



Community Programs

ewba in action...



Morphett Vale and Murray Bridge communities share how they've put *eat well be active* into action

Implemented by Southern Primary Health of Southern Adelaide Health Service and Murray Mallee Community Health Service of Country Health SA



Name of site and author of this story:

Unity College, Murray Bridge
Rob Donaldson, Middle School Principal

What has your site been doing in relation to ewba's key message/s and strategy/ies for action? Who has been involved?

Unity College participated in the *eat well be active (ewba)* Peer Leadership Program. A small team of ten year 9 students took part in healthy eating and physical activity peer leadership training delivered by our local ewba Project Coordinator. Following this training, the student leaders were responsible for developing and implementing a range of sustainable healthy eating and physical activity initiatives within our school. These included:

- Developing social marketing messages to promote healthy eating, physical activity and drinking water to fellow students;
- Painting footprint stencils around the school directing students to water fountains;
- Maintenance and clean-up of the schools water fountains;
- Installing secure pin up boards to promote social marketing messages, as well as lunch and recess time physical activities;
- Assisting with the development of a school vegetable garden, with produce being used by the school canteen;
- Constructing a cross country track for use during PE classes and lunch.

Has this been a new event/project/activity/practice/environmental changes/policy for your site, or does it build on existing elements?

The ewba Peer Leadership Program has been a new initiative.

ewba have supported us by:

- Delivering healthy eating and physical activity training sessions for the peer leadership team. This included information on social marketing techniques and developing leadership skills.
- Providing \$2000 funding towards the development and implementation of our action plan.
- Providing support and advice with project development as required.
- Project planning documents to assist student leaders to plan their activities.

What has been the best part of your site's action/s?

The students were involved in both the decision making and development of initiatives to promote healthy eating, physical activity and drinking water within our school. The students have also learnt new skills that have helped them to take on a leadership role within the school.

What has been the biggest challenge (if any) that has had to be overcome?

The major challenge with the ewba Peer Leadership Program has been time constraints. Like any peer leadership model, it is vital that the peer leadership team has strong adult support and guidance. Setting time aside to meet as a team (teacher and students) and discuss progress with initiatives is always a challenge in a crowded high school curriculum.

What have been some of the outcomes so far, what changes have you noticed, or what are you hoping for as a result of your new activity/project/policy?

We have had some display boards placed around the school that are used for signs, promotions and advertising healthy lifestyles. These are updated periodically when new information comes to us. The cross country track has been used in PE lessons. The vegetable gardens have been used extensively on both campuses.

What do children /students / young people /parents / the community say about this?

The students have positively responded to these healthy changes and have accepted them as part of the College environment

Where to for the future?

We would love to be able to expand and diversify more now that this step has been completed. The students are looking for more innovative ways to promote leadership and healthy lifestyles. Our leadership programs at all year levels are looking at ways for students to be active facilitators in decision making around the school, making positive, healthy and sustainable changes.

What advice would you give to others who would like to start a similar project?

Be prepared for it to evolve slowly. Take a step-at-a-time approach, but be patient in allowing the students to drive it. Let them understand and experience the frustrations, planning, and then ultimately the success in making changes in a school environment. If possible, have a contingency plan for new students to be involved throughout the program. There was a tendency for some students to become disengaged so other students should be recruited to maintain the enthusiasm.

Unity College *eat well be active* Peer Leadership Team

