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THROUGH ACTIVE BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT.



TOOLKIT FOR CHURCHES AND FAITH ORGANIZATIONS

1. Overview
2. Church Leader Outreach Letter
3. Active Lifestyles are Healthier Lifestyles
4. Pre-Survey
5. Shared Use Checklist
6. Sample Shared Use Agreement
7. Facility Agreement
8. Enhancement Options
9. Post-Survey

REFERENCES

1. Transylvania County Church "Play Desert" GIS Map
2. Eating Smart and Moving More Planning Guide for Faith Communities
3. North Carolina Faith-Based Organization Facility Use Assessment Report
4. Community Garden Resource Guide
5. Let's Move! Faith and Communities Toolkit
6. MyPlate Community Toolkit
7. Region 1 Joint Use Agreement Inventory
8. Take Action Community Leaders Reference Guide
9. Checklist for Developing a Joint Use Agreement
10. 521 Almost None, Getting Started in Your Faith Community
11. Sample Eat Smart Policy

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OVERVIEW

OUR GOAL

At MountainWise, we know that active communities are healthier communities. Our goal is to expand the number of shared use agreements that increase access to physical activity opportunities.

WHAT IS A SHARED USE AGREEMENT?

Many local communities have limited access to indoor and/or outdoor space where children and adults can be physically active. A shared use agreement is when two or more organizations share indoor and outdoor spaces like gymnasiums, athletic fields, and playgrounds. The concept is simple: share resources to keep costs down and communities healthy.

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

IDENTIFY

Step 1: The first thing you need to do is identify churches or faith organizations in your area that might be interested in a shared use agreement. MountainWise can provide you with a complete list of churches in your community. Additional information can be found using Google search, the Yellow Pages, or www.churchfinder.com.

Step 2: Identify all parks and recreational facilities, and school grounds in your county that are open to the public.

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SELECT

Step 1: Provide the addresses of the identified churches to your county GIS Mapping Specialist and request maps of parks and recreational facilities, and school grounds.

You can also request maps for play deserts, which are areas where residents have to travel over 10 miles to get to the nearest park and recreational facility.

Step 2: Select a church to approach based on the information you received from the maps. If a church is located in an area with low access to recreational facilities or is considered a play desert, then it should be considered high priority.

Step 3: MountainWise will provide you with a packet of sample shared use agreements. This information, along with county statistics and the community benefits of a shared use agreement, will provide all the information you need to follow up with the church. During this follow up, be sure to highlight how MountainWise will work together with the church to provide assistance, expertise, and the supplies needed to implement a successful shared use agreement.

Find a Community Champion! If you have a connection with an involved church member who could serve as a champion for this initiative, contact them about the project and get them on board.

IMPLEMENT

Step 1: **Assess** each church with the cooperation of the faith leaders, and conduct an inventory of the church's physical activity resources.

Step 2: Use the **Pre-Survey** to determine what resources the community could benefit from and utilize to increase physical activity.

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Step 3: Meet with the church's faith leaders to determine what facilities could be opened to the public, and discuss the logistics of the shared use agreement using the Sample Template. Determine who from the church will be approving the plan and when the shared use agreement will go into effect. Review the *Shared Use Checklist* to ensure all bases are covered.

Step 4: Present the church with a list of *Enhancement Options* that they can choose from to strengthen the opening of their facilities through the shared use agreement. Churches qualify for different enhancements based on the type of agreement they enter into. Enhancements include exercise equipment and marketing supplies (i.e. signage, banners, yard signs, window clings, etc.).

Step 5: Once the shared use agreement is approved and signed by the church, the equipment and marketing supplies can be distributed.

Step 6: Celebrate the accomplishment of increasing physical activity in your community! Submit a press release, host a ribbon cutting event, or have a community welcome event.

EVALUATE

Step 1: Once the shared use agreement is in place, follow up with your church monthly for 3-6 months to ensure that the public is utilizing the open facilities properly and maintaining the property with care. Follow-ups should ideally be done in person in order to ensure that all enhancements are being used accordingly, and that the church is satisfied with the terms of the agreement.

Step 2: Six months after implementation, conduct the *Post Survey* to determine if physical activity has increased in the community and that the shared use agreement was successful.

Step 3: Using the survey feedback, look for ways to improve the shared use agreement.

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SUCCESS STORY: How a rural church decided to take on the physical and spiritual health of its congregation: A Case Study

Holly Springs Baptist Church (HSBC) plays an important role in both the spiritual and physical health of its community. For HSBC, however, they are one and the same thing; taking good care of your body is as important as taking good care of your spirit.

