



Alger Wellness Coalition, Munising, Michigan

Market Walk Program

The MSU Extension Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) reached over 77,000 unique individuals throughout the state of Michigan in fiscal year 2018 including over 24,000 adults. After a series of nutrition education classes with 6,500 adults, over 40% increased the amount of fruit and vegetables they consumed each day and the number of days per week that they spent walking. #SNAPEdWorks



THE VISION: Alger Wellness Coalition

The Alger Wellness Coalition (AWC) mission statement is “Aiming to Improve the Health and Well-being of Alger County Residents”. With the idea that most Americans do not eat enough fruits and vegetables or get enough physical activity, the AWC chose to take action to improve fruit and vegetable consumption and promote physical activity through a simple, yet effective walking program.

“The Tribe will get more people using the track, people will go down and buy local produce from our farmers...everybody wins in this.”

- Vicki Ballas, MSU Extension Community Nutrition Instructor

MSU EXTENSION ACTION

To meet this important need, a Michigan State University (MSU) Extension SNAP-Ed Community Nutrition Instructor, in partnership with the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe, brought the Munising Farmer' and Artisans' Market, Down Town Development Authority, the Munising Memorial Hospital, the Munising Public Schools, the Munising Bay Trail Network, MARESA, the Alger Parks and Recreation Department, LMAS Health Department, the MSU Extension Alger County 4-H, and the Munising Police Department together for the creation of the AWC.

THE IMPACT

As a result, this coalition developed the Market Walk Program that gave program participants a farmer's market token worth \$1.00 for every mile they walked. These tokens and walking led to:

- › **In year one (2017)**, 45 participants walked 432 miles in 30 days, and redeemed 317 tokens. A private individual donated \$432 to support the tokens provided.
- › **In year two (2018)**, 83 adults and 15 youth walked 1,000 miles in 35 days, and redeemed 818 tokens (82% redemption), with each person averaging 2-3 miles per day. The Alger Regional Community Foundation provided the funds (\$1,000) for the tokens.



- › **For the upcoming third year (2019)**, the coalition is planning to have enough tokens for 2,000 miles of walking and extending the walking program to 60 days, because studies show that when people walk for at least 60 days they are more likely to continue walking for life. The coalition is submitting a grant for \$1500 and is using \$1,000 from the UP4 Health award received in 2018.
 - › Participants walked during the winter months to earn tokens they could redeem for fresh, local produce offered at the farmers market during the market season.
 - › The track attendants reported that most of the walkers continued to walk throughout the winter months after the tokens were gone. One participant reported after 7 months that she has continued to walk every day, except for 4, and plans to continue.
 - › The program utilizes the Tribal walking track and their paid attendants. The Tribe was considering closing the track due to low usage, but the increase in walkers is helping to keep the track open to the public all while keeping two people employed.
 - › The tokens are used to purchase fruits and vegetables only.
- The benefits include:
 - › An indoor physical activity opportunity for program participants wanting to walk in a safe, dry, and warm environment.
 - › Amplified use of the Tribal walking track
 - › Boosted traffic to the Farmers Market
 - › Improved consumption of fruits and vegetables
 - › Increased farmers profit
 - › Fostered relationships with community members



The Alger Wellness Coalition, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, and the Munising Farmers' and Artisans' Market are partnering to provide local residents an environment to be more physically active and to eat more locally grown fruits and vegetables.

