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Niverville

Workshop Kickstarts an Exciting Community Initiative

A capacity-building Start Fresh¹ workshop snowballed into a vibrant community initiative in Niverville. Annette Fast was part of a group working on opening a daycare and says her friend dragged her to the workshop to get funding ideas. But the evening sent her and an energetic group of Niverville women in an entirely different direction. Inspired by the stories of CDPI in other small communities, the group formed the Niverville Association for Healthy and Active Living, and began to drum up ideas for their own town and applied for grants to fund them.

By February, a full-scale Family Fitness Challenge was underway. The idea was to get families outside and active in one of Manitoba's coldest months, but in fact February was so cold that the outdoor kickoff – an activity circuit re-using old

Christmas trees – had to be postponed a whole week. To introduce families to the Challenge, the committee distributed 400 calendars to students in the elementary school. Kids were encouraged to document all their family's activities on the calendar. Every family who logged over 1,000 minutes of physical activity in February would be entered into a draw for a Wii game. Seventy-nine children also entered posters in a contest to promote the Family Fitness Challenge, and 26 seniors and staff at the Niverville Heritage Centre judged the posters.

As the bitterly cold weather continued, indoor activities were also allowed to be part of the Challenge. At the end of the Challenge, 71 families had turned in activity calendars and had logged a total of 109,000 minutes of action. Partnerships with the elementary school staff, the Town of Niverville, Manitoba in motion, Heritage Center and Start Fresh all contributed to the amazing success of this initial effort.

The committee kept moving forward. It envisioned a website to draw together all Niverville's health and activity initiatives, and before long, with \$399 in CDPI grant money and a lot of volunteer labour, a dynamic website called Niverville Active Living went online. In a third initiative called the Cholesterol Challenge, weekly speakers offered healthy tips and ways of reducing bad cholesterol. Fourteen women attended the seven-session Challenge.

The Association has no shortage of future plans. Proceeds from a planned cookbook

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¹ Start Fresh is the way CDPI is being implemented in South Eastman RHA.

could go to the purchase of a Handi-Van that would allow more seniors to get out and about. Envisioning all the greasy food available at the annual fair, the committee plans to set up a booth next summer offering healthy alternatives. As for the Family Fitness Challenge, people are stopping Association members on the street and asking when it's going to happen again. The answer is – in February, of course! No month is too cold to get out there and get active for health!

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▼ *Take Note*

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▼ **10 Ideas for Cold Weather Exercise:**

- ▼ • Building a snowman
- ▼ • Trail horseback riding
- ▼ • Dogsledding
- ▼ • Curling
- ▼ • Hockey
- ▼ • Skating
- ▼ • Walking/hiking
- ▼ • Snowshoeing
- ▼ • Tobogganing
- ▼ • Night skiing

▼ http://www.canadianliving.com/health/fitness/10_ideas_for_cold_weather_exercise.php

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▼ **Check Your Head For Exercising in the Cold:**

▼ Remember that your head may be responsible for 40 per cent of your heat loss. A good exercise hat is essential. Make sure it's small enough that if you start to overheat, you can put it in a pocket or hold onto it.

▼ <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/weekly-checkup/coldweather-injuries.html>