

Walking as a Practice Case Study Healthy Shasta

Rural communities with low population densities face a host of challenges when trying to inspire a practice around walking and create places that are safe, comfortable, and enjoyable for pedestrians.

Based in Shasta County, CA, which has a population of 178,000 people spread over 3,785 square miles (larger than some states), Healthy Shasta is a 10-year-old partnership focused on reducing childhood obesity and chronic illness. Like other successful rural initiatives, Healthy Shasta makes up for slim resources and an environment that doesn't support healthy lifestyles, by convening a host of partner agencies throughout the region, including a local hospital, schools, museums, and parks.

Walking is a priority focus for Healthy Shasta, within the general areas of active living and healthy eating, because it is an "entry level" form of physical activity for all ages. An early social marketing campaign titled, "Walk This Way," utilized billboards and messaging focusing mostly on families and women walking with children, and a kick-off event and walk that included free admission to the local museum.

The "Golden Shoe" campaign, which was modeled after a group in Washington, involved community leaders wearing golden shoes and buttons on their shirts saying, "Ask me about my Golden Shoes" to inspire more steps and healthier eating. Additionally, kids and families were encouraged to solve clues and then go out and locate golden shoes that had been hidden throughout the community and on schools campuses. Prizes were awarded for finding these shoes.

Healthy Shasta organizes a variety of other creative programs, involving Incentives and inspirational materials that are designed to make the activity of walking more inviting for everyone. These include informal walking groups, worksite pedometer challenges and a resource bank of user-friendly downloadable maps documenting walking routes in local cities and throughout Shasta County.

Groups like Healthy Shasta have a critical role in naming, leading, and creating localized programs that inspire and motivate families to walk. These investments train our kids to trust the walking experience and, as they grow older, to have an awareness for helping to make the pedestrian experience safer, more comfortable, and enjoyable for all.

Action Item: Connect with Healthy Shasta on Facebook and consider starting your own "Golden Shoe" campaign in your community!



www.healthyshasta.org

- Founded: 2005
- Headquarters: Redding, CA
- Website: www.healthyshasta.org
- Mission: Healthy Shasta is a local partnership to promote healthy and active living among north state residents. We joined forces out of concern over increasing rates of childhood obesity and chronic diseases such as type II diabetes.
- Walking as a Practice typology: Motivational Campaigns and Workplace Wellness