

MUNIHEALTHWORKS

A HEALTHY MUNI WORKS!

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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MUNIHEALTHWORKS

WHY BOTHER WITH WORKSITE WELLNESS?

Worksite health promotion is an investment in human capital. Employees are more likely to be on the job and performing well when they are in optimal physical and psychological health. Scientific research shows the linkage between a company's productivity and the health of its employees. Here are some facts:

- ❖ The indirect costs (e.g., absenteeism, presenteeism) of poor health can be two to three times the direct medical costs.¹
- ❖ Productivity losses related to personal and family health problems cost U.S. employers \$1,685 per employee per year, or \$225.8 billion annually.²
- ❖ A review of 42 published studies of worksite health promotion programs shows an average of 28% reduction in sick leave absenteeism; average of 26% reduction in health costs; average of 30% reduction in workers' compensation and disability management claims costs; and an average of \$5.93 to \$1 savings-to-cost ratio.³

MUNIHEALTHWORKS HISTORY

The Wilson Agency, LLC was awarded the contract for wellness for the Municipality of Anchorage in the fall of 2007. At that time a wellness committee was created to prepare for the launch of the program. In addition, the committee would be tasked with enhancing the acceptance and success of the wellness program activities by encouraging employee ownership of the program. The committee consisted of Joanne Hanscom from Employee Relations, Deenie Robertson of The Wilson Agency, and representatives from various departments around the Muni.

The committee met for an hour every two weeks starting in late October through the end of December to plan a health fair to launch the wellness program and to create a schedule of activities to promote health and wellness to all employees in 2008. During the month of November, 2007, communications began going out to employees advising of the upcoming wellness program starting with a memo from Mayor Mark Begich. Deenie Robertson, Wellness Coordinator at The Wilson Agency, put in countless hours preparing artwork for the promotion of the health fairs and MuniHealthWorks. In early December, posters were placed in all departments promoting the program's launch in January. In mid-December, e-mail communications, flyers, refrigerator magnets, postcards to employee's homes, and posters announcing the health fairs in January were created and sent.

¹ Edington DW, Burton WN. Health & Productivity; 3rd ed. 2003:140-152

² Stewart WF, Ricci JA, Chee E, Morganstein D. Lost productive work time costs. J Occup Environ Med. 2003;45(12):1234-124

³ The Art of Health Promotion, L.S. Chapman, 2003; 6 (6):1-16.

MUNIHEALTHWORKS 2008

Launch:

The official launch of the program in 2008 was on January 15th, 16th, and 17th with health fairs held at the Performing Arts Center and Development Services. The health fairs provided a free opportunity for employees and their spouses to have their blood drawn and tested for cholesterol, glucose, and triglyceride levels and in addition, have their blood pressure taken, and measurements done for height, weight, waist and hip circumference. The results of these tests were key factors in receiving an accurate health score when completing the online wellness assessment that is part of the MuniHealthWorks program.

In addition to the biometric screenings, The Wilson Agency contracted with another 14 exhibitors who were invited to participate in the health fairs to showcase their health and wellness related services and products. Local firms such as Oriental Healing Arts, The Alaska Sleep Clinic, Accurate Hearing Systems, The Alaska Club and more, did screenings and gave employees advice on how to live a healthier life. More than 650 employees attended the health fairs and the feedback was wonderful. Employees really appreciated the Muni's investment in their health and well being.

Program Parameters:

The program was set up with a goal for employees to earn 34 wellness credits during the course of the year. Credits could be earned for completing the wellness assessment, getting a physical exam, participating in the four "challenges" offered on the online program during the year, completing online seminars, completing online "healthy living programs" and participating in local and discretionary activities such as Relay for Life, Big Wild Life Runs, local triathlons, wellness seminars, etc.

Incentives:

The Municipality of Anchorage budgeted to offer employees and incentive of \$25 for completing the wellness assessment by March 31st, and another \$100 for participating in the program throughout year and achieving the 34 point goal by December 31st.

Promotion:

The program was promoted heavily at launch with The Wilson Agency's wellness coordinator doing live demos of the online program at the health fairs, and at many other department locations throughout the year to familiarize employees with how to participate.

