

Story Title Growing Stronger
Program Franklin - Growing Stronger
Educators Vanetta M. Conn

**Is this related to an Equal
Program/Employment
Opportunity?** Yes

Executive Summary Research indicates that strength-training programs like Growing Stronger are a safe and effective way to maintain the ability to do the things we want to do and remain independent as we age.

**Issues/Needs and
Audiences** Persons over the age of 50 years are at a greater risk of losing their balance and falling due to loss of muscle strength, experience loss of bone density which increases the risk of broken bones, and possible reduction of sleep quality, self-confidence and self-esteem.

Extension Responses Offered the Growing Stronger Program at two locations in Franklin County. One of the programs collaborates with a local hospital and church to provide the series in a continuous and ongoing manner. The second uses funding through a senior center to offer the program twice this past year.

**Accomplishments and
Impacts** The Growing Stronger program grows as satisfied participants share with their friends and families the many benefits. In order to keep the continuous program ongoing, participants have volunteered for leader training. These volunteers step up to lead the program and assist newcomers in remaining safe while becoming familiar with the routine. The program at the Office for the Aging seeks funding in order to make this program continuous as well.

When facilitating the Growing Stronger program, I repeatedly hear from participants the many benefits that they receive. They tell stories about a wide range of changes they have made or seen in their lives since beginning the program.

“When I shop for clothes, it is easier for me to balance in the dressing room.”

“I am able to raise my hands above my head without pain.”

“For years I was unable to get down on the floor or up again. Now it is easy for me.”

“I feel so much better. I am stronger and my balance is better. I convinced my sister that she should join me.”

“I invited my friend and her husband to join the group because my husband said he would come if there was another man in class.”

“I haven’t had to go to the chiropractor since beginning the program.”

“My nurse practitioner said this would be good for me. She was right.”

“This is my third series and I cannot wait for the next one to begin. When will that be?”

Remarks like these and many other reported changes in peoples’ lives make Growing Stronger one of my favorite programs to facilitate. Additionally, the program is fun and enjoyable as well as life improving. Many of our new participants are recruited by friends who continue to be engaged in Growing Stronger.

Collaborators Eastern Adirondack Healthcare Network, Alice Hyde Medical Center, First Congregational Church, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Office for the Aging, Retired Senior Volunteer Program

Special funding sources (if any) Franklin County Legislators, St. Regis Mohawk Office for the Aging, Eastern Adirondack Healthcare Network