

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

2015-2016



Grand Challenges

K-State Research and Extension: providing education you can trust to help people, businesses, and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future.

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Kansas Stay Strong Stay Healthy: *A Strength Training Program for Older Adults*



Situation: Despite compelling research about the benefits of muscle strengthening, the majority of older adults, particularly women, do not currently perform these exercises. There are many reasons, including: fear of injuring themselves, no experience with lifting weights, lack of access to a professional experienced with older populations, expense of fitness centers, which often aren't geared towards older adults, and few community programs. SSSH addresses these problems by providing a safe, welcoming environment where groups of older adults can learn from certified instructors how to strengthen their muscles.

What We Did: In December 2015, three regional Stay Strong Stay Healthy (SSSH) instructor certification trainings were conducted resulting in 57 family and consumer sciences (FCS) extension professionals being certified. In November 2016, an additional 8 FCS extension professionals were certified. Extension specialists secured funding to support materials and resources for local unit program delivery. A program website was developed.

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy (SSSH) is an eight-week 16 class exercise program for older adults. The goal of this evidence-based program is to improve health and quality of life through strength training. SSSH is ultimately a fall prevention program. Since March 2016, local FCS agents have provided 40 SSSH sessions resulting in over 640 classes involving an estimated 400 participants.

Outcomes: Participants complete pre and post program surveys as well as pre and post fitness assessments. Reported program benefits include: increased muscle mass and strength, restoration of balance and flexibility, improved bone density, and decreased arthritis pain.

Success Story: Here are comments made by participants:

"The program has improved my life by increasing my strength, flexibility and motivation. Please keep it available to our community."

"I have better balance and move more freely on stairs."

"All of my medical tests numbers improved! My doctor told me whatever you're doing—KEEP doing it!"

"You know, my legs have quit hurting at night and this (the exercises) is the only thing I am doing differently. I'm so happy."

