

Chapter 2:

A Guide to Building Partnerships

The Active for Life™ (AFL) campaign took on what might seem like a daunting mission: to improve the health status of Americans aged 50 years and older by encouraging them to be active for at least 30 minutes a day, at least five or more days a week. AFL learned early in campaign planning that such a lofty goal could not be reached by an individual or organization acting alone. Instead, a group of both traditional and nontraditional partners from multiple disciplines and community sectors needed to work together on such an initiative if it was to achieve any measure of success.

Indeed, AFL can attribute much of its success in Madison, Wisconsin and Richmond, Virginia to its wide range of local partners, who brought different perspectives, resources and skills to the campaign. The AFL campaign clearly illustrated that when organizations and community members collaborate, they can create something new and valuable. Local collaborations enabled AFL to transform its national message about the value of physical activity into a practical, directed and targeted initiative that would impact behavior at the individual level. Partners benefited because AFL supported their local missions, helped them expand their existing physical activity programs, and enabled them to reach out to new audiences.

Background on the AFL Partnerships

Through its state offices in Virginia and Wisconsin, AARP already had a strong presence in Richmond and Madison even before it launched AFL. However, the association knew that it would need to enlist the help of a new set of active partners—many of them new to AARP activities—who had earned the trust of the local older population and who had experience with

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or an interest in physical activity. Once AARP had recruited and hired an AFL coordinator who would oversee the campaign in each city, the next item on its agenda was to begin the search for partners who would make the campaign a truly local initiative.

Coordinators in both cities began their search for partners by using the cities' telephone books, from which they were able to easily identify some "obvious" partner choices. In Richmond, the more traditional partners included the YMCA, the Jewish Community Center, the City Department of Parks and Recreation, and the American Heart Association, all of whom were already involved in physical activity promotion. Other traditional partners included organizations and agencies—including senior centers, nursing homes and area agencies on aging—that served the older population but did not necessarily provide physical activity programming. In Madison, the AFL coordinator found his first partners among people who directed or worked for government agencies and departments, including the departments of health and transportation, which had specific responsibility over areas addressed by the campaign. Having these traditional partners on board early brought credibility to the AFL campaign in both cities. Including the names of these partners on a list of AFL supporters motivated other organizations and agencies to join the campaign.

Being an AFL partner didn't mean the same thing to every organization involved in the campaign. To some organizations, partnership status meant that the organization endorsed the AFL philosophy and wanted to be kept informed of the campaign's progress. To other organizations, being an AFL partner meant that the organization agreed to distribute AFL materials to its members or to make those materials available in its offices or community centers. An additional tier of AFL's most active partners included YMCAs, fitness centers and senior centers, which offered free classes or walking clubs to seniors who participated in AFL.

It was essential for AFL to attract the obvious partners to its campaign, but the search for partners did not end with these traditional organizations. Coordinators in both Richmond and Madison soon expanded their partner search to include nontraditional partners who were more difficult to identify but who, once committed to the campaign, proved to be among the most productive of AFL's collaborators. These nontraditional partners included a group of parish

nurses, who incorporated the AFL approach into their health care ministry; a coalition of civic groups promoting pedestrian safety; environmental groups interested in promoting more livable, pedestrian-friendly communities; and shopping malls interested in attracting mall walkers to their premises.

Once partners agreed to join AFL, local coordinators and other AFL staff in each city engaged them in specific, targeted activities. Ideally, these activities provided partners with meaningful tasks, valuable visibility in the community, and the opportunity to network with like-minded people, agencies and organizations. In addition, the campaign in each city was designed, as much as possible, to ensure that AFL’s most successful elements would continue, under the sponsorship of one or more partners, after funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) came to an end.

This chapter tells the story of how Active for Life™ was able to involve traditional and nontraditional partners in a successful physical activity movement. The story is told through nine of the most important lessons that AFL national staff and local coordinators learned along the way.

