



# PARKS AFTER DARK

Health Education Practice Conference

October 17, 2012



# Presentation Outline

- Park After Dark Overview: Innovative youth and family programming
- Program Outcomes: Survey results, safety
- Parks as a Community Center: Violence prevention & health promotion
- Walking Clubs: A health education model
- How to Participate
- Q&A



# Parks After Dark Overview

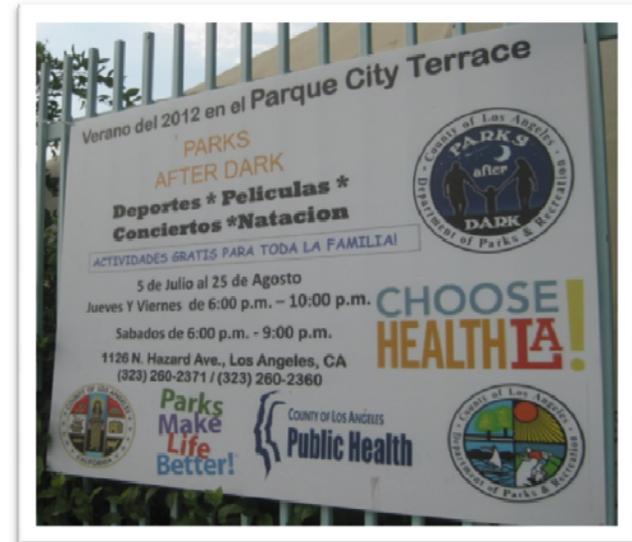
Mika Yamamoto

LA County Department of Parks & Recreation



# Background

- Began in Summer 2010
- LAC Department of Parks and Recreation Program
- Prevention strategy of GVRI / SNL Model
- Community Transformation Grant funded 2012-2016



# Background

- Target population: Residents of all ages in gang-impacted demonstration sites; high risk youth
- Goal: Promote healthy activity and community cohesion, and curb violence and gang-related crimes through recreational activities, mentoring, and health and wellness programs.



# Collaboration

- Chief Executive Office
- Sheriff
- Public Health
- Public Defender
- Probation
- Public Library
- Arts Commission
- Community and Senior Services
- Human Relations Commission
- District Attorney
- LA 84
- Edison

+ many local community organizations and businesses



# Collaboration

Partnerships with other Park Programs to build a regional effort

- LA City's Summer Night Lights
- Long Beach Summer Night Lights
- Pasadena Parks After Dark



# Awards

- Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation “Best New Program of the Year” 2010
- NACO (National Association of Counties) 2010
- CSAC (California State Association of Counties) Merit Award 2011
- National Recreation and Parks Association “Best of the Best” Award 2012



# Park Locations

Unincorporated County Parks in communities with high rates of violence and childhood obesity:

- Pamela Park – Duarte (SPA 3)
- Roosevelt Park – South LA (SPA 6)
- Watkins Park – South LA (SPA 6)
- Jesse Owens Park – South LA (SPA 6) \*NEW
- City Terrace Park – East LA (SPA 7) \*NEW
- Loma Alta Park – Altadena (SPA 3) \*NEW



# Programming & Resources

- Evening summer programming, Thursdays – Saturdays, July 5<sup>th</sup> – August 25<sup>th</sup>, 6-10 PM
  - Sports: soccer, basketball
  - Exercise: walking club, organized bike rides, dance classes
  - Educational classes: computers, arts and crafts, cooking
  - Law enforcement: public safety and community engagement
  - Entertainment: movies, concerts
  - Health and wellness fair
  - Economic and legal resource fair



# Youth Participation

- Positive activities for high risk youth during high-crime summer months
- Programming for teens & young adults
- Estimated youth attendance: 20,000
- Working to increase youth participation
- Youth Councils to be developed under CTG grant: youth work with Choose Health LA to identify and address a health issue in their community



