

## MACON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

**Healthy in Body & Soul: Faithful Families Eating Smart & Moving More**

The numbers didn't lie, obesity was a challenge facing Macon County – 9.5% of children on the WIC program were obese, 21.9% of elementary school children, 25.3% of middle schoolers, 10% of high school students, and among adults 33% were obese and another 37% overweight. County public health leaders, as well as residents, identified increased physical activity and improved nutrition as critical to addressing obesity. Key stakeholders were assembled and began to explore options. Since a large portion of the population was involved in a local church the decision was made to engage directly with the faith community utilizing the Faithful Families Eating Smart & Moving More Program (FFESMM).

The FFESMM Program promotes healthy eating and physical activity in communities of faith by focusing on environmental and policy changes while using educational sessions to promote behavior change. It focuses on three levels of change:

- **Individuals:** Educating individuals to help them make healthier choices. Modes of communication may include community leader messages, posters, bulletin board, program inserts, signs, or newsletters.
- **Groups:** Utilizing group activities to create a social support system for those wanting to make behavior changes; including FFESMM classes, cooking or physical activity classes or clubs, buddy systems, and support groups.
- **Organizations:** Organization changes affect the entire faith community through policy and environmental changes; this may include menus for group meals, walking maps or routes, community gardens, and policies to encourage health eating and physical activity.

**Key Community Partners**

Local Churches  
MountainWise  
WNC Healthy Kids (5-2-1-Almost None)

**HNC 2020 Focus Area: Physical Activity & Nutrition**

**Objective #1:** Increase the percentage of high school students who are neither overweight nor obese.

**Objective #2:** Increase the percentage of adults getting the recommended amount of physical activity.

**Objective #3:** Increase the percentage of adults who report they consume fruits/vegetables five or more times per day.

**HNC 2020 Focus Area: Cross-cutting**

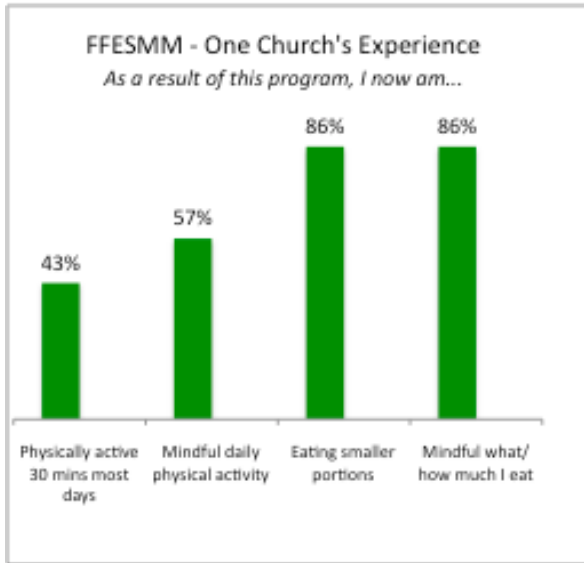
**Objective #4:** Increase the percentage of adults who are neither overweight nor obese.

**Why Did You Select These EBS?**

1. Community Need. Addressed a need that was identified by multiple groups in the county.
2. Working with the Faith Community was the best way to reach the largest number of people and to provide a trusted environment to support long-term change.
3. Resource Availability & Ease of Implementation. Planning guide and templates provided by FFESMM facilitated both implementation and program fidelity. FFESMM staff also assist with compiling and assessing data.

**Results**

- ❖ Two churches have implanted to-date; three additional will start in early 2015. Holly Springs Baptist Church will offer the program a second time inviting members from other churches to attend.
- ❖ Church policy changes include: red tablecloth to identify heart healthy foods, water policy, tobacco policy to include e-cigarette usage, a Move More policy, and joint use agreement for walking area.



## TIMELINE /KEY MILESTONES

May 2013

Data showed high overweight / obesity rates

June 2013

Assembled stakeholders to explore options

July 2013

Chose FFESMM

Identified nutrition/physical activity director

September 2013

Recruited faith communities

Recruited & trained lay leaders

Administered health assessments

October 2013

Administered environmental & policy assessment

February 2014 & On-going

Assisting faith communities make policy & environmental changes

## LESSONS LEARNED

- ❖ **Reach out to unconventional partners** – the faith community can reach persons that need Health Department resources but do not know how to receive them.
- ❖ **Don't underestimate the importance of local "ownership" of the program** – include church partners at every step of the way; allow partners to make changes (which don't impact program fidelity) to make it theirs.
- ❖ **Take advantage of available resources** – use the Planning Guide and the FFESMM staff to their full potential.



Holly Springs Baptist Church, a FFESMM partner church, receiving NCPHA's Norton Award for outstanding service to public health

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Dawn Wilde, Community Health Promotion Supervisor, Macon County Public Health**  
 dwilde@maconnc.org/ 828-349-2426

**Holly Springs Baptist Church's Experience with FFESMM** (video & blog) <http://mountainwise.org/blog/>

**Faithful Families Eat Smart & Move More** <http://www.faithfulfamiliesesmm.org/>

**WNC Healthy Kids** <http://www.521almostnone.com/>

**The Center for Healthy North Carolina**

Laura Edwards, RN, MPA, Director – [laura.edwards@centerforhealthync.org](mailto:laura.edwards@centerforhealthync.org)

