



The Hub

The Oaklawn Activity Center (OAC) is the new Hub for community wellness within the Oaklawn community of Wichita, Kansas. Previously underutilized, the OAC is now reborn into a thriving space for holistic wellness opportunities. Partners (such as community health workers) utilize the space to connect individuals and families to various resources, as they hold community meetings there. Programming, resources and food distribution are regular occurrences. But, most importantly, the success of the OAC has raised awareness to the needs in the historically overlooked and under-invested Oaklawn community. Enhancing the OAC has brought increased support to the community.



Oaklawn Activity Center
Photo credit: Derby Informer

Hub Development

Prior to the Wellness Hub, the OAC was under-resourced and not providing the kinds of programming local community members were looking for. To shift this, the Derby Recreation Commission (DRC) engaged community members, known as "The Crew," who helped open doors, build trust and establish credibility. This collaborative process with "The Crew" identified community needs and generated solutions.

Programs and Services

The OAC hosts a variety of programs and services focused on holistic health and well-being. Prioritizing food access and community cohesion, the OAC has become the place to come for resources and services.

- Derby Community Food Pantry
- Nutrition Education
- ExecuKIDS Academy
- Community Events
- Benefits Connection (SNAP, WIC, SHICK)
- Coordination Among Service Providers
- Gardening
- Resource Fairs (medical, dental, cosmetic)

Community Impact

The OAC, as a reflection of the community's wants and needs, is a place where people can go for assistance and resources. The OAC is working to meet vital basic needs such as food access and hygiene. Through the DRC's work at the OAC, other partners are recognizing the extent of unmet needs and are stepping up to provide their services. Momentum is growing.



1,863,226
Meals Served



105 Hours
of Nutrition Education



1,407
Adult Participants



46,613
Child Participants

Date Range: January 2022 - January 2024

Centering Equity

The difference between "equality" and "equity" is clearer. Applying an equity mindset has allowed the DRC to take a different path with the revitalization of the OAC and focus on knocking down barriers to community health instead of focusing on equal distribution of resources to community centers across the DRC service area.

Additional equity considerations include providing stipends to Spanish speakers to help close language gaps, being cognizant of limited internet access and how to effectively communicate with older adults.

In Their Own Words

Lessons Learned

- Find a champion from the community who will help build trust and foster new relationships.
- Take the time to learn about the local politics, history and sentiments.
- If you want to do something big and meaningful, then you need to know who should be at the table.
- Don't be discouraged by failure. There will be times when no one shows up. Learn from it and keep moving forward.

The Future

Begin providing meals at the OAC every weeknight via a partnership with The Lord's Diner.

Offer new programs, such as coat distributions, Spanish-language nutrition education and farm-to-table demonstrations.

Pursue additional funding through local corporations and United Way. Work to establish the OAC within the permanent DRC budget.