

# SUCCESS STORIES

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## Albuquerque's Asian Community Walks for Health in the International District

### SUMMARY

There is extreme diversity among Asian families residing in Albuquerque. However, they all share in the need to see their children thrive and succeed. Locally, Asian adolescents were surveyed as having the least amount of recommended physical activity levels. To combat this disparity, New Mexico Asian Family Center (NMAFC) created NANO (Neighbors Actively uNiting to get Outdoors) to raise awareness on the importance of physical activity while simultaneously increasing physical activity accessibility for Albuquerque's Asian communities.



### CHALLENGE

Due to extreme diversity in culture, language, and history, Albuquerque's Asian community is often described as fragmented and isolated. The Asian population, with an increase of 46.5% in terms of percentage growth, has a pronounced concentration (5.2%) in Albuquerque's International District. This area has a history of violent crime and gang presence. According to NM Department of Health's most recent data on physical activity, defined as 60

minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity most days of the week, Asian adolescents ranked lowest of all ethnic groups surveyed with only 39.8% receiving the recommended levels. After conducting 10 site assessments in the International District, this section of the city was noted for inadequate infrastructure such as level sidewalks, appropriate crosswalks, and safe lighting that makes physical activity accessible.

### YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

**Childhood obesity is a growing epidemic. Only 39.8% of Asian adolescents in Albuquerque receive the recommended levels of physical activity per week, which is the lowest of all ethnic groups surveyed. Together, families and communities can make walking together part of their every-day routine, helping to manage weight and increase overall health. To increase physical activity for the entire community, it is essential that walking trails in the International District are safe and accessible.**

"When I look at what we have done in such a short time frame, it affirms my belief in how change can be realized when you have a true multi-sector partnership with community at the center."

- Sherry Spitzer, Executive Director

## SOLUTION

NMAFC partnered with leaders of 14 different organizations across multiple sectors to form NANO to increase accessibility to physical activity for Albuquerque's Asian population. Together, NANO created International Connection, a map adapted through ACHIEVE depicting walking trails in the International District. Currently translated into Chinese and Vietnamese, the map includes Asian sites along the walking trails and tailored health messages to Asian communities regarding walking benefits. NANO teamed up with Talin Market to make the map a permanent fixture outside its store.

## RESULTS

Through a community-based initiative spanning over seven short months, NANO and International Connection were created to raise awareness regarding the physical activity health disparity occurring within the local Asian community. Like never before, leaders from diverse Asian communities rallied together to work on reducing this disparity. Through their efforts, 13 organizations signed letters of commitment to complete actions such as promoting International Connection to their community members, emphasizing physical activity among their networks, and making walking a regular part of their every-day. Where before no walking trails were specifically marketed to the Asian community, International Connection now reaches 14,723 Asians in Albuquerque. This number accounts for 75% of the total Asian population of the city.

### Contact

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## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Within the next year, NMAFC and NANO have committed to:

- Work together to continue promoting International Connection within Asian communities and by translating the map into at least two other Asian languages
- Hold community events such as health fairs that emphasize the walking trails throughout the International District
- Conduct walking tours led by community members utilizing International Connection for medical and public health professionals, key stakeholders, and policy makers to demonstrate the strengths and needed resources within the local Asian community
- Leverage International Connection to begin conversations with the City of Albuquerque to improve the built environment within the International District