



Press Release
Be Healthy Berrien

Wellness Success with the YMCA of Southwest Michigan and Be Healthy Berrien

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This is the second article in a 4-part series highlighting Be Healthy Berrien and YMCA of Southwest Michigan's worksite wellness programs and services. To read the previous series articles, visit www.BeHealthyBerrien.org/news.

YMCA of Southwest Michigan, through its partnership with Be Healthy Berrien, is bringing worksite wellness programming directly to 4 employers this spring, including Ballard Elementary School in Niles, Southside School in Niles, STEAM Academy at MLK in Benton Harbor, and Westwoods of Niles. This YMCA Worksite Wellness Program includes on-site Diabetes Prevention Programs (YDPP), Health Coaching, and Lunch-and-Learn sessions as well as expert help for worksite leaders to build healthy practices that help support healthy choices for their employees.

The program has led to many great success stories at Southside School in Niles, with nearly ¼ of their staff members participating in either YDPP or Health Coaching. Participants have benefited from individual attention from their certified coach from the YMCA in setting individual goals. One participant, who wished not to be identified, remarked "I've lost 20 pounds on the program! I'm dedicated to changing my lifestyle and keeping the weight off so I can start a family." Erica Walsh, a YDPP coach, says she loves seeing her clients each week and hearing about their progress. "We celebrate and cry together. Meeting with a coach has been a breakthrough for many of them."

Worksite Wellness programs are an important way to support employees and build strong worksites, no matter the size of the organization. "Great worksite wellness programs can be implemented at no cost, and you don't need to be a wellness expert to start a program at your worksite" states Heather Cole, Director of Be Healthy Berrien. Be Healthy Berrien has created a free, online worksite wellness toolkit that makes creating a wellness program easy for worksites of all sizes. You can find the easy, 4-step interactive toolkit online at www.BeHealthyBerrien.org/worksite-wellness.

YMCA of Southwest Michigan offers customizable worksite wellness programs to employers throughout Berrien County, including on-site services, expert advice, and corporate membership options. For more information on YMCA Worksite Wellness services, contact Monica Norton at the Benton Harbor-St. Joseph YMCA, (269) 428-9622.



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The YMCA Worksite Wellness Program is supported by Be Healthy Berrien through a 4x4 Grant from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. The purpose of the Michigan Health and Wellness 4 x 4 Coalition Initiative is to implement Michigan's priority strategies to improve health and reduce obesity by creating healthier communities, expanding prevention activities and empowering people to make healthy choices and adopt health as a core personal value. The expected outcomes include changes in weight status and improvements in healthy eating and physical activity.

Be Healthy Berrien is a county-wide partnership of Berrien County Health Department, Lakeland Health, Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, United Way of Southwest Michigan, and YMCA of Southwest Michigan. These organizations are working together to reduce obesity and chronic illness by creating healthy places to live, work, learn, and play. For more information about Be Healthy Berrien, please visit www.BeHealthyBerrien.org.

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