

News Column – Donna Krug, District Director and Family & Consumer Science Agent, Cottonwood Extension District

Walk Kansas has a Power 9 Theme in 2020

It is no surprise to hear in the news that our lifestyle choices can and do affect our overall health and wellness. As the 2020 version of Walk Kansas is being unveiled, I am excited to share our theme at a Stop and Learn program this week. Join me at noon on Wednesday, February 19th at the Great Bend Activity Center, 2715 18th Street, for the free educational program titled, “Power 9.”

I don’t want to spoil it and share the specific habits that comprise the Power 9 in my column space, but you can be sure, they will be shared in detail at my presentation Wednesday. Based on the Blue Zones Project, Power 9 is a list of nine healthy lifestyle habits shared by people who have lived the longest. There are currently five Blue Zones in the world with just one, in North America. So what exactly is a Blue Zone? Blue Zones are places where a large percentage of people live an active lifestyle well into their 90’s. The five Blue Zones communities include: Loma Linda, CA; Nicoya Peninsula, Costa Rica; Sardinia, Italy; Ikaria, Greece; and Okinawa, Japan.

Late last spring a team of five K-State Research & Extension colleagues embarked on a visit to Ikaria, Greece, one of the recognized Blue Zones. Their job was to immerse themselves into the culture for a few days and report their findings to those of us back in Kansas. Sounds like a tough assignment doesn’t it?

So how does this Power 9 fit in with the signature Extension program known as Walk Kansas? Although physical activity is at the heart of this health initiative, the 2020 program will introduce to you to healthful eating styles, help you form social connections that support healthy living, offer strategies to help lower your level of stress, help you focus on your sense of purpose and more.

How can you join Walk Kansas in 2020?

- Recruit or join a team (6 people, with one person designated as the captain).
- Cost to participate is \$10 per person and includes access to the online tracker, a weekly newsletter, program resources, and local activities. A program T-shirt may also be ordered for a small fee.
- To participate, each person logs minutes of activity and reports daily/weekly. Cups of fruits/vegetables and water consumption can also be tracked.

Who can participate in Walk Kansas?

Anyone can! Walk Kansas is open to all. Technology allows participants to stay connected even if they don’t live close by. Teams can include coworkers, family members, neighbors, school classmates, members of civic or community organizations, faith-based groups and 4-H clubs. All that matters is that team members agree to support and encourage one another.

I hope to see you at Wednesday’s Power 9 program at the Great Bend Activity Center. Call me if you have questions about signing up for the Walk Kansas program.

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