Four "Challenges" were offered throughout the year and The Wilson Agency prepared all camera ready collateral materials for their promotion. The first "Challenge" of the year was the Physical Activity Challenge designed to help people become aware of the simple things they can do to become more active. This was a 6-week program in January and February. The Chill Out Challenge was offered in May to educate employees about healthy ways to reduce stress. The Take 5! Fruits/Vegetable Challenge in August was designed to increase awareness of the importance of eating five fruits and vegetables daily to maintain or improve health. Lastly, the Maintain, Don't

Gain Challenge was offered in November and December to remind employees of key strategies in getting through the holiday season without gaining any weight and managing their stress.

In addition to these online challenges, seminars on stress management, relaxation techniques, and starting an exercise program were offered to employees. Camera ready collateral material for these seminars were provided by The Wilson Agency.

The Wilson Agency hosted a “Turkey Trot” event at The Alaska Dome in November, 2008 to offer MuniHealthWorks participants an indoor opportunity to walk or run for free. Discounts to The Dome were offered at the event, and employees earned wellness credits for participation. There was also a number of drawings for door prizes at the event.

Weekly newsletters and program updates were sent by The Wilson Agency that offered tips and suggestions on upcoming events and activities, health information and reminders on how to use the MuniHealthWorks program.

The Wellness Committee met a total of 7 times in 2008 to adjust the activity and promotion schedule based on reported risk factors, to plan for the 2009 health fair and to revise the program parameters to encourage not just participation in the program, but measurable outcomes in health improvement.

Participation:

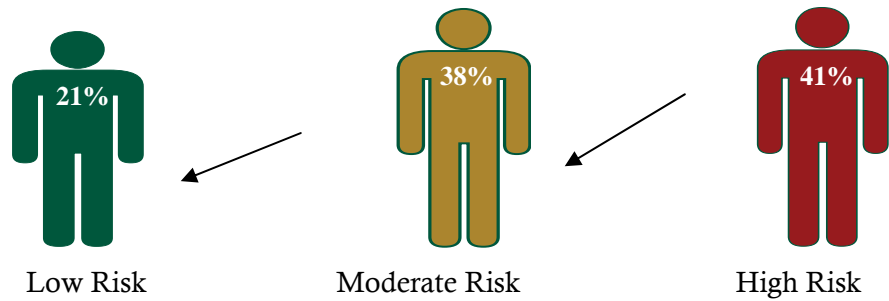
At the end of 2008, 784 people (25.8% of 3043 eligible employees) logged onto the wellness program and earned points in 2008. Of those 784 people, 205 (26.1%) reached the 34 point goal and 196 people were paid the \$100 incentive. 770 people (25.3% of eligible employees) took the Health Risk Assessment. Of those 770 people, 639 were paid the \$25 incentive. The total value of incentives paid out was \$35,575.

Compared to other national corporate wellness programs that offer the same level of incentive, the participation in MuniHealthWorks achieved the corresponding participation rate of 20-35% of eligible employees.

Reporting:

Quarterly aggregate reports on clinical and lifestyle risk factors were created and reviewed with the wellness committee and Joanne Hanscom starting in April, 2008. Each quarter provided new information as more employees signed on and started using the program. From these reports we were able to ascertain what percentage of employees were at low, moderate and high risk, and the areas that had the highest risk factors among Muni employees.

They were as follows at the end of 2008:



Clinical Risk Factors (of employees completing the wellness assessment):

- #1 – Weight – 72.73% in the overweight or obese category
- #2 – Blood Pressure – 62.59% with high blood pressure
- #3 – Cholesterol – 46.5% with high cholesterol

Lifestyle Risk Factors (of employees completing the wellness assessment):

- #1 – Fruits/Vegetable intake – 71.82% saying they don't eat enough
- #2 – Physical Activity – 64.9% saying they don't get enough
- #3 – Dietary Fat – 50.1% saying they eat too much

The Healthy People 2010 initiative is a set of health objectives for the Nation to achieve over the first decade of the new century.⁴ Its primary goals are to increase quality and years of healthy life, and to eliminate health disparities. As part of the initiative, the Surgeon General has set target percentages in various health risk factors. In comparison with those percentages, the Muni has exceeded the target recommendation in blood pressure, weight, dietary fat, fruits/vegetables and alcohol use. The Muni did however, meet or improve upon the targets for physical activity, tobacco use, stress, and using seat belts.