# Success Stories

*At Watkins Park, Public Library had a program with teens on night. The teens were asked to think of a subject in which could be acted out in a skit with a message. The teens decided the topic to be whether or not to join a gang. The teens discussed the pros and cons and then designed the skit. At the end of the evening, one male teen approached one of the librarians and said “I was thinking about joining a gang but after being here (tonight) and talking about it, I don't think I will.”*

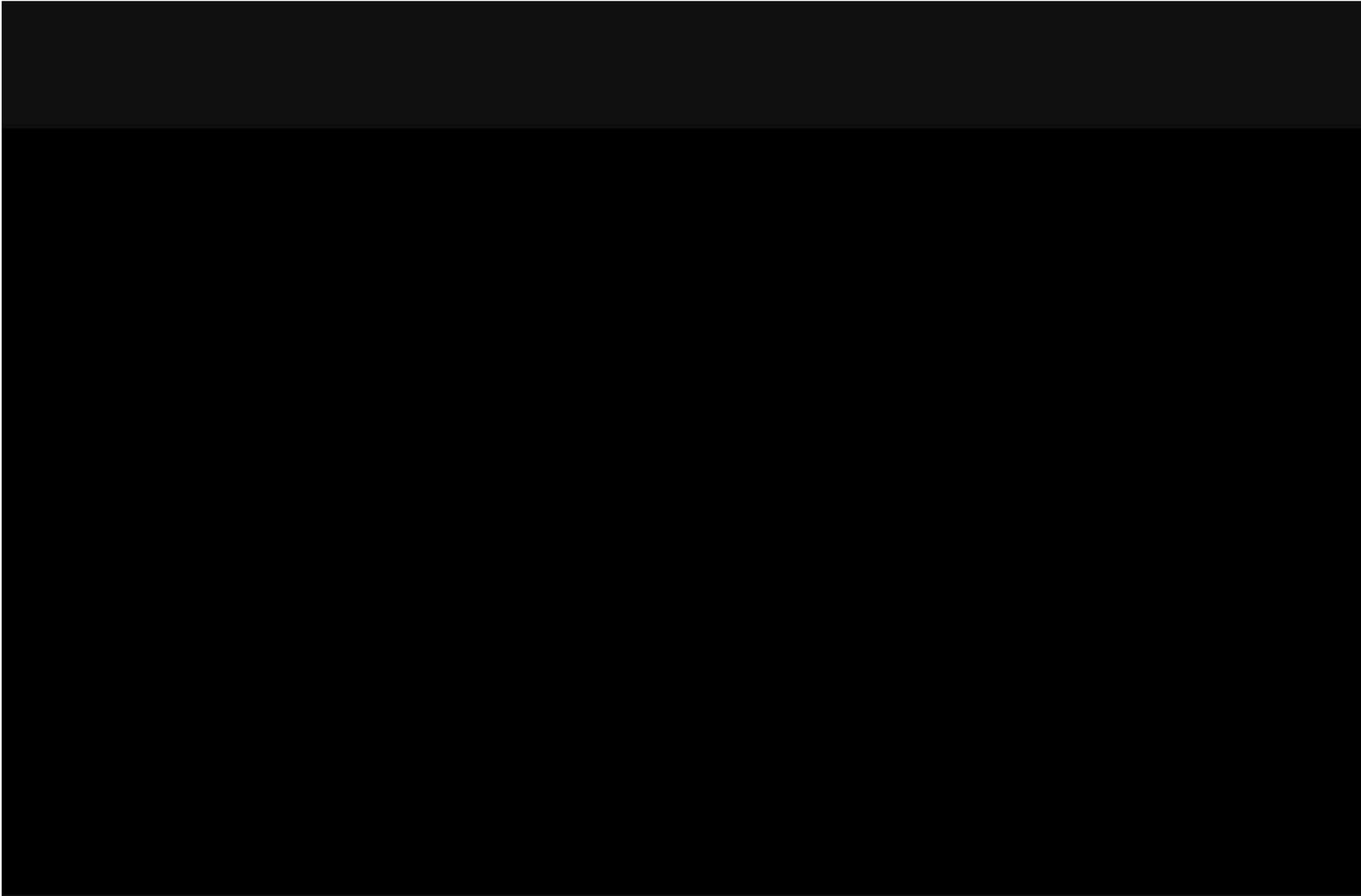


# Success Stories

*After spending the summer together, the community residents surrounding Pamela Park decided to have a spontaneous potluck at the ending of PAD.*