Lessons Learned About Identifying and Recruiting Partners

Lesson #1:

It takes a year or more to recruit, educate and gain a commitment from local partners in a social marketing campaign like Active for Life™.

When recruiting partners for a physical activity promotion campaign, it’s critical to allow enough time before kickoff for adequate organizing and relationship building. While social marketing projects such as Active for Life™ usually take a year or more to organize, AARP completed this task in nine months due to the requirements of its RWJF grant. This shorter planning window is not recommended, however, because it does not give the campaign sufficient time to fully initiate new partners and gain strong commitments from them. As a result of the shorter time

frame, several AFL partners initially felt neglected or peripheral to the campaign. Fortunately, follow-up interviews with partners showed that this situation later improved.

Having a year or more to plan a community-wide initiative will give campaign organizers enough time to complete several important partnership-building tasks, including the following:

- Meeting with partners to learn about the roles they play in the community.
- Educating partners about what the campaign hopes to accomplish.
- Working with partners to determine the role that they will play in the campaign.

Ideally, the bulk of a campaign’s planning efforts should take place before partners actually sign on to the campaign. Once local organizations become formal campaign partners, the planning process should be curtailed and action-oriented activities should begin quickly. In Madison, this rapid switch to action helped to keep partners focused and excited about the campaign. It also let partners know that AFL valued their time and was committed to moving from discussion to action as soon as was feasible.

Lesson #2:

Savvy and outgoing coordinators can make all the difference in attracting partners.

A strong coordinator can help a community-wide campaign make necessary contacts with potential partners and convince them to participate in the campaign. The coordinator doesn’t necessarily need to have pre-existing contacts in the geographic area where the campaign is taking place. While these connections certainly helped the Madison campaign identify and attract partners, the Madison coordinator’s communication and planning skills were more important in preparing him to lead the city’s AFL initiative, according to interviews with local partners. The coordinator had the ability to communicate AFL’s messages to partners in a clear and concise manner; the ability to think through, beforehand, the benefits that AFL would provide its partners and present those benefits to partners in a persuasive way; and the ability to anticipate the questions that partners were likely to raise about their involvement in the campaign. The

coordinator’s years of experience working in state government also gave him the confidence to walk into the office of any partner and feel comfortable, rather than intimidated.

Experience in the physical activity field should not necessarily be a prerequisite for the position of coordinator. In the case of the Madison coordinator, lack of experience in the field may have been advantageous. Because this coordinator did not know who the obvious partners were supposed to be, he reported feeling freer to think “outside the box” in order to attract a number of effective partners who did not have obvious ties to physical activity issues.

Finally, hiring a coordinator who is both a creative thinker and a good negotiator is helpful. The Richmond coordinator used both skills to negotiate “deals” between AFL and its prospective partners. The deals were often a clear “win-win,” so the partners did not turn them down. For example, Richmond’s coordinator convinced several for-profit fitness clubs to offer AFL participants free access to their classes for 12 weeks. In exchange, AFL offered to promote the classes and assured the fitness centers that they could recruit AFL participants to become full club members after the classes ended. The strategy worked. Forty percent of the AFL participants who attended classes at the Richmond Athletic Center decided later to become regular members of the center. In another typical scenario, AFL might offer to promote a prospective partner’s “walk-a-thon” fundraiser as long as the partner agreed to distribute AFL materials to participants.

Lesson #3:

Successful campaigns will constantly be on the lookout for new partners.

“Who is not at the table that needs to be here?” This was the question that coordinators in Richmond and Madison continually asked during their meetings with active AFL partners. The question usually sparked a brainstorming session about potential partners that should attend the next meeting or participate in an upcoming activity. After the meeting, the coordinator would typically call the prospective partner, explain the AFL initiative, and ask for the organization’s support. Following up on such leads brought more than 100 different partners to the Richmond

program, including the American Heart Association, Bon Secours Hospital System, and several assisted-living and nursing facilities.

