

PHILLIPS 50+ WELLNESS PROJECT

6,175,139 Steps and Counting

BY THE PHILLIPS WELLNESS 50+ TEAM

The bright green shirts never fail to grab attention as the Phillips Wellness 50+ walkers move along Park Avenue in Minneapolis. Drivers honk, passersby wave. The walkers get lots of positive support from the community.

The green-shirt-clad walkers have taken more than 6 million steps on the way to our goal of 35,200,000 steps along the 45th parallel. It's all part of the "Phillips Round the World Challenge," an effort of Phillips Wellness 50+. None of us can walk around the world by ourselves but together we can achieve the most audacious goal. Twenty to 30 people (out of about 50 on our roster) gather each week for the group walk, and then track their steps throughout the week.

After each walk, the group gathers for conversation, learning and supporting each other. Guest presenters provide information to help us improve health and well-being.

For six weeks this spring and early summer, Donald Warneke, a University of Minnesota Extension educator, talked about good nutrition. In June, Rachel Von Ruden with the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging Outreach Team shared information about the Senior LinkAge Line and other resources available to support us as we age.

"Being a part of this group makes me feel like I'm doing something good for myself," says one participant. "I've met some wonderful people who will be friends for life." According to another, "The group helps me keep up with regular exercise. I feel supported and accepted by all. It makes a difference to not have to go it alone."

Phillips Wellness 50+ is organized and led by community members and everyone involved pitches in to decide what the group will do and to make it happen. At a recent gathering, participants discussed topics they would like to learn more about. Building upper body

strength and improving balance, managing a chronic condition, cooking for health and helping someone with depression were at the top of list. Look for these topics to be a part of our discussions over the next few months.

The walking group is open to anyone, and now is a great time to join. We need you to meet our community goal!

Meet us in the lobbies of Ebenezer Park Apartments and Ebenezer Tower every Tuesday night at 6:00 PM. Want more information? Contact Donna Nordin at 612-741-5180 or dnordin2@comcast.net.

Phillips Wellness 50+ receives organizing and administrative support from the nonprofit Vital Aging Network (vital-aging-network.org), and the initiative was established through funding from HealthPartners and the Bush Foundation Community Innovation Program.



Walkers Cassie Thompson (front), Carlotta Smith (center), and Mercedes Bolden.

Julia Roles