Synergy between education and research

WIN the Rockies fostered and capitalized on a dynamic relationship between education and research. Cooperative Extension, the WWAMI (Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho) medical education program, and other educational groups helped shape the research inquiry, and research findings have informed, enhanced, and guided project interventions and other outreach efforts.
Two communities were selected in each state. One community served as the demonstrator community and one as the comparator community, where interventions were delayed.  

**Quantitative research:** Each community had approximately 50 adult cohorts who represented the adult segment of the community. Public classrooms of the 5th and 6th grades served as the youth cohorts for the study. A cross-sectional survey was randomly sent to households in all six communities at the beginning and conclusion of the intervention efforts in the demonstrator communities.  

**Qualitative research:** Narratives (or life stories) in the areas of food, physical activity, and body image were collected from 103 adults in the demonstrator communities. More than 55 hours of conversations were transcribed and then analyzed to illustrate the challenges people faced, the successes they achieved, and the insights they gained. Findings from the narrative component helped guide the content of intervention tools.  

**Community-level data:** A *community portrait* was completed in 2002 and 2004. The portrait captured community environmental factors related to food, physical activity, and body image (for example: square footage in local grocery stores for soft drinks, milk and bottled water; organized physical activity opportunities available in community; variety of clothing sizes available at local stores; etc.).

**Educational and Promotional Materials** (available at: www.uwyo.edu/wintherockies)  

A project coordinator in each community worked with local community members to select, implement, and evaluate interventions. Primary intervention tools included the following:  

- **A New You: Health for Every Body** - series of healthy living classes for adults.  
- **WIN Kids Lessons** - series of 13 lesson plans for 5th and 6th grade students.  
- **WIN Kids Fun Days** - 40 activities for youth ages 8-12.  
- **Physician forms** - Healthy living prescription tool used by primary care physicians with their adult patients.  
- **WIN Steps** - Pedometer-based community walking programs.  
- **Videos** - Three original videos were produced to accompany the youth educational materials:  
  
  - *As If* (uncovers the unrealistic perfected body-image messages promoted by the media).  
  - *Portion Investigators* (illustrates the super-size food portion sizes readily available).  
  - *Choose to Move* (demonstrates the variety of enjoyable daily physical activities available to youth).  

In addition to the youth videos, a video called *Search for the Real* was produced.
highlighting the work of artist Larry Kirkwood, who promotes body size diversity by displaying body casts of real people. A video was also developed giving an overview of the WIN the Rockies project.

- **Media campaign** - Media efforts included billboards displaying key messages, local radio spots, banners, health fairs, posters, post cards, and regular newspaper ads.
- **Community grants** - $55,000 were distributed to 50 proposals in 28 communities. Of the four rounds of community grants, one round was dedicated to demonstrator communities, one round to comparator communities, and two rounds for communities throughout the three states.
- **Tri-state workshops** - Two training workshops were organized to serve as anchors for the community efforts. Community members attended workshops on: 1) lifestyle physical activity sponsored by the Cooper Clinic of Dallas, Texas and 2) positive body image for girls conducted by Lisa Sjostrom.
- **Materials in Spanish** - In order to reach the Spanish-speaking minority audience of the six communities, several intervention tools were translated into Spanish including posters, post cards, radio ads, family meal conversation cards, community walking program materials, the cross-sectional survey, and the physician healthy living prescription tool.

Posters, postcards, billboards:
Lewistown Highlights

Participation and Retention Rates for Lewistown

Of the 48 adult cohorts who completed the first assessments in January 2001, 36 (75%) completed the third and final assessment in January 2004. In the fall of 2001, 566 cross-sectional surveys were randomly mailed to households in Lewistown; 317 were completed and returned for a response rate of 56%. In the fall of 2003, the second cross-sectional survey was randomly sent to 568 households, with 314 returned, for a response rate of 55%. Of the 65 5th grade students completing assessments in the Fall of 2001, 59 completed the fourth and final assessment as 6th grade students in the spring of 2003 (91% retention rate).

