

MAKING IT BETTER: CREATING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

A "COMMUNITIES PUTTING PREVENTION TO WORK" MEDIA CAMPAIGN

When it comes to creating healthy and active communities, small efforts can add up to big results. Thanks to the good works of citizen leaders who are taking steps to improve the health of the community, everyone benefits wherever they live, work, learn or play. Neighbors at Glendale Townhomes in southeast Minneapolis are harvesting fresh vegetables from their new community garden to feed residents and supplement their on-site food shelf. Firefighters in Rochester are enjoying a workplace garden at the firehouse to facilitate healthier meals. A North Minneapolis convenience store owner is stocking more fresh produce along with recipes to inspire healthy eating. Eleven Olmsted County childcare facilities are meeting new physical education requirements for more than 1,300 kids.

These are among the many success stories of everyday heroes who are working to create greater access to healthier food choices and more opportunities for physical activity in their neighborhoods, schools and workplaces. These stories represent the true essence of community building – hands-on solutions that are implemented close to home, bringing people together to make positive, long-lasting and healthy changes. The Minnesota Department of Health, Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support, and Olmsted County Public Health Services recognized the power of these success stories to inspire others and developed a media campaign to highlight them.

BACKGROUND

Obesity is a growing epidemic, and in Minnesota, it is estimated that more than 60 percent of residents are overweight or obese, 31 percent do not meet federal guidelines for physical activity, and 85 percent do not meet the federal dietary guidelines for fruit and vegetable intake.

Despite this, there is great opportunity to affect positive change in policy, systems, environments and attitudes regarding healthy activity and nutrition among Minnesotans. As part of the national Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) program, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support (MDHFS) and Olmsted County

Public Health Services (OCPHS) were asked to develop, implement and evaluate a media campaign to support community efforts related to obesity prevention. By launching a media campaign that motivates residents to take action and advocate for these systemic changes, lasting impact can be created and positively affect the health of residents for years to come. Media campaigns, based on market research and targeted to priority audiences, are an affordable and effective method for changing behaviors and motivating people into action. Research has found that mass media campaigns can, by themselves, change health behavior, and that the most successful health behavior change movements feature a mass media component along with community interventions.



Making it Better

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Level K
Consultant's Report

CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

The Minnesota CPPW media team, consisting of the three health departments and Haberman, a Minneapolis-based strategic communications firm, worked closely together to develop, implement, and evaluate the "Making it Better" media campaign, including all of the creative work, guided by the firm's 'storytelling' approach to communicating value and encouraging participation in the campaign. The Making it Better campaign, which took place concurrently in Minneapolis and Olmsted County, was a community initiative that brought people together to discover, share and celebrate stories of people taking action to provide others with greater access to healthier foods and new opportunities for physical activity. The campaign demonstrated how schools, neighborhoods and workplaces are driving community change and making healthy choices the easy choices.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Everyone can play a part in creating places and practices that support healthy lifestyles and prevent chronic health problems such as diabetes and heart disease. The Making it Better campaign set out to increase awareness and support for a movement of sustainable, systemic change in the areas of increased physical activity and healthy eating. Specifically, the campaign looked to support successful community efforts encompassing policy and environmental interventions for reducing chronic disease and improving the health of residents.

The campaign sought to:

- Increase the belief that eating healthy foods and increasing physical activity are important health issues requiring community action.
- Build support for and demonstrate the importance of community initiatives which support eating healthy foods and engaging in physical activity.
- Provide ways for people to get involved and take action to support healthy living.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

In creating the Making it Better campaign, there was a conscious effort to keep it community-centric, connective and affirmative in order to inspire the audience and drive positive, sustainable change.

The campaign intentionally avoided individually focused communications and negative, fear-based messaging. The campaign leveraged the presence of "signs of progress" that are evident throughout Minneapolis and Olmsted County, signs ranging from positive changes at specific locations to community-wide practices that promote health. Initiatives improving the health of the community deserve a seal of approval because they are badges of progress and milestones on the journey towards greater access and choices for healthier living.