⁴ www.healthypeople.gov/about/whatis.htm

2009 MUNIHEALTHWORKS WORKING TOWARDS A HEALTHIER MUNI

Launch:

The program for 2009 was launched with health fairs on January 13th, 14th, and 15th at Development Services, the Performing Arts Center, and this year at the Loussac Library. Unfortunately, the weather was dreadful for two of those days, schools were closed and many Muni employees were not expected to report to work. Just over 300 employees participated in this year's fairs, but again, feedback was very positive and employees look forward to the next health fair. The Wilson Agency wellness coordinator was on site for all three health fairs again, doing online web demos for employees to become familiar with the program and to learn about the new program parameters. She has also participated in three additional biometric screening events (APD, SWS and M&O) to promote the program.

Program Parameters:

Program parameters for 2009 were revised to not only encourage participation, but to start having some measurable results. This year, as with 2008, employees were offered an incentive for completing the wellness assessment. Two other incentive benchmarks have been set. The first, to participate in either the Physical Activity or Chill Out Challenge and earn 20 points by June 30th. The second, to complete a total of two challenges during the year; one Healthy Living Program; one community or discretionary event; and earn a total of 34 points by December 31st.

Incentives:

The Municipality of Anchorage is matching the incentive amounts in 2009 that were offered in 2008. The first incentive was \$25 for completing the wellness assessment by March 31st. For the two new benchmarks described above, each was worth \$50. That gave employees the opportunity to earn just as much as last year, but it was broken into three payments rather than one.

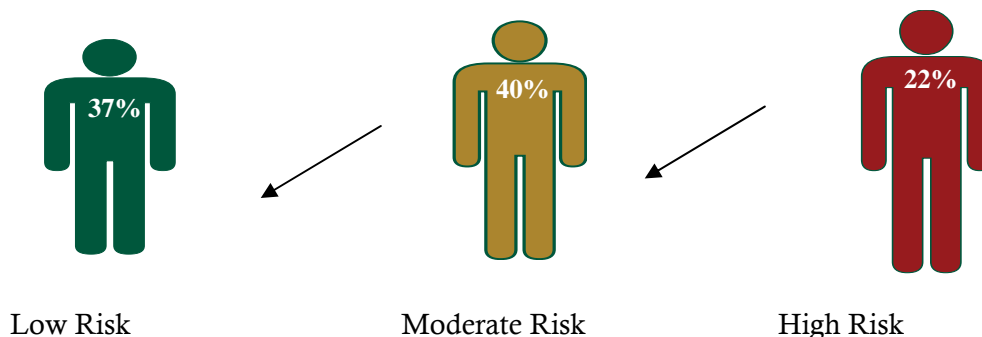
Promotion:

To date, the Physical Activity and Chill Out challenges have been promoted, again with The Wilson Agency providing artwork. Three nutrition seminars were presented in the month of March, two financial seminars were presented in April, and a stress management seminar was presented in May, and a safe boating presentation was held in June. The Wilson Agency prepared camera ready artwork for all but the financial seminars.

The Wilson Agency hosted another indoor walk/run event in March, the Spring Fling. There were many more participants than in the November Turkey Trot and prizes were drawn again. In addition, weekly e-mails on the program as well as weekly wellness newsletters continue to go out. The Wilson Agency's wellness coordinator has customized a monthly newsletter specifically for Muni employees.

Reporting:

At the end of March 2009 we received our first cohort reports on the clinical and lifestyle risk factors for a group of Muni employees. The overall results were very encouraging! The percentage of high risk employees dropped from 41% to 22%, moderate risk increased from 38% to 40% and low risk increased from 21% to 37%.



Clinical Risk Factors of the same 230 employees in 2008 and 2009

- #1 – Weight – down by .66%
- #2 – Blood Pressure – down by 15.66%
- #3 – Cholesterol – increased by 13.79% (the only risk factor that increased)

Lifestyle Risk Factors (of employees completing the wellness assessment):

- #1 – Fruits/Vegetable intake – improved by 22.15%
- #2 – Physical Activity – improved by 22.22%
- #3 – Dietary Fat – intake reduced by 7.41%

Comparing the results of the Muni's aggregate reports for all participating employees for the first quarter 2009 to first quarter 2008, we found that significant improvements were made in every category of the Surgeon General's Healthy People 2010 target percentages.

