

gethealthy DeSoto

Get Healthy DeSoto enthusiastically executes its mission...

To make a long-lasting positive impact on the health and safety of our community by encouraging healthy lifestyle choices, through programs promoting physical activity, healthy nutrition, weight control and disease and injury prevention. It has been our mission from the start and as we see it in motion...we remain steadfast in its worth to our community.

what we strive for

Our vision for De Soto is a community where families have access to quality age appropriate physical fitness equipment, to physical fitness activities, to fresh local produce, to food production (in the form of community gardens), to safe walkways, and to eating establishments with healthy food alternatives. We envision a community with high standards in healthy living, a community whose residents embrace healthy lifestyle choices, a community revered by neighboring communities, and a community that others would like to emulate. We envision a healthy community!



The great part is.....we have already made huge strides in achieving it!

De Soto residents are taking notice of Get Healthy DeSoto's accomplishments and the resulting community landscape. More and more people are joining in and taking part. We have witnessed increased activity in our community, a high level of participation in our programs, and residents opting for healthier food choices. Neighboring counties have noticed our achievements, as well, and are beginning to mirror their programs after ours. De Soto is the City of Pride. Get Healthy DeSoto wants its residents to become increasingly prideful of their commitment to healthy living.



Thanks to Get Healthy DeSoto, our community is moving...growing...and eating...for health.....

our achievements

Get Healthy DeSoto has served the De Soto community since 2004. Membership is free to everyone within the De Soto zip code. Additionally, all residents have access to our programs and services.

The organization offers a variety of informational, educational, and participatory programs promoting healthy lifestyles. These programs include the distribution of 2500 free newsletters weekly (full of helpful, healthful information), the formation and facilitation of the hugely successful De Soto Farmers' Market, and three community gardens, coordination of the annual Better Body Challenge, supporting weight loss, facilitation of weekly People with Arthritis Can Exercise classes, monthly Healthy Lunch and Learn seminars, an annual Kid's Health and Safety Fair, and various hiking and walking clubs, among others.



Our organization has also made several improvements/contributions to the community, many of which are visible. All of the improvements made have been made through fundraisers and with the help of community business men, organizations, grant funding, and in-kind donations from the City of De Soto. The improvements include the extension of the walk trail in Walther Park, 11 wellness/exercise stations in Walther park, the walk trail in Spross Park, information kiosks in Walther and Spross Park, a Frisbee golf course in Spross Park, published pocket walking guides, playground equipment in Walther Park, a Complete Streets Policy adopted for the City of De Soto, a Master Bike/Walk plan completed in 2010, and a plan to extend the walking trail in Spross Park, which will connect Amvets Dr. to Miller St. behind the tennis courts.



And these do not include the small stuff... such as diabetic seminars, healthy recipe contests, bicycle club, CPR classes, babysitting training clinic, health fairs, yoga, pilates, zumba classes, informational community meetings, and the list goes on.

As you can see, Get Healthy DeSoto has accomplished a lot in the few years since its mission began. Luckily for us, somewhere along the way, individuals and organizations took notice.

Interest in our organization and mission is evidenced by our membership, which has grown to over 2500, and our volunteer pool, which is well over 100. Moreover, our list of collaborators is lengthy and continues to grow. Past collaborators include Jefferson County Health Department, Jefferson Regional Medical Center, Jefferson College, University of Missouri Extension, De Soto Chamber of Commerce, De Soto Ministerial Alliance, De Soto Rotary, Master Gardeners, Chartwells, DARE, and the City of De Soto, among others.



challenges we face

Get Healthy DeSoto is a small organization that has done big things. Our organization is volunteer based. We have an Executive Director and volunteers. That is what we have. Everything we have done has been done in the absence of paid staff, with little equipment, and with scarce supplies. Yet, we are making a difference. We are making a difference in a big way, and we are growing. These are good things, but they also present challenges. We will need more resources moving forward.

Our organization serves the rural community of De Soto, Missouri, including everyone in the 63020 area code. The population of the 63020 area code is 20,714 with 16 percent over the age of 65, 24 percent under age 5, and a median age of 38. The breakdown by gender is fairly even, at 49 percent male and 51 percent female. The median income is \$38,919 annually, with 15.3 percent of household members living below the poverty level. De Soto is located in the southern part of Jefferson County. According to the 2012 County Health Rankings, residents of Jefferson County are over 30 percent in the areas of smoking, adult obesity, and physical inactivity, with adult obesity topping the list at 36 percent.

Additionally, there are some trends in our county that either already require our services, or may require our services in the future, including high death rates from diabetes, an incline in heart attack risk, lack of proper dental care among residents, an increasing problem with illegal drug use, and an increase in accidental injuries.



what is next

Since health behaviors and physical environment account for over 40 percent of health outcomes, we remain committed to continuing our mission to make a long-lasting positive impact on the health and safety of the De Soto community. Further, we know our mission and message are reaching beyond our defined perimeter as we witness neighboring counties following our lead. We want to continue to set the standard. We want to continue to positively impact health.



More specifically, Get Healthy DeSoto is presently working on a Worksite Wellness program, as well as two trail rendering projects, including one to extend the Spröss Park trail, and one to connect De Soto School property on Amvets to Vineland Elementary School. We are also working to re-open old Dewitt Street Bridge for pedestrian use. Another program in progress is a collaborative effort with local restaurants to provide healthy options on menus, with special attention given to portion control. We are hoping also to implement a Walking School Bus, combining fun and fitness in a safe walk to school. Of course all efforts toward our new projects are accompanied by efforts spent on ongoing projects and classes.



We are always looking ahead, anticipating need, recognizing opportunities and moving...
our mission forward.

what we need

There is a high degree of interest in our organization and a strong need for our services in the community. That is why we need your help.

We need the resources necessary to continue our good work. We need a minimal amount of infrastructure for our organization to move forward from here and grow. However, *the bulk of what we need is for continuing our programs and building future programs.* We need the necessary resources to keep our farmers' market going, thriving, and growing. So many members of our community benefit from just this one program. We also need the resources to maintain and further develop our community gardens. This is especially true now, as more people need, and become knowledgeable of, the benefits of locally grown, fresh produce.

The Walking School Bus is one, of many, programs in progress that require resources. It is an extensive project that will take the proper funding and execution to put it in place. We also need to put resources toward advancing health policy initiatives, such as Complete Streets. By so doing, we stay ahead of the curve, as a community, and set the standard for healthy living. Another way to stay ahead of the curve is by continuing our work toward healthy food options in restaurants, at the market, and in our school cafeterias. We have so many plans and projects, all of which benefit the health of the De Soto community.

What we need now are the resources to allow us to continue, and to insure the future of our organization and the vision for our community.

Pay close attention to our progress. It is not hard to discern. Everywhere you look in the community you see signs of Get Healthy DeSoto's presence and mission. *And you see results.* Thanks to Get Healthy DeSoto programs, our community is moving...growing...and eating...for health.



Help us keep it that way...