Based on these ideas, three strategic campaign drivers emerged:

1. **INSPIRE** target audiences and raise awareness for people supporting access to healthy foods and physical activity opportunities.
2. **CONNECT** healthy food and physical activity efforts in order to build a deeper understanding of their relationship and impact in creating a healthy community.
3. Motivate **ACTION** by encouraging people to identify and participate in healthy food and physical activity efforts.

AUDIENCES

While the Making it Better campaign was designed to appeal to a wide cross-section of individuals, including business owners, educators and decision-makers, the target audience was local activists known as "community connectors." These highly influential individuals are key gatekeepers and disseminators of information on a community level, and they are vocal and visible catalysts for local change. Additionally, this group is more populous among the community than community leaders – 1 in 5 – giving the campaign a larger target audience. A secondary audience included residents of specific low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. Communications were tailored to engage the secondary audience in a variety of ways, including visual imagery and translating materials into several languages.

COMMUNITY CONNECTORS: A PROFILE

- Active in their neighborhood, community or school organizations.
- Gather in public forums, where they share interests with other community members.
- Passionate about local and neighborhood news.
- Highly social and influential among peers.
- Educated and interested in community activities and events.
- Representative of approximately 1 in 5 of all adults.

EXECUTION

Creating a brand identity

With the audience and campaign drivers in mind, the campaign development started with a branding and naming exploration to create the core visual and verbal identity.

Key considerations for naming/branding included:

- Focus on "community" rather than corporate branding.
- Must be easy to say and remember.
- Must have broad elasticity and adaptability to encompass a wide range of activities.
- Must be positive in tone.
- Must work to signal progress or change.

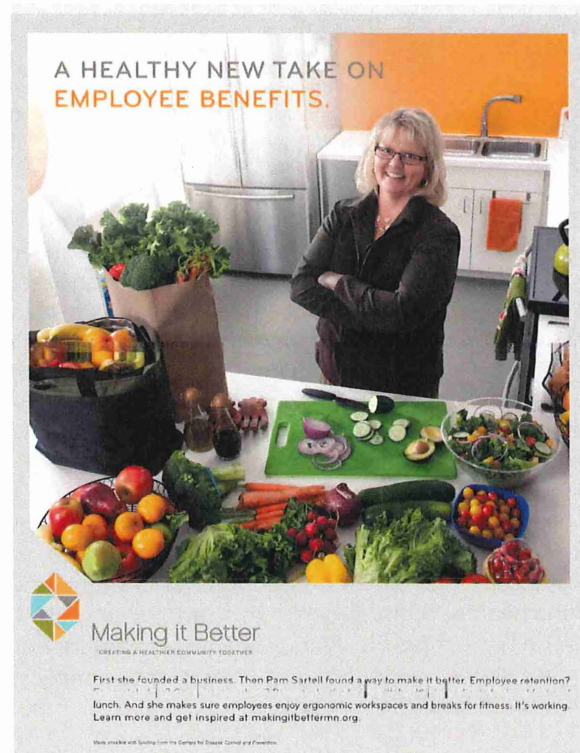
After careful consideration, the team narrowed down 18 initial possibilities for campaign names to just two finalists. Unfortunately, initial testing and research revealed challenges with both options. Haberman developed four additional options that were tested with local community members, including representatives from communities of color and members of the local Community Leadership Team. The top choice was "Making it Better: Creating a healthier community together," for its ability to demonstrate a continuation of progress, to initiate a challenge such as "you can do this" or "you can make a difference," and to allow for the sharing/telling of stories of those who are "making it better."