*A local bike club, Eastside Riders organized a community bike ride from Roosevelt Park to Watkins Park, where previously residents did not feel safe visiting. The bike ride was a huge success.*





# Parks After Dark Outcomes

Kelly Fischer

Injury & Violence Prevention Program



# Parks After Dark – DPH Role

- Injury & Violence Prevention Program
  - Participant survey analysis
  - Facilitating DPH involvement
  - Community Transformation Grant contract
- SPAs 3, 6, 7: Community Walking Clubs
- DPH Programs: Health & Wellness Fairs
  - Office of Women’s Health
  - Network for a Healthy California
  - Environmental Health
  - Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

Division of HIV/STD Programs

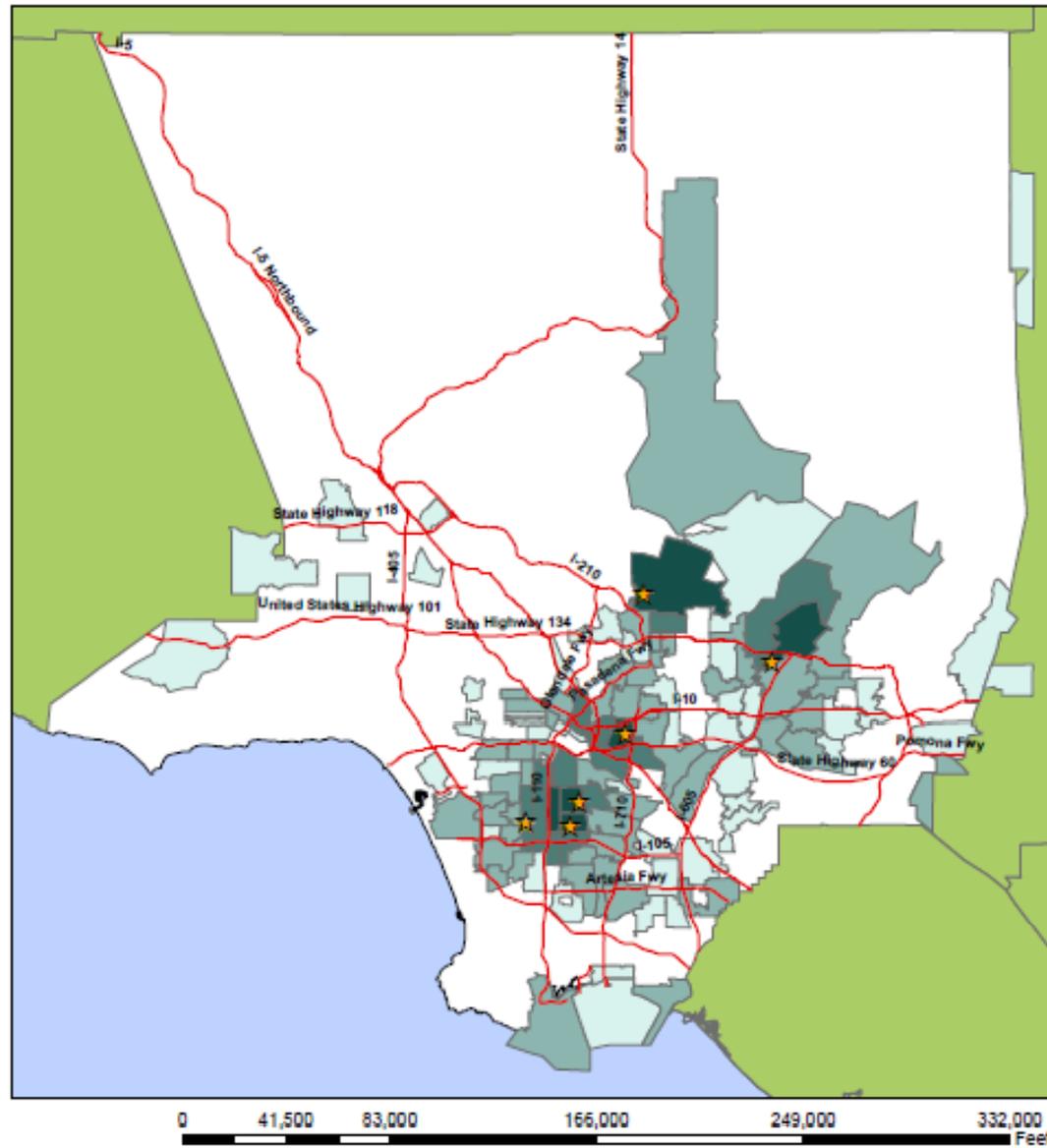


# Outcomes (2012)

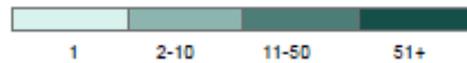
- Attendance: Estimated 52,000 visits @ 6 parks  
↑10,000 since 2011
- Survey: Participants
  - 2133 Total surveys
  - 35% Youth (<18), 18% Young Adults (18-25)
  - 61% Female
  - 86% Regular park visitors (weekly or more)



## 2012 Parks After Dark Surveys - Countywide (N = 2,133)

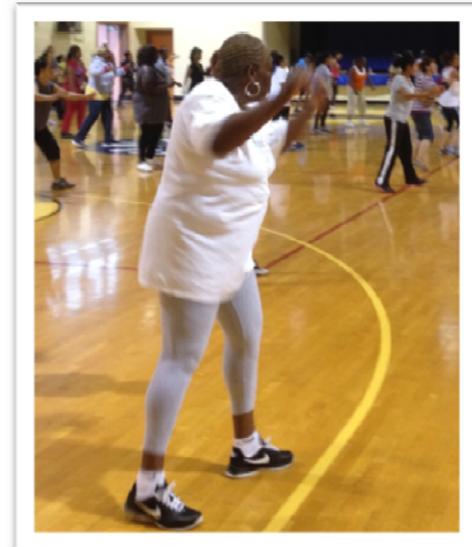


Number of Surveys by Zip Code



# Outcomes (2012)

- Physical Activity
  - 68% reported being physically active 3+ days per week
  - 28% reported being physically active 1-2 days per week
    - 76% participated in physical activity during PAD
  - 4% reported no weekly physical activity
    - 67% participated in physical activity during PAD



# Outcomes (2012)

- Safety

- 96% Felt safe
- Of the 4% who did not feel safe, 80% would participate again



- Satisfaction

- 98% Would participate again / recommend to a friend



# Outcomes (2012)

- ↓ in violent crime in surrounding community compared to the summer prior to program start:
  - Parks in their 3rd year (3): **43%** ↓
  - Parks in their 1st year (3): **11%** ↓
- Improved relations between law enforcement and residents
  - Youth and Deputy Sheriff Basketball Game
  - Friendly, informal social interactions during PAD



# Outcomes (2012)

“PAD is really a good opportunity to hang out with your friends and do things at night that you never have gotten to experience at a park before.” (Loma Alta Park)

“This program changed my life and my family's life. We eat healthier and we exercise more.” (Watkins Park)

“My kids love it, please continue with this program it brings the community together.” (Roosevelt Park)



# Outcomes (2012)

“I love this program. Wish to continue seeing / having it summer after summer.” (City Terrace Park)

“I hope they do more next year. It was amazing.” (Pamela Park)

“This is an excellent idea to keep kids participating in positive activities.” (Owens Park)



