

Programs helping NWI drop weight

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Despite the bleak diagnosis of the region's health, many say there is hope.

Nutrition and community experts across the region have created numerous projects and provided education to help show that obesity, or being overweight, doesn't have to lead to death.

One such project began in 2005, when the United Ways in Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties joined in a partnership project funded by an Eli Lilly grant. Many of the programs in the 4 Community Health Project target children, and aim for early education on proper nutrition and exercise. Others involve seniors and have developed a walk/run marathon for the spring. "There's a lot of positive things happening," said Sharon Kish of the United Way of Porter County. "They're getting healthier." As the result of one program, a group of Hobart

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For more information about the 4 Community Initiative, contact project manager Annemarie Kampwerth at (219) 397-4335 or visit HealthVisions Midwest online at www.hvusa.org.

fifth-graders reported a 65 percent increase in conducting five or more days of physical activity. Half of the students with one or more risk factors for obesity or heart disease in a Whiting based study increased their lean body mass.

Participants in a program hosted by the Gary YWCA lost an average of 12 pounds.

"We have such wonderful programs, they're all so unique," said Annemarie Kampwerth of HealthVisions Midwest in East Chicago.

Organizers hope some of the successful youth programs will be implemented in schools throughout the region.

"The fact that all three counties are doing something is big," Kampwerth said.

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