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More active families, more healthy families

By Pablo Jaime Sáinz

Esther Beltran has lost 40 pounds in six months.

During that time, she has remained active, exercising, practicing kickboxing, and dancing a lot.

“I’m very happy,” said Beltran, who went from 216 lbs. to 176. “I feel great with myself, with my body. I can see difference in the before pictures.”

Beltran, 28, is part of a health and exercise program for Latinos in San Ysidro formed through a collaboration of San Diego State University’s Graduate School of Public Health, the University of California, San Diego’s School of Medicine, and San Ysidro Health Center.



The goal of the Familias Sanas y Activas program is to promote physical activity and healthy habits among Latino families in the South Bay, especially among Latino families in San Ysidro.

The focus is on the Latino community because according to health data among Latinos in San Ysidro show that there’s a great health risk, according to a fact sheet by the San Diego Prevention Research Center, which manages and implements Familias Sanas y Activas.

- Less than 40 percent of Latino San Ysidro residents consider their health to be excellent or very good.
- Nearly 57 percent of San Ysidro residents have been diagnosed with diabetes, hypertension, or high cholesterol.
- More than 50 percent of San Ysidro residents have a family history of diabetes, hypertension, or high cholesterol.
- Only 27.9 percent of San Ysidro residents reported being very satisfied with the number of parks, trails, and other outdoor recreational areas in their community.

As part of its mission, Familias Sanas y Activas will have a walk on Saturday, July 19, from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. at Montgomery Waller Park, 3020 Coronado Ave., in San Diego. The free event will also have activities for children.

Some 100 people are expected at the walk, said Sara Solaimani, Communications and Outreach Specialist for the program.

One of those persons will be Beltran, who said she will take her husband and four children.

“Since I joined the program I try to encourage my children to do more open air activities,” Beltran said. “I try to encourage them to play less video-games and watch less television.”

Currently there are some 350 enrolled adults in the program in San Ysidro and Chula Vista, said Lisa Hoffman, program manager and community liaison. She said that adults can take their children to participate in the exercising groups.

The program uses the promotora model to offer zumba classes, walks, full-body workout, and soccer.

“Lack of physical activity is a major risk factor for the chronic diseases that affect the Latino community like diabetes and obesity,” said Dr. Guadalupe Ayala, Familias Sanas y Activas director and professor at SDSU’s Graduate School of Public Health.

Among the changes in their health that program participants have reported are:

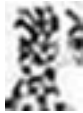
Entre los resultados que los participantes del programa han visto en su salud se encuentran:

- lost weight
- lowered their blood pressure

- drink more water
- adopted healthier family meal preparation habits
- started to focus on improving their health
- have begun to socialize and have fun with others while exercising

“Exercising as a family, or with an exercise group, is fun and is vital to your good health,” said Hoffman, who encourages San Ysidro and Chula Vista residents to join Familias Sanas y Activas. “Thirty minutes per day is recommended. Haz ejercicio, haz amigos!”

For more information on Familias Sanas y Activas, call (619) 594-2322.



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