Senior health fairs, community events and AFL activities were also good places to find new partners. The Richmond coordinator connected with several AFL partners by visiting tables that they staffed at health fairs. The coordinator engaged potential partners by asking them about their organizational goals for the coming year. If an organization’s goals matched AFL’s goals, the coordinator knew it would be worthwhile to begin exploring ways in which AFL and the organization could work together.

Lesson # 4:

Traditional partners will bring early credibility to a campaign, but nontraditional partners will add to its richness down the road.

Nontraditional partners won’t necessarily be promoting physical activity as part of their missions. They will most likely be promoting public safety, environmental causes, or even smart growth and livable communities. The coordinator’s job is to help these organizations see the connection between physical activity promotion and their own efforts to promote community planning initiatives, pedestrian-friendly design or the health of local residents. In Madison, for example, a group of parish nurses and a pedestrian advocacy group called the Safe Community Coalition (SCC) of Madison and Dane County became AFL’s leading partners even though physical activity was not their primary mission.

Parish Nurses

The City of Madison has about 25 parish nurses who are employed by a local hospital to help churches and other houses of worship address the health needs of their congregations. These nurses, whose salaries are partially funded by each faith congregation, typically provide bereavement support, administer flu shots, and conduct routine health screenings among their target populations. They also might run health education programs, connect their clients to affordable health services, or publish health newsletters.

Believing that the nurses might be interested in promoting AFL as part of their ongoing health-related programming, the Madison coordinator invited each nurse to sign on as an AFL partner. About one-third of the 25 nurses responded positively to the invitation and subsequently designed small programs to engage their respective congregations in the AFL-supported walking campaign. This campaign encouraged partners to design a program through which their constituents used AFL step counters to set and meet specific walking goals.

One nurse, who served two congregations, created two walking programs through which 100 Madison residents took a fun, team-centered walking journey together. The participants, who all received AFL step counters, reported their weekly step totals to the nurse, who converted the steps into miles and then charted those miles on a world map. Each group set a goal to walk enough miles to arrive at a specific destination. One group decided to walk a total of 8,450 miles—the distance between Madison, Wisconsin and an African mission that the church supported. At Madison’s St. Patrick’s Church, the second group decided to walk 3,500 miles—the distance between the church and Ireland. Both groups met their goals, and not one participant dropped out.

Safe Community Coalition

The Safe Community Coalition (SCC) of Madison and Dane County was concerned about pedestrian safety in a city where motorists are required to yield at intersections, but rarely do so. The result had been numerous traffic incidents and hesitancy among older people to walk along busy streets. The coalition’s goal to keep pedestrians safe didn’t exactly match AFL’s goal to promote physical activity but was close enough to provide opportunities for collaboration.

Just before AFL began, SCC launched an initiative, called the Pedestrian Flag Project, to increase the safety of Madison’s streets. Project participants carried red flags while crossing busy intersections to ensure their full visibility to oncoming motorists, who were required to yield the right-of-way. Pedestrians picked up their flags from a bin located near the intersection and then deposited the flag in another bin on the other side of the street.

With AFL’s help, SCC was able to expand the number of flagged intersections from two to 40 in both Madison and the surrounding Dane County. AFL provided funds for billboards that educated motorists about their legal responsibility to yield to pedestrians. It also paid about \$1,000 to equip intersections with flags and flag bins that carried the AFL logo and information about walking and physical activity.

Lessons Learned About Engaging Partners in a Campaign

Lesson #5:

Prospective partners will be most likely to sign on to a campaign if the benefits of participating outweigh the costs.

There are numerous reasons why community members or organizations choose to join a partnership. For example, the partnership might: (1) offer partners the opportunity to join in a collective action that promises to draw more attention to a cause that they feel is important; (2) give partners the opportunity to gain knowledge or access financial and human resources that they could not access by themselves; or (3) help like-minded people and organizations network with one another in order to refine a strategy or have a greater impact.

