

I CAN Prevent Diabetes Class Brings New Hope

Maintaining a healthy weight can be a major challenge but with the support of a team it can be made much easier. That is exactly what is happening in Pelican Rapids, MN at the *I Can Prevent Diabetes* (ICPD) Class taught by Rosie Gonzalez, University of Minnesota Extension Lifestyle Coach Gonzalez states, “We work as a team encouraging one another to make healthy choices for ourselves and our families. It’s so wonderful to see each participant come back each week and see the smiles on their face because of what they are accomplishing,”



The ICPD class taught in Spanish in the basement of St. Leonard’s Parish, began in the fall of 2015 and 13 participants remain active in the program.

It’s not all work as the participants have fun as well. Each week they enjoy dancing to music with their resistance bands and sharing stories related to eating healthy and physical activity. Through 16 weekly class sessions followed by 8 monthly sessions, participants learn to manage their weight, receive tips on eating healthy and staying active, learn new lifestyle behaviors, and are encouraged to role model healthy living to friends and family.

“They really appreciate getting the Sanford Health water bottles and stretch bands and just enjoy dancing and exercising to the sound of their favorite Hispanic music "LA CHONA!" They all report being much happier,” says Gonzalez.

PartnerSHIP 4 Health (PS4H) has been instrumental in putting together the puzzle pieces to make this class a reality. They intentionally met with key members of the Spanish Community that attend St. Leonard’s Parish, Alejandra and Mario Mancilla and Father Jeff to obtain input and support for the class, and then brought together the University of MN Extension to facilitate the class and Sanford Health to underwrite its costs for participants. Brochures and flyers were created in Spanish and English and distributed at the local grocery store, restaurant, library, welcome center, chamber of commerce, manufacturing plant, and other organizations. A story was written, submitted to, and published by the local newspaper online and in print. “Our goal was to create partnerships and a buzz about the class so that the community would embrace it and become interested in supporting and sustaining future classes,” states Kristin Erickson, PS4H Healthcare Initiative Coordinator.

St. Leonard’s Parish played a critical role in both the recruiting of participants and the continued success of the program. On the Sunday prior to the class kick-off, Rosie Gonzalez was invited to speak about the class and to invite church members to join the class after the Spanish Mass. At that time, brochures and flyers were distributed as well to interested church members. During

subsequent Sunday mass, wisdom and encouraging words are being shared from the pulpit to help inspire participants to keep steadfast in their journey to becoming healthier.

“Having the faith community, a major healthcare provider, and the University of Minnesota Extension working collaboratively is very exciting and encouraging. It’s exactly what is needed to achieve and sustain improved health outcomes for both individuals and the community,” says Erickson

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