Obesity is a common challenge in rural communities and Macon County is no exception. A lack of faith was not the issue. Most obese people know they'd be healthier if they could lose weight, but ordinary diets that held them to unrealistic expectations almost always backfired.

A diet that linked healthy eating and exercise to spiritual practice was just what the congregation needed.

Taking an Active Interest in the Health of its Congregation

Jan Lee Chair of the Holly Springs Health Care Committee, sought out the help of Dawn Wilde-Burgess, Community Health Promotion Supervisor for the Macon County Public Health Department. Wilde-Burgess, a trained facilitator in the **Faithful Families Eating Smart and Moving More (FFESMM)** program, knew this intervention would be a good fit for HSBC.

FFESMM is a practice-tested intervention developed by Center of Excellence for Training and Research Translation (Center TRT). The curriculum helps individuals in faith communities deliver lessons that encourage families to connect healthy eating and physical activity to their religious or spiritual beliefs.

At the backbone of such a curriculum is a supportive social network, which HSBC already had in its congregation. Everyone already knew each other, and the healthy cooking classes, nutrition programs, and opportunities for exercise only strengthened that connection. Group-oriented goal setting and problem solving have been much more effective as a result.

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Lay leaders are responsible for bringing lessons from Scripture and spiritual elements into the sessions. Central to each session is the discussion amongst the group. Through questions and discussion prompts, lay leaders prompt group members to talk about their eating habits, physical activities, and their faith. Lay leaders help group members connect the dots between the health of their souls and the health of their bodies.

FFESMM covers these concepts:

- How to choose healthy foods and know which options are healthiest
- How to budget for healthy foods by being good stewards of food dollars
- How to keep food safe during preparation and storage
- How to get moving and make physical activity a part of daily routine

Red Tablecloths: Changes for Individuals and Systems

Individual behavior change is easier when surrounding systems support the change. HSBC introduced water policies, food policies, and “moving more” policies.

When a red tablecloth appears on a table at a church meal, that’s where a congregation member can find the heart healthy foods. HSBC also offers more fresh fruits and vegetables for their ministry program, thanks to a silver certification from Partners in Health and Wholeness. Next year, HSBC will apply for gold certification, and use the money to install a paved walking trail for public use.

Strengthening Spirits and Bodies

Holly Springs Baptist Church did more than bring healthy foods and healthy cooking to its congregation. They connected the dots between spiritual and physical health in a program that fostered deeper connections between its members. Exercise and healthy eating are now the natural choices for its members. They are **MountainStrong**.

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Dear MountainStrong Partner,

The MountainWise Shared Use Agreement Project, or **MountainStrong**, is working to increase community access to open areas that promote physical activity through churches and their pre-existing facilities. We are seeking organizations just like yours to partner with us because of your location and the value that you already provide to your community.

Here's What to Expect:

- **Understanding:** The MountainWise team will work with your organization and health committee staff to gain a thorough understanding of your church, what you offer, and ways to work together to increase healthful living within the community.
- **Implementation:** MountainWise will provide your organization with a shared use agreement plan, marketing supplies, items to enhance physical activity at your recreational facility, and ongoing support throughout the initiative timeline.
- **Evaluation:** Have changes been made in the community regarding physical activity? Is the public treating and maintaining your facilities appropriately and practicing safe play? Through pre-and post-implementation surveys, we will find the answers to these questions.

We are committed to working directly with your church to help ensure a successful, safe, and efficient shared use agreement is implemented. We will provide you with the assistance and resources needed to enhance your facilities and ensure that the public knows the rules and regulations for facility use. We will work with you throughout the process to make sure your church is at ease and ready to help increase active living in your community.

We look forward to hearing from you and learning more about your organization.

Thank you,

MountainWise

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OUTREACH LETTER: CHURCH LEADER



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ACTIVE LIFESTYLES ARE HEALTHIER LIFESTYLES

MountainWise wants to ensure that everyone has access to trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, and other physical activity facilities. This includes working with interested organizations like churches, schools, and municipalities who might provide use of existing facilities for active living.

DID YOU KNOW:

- Rural communities often lack access to physical activity opportunities and resources. Shared use agreements can play an important role in increasing recreational opportunities for children and their families, and improve the health of their communities.
- Adults who are regularly active can better manage stress, maintain a healthy weight, and decrease their risk of developing chronic diseases.
- Obesity rates have tripled in the past few decades; 1 out of 3 children in the U.S are overweight or obese. North Carolina percentages for childhood obesity are the fifth highest in the US.
- North Carolina recommends shared agreements and even promotes them by the creation of two statutes that encourage landowners and schools to open their land to the public.