Conversely, there are many reasons why people and organizations don’t join partnerships. For example, the partnership might require too great a commitment from organizations already operating on a shoestring. In addition, the partnership might not use the individuals’ or organizations’ skills or time efficiently. Finally, a prospective partner might have different opinions, a different focus or a different target audience than the rest of the participants.

Each potential partner must make its own decision about joining a partnership. In order to make the best decision, however, an organization or individual needs help to identify and weigh the benefits and costs of partnership. In both Madison and Richmond, AFL coordinators provided this guidance. Those partners who signed on with AFL did so after being convinced that the benefits of participation definitely outweighed the costs, which were far from onerous.

The Costs of Partnership

Generally, AFL asked its recreation and fitness partners to make a commitment to invite the 50+ population into their regular operations and embrace the opportunity to serve this new market. Those partners already offering other, non-fitness-related services and programs to the 50+ population were asked to devise new strategies to encourage this population to be more active. Specifically, AFL asked each partner to do the following:

- Distribute AFL materials in the community. These materials included the *Be Active for Life Handbook*; *Be Active for Life Guide-Madison*; and *Be Active for Life Guide-Richmond*.
- Mention the Active for Life™ campaign and its handbooks and guides in the partner’s own communications.
- Promote Active for Life™ to the partner’s target audiences.
- Invite an Active for Life™ speaker to make a presentation to the partner’s constituents.
- Develop a program or activity especially for the 50+ population, or develop a program or activity that focused on the role of the built environment in promoting physical activity.

The Benefits of Partnership

Partner benefits were numerous and included the opportunity for partners to gain support for their AFL-related missions, receive free advertising for their programs, and network with like-minded organizations.

A Common Mission. Ukrops, a regional grocery store chain in Richmond, became an AFL partner because the campaign provided store patrons with well-designed, sound information and programming for physical activity. The store’s senior nutrition advisor recognized that fitness goes hand-in-hand with healthy eating to create overall health. Yet, she had little training or resources to develop physical activity programming on her own.

In another instance, a series of discussions between AFL and the City of Richmond Department of Public Health (DHP) led to the realization that AFL could enhance the department’s mission by helping to increase the number of people participating in DPH programs. Those programs included Richmond Rocks, DPH’s health, nutrition and physical activity promotion initiative. The successful partnership between AFL and DPH helped to bring two additional governmental partners to Richmond’s AFL campaign: the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Community Services.

Prospective partners often became involved in AFL because they wanted to apply the campaign’s mission and goals to wider community issues in which they were interested. In Richmond, for example, a member of the City Council became an AFL partner after realizing that the campaign’s environmental change component might help address issues that affected the older, African American residents of her district. In Madison, key partners worked with AFL to address their own concerns about pedestrian safety.

Free Advertising. Many partners noted in a follow-up survey that free advertising was the most important benefit that they received from their affiliation with AFL. Some partners expressed appreciation for the opportunity to distribute AFL step counters, handbooks and other campaign tools, which they said had received positive feedback from—and built goodwill among—their clients. Partners with limited budgets and few resources appreciated AFL’s investment in promoting physical activity and were highly appreciative of the campaign’s willingness to market their specific programs. The *Be Active for Life Guide-Madison* and *Be Active for Life Guide-Richmond* were particularly popular among partners. Each guide included a complete, city-specific listing of physical activity programs, facilities, opportunities and services. Many partners who were interested in being listed in the guide volunteered to help plan and develop it.

The opportunity to network. According to campaign research conducted by the Sutton Group in Washington, D.C., the opportunity to network with like-minded organizations proved to be an unexpected AFL benefit. Networks were created when AFL held face-to-face meetings among community partners who shared a common mission and goals but who were unfamiliar with each

other’s programs. Once introduced, these partners quickly took advantage of the opportunity to become engaged in each other’s programs and activities, either on their own or through specific, short-term AFL-facilitated projects. These networks, which did not exist before the AFL launch, still operate in both cities through various committees and coalitions.

