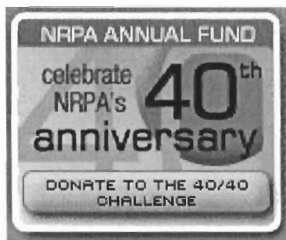



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Background

Since 1999, NRPA has been working with a number of national partners to develop new approaches to improving the health of all Americans through parks and recreation. Over 100 local park and recreation agencies of all types and sizes have assisted NRPA design new strategies in both health and sport. Designated as *Magnet Centers*, these agencies have innovated and evaluated a national community mobilization model that has led to the **Step Up to Health... It Starts In Parks** national grassroots initiative.

Since 2001, over 1,500 agencies have asked to become a *Magnet Center* for health or sport. The 2005 **Step Up to Health... It Starts In Parks** rollout will support up to 500 additional park and recreation agencies ready to join the movement by taking a leadership role to advance healthy lifestyles in their communities and nationwide.

Why Join the Movement?

The impact of our sedentary lifestyles is causing a health crisis in America. Obesity is at epidemic proportions.

The result is multiple chronic diseases and conditions and children are increasingly at-risk for many adult-onset diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

What will be the impact on parks and recreation across America?

- 65% of adults overweight or obese

- 16% of youth are overweight

What is our role in advancing healthy lifestyles and livable communities?


Recently, the International City/County Managers Association conducted a survey of city managers asking: what public agency would be most critical to address the obesity crisis? Overwhelmingly, parks and recreation was the highest ranked public agency cited by city/county managers at 88% with city planning and public health at 71% and 50% respectively.

Parks and recreation has a dynamic and unique role to play in fostering livable communities and improving healthy lifestyle behaviors of all Americans. The access, opportunity, affordability, and inclusive nature of parks and recreation is critical to reversing the obesity trend by engaging the public in active recreational pursuits and by enlisting new stakeholders in support of public parks and recreation.

Still need info?

For more information and general questions, please contact Heidi Melancon at hmelancon@nrpa.org

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22377 Belmont Ridge Road, Ashburn, VA 20148-4150, Phone 703.858.0784 Fax 703.858.0794
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