

CDC FUNDING IN ACTION

PARK UPDATES PROMOTE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR TRIBAL NATION

Recreation Spaces Enhanced with Menominee Art, Language, and History



Challenge

More than 4 in 10 people in Menominee County/Nation have obesity, and only about 1 in 15 residents has access to places where they can be physically active. This is likely because of the rural nature of the community, which only has one fitness center to serve its entire 367 square miles. This fitness center is in Keshena, the most populated community, giving limited access to residents in more rural areas. Depending on where a person lives, it could be a 35-minute one-way drive to the fitness center. A few employers have on-site work out facilities, but they can only be used by employees. Because Menominee language, culture, and history are valued in the community, integrating their culture into community design can help promote active living.



Approach

Extension Menominee County/Nation created the Kemamaceqtaq: We're All Moving project to promote active living through improved land use. The Kemamaceqtaq team gathered community members to complete Wisconsin's Active Community Toolkit, log areas for improvement, and give culturally informed recommendations. The tribe's Community Development Department used this feedback to plan sustainable, culturally appropriate renovations to Chief Niwopet Park in Neopit. By adding a walking trail, an obstacle course, and traditional indigenous game structures, the abandoned park became a place of knowing and remembering a Menominee Chief who made decisions with future generations of children in mind.



Results

The newly restored Chief Niwopet Park opened on October 26, 2019, benefitting 775 Neopit community members. This park was the first of 14 target destinations identified by 9 participants in the walking audits. The revamped park is less than 0.5 miles from the Menominee Tribal School, giving easy access to young people and community sports groups. Thanks to the help of one local artist and two language teachers, Menominee art, language, and history are featured throughout the park. The destination now promotes physical activity with areas to walk and play, and the new structures were made with recycled and donated local materials. Sturgeon Park is scheduled next for reconstruction in 2020–2021 and will also integrate Menominee culture and sustainability practices.



At A Glance

Few residents of Menominee County/Nation have access to safe places where they can be physically active. To address this, the Kemamaceqtaq: We're All Moving project brought the community together on a walking audit to identify ways to improve their land use and promote active living. The feedback from this audit helped guide a new community improvement plan, leading to the renovation of local Chief Niwopet Park. The improved park now encourages physical activity with a walking trail, an obstacle course, and other new structures that feature Menominee art, language, and history.

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The findings and conclusions in this success story are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the funding agencies or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

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