



Mayors Wellness Campaign
Put your community in motion.

Physical Health & Nutrition



Integrating Residents with Disabilities into Your Mayors Wellness Campaign Programs

Involve Your Community

- While many community events are inviting and accessible for most citizens, you might not be aware that they can exclude residents with disabilities.
- A great way to promote inclusivity in your community is to involve residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their family/caregivers.
- You can make your community more welcoming to individuals with disabilities by including targeted programming that fits the needs of residents with disabilities.
- Find an organization near you that can help integrate residents with a disability into your MWC programming [here](#).

ACTION STEPS

Create a Committee

- Organize community leaders (e.g. special education teachers, health care providers, local government, or local residents/caregivers) to create or re-evaluate events and programs to involve community members with disabilities.
- Evaluate your town's community events and programs to ensure that they are both accessible and available for all individuals, including residents with disabilities.

Make a Plan

- Develop your plan based on the needs of your community.
- Promote interaction between community members with disabilities and those without a disability by inviting **all members** of your community to participate in events and programs.
- Create a program that is accessible to residents with disabilities. Integrating parents in the implementation phase will ensure that all needs are met to host a successful event.

FOLLOW THEIR LEAD!

Westwood offers a year-round Special Needs Activity Program (SNAP), which provides a variety of weekly sports and arts and crafts programs to children and young adults who have a physical or learning disability. To promote inclusivity, this program is open to all residents. For more information, click [here](#).

Rutherford offers an "Exceptional Individuals" program that encourages disabled community members to participate in community wellness sessions, followed by a healthy dinner at a local restaurant.

- Consider creating buddy or mentor programs, such as Princeton Special Sports, a program that pairs volunteers with individuals who have a disability.
- Partner with local organizations who serve individuals with disabilities for community events and activities. You can find organizations to partner with by city, county, support service, specialist, and more [here](#).
- Revise after-school, recreational, and other similar programs to be inclusive of all members of the community regardless of their ability level.

Take Action

- **Advocate** – Reduce the divide in your community through education on [specific disabilities](#) or on topics such as [disability etiquette](#).
- **Events** – Invite residents with a disability and their family/caregivers to participate in walks, fundraisers, sensory-friendly movie nights, health and wellness events, etc.
- **Programs** -Start a program that meets on weekdays after school or on weekends to promote the involvement of all community members. Utilizing arts and sports are great ways to ensure everyone’s interests are fulfilled.
 - **Examples:**
 - [Princeton Special Sports](#)
 - A not-for-profit, volunteer organization that provides adults and children with disabilities the opportunity to play sports and engage in social activities in a supported environment.
 - [YMCA Special Needs Adaptive Program \(SNAP\)](#)
 - SNAP helps individuals with a disability between the ages of 5 to 30 gain confidence, promote independence, and promote socialization. Programs include adaptive aquatics and yoga.

Evaluate Your Impact

- Evaluation is an important process that allows your community to identify areas of improvement and helps define the impact of your programming.
- Include evaluation methods in your action plan.
 - A baseline assessment survey should serve as the pre-implementation evaluation. A follow-up survey should be the post-implementation portion of the evaluation process. Use follow-up surveys to identify best practices and lessons learned.
- Record quantitative data such as attendance at program activities or changes in knowledge to define results and impact.
- Collect qualitative data such as interviews to assess how residents felt about the program or ideas on what they would like to see in the future.



MORE RESOURCES

- [New Jersey Association of Community Providers](#)
- [Easterseals NJ](#)
- [CDC Developmental Disability Facts](#)
- [Mom2Mom](#)
- [Community Health Inclusion Index](#)

For more information, contact the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute’s Mayor’s Wellness Campaign at 609-452-5980 or info@njhcqi.org.