Highlights from stakeholder interviews - Quotations from phone interviews

“As an elementary school teacher in this community, I really appreciated the pedometers donated to our school by WIN the Rockies. The students really liked them, and they were more motivated to walk at recess.”

“The total community approach used by WIN the Rockies has made more impact on the community than if it had been an isolated program just for the schools, or a few local adults.”

“Participating in the focus group for the narratives had a profound impact on me. I now have a much greater self-awareness about my eating patterns.”

“The community walking programs really created a community unity with people who wouldn’t have come together otherwise.”

“The coupons for fruits and vegetables were a great benefit and did help me to eat healthier.”

“When I was tired at the end of the day, sometimes I was surprised by how few steps were on my pedometer. It made me realize my fatigue was emotional rather than physical.”

“Having a community coordinator for Lewistown was what really made WIN the Rockies work. Without that person to help us coordinate the many activities, our successes would have been very limited.”

“I really liked the catchy ads in the newspaper about healthy living. The billboards were
effective because you usually don’t see billboards about healthy habits.”

“Bringing Robert Sweetgall into this small community was a real boost for the walking programs for both the adults and the kids.”

“I think WIN the Rockies worked because it was all voluntary. No body was forced to do anything.”

“I’m really worried about the project continuing without the community coordinator. I know the after school physical activity program will continue.”

“Results from the blood work made be realize I should be exercising more.”

**Key messages of WIN the Rockies from a kid's perspective**
(messages and designs by 5th grade students from Preston, Idaho):

- **Every BODY is different**
- **It’s fun and cool to live an active life**
- **Win by eating healthy**

**Notes from community coordinator’s monthly narrative reports**

Quotation from 79 years old female adult cohort who didn’t think she could complete the six-minute walk test: “That was six minutes? I could have gone much further!” (This realization motivated her to engage in more daily walking.)

Observation from the community coordinator after the kick-off of initial community pedometer walking program: “Members of this group consistently record more steps than I do. This is humiliating!”

Response from two A New You class graduates to local newspaper ad promoting the next A New You class: “The graphics for the ad should depict people of all sizes, not just thin people.”

Success story: newspaper ad designer promised to do better in the future to show people of diverse body sizes.
Senior walking program: The senior center’s walking program called *Walk Across Montana* was quickly renamed *Walk Across America*. Once the group walked the distance from Lewistown to Texas, they had a Texas Barbeque to celebrate. One person of the original *Walk Across Montana* program commented that she had walked across all of Montana and had reached Canada and wasn’t sure she could walk any further without a passport.

Inspiration for senior walking program: One participant in senior center walking program was a great inspiration to others. She didn’t let the challenge of being restricted by a wheelchair stop her from participating in the program. She tracked her mileage by using an arm ergometer.

More people walking: Two public school teachers noted how more community members were out walking in the community compared to the previous summer. Why do they think more people are out walking? — because of the WIN the Rockies’ pedometer walking programs.

Success from adult cohort: One adult cohort lost 80 pounds from the first assessment in January of 2002 to the third assessment in January 2004. When asked how he did it, his response was simple: “I just don’t eat as much anymore and I walk a lot.”

Summary response to Extension Educator teaching *A New You* classes from a married couple six months after completing the classes: “We thought we would let you know how we are doing. We have both lost about 30 pounds, but we are really not concerned about the weight. What is more important to us is how great we feel. We are eating about the same foods, but we are more conscious about portion control. We exercise 45 minutes a day, six days a week. Anyway, we just wanted to thank you for your wonderful advice and help. The class changed our lives!”

Each adult cohort was given $50 of coupons to redeem toward the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables. Ten dollars of coupons were sent each month for five months along with educational materials promoting an increase in fruit and vegetable consumption. Local grocery stores were partners in this effort.

Summary of redemption of coupons: 94% of the adult cohorts in Lewistown redeemed one or more of the coupons. Of the 1200 $2 coupons issued in Lewistown, 875 (73%) were redeemed.
Summary of Community Grants

In the competitive community mini grant program for WIN the Rockies, Lewistown was awarded six community grants totaling $6,700.

* One grant implemented the Smart Girls curriculum in Lewistown. The program promoted healthy lifestyles for females from the ages of 10-15.

