

Report on Research into ParticipACTION/Act Now BC

On behalf of the BC Square and Round Dance Federation, I have contacted the Federal Government, ParticipACTION program and the British Columbia Act Now BC program. It has been difficult to reach anyone with authority as most of their communications with the public are via the internet. Here is a summary of my findings.

ParticipACTION:

The initial ParticipACTION program in the 1970's was deemed very successful and much of its success was credited to the Mass Media Radio and TV ads. See: www.usask.ca/archives/participaction/english/home.html. The program was cancelled in 2001. But it has been recreated with the focus on children 12 or younger and groups at high health risk such as seniors, aboriginals and people with disabilities.

The new site is http://healthy Canadians.gc.ca/index_e.html. This time there is a heavy emphasis on internet and print media rather than the more expensive broadcast media. Among other health issues, site materials focus strongly on exercise but this takes the form of lists of good exercise options, which include non-specific "dancing".

At this time, the Public Health Agency has already completed a series of publications encouraging physical activity. I requested and was sent these documents. Most include generic "dance" as a recommended form of activity. (See highlighted sections of the attached publications.) I was told there were no plans to develop more publications and they could/would not discuss broadcast advertisements with me. I was referred to the office of the Hon. Mr. Tony Clement, Minister of Public Health and I sent him the attached letter. His offices' response is attached. I felt it was a polite 'go away' letter.

I then wrote my local MP, Blair Wilson and requested his help. Attached is his response. Another dead end.

With the emphasis on Internet communications, there might be an opportunity to get some clips of our dancing on the ParticipACTION website. Possibly some clips from Dancing Keeps You Young and the proposed Round Dance DVD might be attractive to the program designers. Since the programs target children, we might be able to get some interest in Moving and Grooving but we would probably need some film clips to promote this program through ParticipACTION.

Act Now BC:

The main internet site for this program is <www.actnowbc.ca>. It provided the following information:

The Act Now BC program does not target individual citizens directly. It targets programs for healthy change in schools, workplaces and communities. There is a heavy emphasis on children and families.

When I discussed it with the Ministry, they suggested I contact my municipality to see if they had signed up for the healthy communities program and to make my proposals to them. That is, they suggested we do this on a community by community basis. This is an option for leaders who want to do this in their communities if that community has joined the program.

However, one of the suggestions they make in the Active Family program is for the whole family to join a club or sign up for lessons in a new activity. This sounds good but could be a problem unless the club involved has programs that include family members of all ages.

Act Now BC does most of its communications on the internet. For printed materials it refers readers to the Canada Health Agency brochures discussed above and attached.

Beth McGifford referred me to The BC Ministry of

Health, the Public Affairs Bureau and the Deputy Minister's Office. From there, I was referred to the internet site and Minister Hogg's office (Minister for ActNow BC). I sent a letter to the the Act Now BC program in June before we left on holidays but did not receive a reply. When we returned, I was then distracted by Festival 2007. In December, I again contacted his office and was advised that I had been sent a reply which went to our previous email address.

This letter suggests we may have a good match between Moving and Grooving and the Action Schools program at (www.actionschoolsbc.ca). They also suggest we contact the British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association which mobilizes and supports local governments in who are part of this Active Communities Programs. We deliver our Round Dance and Social Dance programs through the Powell River Leisure Services Program and it has been a very successful partnership. I think this is a good option for other leaders to follow.

I have talked to Rachel Chan, the Active Communities Co-ordinator and she has suggested they might consider developing a Dancing Handbook similar to their current Walking Handbook. The Walking Handbook is a document provided to all Active Communities in BC for implementation in their area and as such could make our dance programs a central part of ActNowBC.

Here are some contacts for ActNowBC:

Rachel Chan

Active Communities Program Coordinator

BC Recreation and Parks Association

Ph: 604.629.0965 ext. 38 Fax: 604.629.2651

www.bcrpa.bc.ca

<activecommunities@bcrpa.bc.ca>.

The Walking Program

<<http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/walking/>>.

Some of these ActNowBC programs also have grants available to help in the implementation of programs.

Recommendations:

1. That we approach ParticipACTION and Act Now BC with our video materials (Dancing Keeps You Young and the proposed Round Dance Promotional Video) and offer make all or some of this material available on their websites as examples of healthy exercise options.

2. Since ParticipACTION is strongly targeted to children, that we acquaint them with the Moving and Grooving for the Active Schools programs.

3. That we approach the Action Schools! BC (www.actionschoolsbc.ca) with regard to Moving

and Grooving Program.

4. That we approach the British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) about including our dance programs in the recommendations to local communities involved in the Active Communities project. We can use the Social and Round Dance programs in Powell River as an example of this successful partnership.

5. That we work with Active Communities Program on a provincial basis to produce a Provincial Dancing Program manual.

Respectfully submitted:

Ann Clements.