WHY IT MATTERS:

- Poor nutrition and physical activity leads to an increased risk of obesity, which can result in chronic diseases including diabetes, heart disease, and cancer.
- There are an increasing number of young children being diagnosed with type II diabetes.
- Churches are natural leaders and community change facilitators. They can be influential in ending the obesity epidemic by utilizing their existing facilities and resources, and providing the public with greater access to physical activity opportunities.

OUR SOLUTION:

- MountainWise will work with local Churches to open up pre-existing recreational facilities to the general public and develop shared use agreements in order to increase opportunities for physical activity.

YOUR ROLE:

- Work with MountainWise to determine what facilities your church could open to the public in order to improve the health in your community.

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ACTIVE LIFESTYLES



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PRE-SURVEY

You are being asked to participate in a voluntary and anonymous evaluation for the MountainWise Shared Use Agreement Project, **MountainStrong**. No one will be able to associate your responses with your identity. You may choose not to take the survey, to stop responding at any time, or to skip any questions that you do not want to answer. Your completion of this survey serves as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project.

1. Are any of your facilities currently open to the public? List all facilities and hours for public use.

2. If not, are you interested in opening facilities to the public?

3. How often does the community use the facilities?

- A. Always
- B. Often
- C. Sometimes
- D. Rarely

4. Do you feel the facilities are safe and accessible to your community members?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Uncertain

5. Do you have any concerns with opening your facilities to the community?

6. How can MountainWise better support your organization?

Thank you!

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SHARED USE CHECKLIST

The following checklist outlines a number of key steps for churches and faith organizations considering shared use of their facilities.

- ___ Identify and review existing congregational policies and agreements that address public access to facilities, including Facility Use Plans and Agreements.
- ___ Determine how an Open Use Plan or other shared use efforts would allow the congregation to further expand community access to facilities.
- ___ Discuss shared use with the congregation's leadership and membership.
- ___ Designate a point person or committee to be responsible for shared use and work with the congregation's leadership and other community partners to ensure success.
- ___ Consider which facilities or programs to open for community use and participation, the type of activities allowed, the hours of use, and any limitations or restrictions on use. The details of shared use may vary across different facilities. For example, a walking trail and playground may be open for community use during daylight hours seven days a week, while a gymnasium may be open for community use a few afternoons a week.
- ___ Start by focusing on how shared use can fit into the organization's existing community work without requiring additional funds or resources. For example, if the congregation already offers free or low-cost aerobics classes, consider inviting community members to participate.
- ___ Include the community in the planning process for any new projects that will be open for shared use purposes.

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- Be creative when looking for funding. Sources of funding for shared use are different in every community and congregation. Possibilities include: grants from local and national foundations; grants from federal, state, and local government; and congregational support. Be sure to seek out in-kind donations of equipment, supplies, materials, and volunteer time and labor.
- Form partnerships with other organizations working on health and wellness in the community. For example, a local hospital or clinic may be willing to partner on a walking trail project if the trail will be open to its patients.
- Make connections with other churches that allow shared use of their facilities to explore ideas and strategies. Reach out to local, state, and national groups that promote shared use to help answer questions and strategize ways to overcome obstacles.
- Determine if additional staff or volunteer time will be needed to support and supervise community use. Possible added duties and activities include unlocking and locking facilities, scheduling use of facilities, and additional janitorial and maintenance work.
- Review insurance policies to make sure they provide adequate coverage for additional use of facilities. Update insurance policies to include coverage for any property improvements or new equipment.
- Consider getting a waiver and release of liability from participants in exercise classes.
- Get the word out. Let the community know that they are welcome to use the congregation's recreational facilities by posting signs, using social media, and even sending flyers home with local schoolchildren.

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SAMPLE SHARED USE AGREEMENT

Below is a sample of a Shared Use Agreement that can be adopted by North Carolina churches interested in opening their recreational facilities to their communities. There are many ways to make shared use official. This sample presents some key elements to include in the agreement.