How risks affect productivity and health plan cost:

Research is being conducted on productivity and its relationship to health. This is due to the fact that employee productivity is influenced by a number of factors, the most important of which is stress, followed closely by chronic medical conditions, and lifestyle medical conditions.⁵ In recent years, researchers have found that high-risk employees are 12% less productive overall than those who are low risk.⁶ Researchers use self-reporting tools and risk assessments to analyze employees' utilization of health care and their ability to perform well at their jobs.⁷

⁵ AHIP

⁶ WN Burton, JOEM Vol 47, 2005

⁷ W Lynch, Health & Productivity Q&A, Absolute Advantage Magazine 2003

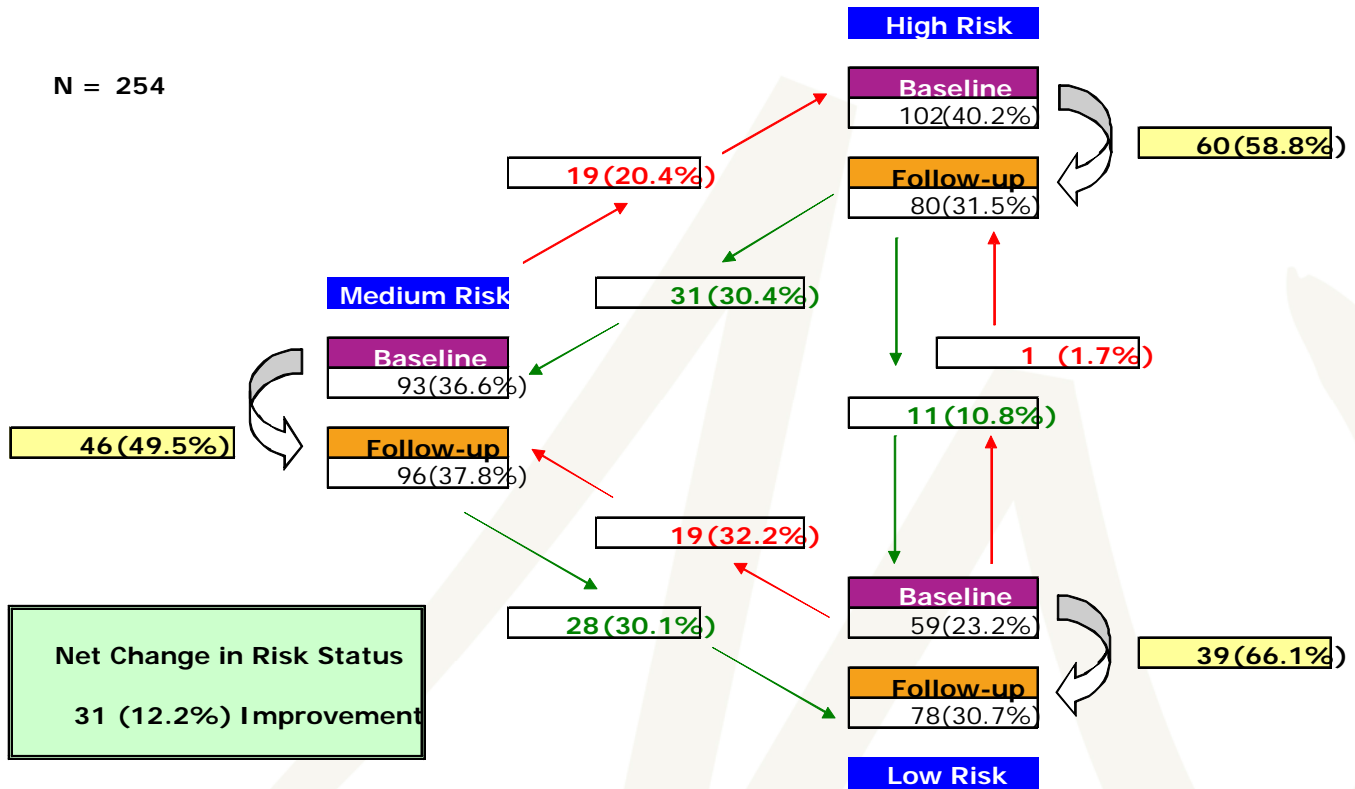
A cost prediction report was done in October, 2009 based upon 254 cohort participants from 2008 and 2009 and resulted in the following savings report.

