



## Create Your Own

How do I get started? Whether you are a Recreation and Parks professional, a health care professional, a community leader, or a concerned citizen the health and benefits of active recreation, outdoor play, nutrition, fitness, environmental education/awareness, and family involvement are obvious. This program was created to connect the people with these benefits and therefore make a healthier community. You also can share in this benefit by taking steps similar to those found below in your town or municipality. Both the Frederick County & City Parks and Recreation Departments have highlighted these steps below to encourage and equip the proactive in this venture. Enjoy!

*"Life is a great adventure...accept it in such a spirit." - Theodore Roosevelt*

### Here are a few steps you can take to develop a program:

1. Contact your Local Parks and Recreation, or Recreation provider about the concept. Ask for a meeting to discuss the pro's for this type of public-private partnership.

Pro's include:

- a) Development of community awareness of parks and recreation resources
- b) Communicate a unified message of health, fitness, and environmental appreciation to your community
- c) Encourage participation at events and at recreational programs via local health care providers
- d) Creation of new recreational programs that are specifically designed to meet a higher health standard
- e) Involvement of Health Care professionals at the events promotes and communicates a sense of "leading by example" to all involved
- f) Many more I am certain...

Con's include:

- a) This type of program will take some staff and volunteer time by all parties involved. Best approach is to delegate specific responsibilities to each member of the eventual committee
  - b) This type of program will be a small financial investment. Best approach to overcome this is to "share" the burden of the project between the groups
2. Request a meeting with a representative from your Health Department, other local parks and recreation offices (city or county), the YMCA, and a local Doctor (possibly a pediatrician).
  3. Create a *Docs in the Park* committee with representatives from each of the above mentioned areas. At your meeting accomplish the following:
    - a. Identify the needs of your community
    - b. Identify the resources and approach the committee would like to take. This can be done a variety of ways; however one agency will have to take a "lead" role in this process.
    - c. Identify how you would begin constructing your own program with your newly formed committee. Developing a concept of events and or activities that could communicate this message clearly for your community is a sound approach.
    - d. Identify the "benchmarks" that will be necessary to be considered a true Docs in the Park program. (Benchmarks should reflect the needs of the community or goals of the committee).

- i. Note: we established that for our Docs in the park program to be considered a designated program it would need to meet 2 of 4 of the following criteria: Nature, Physical Activity, Family Involvement, and Nutrition.
    1. Nature: Minimum of 30 minutes of a nature component
    2. Physical Activity: 30 minutes of physical exercise
    3. Family involvement: Program is designed for family involvement
    4. Nutrition: Program is designed for healthy nutrition, communicating healthy eating habits
  4. Develop a presentation that can easily be transported and communicated at events and or special meetings such as PTA events, Health Care Professional gatherings, library events, etc.
  5. Development of flyers with themes such as “play”, “move”, and “explore” to promote amenities and free opportunities to the public is essential. Include all groups of the committee in the flyer’s to ensure by in by all parties
  6. Develop a website presence that points to the opportunities for health care professionals to get involved and describes the benefits the community can have in participating
  7. Develop a “tool kit” that connects the Doctors offices with the information to promote. The tool kit should include flyers, brochures from all agencies involved, posters for the waiting rooms, “ParkScriptions” pads, health department information on nutrition, and a formalized letter on either the group or the lead agencies letter head describing the program.
  8. Designate a contact person to promote the message of the program to the local doctors. This can be done by any member of the committee; however the health care professionals are often the best resource at this.
  9. Designate a contact person (email and phone) who will collect information on any interested doctors’ information
  10. Promote the programs associated with the benchmarks you have established. Using a symbol or logo consistently with all recreation agencies is the best approach. A coordinated message keeps the integrity of the program intact.
    - a. Develop a “t shirt” that doctors who attend can wear as their “uniform” on the day they participate. Use the Docs in the Park logo your committee has established so that the message remains consistent
  11. Contact your local media outlets to discuss the new program you have developed through this local partnership.
  12. Hold your event or activity!
  13. Evaluate your event or activities via a follow up meeting and any survey tools you have available
  14. Send “thank you” for participating awards to Doctors involved at your events. Make this something that they would be proud to hang at their office and promote their involvement in the community benefit program
- Continuously: Develop partnerships with local doctors, local nonprofit agencies, or corporate businesses who are community minded and want to participate.

