

*“The indoor walking tunnel resulted from collaboration and cooperation between multiple departments.”*

Carol Wickenheiser  
GIS Database Administrator  
Information Services Department  
Member of the Clay County Wellness Committee



Creative thinking on the part of multiple entities and reinforced by Clay County’s participation in the PartnerSHIP 4 Health Worksite Wellness Collaborative resulted in a year-round indoor walking option for Clay County employees. On March 11, 2015, the Clay County Wellness Committee and the Clay County Employee Appreciation Committee held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the official opening of the tunnel in the Clay County Family Services building.

Primarily used by maintenance workers as a passageway from the heating plant to the west end of the Family Services building, the tunnel offers a new walking option for employees. According to Carol Wickenheiser, a member of the wellness committee, the dark and dingy tunnel did not offer an appealing indoor walking option. Wickenheiser believed that an upgraded version of the tunnel would draw employees to use it as an indoor walking space. She asked a maintenance supervisor regarding sprucing up the tunnel, and received permission to make some changes to the tunnel.

In December, the walls were painted, and new lights installed to make the tunnel brighter. In January and February, the wellness committee decorated the tunnel with encouraging posters, a tally wall for employees to document their tunnel walks, and interactive activities such as hopscotch and a selfie wall.



The wellness committee organized a tunnel-naming contest and a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate these changes. During the celebration, the committee awarded door prizes to attendees, and announced the winners of the February Health Fruit and Veggie Challenge and the tunnel-naming contest. Administrator Brian Berg and Commissioner Jenny Mongeau cut the ribbon to “The Tunnel,” christening it with its new name and officially opening it as an indoor walking space for employees.

Wickenheiser captured the importance of the tunnel by saying, “We hope it gets plenty of use...probably not so much when the weather is nice, but it’s a great option on those not-so-nice days, which we have plenty of here in Minnesota.”

March 2015

*PartnerSHIP 4 Health is community and public health partners in Becker, Clay, Otter Tail, and Wilkin counties working together to create an environment that supports improved health for all.*

*Supported by the Statewide Health Improvement Program Minnesota Department of Health.*