# Parks as Community Centers

Violence prevention  
& health promotion



# Parks as Community Centers

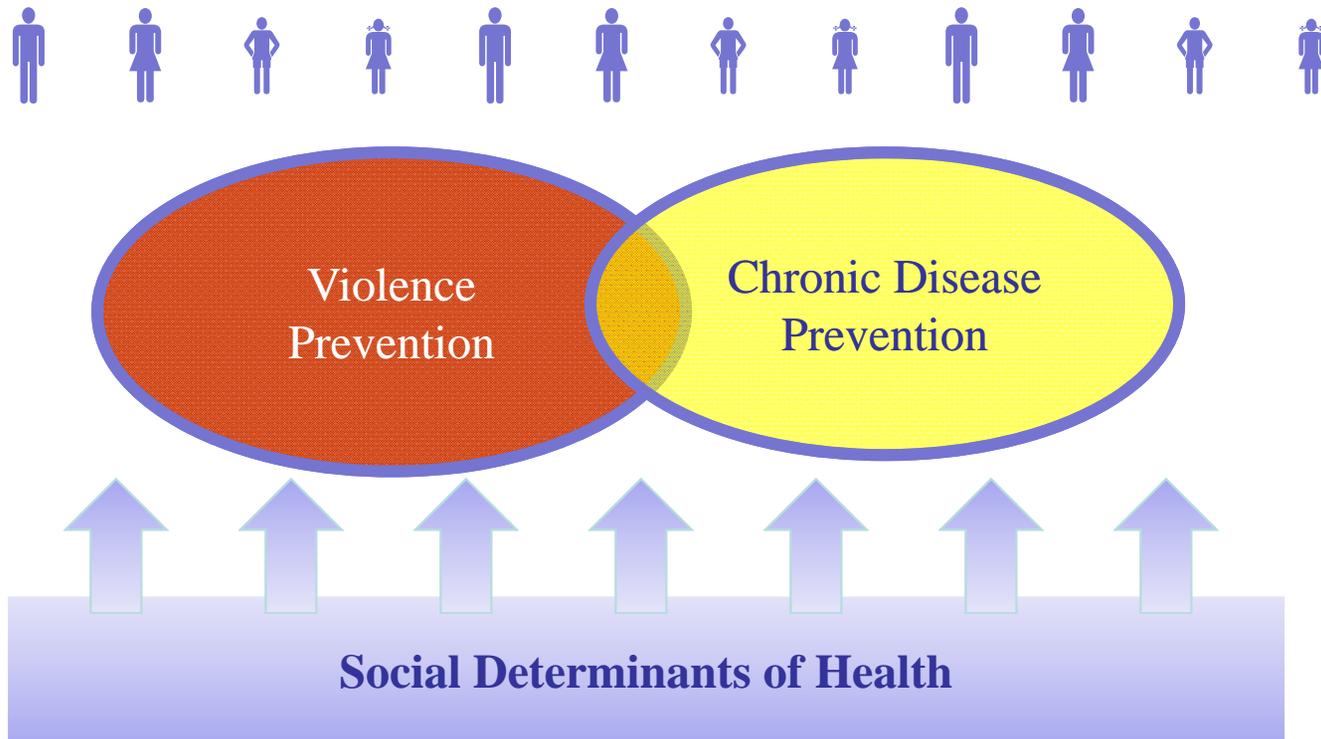
**Parks After Dark started as a *violence prevention initiative.***

## **Public health impact & opportunity**

Positive recreational and social activities for underserved youth and families during typically high-crime summer evenings increases community cohesion, physical activity, and decreases violence; opportunity to connect residents to public health services



# Violence & Obesity Prevention



# Violence & Obesity Prevention

- Unhealthy Barriers: Community Violence
  - Perceiving one's neighborhood as dangerous and hearing about violence in the community has been linked with worse psychological health
  - Chronic stress has been linked with rapid onset and progression of chronic illnesses
  - LA County Health Survey (2007):
    - SPA 6: 57% of adults believe their neighborhood is safe from crime
    - SPA 5: 91% of adults believe their neighborhood is safe from crime



