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Corporate Plan Output: Recreation Programmes and Promotion	

The purpose of this report is to inform Councillors of progress to date on the "Active Christchurch" project.

BACKGROUND

This project aims to encourage more Christchurch residents to incorporate regular physical activity into their lifestyles. The programme was launched in October 1998, with a variety of gentle exercise activities suitable for people of all ages who are new to or are restarting exercise. Our initial partner for this project is the Christchurch YMCA.

"ACTIVE CHRISTCHURCH" PROGRAMME

The programme to date consists of five components:

1. **"Let's Walk"** - weekly, Sunday, guided walks which are on the flat and suitable for those new to walking.

This programme has been very successful with numbers as high as 250 people per walk! Much of this is due to the expertise and enthusiasm of the leader, Graham Stanley.

2. **"Let's Cycle"** - weekly, Sunday, guided cycle rides suitable for those new to cycling. Around 20 people on average are attending each week, with a regular group of middle-aged adults who enjoy the social aspect of the programme.
3. **"First Step"** - This is an eight week introductory course which eases people into regular physical activity and includes lifestyle information on nutrition, back care, injury prevention, the health benefits of exercise, etc. "First Step" was an existing YMCA Programme which was made available to Council facilities, and has been offered at two YMCA and three Council venues. Although initial numbers for this programme have been low, interest this term following more promotion is high.
4. **Packaging of Existing Council/YMCA Programmes** - An important aspect of "Active Christchurch" has been to make residents aware of the many existing gentle exercise options available to them in the city. To achieve this, selected Council and YMCA programmes have been assessed as suitable for beginners using a three-level assessment programme developed for "Active Christchurch".
5. **Personal Fitness Assessments** - Free advice on how to "get started" is offered for the first week of each term at the city and Bryndwr YMCA, Pioneer Stadium and Queen Elizabeth II Park. These have been popular and provide a good way of introducing new people to exercise in a friendly way.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Due to the popularity of the walking component of the programme we are currently establishing a second walking session. And as from Term 3, other Christchurch organisations which provide physical activity initiatives will be invited to participate under the "Active Christchurch" umbrella. This will bring greater variety and depth to the programme. Marketing of the programme will also be expanded.

CONCLUSION

The target market for "Active Christchurch" is a challenging one, and one which it will take time to have an impact upon. Consistent, regular marketing of the message that physical activity takes just "30 minutes a day" and is easy, will help address habits of inertia and convince people of the benefits of regular physical activity.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received.