

2015 OAAA Small Grants Case Study:

Associated Recreation Council and Seattle Parks and Recreation Back in Motion Campaign



What is the...

Associated Recreation Council?

The Associated Recreation Council (ARC) is an independent, non-profit organization that partners with Seattle Parks and Recreation to offer recreational and lifelong learning programs, classes and activities. ARC's **Lifelong Recreation Program** serves adults 50+ in Seattle Parks and Recreation facilities.

The Associated Recreation Council is an established provider of recreation and physical activity programs to Seattle seniors aged 50+. They served 7138 seniors in 257 classes in 2015. Their 2015 OAAA mini-grant aimed to improve accessibility for participants with osteoarthritis and/or mobility issues. Their plan involved assessing facility accessibility, training instructors in arthritis issues and developing arthritis-specific programming.

Addressing “aging out” of Seniors in Seattle

Recreation leaders at ARC classes noticed that many seniors were “aging” out of their programs and classes—leaving or failing to reenroll in classes because of arthritis pain, declining health, or mobility limitations. This concerned recreation leaders, because seniors becoming sedentary can accelerate decline into poor health and low mobility.

Overall Project Goal: Increase access to low-impact, low-intensity fitness opportunities for adults with arthritis or limited mobility.

Key Project Activities

Reach people with arthritis and/or mobility issues

- Initiate a marketing campaign targeted to seniors
- Assess facilities and correct accessibility barriers

Ensure that the program is effective at meeting the needs of those with arthritis and/or mobility issues

- Conduct pre-, mid-, and post-course self-evaluations for *Walk with Ease* and *Enhance Fitness* programs

Adopt Low Impact-Programming in all five geographic regions of Seattle

- Add arthritis-appropriate programs in all five regions

Implement Low-Impact Fitness Programming

- Train 2 instructors each in the Arthritis Foundation's *Walk with Ease* and *Aquatic Programs*
- Train 35 instructors in chronic pain/exercise issues

Maintain changes and continue to provide arthritis appropriate programming

- Continue low-impact programming in all regions
- Keep participants informed about new opportunities

Lessons Learned from ARC's Project

Use Existing Resources

Seattle Parks and Recreation publishes a regular brochure with class listings. For the launch of Back in Motion, they used this brochure to highlight arthritis-friendly classes.

Leverage the Skills of Partner Organizations

ARC partnered with two organizations:

- **The University of Washington:** UW Occupational Therapy Students developed a tool to evaluate the accessibility of local trails. UW research evaluated the *Enhanced Fitness Program* in partnership with ARC.
- **Outdoors for All:** An adaptive exercise organization that helped ARC offer biking, kayaking, and other outdoor classes

Develop a Maintenance Plan to sustain the program

ARC used OAAA mini-grant funding to train 18 fitness instructors in topic related to arthritis, developing skills they can use in future classes. ARC recreation specialists developed goals to continue offering arthritis-appropriate

Texas State University Employee Wellness Program

Arthritis-Appropriate Programming within a Comprehensive Wellness Program



WELLCATS

What is the...

Employee Wellness Program at Texas State?

In spring 2015, Texas State University funded a 4-month pilot employee wellness program, because employees had responded positively to the idea on an employee needs and interest assessment. The program includes health assessments, wellness checks, exercise classes, and educational Lunch & Learn sessions. The pilot program was generally successful and Texas State committed to expanding it and ensuring its permanence.

With 3,400 employees on main campus, Texas State University is the largest employer in San Marcos, TX. The *Wellcats* Employee Wellness program began in Spring 2015, was expanded into a two year pilot program, and has since continued toward long-term institutionalization. The purpose of the OAAA's grant was to implement new features and accommodations within the *Wellcats* program that promoted participation by employees with osteoarthritis and other chronic diseases.

Designing comprehensive & inclusive physical activity opportunities for employees with arthritis

[The OA Action Alliance Physical Activity Guide](#) includes a variety of strategies to encourage physical activity among employees with osteoarthritis. These strategies include auditing walking paths for arthritis-accessibility, offering arthritis-appropriate physical activity interventions, and ensuring that programs not specifically designed for arthritis are nevertheless inclusive of those with arthritis and/or functional limitations.

Project Goal: Improve program options and resources for people with arthritis and/or chronic conditions within a nascent employee wellness program at a large public university.

Key Project Activities

Train staff to teach fitness classes in a way that is appropriate for people with osteoarthritis

- Training aimed to increase the accessibility of classes for people with OA or mobility limitations
- 10 instructors were certified through ACE Chronic Musculoskeletal Challenges and Exercise Training

Adopt new low-impact classes—land and water-based

- 3 low-impact aquatic classes and 2 low-impact land-based classes offered during grant's academic year

Implement the Evidence-Based Walk with Ease Program (WWE) & Reach Adults with Arthritis

- 7 Instructors trained in WWE, marketing materials distributed, met Fall and Spring attendance goals

Enhance Walkability by ranking paths by difficulty and posting information to University map and app.

- Audited walking paths and assigned difficulties. Marketing process stalled by update timeline for app.

Lessons Learned from Texas State

Use grant funding to make long-term investments toward sustainability

- Texas' State's grant request included substantial funds for training fitness instructors. At the conclusion of the grant period, instructors had completed 31 trainings. Various instructors completed Walk with Ease instructor training, ACE Chronic Musculoskeletal Challenges and Exercise Training, ACE Orthopedic Exercise Specialty Certification, and Aquatic Exercise Association Fitness Professional Training Certification. Having a pool of trained instructors lessens costs to continue offering arthritis-appropriate programming.

Monitor Interest and Reach, adapt programs to meet demand

- TSU developed attendance goals and tracked attendance so that they could measure program reach and interest
- After initial classes, TSU noticed that Walk with Ease was high-demand and trained 2 instructors more than planned.