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Using Local Resources to Build Strong, Healthy Families

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Using Local Resources to Build Strong, Healthy Families

Cornelia Willis, MSIII

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Sarah Morgan, MD, Hardwick Area Health Center

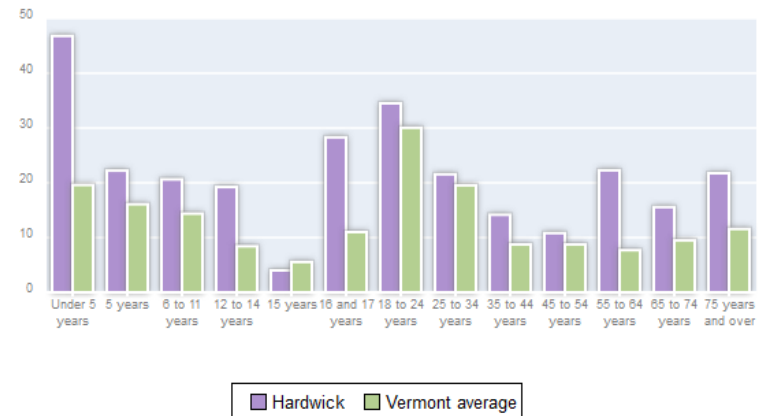
Climbing Obesity Rates in the United States

- Obesity rates continue to rise in the United States.
- Unfortunately income level impacts obesity prevalence.
- Among children ages 2-19, 31.8% are currently considered either overweight or obese.
 - Overweight in children is measured as a BMI at or above the 85th percentile. Obesity is measured as a BMI at or above the 95th percentile²
- Studies show that people with a lower income gravitate towards less healthy foods because they are less expensive, easier to prepare and are considered time effective.³

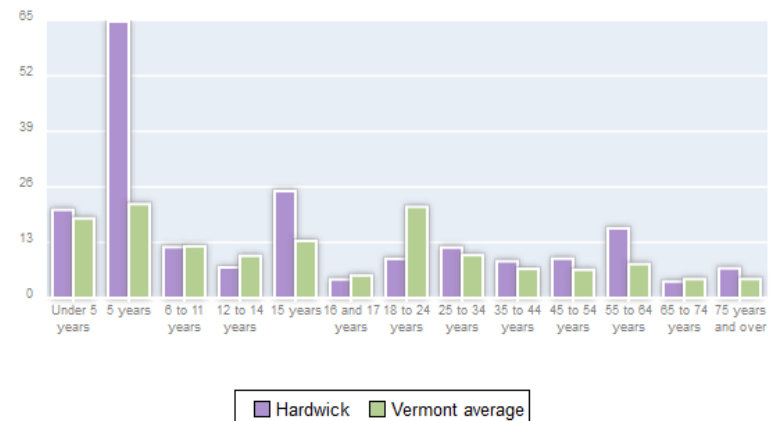
Getting to Know Hardwick, Vermont⁴

- 370 families (26% single parent households)
- 22.2% of the population falls under the poverty line
- 11.5% of preschool-elementary school children are obese
- Hardwick, Vermont is in the center of a fresh food mecca
- Hardwick has many resources for disadvantaged families

Breakdown by age of poor female residents in Hardwick (percentage below poverty level)



Breakdown by age of poor male residents in Hardwick (percentage below poverty level)



Local Leadership's Impact

- Hardwick residents have risen up to take on some of these problems. However many are finding their resources are not being fully utilized.
- Hardwick Food Pantry and Ruby Dale Brown with Bethany Dunbar
- NEK on the Move and Katherine Ingram
- Hardwick Trails and Helen Beattie
- YATST and UP for Learning with Helen Beattie

Healthy Hardwick Families

- Through conversations with community leaders and parents of children presenting to the health center for well child visits, local healthy eating and lifestyle resources were identified.
- Local and Internet resources were highlighted on an accessible pamphlet promoting Healthy Hardwick Families
- Though the parent discussions, a general understanding of need was established. Parents wanted help with getting their kids to reduce screen time, modify negative behaviors or help with household chores.
- Development of Activity Cards for ideas for outdoor and indoor healthy and family friendly activities.
 - These cards could be used to strengthen family bonds and provide alternatives to non-academic screen time.

Outcomes of the Healthy Hardwick Families Resources

- The Healthy Hardwick Families products were well received by providers and community members.
- The local AHEC branch is printing out 30 pamphlets and over 100 activity cards for the Hardwick Area Health Clinic.
- Healthy Hardwick Families posters will be hung in several public places to notify people about the availability of additional resources at the Hardwick Area Health Center
- Future assessment of effectiveness will be seen in local program attendance
- Another data point for effectiveness could be related to screen time statistics

Evaluation of Effectiveness and Limitations

- Because there are no consolidated list of resources for disadvantaged or at risk families, the Healthy Hardwick Families pamphlet fills a much needed void.
 - The resources included in the pamphlet are not limited to the 370 families in Hardwick, but can be extended to families and individuals in the surrounding areas
- Assessment of effectiveness is difficult as the current Hardwick Area Health Center EMR is not designed for extracting/sorting data
- Families that would benefit most from the brochure are historically have the greatest rates of “no shows” for medical appointments
 - Brochures or a short educational presentation could be administered to students at local schools
- Assessing impact of project on children’s overall health is difficult secondary to long follow up times
 - More frequent counseling or supportive interventions/meetings would help to motivate change

Recommendations for Future Interventions and Projects

- Develop internet resource links for the Northern Counties Health Care, Inc. website
- Work to promote the Hardwick Area Food Pantry's Grow Your Own program outside of the Healthy Hardwick Families products
- Survey population to identify needs/service gaps
 - Determine if services are already available or need to be developed
- Work with local schools to develop family fun nights and other interventions to promote healthy lifestyles
 - Past projects in Hardwick have worked to promote healthy eating and active lifestyles

References

- 1 "Relationship between poverty and overweight or obesity." Food Research and Action Center. 31 October, 2014 <http://frac.org>
- 2 "Overweight and Obesity Statistics," Weight-Control Information Network. 15 October, 2014 <http://win.niddk.nih.gov/statistics/>
- 3 Fournier, Kate, et al. "Causes of Obesity" The University of Vermont and the Vermont Attorney General's Office. 16 November, 2010
- 4 "Hardwick, Vermont." City Data. 31 October, 2014 www.city-data.com