

# Northwest Kansas (NWKS) Acts to Address Community Health



**COLBY** – (Left) After a 3-tier composter was donated to the new Copeland Garden, a master gardener gave a demonstration and directions for use. This year, it has contributed to a large pumpkin patch. **ATWOOD** – (Center) Volunteers partnered with a local grocery store to supply families in need with weekly, affordable, fresh produce baskets. The program has become a community staple. **BIRD CITY** – (Right) To help students stay healthy and hydrated throughout the school day and sports practices, bottles were given to students and new filling stations were installed throughout the school district.

## THANK YOU

The Northwest Kansas Collaborative is appreciative of our wide network of partners that made this work possible.

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- **MEMBERS OF THE THOMAS COUNTY COALITION**

In 2020, the Northwest Kansas Collaborative conducted a survey to examine the perceptions of NWKS community members about the issues of healthy eating, active living, and tobacco cessation. A total of 255 residents took the survey, which was a part of the *Pathways to a Healthy Kansas* grant, a Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas initiative and was distributed in collaboration with **THOMAS, CHEYENNE & RAWLINS COUNTIES.**

For the past three years, the NWKS Collaborative has partnered with worksites and volunteers throughout the three participating counties to provide awareness about healthy lifestyle choices and offer opportunities that allow people to make healthy choices conveniently and affordably. Through our efforts, worksites, schools and governments are now implementing policy changes and offering ways to increase the consumption of water and healthier foods, having discussions that allow for physical activity during the work day, and to provide education about the environmental hazards and personal risks of tobacco and alcohol use.

### Here are a few key findings from the survey:

Work to build a foundation for healthy lifestyles has seen success. Notably, 92 percent of respondents indicated the region is at least “Somewhat Healthy,” when asked how they would rate the overall health of the NWKS region (see Figure 1).

Additional data that supports work of the NWKS collaborative, include:

- Over 70 percent of respondents are familiar with recommendations for physical activity.
- An average of almost 6 percent more people in 2020 “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” that their community has a sufficient number of sidewalks or bike/walk paths; has a sufficient number of parks and playgrounds; has adequate street lighting for walking at night; and, that in general, their community has sufficient opportunities for physical activity, as compared to respondents in 2018.
- Almost 80 percent are aware of fruit and vegetable consumption recommendations.
- An average of 87 percent are “Supportive” or “Very Supportive” of policies prohibiting tobacco use at local parks, school and hospital grounds, and worksites.

Figure 1. In general, how would you rate the overall health of our community?