# Disparities: Youth (ages 15-24)

- Gun-related homicide leading cause of death for youth in LA County (nationwide: MVT collisions)
- In 2009, youth accounted for 57% gun-related homicides
  - Youth account for just 15% of total County population
- Minority male youth most impacted
  - Firearm death rates among youth in SPA 6 (South LA) were nearly 8X the county overall
  - Homicide rates among young males: more than 10X females
  - Youth homicide rates highest among African American (90 per 100,000 population), and Latino youth (30.5 per 100,000 population).



# Parks as Community Centers

- Taking back the park
- Social cohesion
- Positive space
- Youth hang out
- Recreational appeal – transformative potential



# Parks as Community Centers

- Literature – utilizing parks to address violence & chronic disease
  - Prevention Institute (2010): Addressing the Intersection
    - Recommends creating safe spaces in partnership with parks/schools
  - California Endowment (2010): Reclaiming Public Spaces
    - Recommends facilitating community ownership of parks, partnering with parks to facilitate use by youth/community and deter youth violence
  - Parks as “opportunity structures” for building community social capital and health promotion (Broyles et al 2011, Am J Prev Med)
    - Park usage survey & observation found ↑ levels of physical activity in parks with ↑ social capital



# Community Walking Clubs

A health education model

Shamika Ossey

SPA 5&6 Area Health Office



# Community Walking Clubs

- History & Overview
  - SPA 5/6 CLPHN staff initiated Walking Clubs during PAD 2010 & 2011
    - Watkins Park
    - Roosevelt Park
  - Goal: Encourage walking through a guided 8 week physical activity Program
    - Health promotion
    - Education
    - Empowerment



# Community Walking Clubs

- Program Overview
  - Weekly Health/Wellness Tip
  - Positive feedback
  - Incentives
  - Health/Wellness literature
  - Walking maps



# Community Walking Clubs

- Logistics
  - Location
  - Time
  - Staffing
- Planning
  - Assess the community
  - Conduct surveys
  - Assess our resources
  - Reevaluate our strategy



# Community Walking Clubs

- Community Engagement
  - Establish rapport
  - Meeting the needs of the community
  - Community empowerment
  - Focus on advocacy and built environment
  - SUSTAINABILITY
  - Providing incentives



# Community Walking Clubs

- Outcomes
  - Participants
    - Individuals
    - Families
  - Anecdotes
    - Nurses walk the talk
  - Youth involvement
    - Incentive driven participation
  - Support for model
    - Over 96% stated they would participant again
    - Over 93% stated they would recommend a friend



# Community Walking Clubs

- Health Education methodology
  - Weekly Health Promotion Tips
  - Supplemental health and wellness literature
  - Group presentations
  - One-One education