	Baseline	Follow-up	Savings
Presenteeism	\$665,822	\$626,601	\$39,221
Absenteeism	\$233,937	\$220,157	\$13,780
Total Lost Productivity	\$899,759	\$846,758	\$53,001

Total Healthcare Savings	\$44,176
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Total Savings Due to Risk Reduction	\$97,177
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Savings per Cohort Participant	\$382.59
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OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

Weight

A large percentage of your population is overweight, which is a serious risk factor for many health conditions. Opportunities exist to support weight management efforts by offering classes, on-site support groups, and personal health coaching. Subsidize or pay for completion of weight loss programs. Offer healthier foods in vending machines at reduced prices

Blood Pressure

High blood pressure is often referred to as the silent killer. It is simple to detect, and most people with high blood pressure can control it with lifestyle and/or medication. Offer on-site blood pressure testing, promote awareness and emphasize the importance to taking blood pressure medication as prescribed.

Physical Activity

Being physically active is a cornerstone for good health. Close to half of your population is at risk due to physical inactivity. Even simple steps, like walking 10-20 minutes a day produces health benefits. Encourage your population to participate in seminars, challenges, and charity events that promote physical activity. Help them realize that even small amounts of activity are better than none.

Nutrition

Most of your population needs to improve their eating habits. Here are some steps you can take to support good nutrition. Offer low-fat vending machine alternatives at lower prices; offer and promote healthy alternatives in break rooms; serve healthier foods and beverages at company functions; offer refrigerated storage and microwave preparation areas; and promote participation in seminars, challenges and other events that encourage healthy eating practices.

Cigarette Smoking

Cigarette smoking, while somewhat lower than the national average, is still a serious problem. Not only does smoking have long term consequences like cancer and emphysema, it also increases the chances for and severity of other respiratory problems. Among the steps you can take are create a smoke-free work environment, offer incentives for participating in smoking cessation programs, subsidize nicotine replacement therapy (gum, patches, etc.) and reward individuals who stop using tobacco products.

Stress

Dealing with stress requires consideration of both the source of the stress and the ability of each individual to deal with stress. Is the culture of your workplace one that causes unnecessary stress? Are there ways you can simplify processes, improve communications and improve efficiencies? Do you communicate your Employee Assistance Program well? To help your population better deal with stress, encourage them to be physically active, eat smart, get adequate rest, not use tobacco products, and not abuse alcohol or drugs.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

Senior Level Support

The most successful wellness programs have senior level support. To be truly effective, the CEO and Senior Executives must care about the organization's people. When care and concern from the very top of the organization are present, everything begins to change. Employees know the difference between caring and lip-service. True care and concern manifests itself in action. And, when people feel the impact, the culture takes a turn for the better. A letter of support for the MuniHealthWorks program would be the first step in communicating to employees that their health is of the utmost importance to the organization. Subsequent communications should encourage department managers to set aside time to promote the program and encourage employee participation.

Culture of Health

In order to build a results-oriented wellness initiative that will last over time, it's essential to develop specific strategies for systematically improving the physical working environment of your employees. In fact, in order to lead healthier lives, employees need to have environmental support in nine key areas. Specifically, these areas include: 1) physical activity; 2) tobacco use; 3) nutrition/weight management; 4) workstation/ergonomics; 5) alcohol/drugs; 6) stress management; 7) seatbelt safety; 8) safety/emergency procedures; 9) organizational benefits. While it may not be practical to aggressively implement all of these environmental modifications within the working environment, an open mind is necessary when creating more supportive, health-promoting environments.

We need to empower supervisors and department managers to work towards a culture of health. Offering healthy foods at meetings, revamp the vending machines to offer more healthy choices than not, brightening up stairwells to encourage walking the stairs over taking the elevator, encouraging walking during breaks, promoting smoke-free buildings, offering stress management seminars, and educating employees on safety policies are all actions that can promote a healthy working environment.

