
INTERVIEW WITH A COMMUNITY WELLNESS COORDINATOR

COMMUNITY WELLNESS COORDINATORS (CWC) WORK TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO NUTRITION AND HEALTH IN RESOURCE-LIMITED COMMUNITIES IN INDIANA. THE MISSION IS TO FACILITATE COMMUNITY ENTITIES TO GENERATE POLICY, SYSTEM AND ENVIRONMENTAL (PSE) CHANGES WITHIN FIVE FOCUS AREAS: DIET QUALITY, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, FOOD SECURITY, FOOD SAFETY AND FOOD RESOURCE MANAGEMENT. CWC AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM ASSISTANTS WORK TOGETHER AND OFFER TOOLS, SOLUTIONS, AND EDUCATION NECESSARY FOR INDIVIDUALS TO LEAD A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE.

ASHLEE SUDBURY



Q: What is your role as a Community Wellness Coordinator?

A: My role as a Community Wellness Coordinator is to promote the healthy choice as the easiest choice! We improve nutrition and health in resource-limited communities statewide based on Purdue Nutrition Education Program's five focus areas: diet quality, physical activity, food security, food safety, and food resource management. My role involves policy, system, and environmental changes. We all know an apple a day keeps the doctor away. But if people don't have apples, they aren't going to eat them. I develop solutions to get people the tools they need to be healthier. Our efforts as Community Wellness Coordinators with Nutrition Education Program Assistants ensure that all people have access to physical activities and nutritious foods.

DUBOIS COUNTY

Q: What do you enjoy most about your position?

A: I truly enjoy working with my communities, helping them realize their potential, celebrating little "wins," and working together to accomplish common goals. Giving ownership of assets to each community and guiding conversations toward improvement is vital. At the end of the day, I realize that my job allows me to make a difference in the lives of people I care about, even if I do not know them well.



Q: What are your goals as a Community Wellness Coordinator?

A: My goal is to be seen as a friend and a resource to people that need the service. When working with various sectors of a community, I want to build trust and confidence in the work I do. Ultimately, I want to make a difference to the lives in my community.

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Q: What changes would you like to see in your county, and what changes are you most excited about?

A: I want health and wellness to become a common conversation that we are not afraid to have. Our communities should stand by their goals, challenge the standards, and strive for improvement. Most importantly, I want to help create a world that my children will grow up happy and healthy, not only by choice, but also through tradition.



Q: What is the most important aspect of wellness that you tell your clients?

A: The most important aspect of wellness is that everybody has a role. The places where we live, learn, work and interact influence what we eat and how we move. No individual, group, organization, or community can create viable changes alone. From small adjustments in our day-to-day lives, great progress can be made in improving health and wellness.

Q: What barriers have you encountered?

A: Barriers are speed bumps to check if we make sustainable changes. Most of the time, barriers that I encounter relate to a lack of resources: funding, man power, direction, etc. Once our community looks closer at our "speed bumps," we can find ways to overcome the challenges. Funding tends to be the biggest barrier. It is hard to jump start an initiative or maintain existing motivation without sources of funding.



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Q: How do you think emergency food providers may help to promote wellness?

A: Emergency food providers such as food banks, food pantries, and feeding programs can promote wellness through food nutrition policies. By implementing nutrition policies, providers have control over the quality of food given to people in need. Organizations may also offer incentives, nutritious recipes, cooking classes, or demonstrations for clients to pick healthier options.

FIND YOUR LOCAL CWC BY VISITING THE NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM WEBSITE:
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