

A Place For Hope becomes a Place for Health

“PartnerSHIP 4 Health has been instrumental in helping our members lead healthier lives and making more informed choices.”

Dina Geiszler, Executive Director
A Place For Hope



A Place For Hope (formerly Social Connexion) provides a safe, enriching and supportive recovery environment for adults living with a serious and persistent mental illness or serious mental illness. In collaboration with PartnerSHIP 4 Health, it is making a fresh start in 2015 with a new name, a new mission, and a new goal to promote healthier lifestyles among their members.

PartnerSHIP 4 Health (PS4H), local public health and community partners in Becker, Clay, Otter Tail, and Wilkin counties, utilizes a Health Equity strategy to collaborate with human services organizations whose clients have limited access to healthy foods, physical activity, and tobacco-free living. Since becoming a health equity partner, A Place For Hope has updated their mission to include wellness and created an environment more conducive to health.

“PS4H has been very instrumental in helping us develop some programs and open up new opportunities for our members,” said Dina Geiszler, Executive Director. For example, PS4H supported A Place For Hope in developing healthy food initiatives that teach members about healthy eating. This past summer, members planted and harvested fruits and vegetables using outdoor containers, and helped prepare meals using the produce. For many of the members, cooking with homegrown ingredients was a new experience.

In addition, PS4H equipped A Place For Hope with sample food plates and food models to teach members about portion sizes. “Those are really nice to have out,” said Geiszler, “it really shows a visual of what a serving size is because that is really deceiving for a lot of people.”

PS4H furnished A Place For Hope with pedometers to incentivize physical activity opportunities via a step count challenge. According to Geiszler, members who normally drove to the facility chose to walk in order to boost their step count. A Place For Hope looks forward to integrating a treadmill into their facility so they can offer indoor exercise options to their members.

PS4H also provided A Place For Hope with resources to support tobacco-free living. “PS4H helped us create a tobacco policy, develop a smoke-free zone area on the entrance walkway, and offer smoking cessation materials to our members,” Geiszler mentioned. Members are respectful of the facility’s new policies, and those who smoke go to the established outdoor area rather than smoke on the walkway. To help members understand how harmful smoking can be to health, A Place For Hope and PS4H held a carbon monoxide testing session for members, and the results encouraged a few individuals to consider a making a quit attempt.

“Changing our focus to wellness and changing our mission to include improving health outcomes—a lot of that had to do with the relationship that we’ve had with PS4H, so we’re excited about that and excited for what we can accomplish in the future,” said Geiszler.

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