* The local Extension agent received a grant to conduct a Wellness Fair for community teens.

* An elementary PE teacher implemented a walk at recess program. Each time students completed the walking course at the school, their cards were punched. Students could redeem their punched cards for tokens.

* One grant purchased 175 pedometers for students in the public schools. The program promoted the concept that all steps count and encouraged students to increase their steps both at school and at home.

* The community has a long term goal to convert an abandoned railroad track to a walking path. A community grant allowed for crosswalk signs to be erected as an initial step for the project.

* Grant funds from WIN the Rockies were teamed with funds from a Parent’s Support Group to purchase two new pieces of school playground equipment.

Key contacts in community

Key contacts in Lewistown for the WIN the Rockies’ project included the following; Cooperative Extension, public schools (superintendent, school principles, PE teachers, school nurse, teachers), primary care physicians, local dentist, Council on Aging, local hospital, Chamber of Commerce, City Parks and Recreation Department, local businesses (agreed to display posters), regional office of the BLM (Bureau of Land Management), Head Start, local community organizations including Rotary Club and Kiwanis, family planning, city planner, youth groups including 4-H and the Boys and Girls Club, local radio station, local newspaper, senior center, local grocery stores, licensed child-care providers, and local library.
Population of community: 5,813
Households: 2,594
Percentage of population 65 and older: 23%

**Physical activity opportunities for general public:** seasonal outdoor public pool, year-round pool in fitness center, one roller skating rink, two golf courses, one community walking/biking path, one outdoor track, Civic Center opened year round for indoor walking, several organized competitive sports offered by park and recreation department, four for-profit fitness centers, two local businesses pay fitness membership fees for their employees, and hospital houses its own fitness center.

**Schools:** *Grade schools* allow 25 minutes for lunch and offer PE twice a week for 30 minutes; *middle school* allows 25 minutes for lunch and offers PE three times a week for 40 minutes; *high school* allows 25 minutes for lunch and offers PE as optional class. *Vending machines:* no machines in the grades schools, but vending machines in the middle and high schools are available to students during the school day.

**Food availability:** One *local grocery store* offers 35 ft. of milk (6 ft. fat free, 6 ft. 1%, 12 ft. 2%, 9 ft. whole, and 2 ft. flavored), 30 ft. of sweetened beverages (including sports drinks), 60 ft. soft drinks, 30 ft. 100% juices, and 2 ft. bottled water; *restaurants* in community include nine fast food restaurants and nine sit-down restaurants.