Phase 1: Launching the campaign

Following name approval, the team gathered information and resources while preparing for the campaign's launch. Haberman worked with MDHFS and OCPHS to identify three "charter" stories in each community that featured local heroes making their communities healthier, documenting the stories through photography and narrative writing. Telling the stories of people who are doing great things in their communities was selected as a tactic to achieve the first two strategic campaign drivers – inspiring our audience and raising awareness of those making changes, while connecting healthy food and physical activity efforts to demonstrate their impact on communities. The team used these charter stories to create the initial print and radio advertising concepts, as well as featuring them on the campaign website. Haberman, OCPHS and MDHFS selected stories that best represented diverse communities, illustrated tangible actions that could be replicated by others, and that supported policy, systems and environmental change strategies.

The first phase of the campaign launched in August 2011, with the focus on introducing the campaign and brand, while also beginning to educate the public about ways to make their communities healthier. Media elements included a press release and active outreach to local reporters; print ads in local community newspapers such as the Minneapolis Southwest Journal and the Rochester Post-Bulletin; poster ads at 50 bus shelter locations in Minneapolis; and radio underwriting sponsorships on Minneapolis radio stations KFAI and KMOJ; and produced radio ads on seven local broadcast stations. These mediums were selected for their ability to reach our target audience – community connectors – in a highly targeted manner where they are already going for community information. Including advertising in local media outlets built community pride among those featured and those who know them.

A campaign website – makingitbettermn.org – was created to house more detailed stories of those featured in the paid ads, provide more information about the Making it Better campaign and serve as a one-stop-shop for those who were inspired and looking to get involved. The website offered local community resources for those looking to take action in their community, a page to share ideas for making their community healthier, and other ideas of simple things residents could do in their neighborhood, school or workplace.



Phase 2: The Making it Better Challenge

The second phase of the campaign launched October 1, 2011, with the Making it Better Challenge, activating the third strategic campaign driver – motivate action by encouraging people to identify and participate in healthy food and physical activity efforts. Haberman and the team chose a "challenge" approach because it would activate and inspire target audiences, while helping identify and highlight additional success stories to share in a later phase of the campaign. This phase shifted the messaging from telling the stories of others to "tell us how you are making your community healthier."

To drive story collection and entries in the Challenge, new print and radio ads were created with a call-to-action that encouraged community members to share their story. These ads ran throughout the month, along with targeted online advertising. In addition, a direct mail piece was sent to more than 34,000 small businesses, churches, nonprofits, health and nutrition directors at schools, and organizations. Through these channels, the Challenge invited Minneapolis and Olmsted County residents to share how they were "making it better" by providing access to healthy foods or opportunities for physical activity in their neighborhood, school or workplace. Entries were submitted online via the Making it Better campaign website, which had been updated to include an online entry form and page to feature all of the entries received.

"We are very excited to be the winner of [one of the weekly prizes]... the gift certificate to Gopher Sport will enhance physical activity for the community and that has been one of our primary goals. Thank you!"

- Jenny Bradt, community member

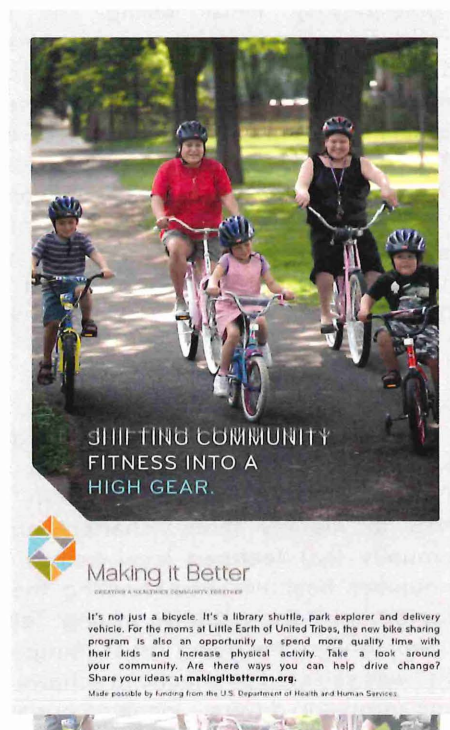
To supplement these efforts, the team partnered with Grassroots Solutions, Inc., an organizing consultancy specializing in community engagement and mobilization. Engaging with the target audiences using a one-to-one "grassroots" approach was essential to the success of the Making it Better campaign, as motivating individual action on a hyper-local level is extremely difficult through mass communication. Grassroots Solutions provided a Making it Better presence at local events, collecting stories of community members on site that were later added to the campaign website. This presence was critical in helping community members learn about the campaign in a simplified manner and connect their own actions with creating healthier communities. This introspection allowed community members to gain a deeper understanding of the campaign's messaging than if they were simply told or informed about the campaign.

