

Increasing Access Success Story

YWCA Crabtree Corner Saturday Family Program



Why it started...

The Saturday Family Program has been operating out of the YWCA Crabtree Corner for over 10 years now. Crabtree Corner is located in downtown eastside Vancouver, one of Canada's most impoverished neighbourhoods. The Saturday Family Program was originally developed based on an identified need in the community for social opportunities for families on low incomes.

What it is...

The Saturday Family Program is a drop-in program targeting families on low incomes who live in east Vancouver. The program is completely free to participants. The day begins with a lunch at Crabtree Corner, then bus fare is distributed and a facilitator and three volunteers lead the group on an outing. The focus is on educating the community members about the resources available to them in the surrounding neighbourhoods. The facilitator tries to vary the type of outing from week to week, examples of physically active trips include: going to the beach or the park, public swimming or skating, and bowling.

Why this initiative is a promising practice...

Although the Saturday Family Program is not strictly focused on physical activity, and some outings do not involve exercise at all, the organization of the program is the reason Everybody Active has chosen it to be profiled. The program addresses common barriers for low income adults trying to access recreation, such as transportation, childcare, cost, and invasive application processes.

The Saturday Family Program operates a 'no questions asked', 'everyone is welcome' drop-in program (although space is limited so participants are encouraged to call ahead). This program involves the children as well so seeking or paying for childcare is not an issue. Due to funding links with an organization like the YWCA, Crabtree Corner has the budget to pay for lunch, bus transportation for the outings, and any admission costs. This allows community members to participate in activities that they would miss out on otherwise.

The Saturday Family Program provides a supportive environment and opportunities for social networking. Feedback from participants has been very positive. The following quotes come from past participants:

- "I enjoy coming and meeting other parents."
- "I get a lot of support for my family. This helps me so much."
- "The volunteers are always willing to help. My kids love them."



- "This is a very friendly, safe, family program."

Thanks to the dedication of the program facilitator and three volunteers, the program continues to run every Saturday. Weekly participants range in number from 8 to 25 participants. A core group of participants has emerged and there is a strong sense of community in the group.

Find out more...

Check out the YWCA Crabtree Corner's programs and services for information on their other programs that promote healthy living.

www.ywcavan.org/content/Crabtree_Corner_Programs_Services/602

To learn more about how you could offer a similar program in *your community*, check out the "How did they do it?" profile on the Everybody Active page @ www.physicalactivitystrategy.ca.