Lesson #6:

It is important to build partner commitment early.

There are several ways to prompt an early buy-in from partners, whether for an overall campaign or for one component of the campaign. These methods include the following:

- Invite potential partners to an early informational meeting.*** Prospective partners in Richmond and Madison were invited to an informational kickoff meeting, held in each city to explain Active for Life™ and how local organizations could get involved in the campaign. The meetings also showed prospective partners that AFL valued their participation enough to make a special effort to explain the campaign and provide opportunities for input. During these meetings, AFL used an independent facilitator to elicit local opinions about how AFL could carry out its program in partnership with local organizations. During subsequent meetings, AFL shared more details about campaign components and clarified any misconceptions that partners might have had about the program. One common misconception was that AFL’s grant from RWJF would be passed through to local organizations, which would then be free to spend the money as they saw fit. AFL representatives took time during partner meetings to identify clearly where AARP would spend the RWJF funds and how those expenditures would help partners carry out their own missions.

Kickoff meetings also gave AFL the opportunity to understand the specific challenges that its partners faced. In particular, many partners were running their own operations on a shoestring and had no significant time or resources to contribute to Active for Life™. These partners were still interested in being involved in the campaign but indicated that their involvement would, by necessity, have to be limited. As a result of this feedback, AFL

decided to make partner involvement as easy as possible by providing local organizations with ready-to-use materials to promote physical activity. Many partners were happy to use the *Be Active for Life Handbook* as the centerpiece of the physical activity programming that they sponsored during the campaign.

- ***Keep up the communication.*** AFL distributed newsletters to partner organizations as a way to keep new partners involved in and excited about Active for Life™. The newsletters included updates on campaign developments and profiled some successful partner activities.
- ***Ask partners to sign a memorandum of agreement.*** Each partner in Madison’s walking campaign signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) that outlined what AFL wanted the partner to do and what the partner could expect from the campaign. By signing this MOA, the partners agreed to distribute step counters and informational materials to Dane County residents who were aged 50 years and older. They also agreed to promote the AFL walking campaign to their constituents/employees, to seek out human interest stories within their programs that could be used by the Dane County media, to provide to AFL a summary and brief evaluation of their activities, and to maintain contact with the local AFL office. On a more practical level, the partners also agreed not to remove the AFL branding from step counters or other materials and to return the supply of uncommitted step-counter kits at the end of the walking campaign’s enrollment period. Partners who signed the one-page MOA viewed it as a serious commitment and were more likely than other partners to remain involved for the duration of the campaign.
- ***Hold an orientation session before launching specific activities.*** AFL coordinators in both Madison and Richmond held partner orientation sessions before the start of their walking campaigns. At Madison’s orientation session, health and fitness experts from the University of Wisconsin talked to AFL partners about the importance of physical activity and then demonstrated how to use the step counters that partners would be distributing. The experts also facilitated brainstorming sessions about the types of walking programs that partners might design for their own constituents. Partners reported that the orientation sessions

inspired them to think creatively about their own walking programs, forged bonds with other partners and sealed partners' commitment to the campaign.

Lesson #7:

Prospective partners feel more comfortable with a campaign that features concrete activities that have a specific focus and defined goals.

The sense of ownership that partners gain during the early days of a campaign is likely to translate into a commitment to support the campaign over the long term. This sense of ownership doesn't necessarily come from sitting around a conference table and planning a campaign from scratch. Although some AFL partners responding to a campaign survey expressed a desire to be consulted more closely about the campaign's general design, AFL also found that most partners did not have the time or the staff to become too involved in campaign details. These partners preferred when AFL offered them specific plans for the campaign and then provided the resources to help them follow through with those plans.

