



## **City of Othello, Adams County Executive Summary of the Community-Level Progress Evaluation Reports**

*Department of Social and  
Health Services*

*Research and Data Analysis  
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The City of Othello, Adams County, is one of eighteen recipients of the Washington State Incentive Grant (SIG). SIG funds are allocated to communities to prevent the use, misuse and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and other drugs by Washington State youth. Community grantees are expected to make their local prevention system more effective by establishing prevention partnerships, using a risk and protective factor framework for data driven needs assessments, and by implementing and monitoring science-based prevention programs.

### **Project Site**

First year SIG funds were used to open a Boys and Girls Club in Othello, which became a huge success immediately after opening. Over 400 children became members with about 120 youth attending daily. During the second project year, the Boys and Girls Club continued to be a great asset for the youth and the community. At-risk youth attending the club continued to benefit from the safe environment, SMART courses, and other activities provided by the club. Attendance has stabilized at 85-90 youth per day. Othello made progress during the second year of the project toward each of the community level objectives.

### **Prevention History**

Adams County has a very active prevention specialist, funded by the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA), Department of Social and Health Services, and the Office of Community Development, Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development. About ten years ago, a few community members formed an organization called People Against Illegal Drugs (P.A.I.D.). This group funds small prevention projects. There is a local DARE program and a Students Against Destructive Decisions group. The county and city decided to apply for SIG funding when the after-school recreation program was ended due to budget cuts. While the City of Othello was familiar with prevention in general, it was not accustomed to using risk and protective factor data for prevention planning. SIG introduced the concept of science-based programs to Othello.

## **Progress toward Community Level Objectives**

**Objective 1:** *To establish partnerships...to collaborate at the local level to prevent alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drug use, misuse, and abuse by youth.*

The SIG project established partnerships among the City of Othello, Adams County Community Counseling, the Othello School District, the Othello Police Department, and local businesses in the community. However, the project evaluator perceived some tension between existing prevention programs and the new, highly successful Boys and Girls Club.

**Objectives 2 and 3:** *Use a risk and protective factor framework for planning and participate in joint community risk and protective factor and resource assessment.*

During the second year of SIG, Adams County used the new planning guidelines developed by DASA to work with a broad range of agencies in the community. Together they identified risk and protective factors and planned for service needs.

**Objective 4:** *Select and implement effective prevention actions...*

The Othello Boys and Girls Club uses science-based programs from their national curriculum including Stay SMART, SMART Families, SMART Kids, and Start SMART. These programs are supplemented with social activities, recreation, education, arts and crafts, and mentoring.

Pre and post-test measures built into the SMART curriculum show that the programs have a positive impact on youth. Evaluation over a number of years is needed to determine the extent to which these programs impact substance use and abuse among youth and their families.

**Objective 5:** *To use common reporting tools...*

A requirement of SIG is that the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behaviors be administered in participating schools. In response, the Othello School District began to use the survey for the first time in 1998. The Boys and Girls Club evaluates its prevention programs with the pre- and post-test evaluations built into the SMART courses. The SIG matrix is used as a monitoring tool, as well. Othello did not find the Everest program monitoring database useful.

### **Summary: Systems change**

Overall, the Adams County project has had a major impact and on prevention in the county. During the last year of SIG community funding, the prevention community hopefully will move toward institutionalizing some of the changes they have achieved in their system of prevention planning, funding, implementation, and monitoring under SIG.

The city and county administrators recognize the Boys and Girls Club as an asset for providing after school programs for disadvantaged youth. However, while the club attracts donations from various local businesses and funding agencies, it does not appear to be fully integrated into the community organizations. There seems to be a philosophical distance between the club and some of the mainstream community organizers. Club managers feel they are still considered outsiders, and there appears to be competition for providing services and obtaining funding. This competition and attitude may limit collaboration between the club and the county. The Adams County Community Public Health and Safety Network has been very helpful in raising funds for the club.



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