Whereas:

More than two-thirds of adults and almost one-third of children ages 10 to 17 in North Carolina are overweight or obese;

Whereas:

Less than one half of North Carolina adults and less than one-third of North Carolina children in kindergarten through fifth grade get the recommended amount of daily physical activity;

Whereas:

Only 41% of North Carolina youth live in neighborhoods with any type of facility that can accommodate and encourage physical activity, like parks, playgrounds, community centers, walking paths, and even sidewalks;

Whereas:

Churches can provide congregants and the community-at-large with the ability to be healthier by allowing use of their recreational facilities;

_____ encourages its members and the community at large to engage in healthy eating and active living programs and activities.
 [insert name of church]

_____ hereby adopts this policy to open its facilities for community recreational use when such use does not interfere with congregational programs and activities.
 [insert name of church]

_____ hereby resolves to support the health of its surrounding community by:
 [insert name of church]

[insert name of church]

[insert description of facilities, potentially including playgrounds, sport courts, walking trails and gradens]

[describe any conditions that apply to use]

[insert days and times of access]

[insert name of church]

[Insert description of facilities]

[Insert days and times of access]

[insert types of activities]

[describe any conditions that apply use]

Signature _____
 Name _____
 Title _____

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 SAMPLE SHARED USE AGREEMENT



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MOUNTAINSTRONG FACILITY AGREEMENT

Church Name: _____

Contact: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

MountainWise, in collaboration with _____ will provide the assistance needed to implement a shared use agreement at your organization in order to ensure proper and safe use of the facility. This collaborative process provides an opportunity to increase physical activity within your community and improve the health and social aspects for all.

MountainWise Intervention Lead:

Health Educator:

Phone Number:

Phone Number:

Email:

Email:

OBSERVATIONS:

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MountainWise Agrees to provide the following benefits:

- Promotion on the MountainWise website
- Promotional signage at your shared use facility
- Advertising/PR Opportunities
- Exercise Equipment

As a MountainStrong partner, you agree to:

- Complete an evaluation of the project
- Allow MountainWise to survey and take inventory of your shared use facility
- Develop a shared use plan that includes lists of properties subject to the agreement, inventory of the conditions, hours of use, operating rules, insurance documentation, duration of agreement, and third party user forms with the help of MountainWise staff
- Obtain approval from your organization
- Use provided supplies for community use

Results of agreement:

As a faith leader of _____ I agree to the above.

print name

sign name

date

As a representative of MountainWise, I agree to the above.

print name

sign name

date

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FACILITY AGREEMENT





ENHANCEMENT OPTIONS



PHYSICAL EDUCATION KIT

Includes: (1) volleyball,
 (2) 8 1/2" playground balls,
 (2) soccer balls,
 (2) basketballs,
 (2) 10' jump ropes,
 (2) 12' jump ropes,
 (2) 16' segmented jump ropes,
 (4) 7' segmented jump ropes,
 (4) 8' segmented jump ropes

YOGA KIT

Includes: Yoga mat, blocks, strap, carrying case



*BANNER

Includes: 5' X 2' banner with grommets. Does not include installation materials



**If any additional signage is needed, please send your request to Sarah Tennyson at sarah@mountainwise.org*

WALKING TRAIL KIT

Includes: Pedometer, water bottle, bottle carrying case



BASIC FITNESS KIT

Includes: Workout DVDs, mats, hand weights, exercise balls with pumps, resistance bands

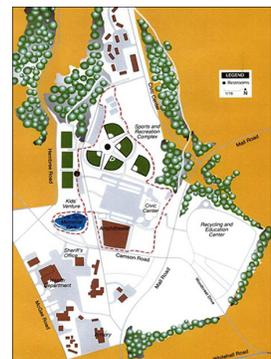


DISC GOLF SET



WALKING MAP

(image shown is example of what may be available)



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POST-SURVEY

You are being asked to participate in a voluntary and anonymous evaluation for the MountainWise Shared Use Agreement Project, **MountainStrong**. No one will be able to associate your responses with your identity. You may choose not to take the survey, to stop responding at any time, or to skip any questions that you do not want to answer. Your completion of this survey serves as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project.

1. What facilities were opened to the public? List all facilities and hours for public use.

2. Have you noticed an increase in community use of facilities?

- A. Yes, large increase B. Yes, small increase C. I don't know D.No

3. Do you feel the facilities are safe and accessible to your community members?

- A. Yes B. No
C. Other _____

4. Do you feel satisfied with the way the shared use agreement has been implemented?

- A. Yes B. No
C. Other _____

5. Do you feel satisfied with the assistance received from the MountainWise Partnership?

- A. Yes B. No C. Other _____

6. Do you feel the public is respecting your property?

7. How can MountainWise better support your organization?

Thank you!