

## **Executive Summary**

With the startup and continued support from the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority, the Beckley Area Foundation, and the Massey Foundation, Active Southern West Virginia has grown quickly to meet its mission of providing opportunities for communities to be more physically active ultimately improving the health of Raleigh, Fayette, Summers, and Nicholas Counties.

Active SWV received sponsorship donations from New River Access Health, Med Express, and WV American Water in support of our programs.

Active SWV was able to sponsor and support area events and organizations: Beckley Half & Full Marathon, Rocket Boys Festival, Babcock Sticks & Stones, Babcock Gristmill Grinder, New River Captain Thurmond Challenge, United Way's Dancing with the Stars Glow Run 5K Fundraiser, Canary in the Cave, Raleigh County 4-H 5K, Women on Wellness Greenbrier County, Piney Creek Watershed Association, Fayette County Livingwell Work Group, Community Health Expo in Richwood, Try This WV.

Through recruiting and training 19 Community Captains and multiple events, Active SWV was able to impact over 1,000 participants in 2015.





## Community Captains

Our team of Community Captains has expanded from zero community volunteers at the beginning of the year to a total of 19 at the end of the year. In December, we hosted a volunteer appreciation party at the new Active SWV Academy space, located behind the NRGRDA offices on Heber Street in Beckley. The 19 Community Captains received special recognition plaques. Our Community Captains are now leading exercise activities in all four NRG counties.

Our goal for 2016 seeks to increase the number of Community Captains to 40, with 10 CCs in each county – Summers, Raleigh, Fayette and Nicholas. These Captains will receive specific training and earn fitness certifications as well. Changing the culture of inactivity in our region can only be accomplished with encouragement from our friends and neighbors, and this is the spirit of the Community Captain initiative. We are grateful for the

enthusiasm of our CC volunteers.

A new Facebook page has been designated for Community Captain news and activities – [Active Southern West Virginia Bulletin Board](#).

## Active SWV Kids Run



This fall was our first kids running club at Valley Elementary in Smithers. From the beginning, we have set a goal of organizing 10 kids running clubs, 5 in each county, by the end of 2016.

To better focus our resources, we are changing the name of this priority from Active Kids to Active SWV Kids Run. All future events, projects and fund raising will focus on organizing kids running clubs in elementary and middle schools in the NRG four county region.

## **Active SWV Bike/Walk**

We are glad to report that an AmeriCorps VISTA worker will be joining us in March. Andy Davis, a native of Georgia who is very familiar with the NRG region, will work from our office in Beckley and also from city hall in Mount Hope. His initial focus will be on building infrastructure to support an historical walking and biking route around the streets of Mount Hope, a one mile fitness trail adjacent to Dunloop Creek and a rail trail along a nearby abandoned rail line, all accessible from the planned Coal Heritage Museum on Main Street.



## **Training Teams & Events**

Our Training Team coaches have held weekly running sessions leading up to several events - Beckley Half Marathon, Glow Run 5K, Sticks & Stones 15K, and the Jingle Bell 5K race. We thank Missy Burlison, Terry Hoskins, Sarah Coffey, and Abby Barrett for going above and beyond the call to encourage their teams to participate.

Following up on what we learned from these training teams, a 5K training manual has been developed. We think a broader

population can realistically train up to 5K distances rather than pushing them for longer races.

Bridge Day 2015, Active SWV hosted a scavenger hunt for participants to find items all around the bridge area, making this a very active day for those who participated.

October 24<sup>th</sup> Active SWV held a Glow Run event with glow sticks and headlamps on the New River Gorge National Park Service trails at dusk. The event was lightly attended but was able to raise \$240 for our Active SWV Kids Running Club program.

Coming for 2016 will be a Family Friendly Triathlon during the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Summersville Lake Festival on August 20<sup>th</sup>. Active SWV will enter into a Cooperative Agreement with the Army

Melanie will present to the Bridge Day Commission on Feb 19<sup>th</sup> about a 5K race during the morning of Bridge Day 2016.