

# The Steps Program in Jefferson County, New York

Funding Period: 2003–2008

CDC's Steps Program funds states, cities, and tribal groups to implement community-based chronic disease prevention programs to reduce the burden of obesity, diabetes, and asthma by addressing three related risk factors: physical inactivity, poor nutrition, and tobacco use. Steps-funded programs are showing what can be done locally in schools, work sites, communities, and health care settings to promote healthier lifestyles and help people make long-lasting and sustainable changes that can reduce their risk for chronic diseases.

## Background

Jefferson County is a largely rural area located approximately 60 miles north of Syracuse, New York. The county is part of New York's "North Country" and shares the distinction of being part of the famed "Thousand Islands Region," an international recreation and tourism destination. The County's population is 119,738; major population centers include the City of Watertown and a large U.S. Army base, Fort Drum. Jefferson County has a median household income of \$39,006, with about 13% of residents living below the federal poverty level (2005 U.S. Census Bureau estimates). The Steps Program provides interventions throughout the community in schools, day-care centers, municipalities, work sites, and health care settings, with particular focus on the mentally or physically disabled and low-income individuals and families.

## Spotlight on Success

The Steps Program helped implement a wellness program for school staff members in one of the county's rural school districts. This program contributed to decreases in expenditures by the district's self-funded health care plan and resulted in a reduction in employees' health care insurance premiums. Read Jefferson County's success story in *The Steps Program in Action*, available at [www.cdc.gov/steps/success\\_stories/pdf/jefferson.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/steps/success_stories/pdf/jefferson.pdf).

## Community Partnerships

The Jefferson County Steps Consortium includes representatives from businesses, municipalities, agencies, and nongovernmental organizations, as well as local community residents. The group is highly effective at collaborating on a wide range of projects and guiding Steps activities in this rural area. Among the partners are the Tug Hill Commission; Villages of Theresa, Black River, Adams, West Carthage, Philadelphia, and Clayton; the City of Watertown; the Velocity Family Fun Center; the North Country Children's Clinic; Cornell University Cooperative Extension; all three local hospitals; the Watertown Family YMCA; Feed the Soul Nutrition; 11 school districts; Hannaford Supermarket; local health care providers; Watertown Urban Mission; the CNY Asthma Coalition; T-PACC; Miracles by the Acre; and many work sites and businesses, including local farmers.

## Contact

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