

Diabetes: A Family Matter

Dance Contest

Brief Description:

Everyone loves to dance! The world loves to dance! This fund-raising activity can be interpreted in ways most interesting to people that live in your community. Dance can involve individuals, pairs, or groups. The contest can include break dancers, hip-hop, traditional ballroom, salsa, square, contra dancing, or anything else of local interest. Some suggestions for a competition are provided, but it can be organized in ways your sponsors and program planners view as most fitting. This is an activity that volunteer *SUGAR Helpers* can organize and sponsor.

Objectives:

The purpose of this activity is three fold:

- Have fun together,
- Promote local interest in physical activity, and
- Raise money for your local diabetes coalition or volunteer *SUGAR Helper* group.

Participants:

You will need a planning committee to organize the event, recruit participants and observers, and advertise the event to the general community. You will need to identify how many participants you will need for the competitions. You may also need a set-up and a clean-up group for this event. If you decide to do other things in conjunction with the event (e.g., have refreshments for sale, photography, sale of promotional items), then you will need a

group of volunteers to focus on this activity. You may also need volunteers to assist in obtaining donations for the prizes for the dance contest winners. Finally, you will need to identify a panel of judges who others will view as experts. If you will have them share their responses then identification of some judges with a sense of humor could be valuable!

Costs:

Financial costs for this event will likely be low if you are able to arrange for use of a school auditorium or other public space to hold the event. Other expenses will be based upon what your group intends to offer for prizes to the winners. Keep in mind that great prizes can help attract people to participate. You may need to have some funds for advertising, but it is likely that your local newspaper, radio station, and grapevine will enable you to accomplish this without large cash outlays.

Activity Duration:

This activity could be an event that occurs at a single time point or one that is fashioned to continue over several weeks using a process of elimination that encourages groups to keep practicing and returning for the competition. An on-going event can keep interests in dance and physical activity going for a longer time period.

Materials Needed:

You will definitely need some prizes for the winners, but all other materials will be based upon the type of event your group decides to sponsor. Of course, you will need music and a way to assure that the music can be played so that it is heard well by the dance contestants and those observing the competitions. This might entail getting some audio equipment donated and perhaps require enlisting a person or more who is familiar in working with setting up sound systems. The space where the contest is held will likely require some special adjustments of the sound system to assure that a satisfactory experience is had by all.

Instructions:

You will need to decide what kind of a dance competition you want to sponsor, who you want to participate in the activities, and who you will want to attract as the observers at the events. Keep in mind, if you want this to be a fund-raiser, you will need to consider ways to make this most profitable given the time and efforts of all the people you involve. What else might you do in conjunction with this activity.

Once you have these ideas about the form the dance contest will take, then you will need to decide what tasks will need to be completed. Committees to address various tasks should be organized so that the workload can be balanced and assure that the event is successful. Appoint people who enjoy these different activities to oversee the various tasks needed to sponsor a successful event. You should always consider any issues that might pertain to personal or group liability concerns in having an event such as this.

Decisions about what kinds of competitions will occur are important. Choosing a single venue could help you focus on a single audience. For example, if you want to promote a youth activity then focusing on something like group hip hop or break dancing competitions might be optimal. However, if you want to encourage family participation, then you might consider a contest that includes a variety of competitions such as:

- Age-related dance competitions for things like tap or ballet
- Father-daughter and mother-son ballroom competitions
- Period dances (1920s through the present)
- World dances (where people are challenged to try new things)
- Dances that represent ethnic heritage

You will likely want to have some form of registration for the various contests. Decide what information you need to collect. How will you guarantee that the participants show up for the competition? Will you sponsor practice sessions prior to the real event? It might be helpful to invite the participants to a session where all the rules of the competition are explained.

You will need to consider things like the time limits for each dance routine, the rules for judging the contestants, and whether the audience will have a chance to weigh in on the vote for the final winners. If you decide to do a contest that lasts over several weeks or a longer time period then it will be useful to consider ways that local people can register their votes. Capturing some of the dance routines on video and making them available through U-Tube or a

local community website could be a way to spark community interest.

Another concern relates to the audience you want to attract. As you consider what you will charge for this event, keep in mind that keeping cost low will allow more people to attend and encourage multiple family members to take part.

Be sure to have information available to share about healthy active lifestyles that can be shared with those attending this event. You should have information about your local diabetes program. The volunteer *SUGAR Helpers* should be on alert for ways they communicate with those attending about other ways they might connect with local groups and spread the word about healthy lifestyles and diabetes prevention. This could also be an opportunity to recruit new volunteers for the next *SUGAR Helper* educational training program.

Ways to Extend the Activity:

In many rural communities, both youth and older folks often agree that there is nothing or little to do! Thus, finding ways to create fun and activities for local families without great expense is important. The lack of physical activity in children, youth, and adults of all ages is something to consider as you think about this event.

If your group decides to make this contest one that extends over time with contestant eliminations, then you will need to decide exactly how this will be done. It would involve arranging for use of the space for a much longer time period. However, with careful planning you could actually extend this activity over a period of several weeks or even months. This could be a great way to overcome the winter doldrums when fun

activities and physical activity might be more limited. By creating an activity that young and old can participate in together is a great way to encourage people to consider getting more physically active. If you want to do this on a somewhat smaller scale, then you might consider making this an activity of a local church or other community group. Getting everyone to take part in some way could be great fun.

If you want to have an extended competition that lasts for several weeks with an elimination done weekly, you might consider having a preliminary contest where you eliminate all but the final contestants. Perhaps the selection of 10 contestants where one would get eliminated over the next 9 weeks would be something to consider.

Something to consider along with the dance contest is actually involving all of the participants in some active dancing following the contest. Consider having square dancing or contra dancing as a way to get everyone up on their feet and active. Many older folks enjoy this form of activity and have had some experience with it in their past. Perhaps some other type of dancing would be of interest. Consider your resources and what local people might enjoy and let your imagination be your guide.

Another variation of this dance contest could be accomplished by acquiring several sets of the game *Dance Dance Revolution* and forming a competitive activity using this game that most children and youth enjoy. The trick could be getting mom, dad and the grandparents to join in the fun.

Final Word:

If you complete this activity, be sure to return to the **Communicate** section of the *Diabetes: A Family Matter* website <www.diabetesfamily.net> and describe how you have used this activity in your community. Share the outcomes of the activity. What worked well? What did not work? By doing this, others across the Appalachian region can learn from one another about new and better ways to use these activities. It is likely that you will have some new ideas of your own to contribute.