

# A new you: Health for Everybody program teaches skills for healthy living

## Situation:

Wamsutter in Sweetwater County is about 40 miles west of Rawlins and 68 miles east of Rock Springs. The population in 2000 was 261 with fewer than 65 families in the town. The recent oil and gas industry boom in the Wamsutter economy increased the population and demand for more social services. Wamsutter opened its first health center in January 2010, identified as one of the town's top five needs. This also raised awareness about the lack of nutrition and food education within the growing community.

Research has provided conclusive evidence that changes in individual lifestyles and behaviors can lead to improved health status (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1997; Canadian Nurses Association, 1992).

The West Area nutrition and food safety (NFS) educator partnered with the former community development educator in Wamsutter to assess needs for a program that fit this small, growing community. This led to implementation of "A new you: Health for everybody." This program focused on developing new attitudes, setting goals, and learning skills for healthy and pleasurable living. The program was taught by three NFS educators and conducted in five two-hour evening classes October to mid-November 2010 at Desert School in Wamsutter. In addition, 12 newsletters were sent to each participant household during the three months reinforcing topics covered during the program. Wamsutter Desert School teachers showed interest in this program and motivated others to register.



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## Impact:

Eleven adult women from Wamsutter, including seven elementary teachers and four adult females from the community (all married with children), participated. All completed a pre- and post-questionnaire enabling measurement of new attitudes gained, such as living a life focused on health, honoring hunger, and enjoying physical activity every day.

The following impacts were reported.

- 50 percent increased physical activity purposely.
- 90 percent now stop eating when they start to feel full.



“Feel that I was reminded of the importance of self-worth and acceptance.”

- The quality of the program was rated by all participants based on a rating scale of Poor, Fair, Average, Good, and Outstanding. 90 percent rated the program good to outstanding.

## Comments from participants

- “I learned to know when to eat and being more aware of what and when I’m eating.”
- “Feel that I was reminded of the importance of self-worth and acceptance.”

- “I thoroughly enjoyed this class; it was a totally different viewpoint from the traditional.”

Anecdotal evidence shows participants have become especially concerned about the role of nutrition and diet in maintaining health, preventing disease, and achieving a desirable quality of life.