All qualified entrants were featured on the Making it Better website and entered into a weekly drawing to win a prize of their choice valued up to \$500. Prizes included both experiential and physical options that

tied into the campaign's key messages of healthy eating and physical activity, such as ski and snowboard passes, cookbooks and farmers market gift certificates. Three winners were drawn weekly in each community for four weeks (24 prizes total). Entrants were also encouraged to share their entries via Facebook and Twitter with those in their social networks to collect votes for a chance to win the grand prize – their story featured as part of a new set of ads that debuted in January 2012. The grand prizewinner was chosen from both Minneapolis and Olmsted County submissions.

Phase 3: Spotlighting healthy change

The final phase of the campaign returned to the first two strategic campaign drivers and featured three new campaign ads of local heroes identified through the Making it Better Challenge. Campaign messaging re-emphasized the power of local efforts driving healthy changes in Minneapolis communities, demonstrating signs of progress and inspiring others to take action. Ads ran in the media outlets featured at the beginning of the campaign to create a continuous stream of messaging and inspiration.



RESULTS

Advertising

The Making it Better paid media campaign generated more than 18.7 million impressions among Minneapolis and Olmsted County residents through print, radio and out-of-home advertising, which are indexed high as information resources among community connectors. The paid advertising campaign also yielded more than

3,100 visits to the Making it Better website; the average time spent on the site was nearly two minutes.

Earned media

In Minneapolis, Making it Better garnered more than 390,000 earned media impressions, with news stories appearing in MinnPost.com, on Kare 11 morning news and on community sites such as Meet Minneapolis. In Olmsted County, Making it Better garnered nearly 37,000 earned media impressions, with news stories appearing in Rochester Women magazine and on KTTC-TV.

Social media

Facebook and Twitter pages were active throughout the campaign, generating 694 followers in Minneapolis and 338 followers in Olmsted County.

The Making it Better Challenge

The Challenge resulted in 120 submissions from Minneapolis and Olmsted County community members. The most popular submission and Challenge winner – Mr. Parry's Endurance Challenge, an incentive-based challenge from a schoolteacher to spur more physical activity in his community – received 765 votes. The second place submission – HUGE Theater, which rewards volunteers and patrons for biking to the theater – received 550 votes. Online ads during this time generated more than 17 million impressions and nearly 3,000 clicks.



EVALUATION

Minneapolis evaluation: Focus groups

Campaign evaluation proved complex given the highly targeted efforts implemented and the time and cost associated with measurement tools, such as surveys, to reach our specific audiences. Given this, two focus groups were conducted in Minneapolis to gauge community reaction and assess the campaign's

perceived value among Latino and African-American community members. The results indicated that while the print ads did not fully resonate and the campaign messaging was difficult to grasp, two of the print ads were visually communicative and effective – a family biking in the Little Earth Community and healthy, fresh foods in the kitchen at The Sartell Group. These ads clearly communicated tangible actions that could easily be taken to create healthier communities.

"Everything we do here is educational. There isn't any time we turn the switch off. We see the food service and student lunches as part of the educational process. Our food and nutrition service isn't just about getting kids fed. It's about teaching them to eat nutritionally. The bottom line is, it's better for the kids."