Wellness Team

When it comes to building results-oriented wellness programs, teams are a big part of the equation. Reliance on the team as opposed to an individual is one of the keys to a wellness program that is built to last. The team should have strong leadership comprised of individuals from various departments around the organization and with different skill sets and interests. The team should have a name, a vision, a motto and goals. It should be promoted, and members should be encouraged by supervisors to attend regular meetings. The team should consist of people who become champions of the MuniHealthWorks program and work together to design appropriate wellness initiatives and interventions and build loyalty to the program amongst employees.

TESTIMONIALS

At the health fair in January 2008, although all of my numbers (blood pressure, heart rate, weight) were good – in fact great, according to the health fair workers, I felt tired all the time and was having trouble getting up in the mornings. Thinking the problem was in my head, I called Magellan, which had a booth at the health fair. The Magellan EAP counselor asked me some obvious questions, like what time do you go to bed at night. I told the counselor that I go to bed at a reasonable time, but I surprised myself when I told him I woke up every night for several hours due to aches and pains in my knees. So, I made an appointment with a doctor and found out that there was nothing wrong with my knees, but that I had arthritis in both of my hips! (Since I had NO pain in my hips, this diagnosis was a total surprise.) After the diagnosis, I started taking over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medication for the arthritis; I joined Weight Watchers so I could take some weight off my hips and have lost 7 lbs; and I started exercising. Although I need to lose 10 more lbs. and continue to exercise, I'm not tired everyday and I'm sleeping better at night. I'm relieved to know what my medical issues are and to know that they are manageable. Joanne, I am so thankful that the MOA health fair last January gave me permission to take care of myself! Thanks so much for the great work this year!

At the beginning of 2008 I was close to a weight that made me very uncomfortable (200 lbs.). The first working day of the year I joined Weight Watchers and then the health fair a week or two later reinforced the whole bad BMI that I had – at the health fair my BMI was 30.3.

Since January I have lost 30.6 lbs and am in a 10 pound range to reach my goal and have a healthy BMI under 25 – I like to have a little fluff factor there. I really like basing my expected weight on the BMI system, having science involved helps me feel this weight I am going for is appropriate. So this program has helped to reinforce my healthy living, thanks.

Thanks for your work on the wellness program. It hasn't given me any blinding new revelations, but lots of good reminders and goals, and it kept the issue constantly in front of everyone throughout the year.

I attended the MOA health fair in January this year. When I arrived at the health fair, I had no idea how my life was about to change. You see, I have been significantly overweight for at least the past twenty-five years, and had only become more so as the years advanced. My doctor has told me for years I had to lose weight. I read all the articles about the obesity epidemic and the fact that obesity causes health problems and shortens lives. You would think that the health issues that surround obesity would have inspired me to take action, even without my doctor's ongoing advice. But nothing did. Then, a week before this year's health fair, I saw a picture of myself that shocked me: I finally realized how much weight I really had put on and I was embarrassed..

At this year's health fair, as in the past, I skipped the "weigh station." I really did not need to have them tell me again that I was "obese." I got my blood work started and then set out to visit the various stations with my "passport," in a vain attempt to win the prize offered by ER (is there really a prize awarded?) I was in a hurry to get all the required signatures so I could get back to my office, when it happened: my life changed! I stopped by the Medifast booth to get a signature and started talking to Steve Booth, the health coach manning the station. When I got my blood work results back, I was shocked again to see how far off the charts I was. My health was in serious jeopardy.

Two months after starting the program, I had lost more than forty pounds. I made an appointment to see my doctor and brought my test results to him. He immediately ran another blood panel. When those results came in, we both were amazed: in just two months, my cholesterol had dropped a hundred points and everything else was right in the middle of the normal range. Two months later, I reached my goal and was more than eighty pounds lighter. Not only am I healthier as a result, I feel twenty years younger, and look it, too (perhaps that's the power of self-delusion). There is no question this was the best thing I have done for myself in a very long time.

If the MOA ever wonders if the expense and effort of putting on the health fair is worth it, I am here to say, you betcha! (sorry about that). Not only have I become healthy as a direct result of this year's health fair, a number of other people have seen the dramatic change in my weight and have started their own journeys. I am more than happy to discuss the program with anyone who is interested or who has questions about the program.

Please accept my heartfelt thanks for all the work you and your team put in to make the health fair happen. I does change lives!
