inc. (CASI) in Davenport and through Alternatives for the Older Adult in Moline. The majority of the participants in these caregiver support groups are senior citizens themselves so the presentations were designed to provide information on the care of one's own teeth as well as information on caring for the oral health of a loved one.

The health education presentations were led by Eileen Cacioppo, MS, RDH with the support of the members of the Smiles For All team and specifically the members of the Oral Health and the Older Adult workgroup. Ms. Cacioppo has over 40 years of experience in dental hygiene, holds a M.S. degree in Health Education, is currently a member of the Iowa Board of Dental Examiners and frequently provides trainings for nursing home staffs.



**Naomi and Ray Grimes learn about the need for regular dental check-ups and oral health care from Eileen Cacioppo, MS, RDH during one of the Senior Smiles presentations at CASI.**



Dee and Brian "Buz" Walters proudly display the oral health educational materials and free product samples that were provided by the Smiles For All team through a grant from the Alliance of the American Dental Association.



## Oral Health Care is Essential at Every Age

The need to focus on the oral health of seniors was based on reports issued by the United States Surgeon General stating that low-income senior citizens have an 80% higher prevalence of untreated oral disease than any other group. A longer lifespan means that oral health is just as important in older adults as it is at any other age. Fillings may weaken and need attention, diabetes and other diseases can reduce the body's resistance to infection, medications can create dry mouth and aging can affect nutritional needs. Dentures and denture care also are issues that need to be discussed with this group.

"The presentations were about 45 minutes with plenty of time for questions," says Cacioppo, "Dry mouth is a big issue with this age group since it is a side effect of many medications. They also asked questions about many of the products on the market for sensitive teeth and even whitening products."

Cacioppo talked about the need for regular dental check-ups and oral cancer screenings, the importance of diet and nutrition and entertained them by reciting the familiar old rhyme for brushing, "Up like a rocket, down like a plane, back and forth like a choo choo train," explaining that the new research encourages you to gently brush all sides of your teeth using small round motions or short back-and-forth strokes with a soft toothbrush or a powered toothbrush. After one of the presentations an elderly woman admitted that she was surprised to learn new things adding, "I guess you can teach an old dog new tricks."

"These were lively groups with lots of questions." Cacioppo says, "Many of the participants are not only taking care of their spouses or parents but some were taking care of grandchildren so the questions spanned many age groups." At the end of the presentation everyone received a free oral health kit provided by the Alliance of the American Dental Association grant.

### Key Facts

- 30% of adults aged 65 and older have untreated dental cavities. Periodontal infections are more common in the elderly with about 23% of 65-74 year olds having several periodontal diseases. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2006)
- Many seniors take medications that have the complicating side effect of reducing salivary flow, resulting in dry mouth. Reduction of salivary flow contributes to increased dental decay. ("Oral Health and the Older Adult," Kenneth Shay, DDS, MS, 2006)
- The vast majority of older Americans pay for dental services out-of-pocket. Medicare does not cover preventive or routine services for oral health. Only half of the country's state Medicaid programs cover dental services. Only 8% of our nation's retired citizens have private dental insurance. (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, 2006)



**Baseline measurements, taken at the beginning of the program in September, helped assess the children's body-mass index, balance, flexibility and endurance. Three additional measurement points took place during the school year.**



*"Today about 25 million kids (ages 2-19) in the United States are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight. That's nearly one of every three kids. Overweight kids are more likely to become overweight adults. Some experts believe that if obesity among kids continues to increase at this rate, our current generation could become the FIRST in American history to live shorter lives than their parents."* -- The Alliance for a Healthier Generation

## Healthy After School 2008

The Quad City Health Initiative's 2002 Community Health Assessment indicated that obesity, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, all risk factors for cardiovascular disease, were critical issues for adults in our community. QCHI's Wellness Champions decided to design a pilot project and start to collect data about the health habits of children with the goal of encouraging a healthier lifestyle at an earlier age.

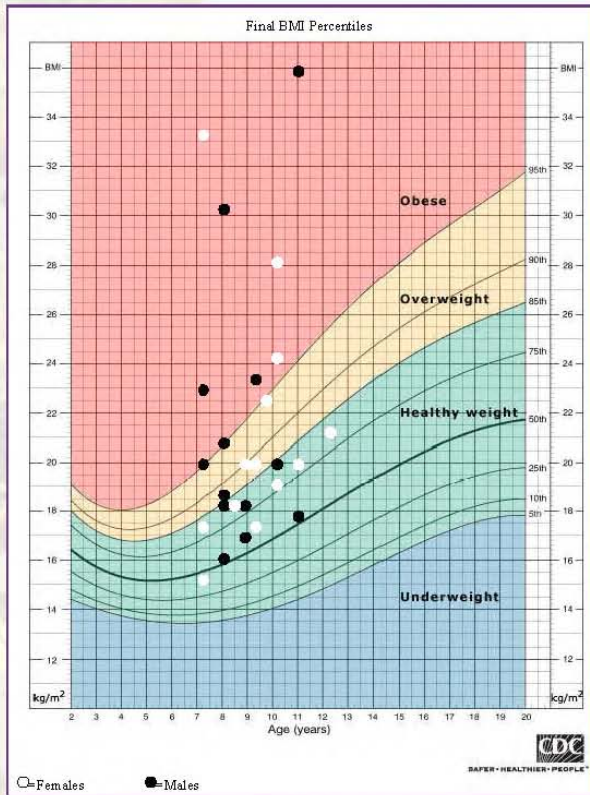
The Wellness Champions knew that there were significant education efforts already underway in schools so the group decided to focus on those critical hours between 3 and 6 p.m. In the fall of 2007, the Wellness Champions partnered with the City of Rock Island's Martin Luther King Center after school program. The Healthy After School Project focused on improving the nutritional content of the meals served and encouraging at least 30 minutes of physical activity every day.