For example, Madison's coordinator found it productive to approach partners with a specific invitation to participate in the AFL walking campaign. None of the partners seemed to mind the fact that they had not been involved in developing the campaign's concept, and all seemed to appreciate the fact that the campaign was well defined, finite and would provide step counters and other promotional materials to support their outreach efforts.

In retrospect, local ownership of the Active for Life™ campaign might have increased even more if AFL had allowed partners to choose the name of the campaign, had asked for more local input into campaign components, or had invited cities to compete for the opportunity to participate in the campaign. Unfortunately, the research questions that drove the campaign, in addition to grant-imposed requirements to include specific components, limited AFL's ability to ask for and incorporate partner feedback into the program's design. In addition, AFL's short startup timeframe would have made a national competition among prospective host cities difficult to organize.

Lesson #8:

An organized strategy for communicating with partners on an ongoing basis can cement their commitment to the program.

New partners can't be left alone to fend for themselves. They need to feel engaged in the campaign even when they aren't working on a specific activity.

Newsletters helped AFL make connections with its partners at least quarterly, and partners reported feeling more connected to the overall campaign after reading these publications. In addition, ongoing personal contact with partners was critical to building loyalty and commitment to the campaign. One-on-one contact with a single partner—often in the form of a five-minute telephone call—was often more productive than a one-hour meeting among many partners. When meetings were necessary, coordinators were careful to develop limited agendas and to invite only those partners interested in discussing specific agenda items. The coordinators knew that busy partners were unwilling to sit through presentations or meetings that focused on campaign aspects that did not interest or directly involve them. Partners expressed appreciation for the fact that AFL worked hard to determine how partner interests and expertise fit into the campaign and to engage partners in ways that best utilized their resources and capabilities.

AFL staff members in Madison made a concerted effort to carefully manage and track contacts with partners so that everyone on the AFL team knew the status of partnerships. The coordinator created a binder that contained a section for each partner. Staff people used the binder to record every contact they had with each partner, when it occurred, and the result. The binder also included notes on what resources AFL was providing to each partner, what each partner had requested from AFL, the goals of the particular partnership, and the next steps. By consulting the binder, staff people preparing to contact a partner would understand the partner's program and the nature of the last contact that AFL had had with that partner. The binder also helped staff to keep track of—and follow through on—promises made to the partner.

Lesson #9:

A successful campaign will make plans to leave something behind after its funding has expired.

While Active for Life™ brought tremendous resources to Madison and Richmond, the nature of those resources—coming as they did from a finite grant—made sustainability a challenge for campaign organizers. AFL knew it would be important to demonstrate its long-term commitment to both Madison and Richmond in order to have a permanent impact on physical activity levels in both cities. However, the fact that the RWJF grant would last only three years imposed a measure of hard reality on the campaign. Once the grant period was over, the local presence of AARP and RWJF would necessarily be diminished. What could AFL do to ensure that its mission would continue after the grant period was over? During the course of the campaign, AFL learned two important lessons about how best to encourage the sustainability of its programs.

First, AFL knew it had to be honest with its partners by informing them, from the beginning, that the AARP and RWJF involvement was time sensitive and would eventually end. Community partners understood the nature of grants and were not surprised. In fact, the grant’s finite nature may have given local partners the push they needed to find ways to sustain particularly successful AFL components. AFL tried to promote that sustainability by making its partners as strong as possible and helping them feel ownership of the AFL campaign.

Second, AFL knew that partners would be more willing to sustain AFL initiatives if they had actually received tangible benefits from those initiatives. Armed with this knowledge, AFL staff devoted considerable energy to articulating the benefits it thought partners could gain from involvement in the campaign. AFL continually assessed whether partners were receiving those benefits and made necessary adjustments in the campaign to ensure that partners continued to benefit from their involvement.