-Bruce Klaehn, Superintendent, Dover-Eyota Schools, ISD #533

Additional key findings included:

- The Latino group was clearly dealing with immigrant issues and stress around finances, time constraints, language barriers and school-age children.
- The African American group was more informed about healthy habits and interested in helping solve issues around poor health, including using health and nutrition as an agent for getting young people more involved in their community.
- Imagery and communication messages are best received by both groups when placed in a cultural context and using imagery that is reflective of their community.
- Both groups identified a need to overcome cultural barriers that impact how they view and approach healthy behaviors.
- Communications for both groups should be inspirational and provide clear, educational how-to information versus being directive.

While the focus groups provided valuable insights regarding how to best reach and engage communities of color, the sample size was not significant enough to extrapolate to the broader audience. In addition, anecdotal insights revealed positive impact on those that did encounter the print advertising. For example, Lowery Food Market owner Bassem Kablaoui reported an increase in traffic to his store and received several comments from patrons on having seen him in the ads at bus stops. As well, The Sartell Group received interest from local media regarding their efforts to promote employee wellness after a reporter saw the ad in a community newspaper.

Olmsted County evaluation: Telephone surveys

Telephone surveys were conducted in Olmsted County prior to campaign launch and immediately following the Challenge to assess the public's awareness and perception of the Making it Better media campaign. Each survey included a random sample of 400 residents in Olmsted County with a margin of error of ± 5.0 percent within a 95 percent confidence interval. The results indicated a high level of public engagement and positive feelings associated with the campaign, as respondents characterized the Making it Better campaign as "fun, unique and inspirational."

Of course, the real measure of success for the Making it Better campaign will be the long-term health of participants and their friends and families, as behavior changes lead to pounds lost, miles walked, calories trimmed and years of longevity gained.

SURVEY KEY FINDINGS

A significant increase in attitudes and beliefs that access to healthy foods and physical activity are important health issues for communities.

- 16 percent increase in those that believe their community should make it easier for people to walk, bike and be active.
- 13 percent increase in those that believe it is important to help improve access to healthy foods and physical activity.
- 9 percent increase in those that believe workplaces and schools can make it easier to eat healthy and be active.

A significant increase in the current behaviors in which participants engaged.

- 12 percent increase in those who actively support efforts for people in the community to be more active.
- 9 percent increase in those who have contacted an official about increasing physical activity in schools.
- 8 percent increase in those taking action to make it easier for people to walk, bike or be more active.

LESSONS LEARNED

One of the key lessons learned from the Making it Better campaign was the power of identifying and developing real life stories that can be shared. The ripple effect of simple, compelling stories that pass from one person to another was evident through tangible and anecdotal results. Stories proved to be a very successful tool for communicating with target audiences and for presenting a complex topic – community change – with simple, tangible examples.

Additional learnings include:

- Story collection efforts were successful, but required a large amount of time and resources.
- Featuring local community members in real settings in advertisements proved effective, helping turn ad participants into ambassadors for the campaign.
- Collecting stories at events was successful and an important element in the Making it Better Challenge.
- Earned media was challenging to secure because community papers often wanted pre-produced content.
- Utilizing Facebook ads had a large impact in generating awareness about the campaign as well as participation in the Challenge. Given the opportunity, we would recommend starting these ads earlier in the campaign.
- Challenge prizes were enticing and well chosen, helping to drive interest and also providing rewards that allowed entrants to further their efforts to make their community healthier.
- Social media was effective in reaching community members and for supporting the Challenge, but did not produce the level of interaction and conversation desired.
- Evaluating and measuring the media campaign posed a challenge, as there was not an efficient tool for capturing impressions of the campaign and the actions taken as a result. However, specific tactics such as the Making it Better Challenge and social media sites provided areas for measuring campaign actions and engagement.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit www.makingitbettermn.org to learn more, or email Chris.Tholkes@state.mn.us to learn more about how your workplace, school or neighborhood can support healthier lifestyles.