## Healthy Habits Need To Begin Early

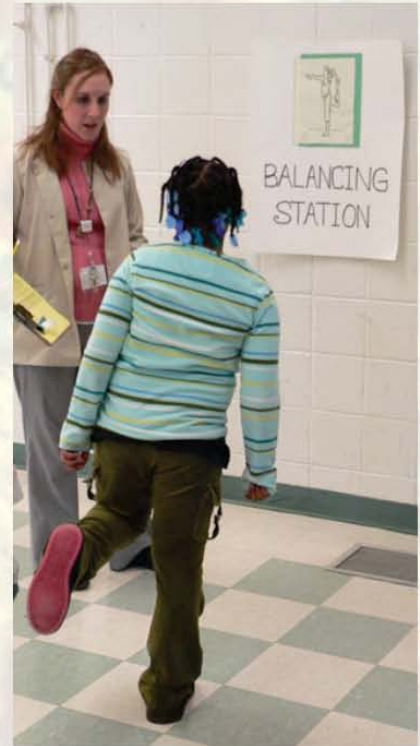
Volunteers across the community were recruited to help with the Healthy After School Project at the King Center. During the first phase, dieticians affiliated with Hy-Vee Food Stores reviewed and made recommendations about the food options served to the students.

"This was a critical first step," says Jerry Jones, Director of the Martin Luther King Center, "since many of our kids eat their main evening meal while at the King Center. We wanted to make sure we were providing them with wholesome and nutritious food that would model good eating habits."

Baseline measurements were also taken in September with the assistance of nursing staff and exercise specialists from Genesis Health System and the Trinity Visiting Nurse and Homecare Association. These included measurements of the children's body-mass index, balance, flexibility and endurance including a 1-mile walk/run. Three additional measurement points were established with a final set of measurements taking place in May near the end of the school year.



Maintaining a healthy weight is a challenge even during one school year. At the end of the year most of the kids were above the 50th percentile for body-mass index.



## The Results

The data was collected and analyzed by the Genesis Health System Biostatistics Group. Dr. Jon H. Lemke reported that 86 children, ages 5 to 11, participated in the Healthy After School project and 60 were assessed at least once during the year.

Although the Wellness Champions are well versed in the challenges of childhood obesity and inactivity, some of the results were still surprising. The results indicated that participants struggled with weight increases even in just one school year. The sit and reach measurements indicated that as the females grew their reach decreased but as the males grew their reach increased. The greatest success was the improvement in the times for the 1-mile walk/run.

"The data shows that this is a time when these children are growing and going through lots of changes," said Dr. Lemke. "Changes in weight and height might account for some of the differences in flexibility and reach. One thing we do know from the data is that weight is one of the biggest challenges these children face." He recommended that the students be given more opportunities to test themselves during the course of the school year so they can follow their own physical progress.

"This is a time when habits are being formed that can last a lifetime so this pilot project has shown us that there is a real need to educate this age group on the importance of eating healthy and finding an exercise activity that they enjoy," says Bud Phillis, OCHI's Board Chair.

The team knows that change takes time so the Wellness Champions are continuing their partnership with the Martin Luther King Center into the next school year. The group plans to look more closely at food portion control, hunger cues and individual wellness plans for the children.



A lively game of dodge ball was just one of many physical activities participants had the opportunity to explore during the course of the Healthy After School Program.



# Our Goals

- **Raise Awareness** – To increase the knowledge of consumers and providers about matters relevant to the health of the community.
- **Develop Projects** – To encourage the growth or development of new projects in the Quad Cities that address unmet needs or gaps in health service.
- **Foster Collaboration** – To bring consumers and/or providers together for the express purpose of coordinating services and maximizing resources to improve the health of the community.
- **Develop Plans and Reports** – To support the collection, tracking and reporting of data relevant to the health status of the community.
- **Encourage Advocacy** – To educate the board and the community on QCHI’s mission as well as grants, regulations, ordinances, policies, and legislation that will improve the health of the community.
- **Access Funding** – To heighten awareness and share information about private and public resources that are available to improve the health of the community.

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