Fortunately, AFL partners are maintaining their commitment to physical activity promotion among the 50+ population. In keeping with the lessons mentioned above, AFL partners who

received tangible benefits from their efforts to reach the targeted population have continued to reach out to this group, several years after AFL officially ended. And, partners that had been serving older constituents are now offering these consumers additional support for physical activity. While these promotional efforts are not called “Active for Life™,” they are based on the campaign and involve many of the same individuals and organizations that participated in AFL. They include the following:

- Fit City Madison:*** Fit City Madison, an initiative sponsored by the City of Madison, is probably the most visible continuation of AFL principles in that city. The initiative focuses on preventing obesity and disease through daily exercise. AFL’s coordinator participated in the development of Fit City Madison and helped plan the citywide summit that launched the initiative. This involvement solidified the partnership between the city and AFL, helped AFL establish programs with Fit City Madison partners and, as hoped, provided a permanent outlet through which AFL participants and other members of Madison’s 50+ population could increase their physical activity.
- Ongoing outreach:*** AARP’s Virginia state office and Bon Secours Hospital have agreed to continue their support for Project Joy, a faith-based cardiovascular health promotion for African American women. Buoyed by its success during AFL, the Richmond Athletic Club continues to reach out to the 50+ population and has committed itself to an annual marketing campaign aimed at attracting people in that age group to its programs. The DuPont Corporation is using AFL tools to reach out to its midlife and older employees. The Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation Department has developed a new walking program for people aged 50 years and older, and Robious Sports and Fitness clubs have agreed to periodically offer free one-month trial memberships to consumers aged 60 years and older.

In Madison, senior centers and faith-based congregations are maintaining the walking groups that they started through AFL. In addition, health clubs, local YMCAs and other organizations have revamped their offerings for and increased their outreach to people aged 50 years and older. The Dane CAN (Choosing Activity and Nutrition) initiative is bringing together local partners to improve levels of physical activity and nutrition in the community.

In addition, Wisconsin’s Department of Workforce Development and its Department of Health and Family Services have agreed to adopt program messages about the importance of physical activity for the 50+ population.

- Coalitions and committees:** Various coalitions, committees and task forces have been formed and have pledged to continue the work of Active for Life™ in both cities. In Richmond, the Active Living Forum is sponsoring quarterly meetings in partnership with the city and state health departments. A Web site called Senior Navigator will maintain and update a community listing of physical activity opportunities in the Richmond area. Richmond now has a commission to assess and improve the health of the city’s population, as well as a task force to increase intergenerational use of city parks.

Madison established a committee to ensure citywide coordination of all physical activity projects. In addition, SCC received a grant from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration that will allow it to expand its Pedestrian Flag Project. SCC will establish advisory committees in various sections of its target area. The committees, whose members are adults aged 65 and older, will identify intersections that are good candidates for the flag program.

Conclusion

Two true tests of partnerships are (1) what they have accomplished in the past and (2) their capacity to shape the future. AFL partners have passed both of these tests. As illustrated in the preceding pages, these partners brought energy and commitment to the AFL campaign while it was formally operating in Richmond and Madison. Clearly, the campaign could not have accomplished much without its partners.

In looking to the future, AFL partnerships stand poised to continue physical activity promotion. The principles of Active for Life™ continue to make an impact on both Madison and Richmond because of the efforts of partner organizations and a new mindset among residents, who continue

to value physical activity. In Madison, for example, a post-campaign survey showed that 26 percent of AFL participants continued to use step counters to track their physical activity. This significant finding illustrates AFL’s success in changing participants’ awareness of and approach to physical activity.

Even with these successes, however, it’s important to think realistically about sustainability and to recognize that not every element of a campaign to promote physical activity can be expected to continue after that campaign ends. Often, only small pockets of activities will survive—activities that were important to campaign participants and are sponsored by committed partners with limited resources. The most important ingredient of sustainability—an ingredient that was present in both Richmond and Madison—is an enduring commitment to physical activity promotion on the part of campaign partners. Because of this commitment, the AFL legacy is more likely to continue in both cities in a way that is most meaningful to the local 50+ population.