**Body image observation:** Of the four local stores offering clothing, three offered plus sizes for women and two stores offered plus sizes for men. Three of the four stores did not offer extra small sizes.
**Summary of Major Interventions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description of Activity</th>
<th># participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Meeting, Elementary School</td>
<td>October 2001</td>
<td>Introduction of WIN the Rockies research project and preliminary efforts to implement WIN Kids lesson plans for 5(^{th}) and 6(^{th}) grade students.</td>
<td>15 school faculty members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-service training, primary care physicians</td>
<td>November 2001</td>
<td>Overview of WIN principles presented by Sylvia Moore, project director, to engage primary care physicians in community efforts.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| A New You (series of classes)   | Winter 2002, Summer 2002, Fall 2002, Summer 2003, Fall 2003 | Series of healthy living classes for adults. 3\(^{rd}\) class = BLM employees, 4\(^{th}\) class = school teachers (received 1 college credit) 6\(^{th}\) class = child care providers. | Class 1 = 16  
Class 2 = 16  
Class 3 = 9  
Class 4 = 6  
Class 5 = 8  
Class 6 = 40  
**Total = 95** |
| Spring Fling                    | March 2002         | Annual community event hosted by local businesses & agencies. Distributed WIN the Rockies promotional materials. | General public |
| Community walking programs      | Summer 2002, Fall 2002, Fall 2002, Fall 2002, Summer 2003 | Programs used pedometers, log sheets, and group support to sustain daily walking routine for participants. 2\(^{nd}\) group = BLM employees. 3\(^{rd}\) group = hospital employees. 4\(^{th}\) group = Head start. 5\(^{th}\) group = school district employees. | Group 1 = 26  
Group 2 = 60  
Group 3 = 100  
Group 4 = 45  
Group 5 = 250  
Group 6 = 100  
Group 7 = 60  
**Total = 641** |
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooper Clinic Training</td>
<td>June 2002</td>
<td>Key community members attended training and then returned to community and met quarterly to implement strategies.</td>
<td>9 community members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County fair</td>
<td>July 2002</td>
<td>Promotional booth to distribute grocery pads. Included sign-up sheets for <em>A New You</em> classes and community walking programs.</td>
<td>General public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper and radio ads</td>
<td>Fall 2002 through Winter 2004</td>
<td>Distributed weekly and seasonal special newspaper and radio ads promoting WIN the Rockies principles.</td>
<td>Mass media effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk to school day</td>
<td>October 2002</td>
<td>Community-wide event. One principal walked to school, and picked up students along the way.</td>
<td>Public schools participated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewistown Rotary Club</td>
<td>October 2002</td>
<td>Presentation on WIN the Rockies principles.</td>
<td>20 adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local physician’s office</td>
<td>Winter 2002</td>
<td>Implementation of physician healthy lifestyle prescription tool.</td>
<td>Used with patients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewistown Kiwanis</td>
<td>November 2002</td>
<td>Presentation on WIN the Rockies principles.</td>
<td>10 adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIN Kids Play Days</td>
<td>Spring 2003</td>
<td>Eight after school sessions promoting physical activity and pleasurable and healthful eating.</td>
<td>20-40 grade school students each week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Health Fair</td>
<td>March 2003</td>
<td>First community health fair - WIN the Rockies was one of the major sponsors. (Community sponsored second health fair held in 2004.)</td>
<td>400-500 community members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Sweetgall Walking programs</td>
<td>March 2003</td>
<td>Series of community programs for school teachers, seniors, &amp; others.</td>
<td>275 adults</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Summary of Major Interventions - continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Snackerize</td>
<td>April 2003</td>
<td>Presentation co-presented by community coordinator and Extension educator promoting fun physical activities and fun healthy snacks.</td>
<td>40 grade school children (take home handouts for parents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIN Kids Fun Days</td>
<td>Summer 2003</td>
<td>Co-sponsored by City Parks and Recreation Dept. One afternoon a week for 8 weeks.</td>
<td>20 students, 3rd - 5th grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart Stepping</td>
<td>Fall 2003</td>
<td>Curriculum by Robert Sweetgall implemented in public schools.</td>
<td>Goal: additional million steps for each student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billboard</td>
<td>Fall 2003 - Summer 2004</td>
<td>Series of 5 billboards with WIN the Rockies messages.</td>
<td>Mass media effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size It Up! by Betty Holmes</td>
<td>November 2003</td>
<td>Educational program on promoting body size diversity to high school classrooms, and adult education classes.</td>
<td>46 students and 35 adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let their voices be heard (book)</td>
<td>Winter 2003</td>
<td>First draft of book from narratives (life stories) shared with community members through local library and Extension office.</td>
<td>General public marketing effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size It Up!</td>
<td>March 2004</td>
<td>Educational program on body size diversity presented as in-service training for all school district employees.</td>
<td>115 adults</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Samples of mass media efforts

Do you multi-task while eating? Do you eat while also driving, reading, or working at the computer? Are you then really enjoying the food? Eating is one of life's great pleasures and food is a gift. The community of Lewistown and WIN the Rockies remind you to maximize your food satisfaction by being free from distractions when you eat.

Sample radio spot

Lewistown News-Argus - Oct. 5, 2002

Lewistown News-Argus - May 17, 2003


One of five billboards displayed in community

Remember sitting at your desk in elementary school, waiting for the recess bell? Didn't it feel great to run outside? Recapture that zest for joyful physical activity. Participate in activities for the sheer pleasure of feeling your body move. WIN the Rockies and the community of Lewistown encourages everyone to be active your way, every day.

Sample radio spot

Lewistown News-Argus - Feb. 12, 2003