



# 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.

SANDRA READ



MARSHALL COUNTY



Q: What is your role as a Community Wellness Coordinator. How many Community Wellness Coordinators are there in Indiana?

A: Community Wellness Coordinators (CWCs) work to improve nutrition and health in resource-limited communities based on Purdue Nutrition Education Program's five focus areas: diet quality, physical activity, food security, food safety and food resource management. As a CWC, I facilitate community entities to implement initiatives that generate Policy, System and Environment (PSE) changes within those five focus areas.

All together we have around 41 Community Wellness Coordinators. With Purdue Extension Nutrition Education Program, CWC provide coverage throughout the state of Indiana. Each of us serves a role specific to the needs of our communities.

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

A: I facilitate communication among organizations to carry out collaborative goals that impact an entire community. Once organizations are aware of what other community partners do in their own counties, conversations over a shared concern will happen.

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

A: One of the most important wellness aspects for the community partners to understand is that PSE changes will cause a cultural health shift with an increase in active lifestyles as well as healthier food choices.







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Q: What do you enjoy most about your position?

A: Guiding groups to what they want and how they proceed is rewarding. It's gratifying to be able to connect organizations and people who combine resources to achieve common goals.



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

A: Wellness can be promoted through the establishment of a food nutrition policy. Then donors will know about acceptable healthy options for donation. Fresh produce could be sought out from farmers' markets, supermarkets, and restaurant/school food rescues.

Q: What barriers have you encountered?

A: Cultural shift takes time. Changing mindsets and habits can be slow work. Explaining what cultural shift is and how PSE works to community partners takes patience and perseverance.



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

A: I would like to see overarching changes in obesity, including obesity reduction in children as well as in adults. In the nutrition area, I hope for increased food security, especially as it relates to children.

Changes that I am excited about:

-Screening for food insecurity by healthcare providers. The process involves signing up clients for SNAP and WIC, providing emergency packages of food, and offering resource lists.

-Promoting "Lettuce Change" in farmers markets. Jars are placed on vendors' tables, and patrons put spare change in these jars. Produce that are purchased with the collected money are donated to local food pantries.

-Linking farmers markets to information in order to offer SNAP EBT/WIC.

-Connecting organizations with resources to increase the number of community gardens in all sectors of the community.

-Acquiring an Active Living Workshop grant to develop an environment which people can walk, bike, and access resources frequently.

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FIND YOUR LOCAL CWC BY VISITING THE NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM WEBSITE:  
[HTTP://WWW.PURDUE.EDU/HHS/EXTENSION/FNP/](http://www.purdue.edu/hhs/extension/fnp/)

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