

Community Partnership 2013-14

Brockville Neighbourhood Activity Plan

A group of women in Brockville, Dunedin set up their own Health and Social Services Team. They share a passion for their community and a commitment to support the health of families, whānau and aiga. Regular consultation with their community had identified a desire to be more physically active. When they secured HPA funding the team set about in earnest to create a shared community vision and plan for physical activity in Brockville.

Rose Richards is one of those women and says this funding was the catalyst for the Health Team to carry out the serious consultation they had been wanting to do for some time. Their goal was to find out what kind of physical activity the residents of Brockville would like to have available and the ways residents might support those activities.

Passionate about health of community

“We are a voluntary group of women interested in the health of our community. We have worked collectively on several projects previously. Something like this is too big to do alone but together we could do it.”

Rose says that passion and big dreams drive their work. “We try to work with a lot of love and laughter and we egg each other on to create bigger and better plans. I am often dazzled by the energy and ideas that are around.”

Brockville is a suburb on the outskirts of Dunedin. Rose says it’s a great community to live in.

“We are about 900 households on top of a hill with lots of local resources in the form of awesome people, outdoor spaces and community buildings. We have people right here with all sorts of skills – leadership, sports coaching, yoga, writing, music, arts and cooking!

“We are also lucky to have a close-knit community with plenty of grandparents, aunts and uncles, and lots of kids roaming around.”



Good planning

The Health Team spent a long time planning the consultation, and this enabled them to set clear goals, says Rose. “We wanted to make sure we were all on the same page. We had frank conversations about what we wanted to do, why we were doing it, what our personal values were. And we built on all the work we had already done as a team in our community.”

Rose is a strong believer in the power of the collective. “The team thing is really important. We needed to bring people along with us and help build their confidence so they can step up — and everyone becomes a leader.

“We consider it part of our role to walk alongside people to develop and learn new skills, just like others have done for us. We are always trying to build our community’s capacity to be sustainable.”

Wide promotion

The existing community infrastructure is strong so the team could immediately tap into local groups and use their contacts to consult widely. They covered pre-school and school kids, teachers, parents, and elders. They started with Facebook, asking for ideas about things people would like to have happening in their community. Zumba, hot hula, self-defence, a family sports day and a walking/jogging group were suggested.

“The Brockville Community Development Project produces a regular newsletter that goes to every home so we used that to tell people what we were doing.”

But Rose says that ‘word of mouth’ is the most important way to connect. “People are so busy, and they often need personal contact to motivate them to participate. We also have an amazing community worker, Marie Laufiso, who spread the word everywhere she went!”



Consultation meetings popular

The solid planning meant that once the consultation meetings started, it took off.

The three waves of consultation started with Facebook, then a meeting with staff at the local primary school, followed by school parents and kids, a ‘Brockville Little Feet Fest’ with young families in the community and a survey to all households.

“The school was fantastic. They gave us spaces to use and time with their community. The Brockville Community Development Management Group, Brockville Community Support Trust and the Department of Internal Affairs were all there supporting us in the background.

“The hardest group to engage were the youth/ rangitahi and we realised that we have to think more about how to get them involved next time.”

A gift for a gift

Giving something in return for the time and ideas was an important principle for the Health Team. “People gave us a gift of their thoughts and knowledge. We wanted to acknowledge that and give a gift in exchange. Wherever possible we provided healthy kai and gave grocery vouchers to say thank you.

“We also aimed to leave people uplifted and excited. That was an important goal for us. And we wanted people to see themselves in the final strategy, to see that we had captured their voice.”

The strategy is not quite complete but it is well on the way. The Health Team is taking the plan back to the community during ‘Spring’ celebrations. They will ask people to put their names beside the different activities in the plan. This means the residents of Brockville will be a key part of turning their plan into action. The success of this project and the energy of this small suburban community suggests they will continue to go from strength to strength.

Top tips

- Build a strong team and take time to plan.
- Give something in return to the people you consult with.
- Don’t forget to take lots of photos as you go – they tell the story.