

SPECIAL TOPICS IN PUBLIC HEALTH  
ORIGINAL RESEARCH: FEATURED ABSTRACT FROM THE  
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## Moving Right Along: A Creative Partnership to Engage Older Adults in Physical Activity and Nutrition Programs

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PEER REVIEWED

A creative partnership was established among Tri-Parish Nursing Ministries, The Arthritis Foundation, Missouri Extension Services, and the Saint Louis County Department of Health to promote quality of life for older adults through physical activity and health education messages.

Twenty-nine participants met twice a week in a local church to exercise for one hour with a trainer from PACE, or People with Arthritis Can Exercise, and then to receive 30 minutes of nutrition education from a Saint Louis County registered dietitian using the Missouri Extension's Health for Everybody program.

A pilot study design was used to engage Saint Louis North County older adults in a physical activity program. Participants were recruited from doctors' offices, local churches, grocery stores, and libraries, using flyers and brochures. Newspaper ads were also used. Outcomes desired included a minimum participation rate of 50% at the end of the 6-week sessions, increased flexibility, and positive feelings reported in Health for Everybody evaluation forms.

The participation rate for the program was 62% at the end of 6 weeks. Mean age of participants was 74 years. All participants reported positive feedback, indicating that they enjoyed sessions and "learned something new." Mean Healthy Eating Index score was 68.6. Feedback revealed that participants desired more ways to exercise outside of class, so Tai Chi instruction and pedometers will be incorporated into future programs.

Nutrition education and structured exercise classes in a safe setting, tailored to varying levels of ability, engaged older adults for the 6-week session.

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