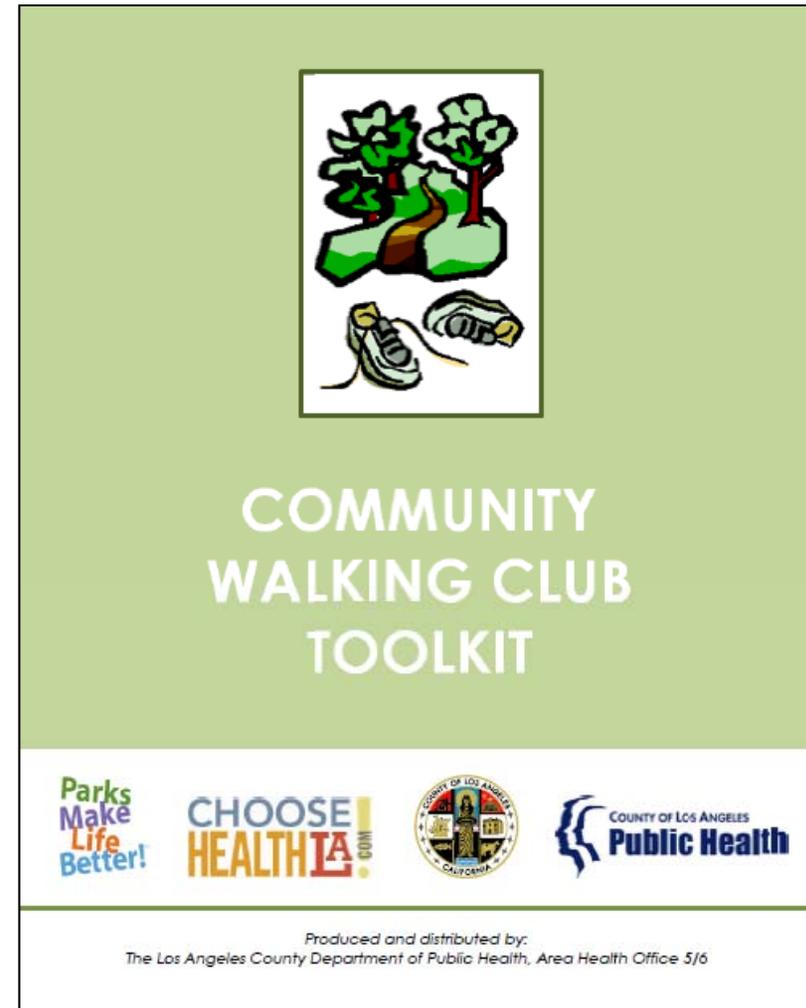
# Community Walking Clubs

- Expansion 2012
  - SPA 3 – Pamela & Loma Alta Park Walking Clubs
  - SPA 7 – City Terrace Park Walking Club
- Walking Club Planning Team: CHS, IVPP, Physical Activity, Parks partnership
  - Planning, evaluation, identify partners, opportunities to expand
- Toolkit
- Mile Markers @ Watkins Park



# Community Walking Clubs

- Toolkit
  - Benefits of walking
  - Encourage and promote daily physical activity
  - Individuals, community groups, and organizations



# Community Walking Clubs

- Mile Markers – Watkins Park
  - Provides enhanced activity experience
  - Informational kiosk educates and empowers
  - Optimistically increase usage of the trail



# Community Walking Clubs

- Lessons learned: successes
  - Partnership with Parks & Recreation
  - Relationship building with community & partners
  - Incentives
  - Community interest in health education
- Challenges
  - Empower community to take ownership
  - Staff time
  - Outreach to broader community – more men, youth



# Community Walking Clubs

- Expansion and sustainability
  - Identify community champions
  - Working with Parks to maintain clubs beyond PAD
  - Identify other partners to sustain
  - Toolkit: Train the Trainer
  - Walk with a Doc
  - Branding & standardization
  - Marketing



# Community Walking Clubs

- Potential for Youth Outreach
  - Markham Middle School Health Careers Magnet
  - Watts Walks with Markham 5K
  - Magnet Initiatives
    - Academic Excellence
    - Health Careers Engagement
    - Community Collaboration
    - Community Involvement



# Community Walking Clubs

- Potential for Health Educator Involvement
  - Walking Club Presentations
  - Health Classes during PAD Health & Wellness Resource Fairs
  - Your connections & expertise



# PAD Public Health Opportunities

- Plans for increased health promotion
  - Youth Councils
  - Choose Health LA integration
  - Outreach to DPH Programs
  - Dissemination of model
  - Sustainability – CTG & beyond



# How to Participate

- Reach out to high risk communities/youth to meet your program's mission.
  - Health screenings, vaccinations, mobile units
  - Health Education programming
  - Participate in SPA Walking Club Efforts – PAD and year-round
  - Referrals to other organizations to participate in PAD
  - Assistance publicizing PAD to community
  - Assistance with design/implementation of Youth Councils



# Q & A



# Thank You!

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