



Building Communities
for Better Health

Success Story

“P” is for Partnering to Promote Health at Parks

With funding from Building Communities for Better Health (BCBH), a Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) initiative, the Butler County Health Department collaborated with the Butler County Wellness Council Coalition to promote health and wellness through city-owned parks in Poplar Bluff.

“E” is for Environment

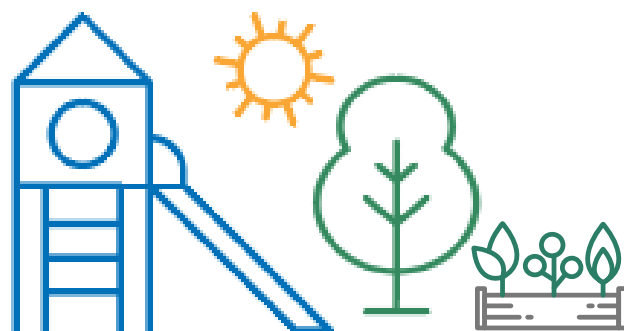
The places where we live, learn, work, and play all contribute to our ability to become and stay healthy. Parks, in particular, provide people opportunities to connect with nature and are places for them to have fun and find mental, physical, and social wellbeing.

People of all ages enjoy Poplar Bluff parks throughout the year, especially in the summer months. There are playgrounds; pavilions and BBQ areas; sports facilities including football, basketball, and disk golf; and trails that connect all the parks in the city. For these reasons, the local Butler County Wellness Council Coalition focused on the park environment as a way to promote overall health of residents and visitors alike. In particular, the Coalition wanted to ensure smoke- and tobacco-free environments and to promote healthy eating through community gardens.

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“S” is for Smoke- and Tobacco-Free

Firsthand smoking and secondhand smoke and vape aerosol—or the fumes that are emitted when smokers use cigarettes, pipes, cigars, e-cigarettes or other tobacco products—pose harmful health effects. While smoking and vaping directly are worse, nonsmokers who inhale secondhand smoke or vape



aerosol, even for as little as five minutes, are exposed to chemicals such as nicotine, carbon monoxide, and formaldehyde. Regular secondhand smoke and vape aerosol exposure can lead to a variety of health issues in adults, but children are even more vulnerable because they breathe faster and their bodies and brains are still developing.

Smoke and tobacco-free environments prevent smoking initiation, encourage quitting, and protect nonsmokers from the harms of secondhand smoke and vape aerosol exposure. The need to protect nonsmokers, especially children, from tobacco smoke exposure has increased public support for smoke-free policies in public places.

Through BCBH, the Butler County Wellness Council Coalition worked with the City of Poplar Bluff to create smoke-free parks. On April 6, 2020, the city council passed bill number 8225, disallowing tobacco and vaping in all nine city-owned parks. Signs located at strategic locations (e.g., park entrances) help to promote the ordinance. Anyone found in violation is subject to a fine of up to \$500.

***Anyone who visits any of the nine
city-owned parks throughout
Poplar Bluff are now protected
from secondhand smoke and vape
aerosol exposure!***



“G” is for Good Food, Getting Active, and Gardens

In addition to creating smoke- and tobacco-free parks, the Butler County Wellness Council Coalition also wanted to provide an opportunity for residents to get some physical activity while harvesting locally grown produce in a park garden. Community members came together to make this idea a reality by donating supplies and building not one, but two gardens in separate parks. Produce is made available to the public, which helps families have access to good food!



(Horton, B. (2020, June 10). Community Garden Promotes Health Living. *Daily American Republic*.)

As time has passed, more community members have become involved with the gardens, and the Butler County Wellness Council Coalition is looking for additional locations to expand this opportunity.

“The garden is designed to fill both the body and the soul by encouraging a healthier life both nutritionally and physically.”

What’s Next?

The Butler County Wellness Council Coalition is looking to sustain and build on the progress made thus far. It hopes to engage more community members and to keep increasing access to healthy foods, safe places to be physically active and secondhand smoke protection.

To learn more about our work or to get involved, visit:

www.butlercountyhealth.org

Or email:

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