



Increasing Minority Participation

2005-2008

1/20/2009

Prioritizing Minority Outreach

In the spring of 2005, BORP applied for a three year Federal grant to increase the numbers of minority and immigrant participants. The decision to pursue minority outreach stemmed from persuasive research.

1. Getting exercise is a problem for people with disabilities.

According to the Healthy People 2010 report, people with disabilities are much less likely to engage in a physically active life. In fact, 56% of adults with disabilities do not engage in any leisure-time physical activity compared to 36% among adults without disability. (USHHS, 2000) Researchers at the National Center on Women with Disabilities (1999) asked women around the country to indicate which health maintenance behaviors they practiced. No significant differences were found between women with disabilities and women without disabilities in measures such as eating a balanced diet and not smoking, although significantly fewer women with disabilities reported that they exercised regularly (46% versus 73%). As a result, 31.5% of adults with a disability report obesity, compared with 20.5% of the non-disabled. Only 33% of adults with a disability report excellent or very good health, compared with 61.7% in the general population.

2. Members of minority groups are more likely to have a disability and less likely to get exercise.

US Census Bureau reports show that African-Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics, and mixed race individuals have higher rates of disability than Caucasians and Asians. (CDC, 2003) Members of minority groups also report being significantly less physically active compared to non-Hispanic Caucasians. Being of a minority group and with a disability, has been referred to as "double jeopardy" because of persistent racial and ethnic health disparities, cultural distinctions, prejudice, discrimination, and economic barriers that are coupled with environmental and access issues. (Zawaiza et al., 2002)

By the year 2010, Latinos will comprise half the population of California and Latino children will outnumber white children by almost two million. Latino boys and girls comprise, respectively, the first and second most overweight ethnic groups of all U.S. children. (Flores, 2002)



Riding a hand cycle near Aquatic Park

3. Exercise is more important for people with disabilities.

On July 11, 1996, the Surgeon General issued its first report on Physical Activity and Health, documenting scientific and medical evidence on the *negative* health consequences of physical inactivity. Since then, these negative effects have become more widely known. A sedentary lifestyle increases the risk of preventable diseases and does not contribute to health. Recreational activity reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression; and is associated with fewer hospitalizations, physician visits, and medications. Regular physical activity reduces the incidence of a secondary disability and increases one's ability to function in daily life. Greater strength is a real benefit to those using a wheelchair, crutches, or other adaptive equipment.

4. People with disabilities report significant barriers to physical activity.

A study of barriers and facilitators of physical activity for people with disabilities found that people with disabilities reported membership and transportation costs as the primary economic barriers. (Rimmer et al., 2004) Emotional barriers identified by consumers included fear of the unknown, concerns about needing and requesting assistance, fear of failure, and lack of support from friends and family. Researchers have noted that children with disabilities often do not participate in physical activity because family members may be

overprotective. Both professional and consumer groups noted that there is a lack of information regarding available and accessible facilities and programs in their community. (Rimmer et al., 2004) A study of barriers for African American women with disabilities included transportation, inability to pay for a fitness membership, lack of knowledge on where or how to exercise, and lack of understanding on the importance of exercise in improving their condition or health. (Rimmer et al, 2000)

5. The benefits of physical activity go beyond improved health.

For people with disabilities, recreational pursuits go beyond providing meaningful relaxation and enjoyment; they also promote social involvement and self-determination. (Gaylord, et. al, 2003) Recreation has been shown to empower the individual, to strengthen their ability to act and make important choices about their own lives. (Wehmeyer, 1996). Participating in recreation activities allows individuals with disabilities to develop social relationships around shared interests. Without these opportunities for social inclusion and the exercise of self-determination, the range of life choices for individuals with disabilities is limited. Recreational activities stimulate the mind, offer challenges, build community and family relationships, and teach a wide range of lessons. In the words of the Director of the National Center on Physical Activity and Disability: "For children with disabilities, sports can be the difference between an active, vibrant youngster who learns the value of hard work in achieving important milestones, and one who is disengaged from a very important part of childhood." (Rimmer, 2005)

(Citations listed on back page.)



Going for the goal ball- Photos by Scot Goodman

Overcoming Barriers

BORP's outreach program was designed to address the main barriers to participation for minority individuals.

Lack of accessible and appropriate opportunities for sport and recreation:

Youth with disabilities are often limited in their opportunities despite the provision of adapted PE because they may be the only or two students with very disparate needs per site. School sport programs typically do not have enough youth in one school to do relevant sports education. Similarly, adult recreational services in the San Francisco Bay Area are organized by city and do not currently serve enough people with a related disability to organize teams.

By offering the wide range of activities listed in the box to the right, BORP creates accessible sport and recreation for hundreds of people each year.

Language barriers: "They speak too fast for me." For some, an imperfect knowledge of English is sufficient to keep them from learning about or taking advantage of services. BORP has been able to recruit over 30 multi-lingual volunteers in order to create greater comfort for non-native English speaking families.

Cultural issues: Many immigrants come from cultures have diverse ideas about independence and disability. A disability may be regarded as something that is to be hidden or denied. They may have very different ideas about the benefits of independence and the relative value of getting out of the house. BORP addresses this by with a bi-cultural outreach specialist, who can who make home visits to present recreation options, to work with multiple and diverse family structures, to take as long as needed, and to answer as many questions as participants have. Accommodations have included sending a sibling along with a child with a disability, including other family members, and translation services.

Economic barriers: Low-income people with disabilities (strongly correlated with racial minority status) are less likely to have the resources to access services. (NCD, 1999) Barriers include transportation costs, lack of accessible vehicles, potential equipment costs (such as adapted cycles, sports chairs), education about available services or accessible facilities, and the direct costs of activities. BORP has found that higher income families tend to have a non-working, primary care-giver who provides support and transportation allowing a disabled family member to access recreational opportunities. Lower income families tend to have two working parents or a single parent and thus are unable to provide this support. BORP works to overcome these barriers. There are no fees for youth programs. There is a small fee for

adapted cycling and adventures and outings, that is waived if an individual cannot pay.

Family Structure / Support: Some people with disabilities may live almost exclusively within their family units. Even if this structure is emotionally nourishing, it sometimes fails to provide the support necessary for physical activity and community integration *even when the desire is there*. BORP is experienced in working with the family, and includes family members in sports, recreation, and outings in a variety of ways.

Transportation barriers: Whether due to cost, lack of availability, lack of access, or other reasons, transportation is cited as a major barrier to recreation by people with disabilities. This is especially true on weekends when many recreational activities occur. Our ability to provide transportation is a crucial element. BORP maintains three vehicles, including an accessible van, for transporting clients and organizes car-pools that take advantage of other accessible vehicles.

Emotional/Informational barriers: BORP has learned that simply putting out a flyer or publishing a schedule of classes and expecting individuals with significant disabilities to just show up does not work. These standard means do not address the emotional needs for people with disabilities: their concerns as to how they will participate, how the disability will be accommodated, etc. Questions that relate to factual and procedural details may be strictly informational or may be an effort to determine how the individual with a disability will be perceived and treated by the program staff and others. Issues related to self-confidence may also be indirectly addressed through questions. BORP staff will frequently meet several times with each participant and/or family to make sure they are comfortable before engaging in a new recreational activity.

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BORP Activities

Youth Sports offers year-round competitive and recreational sports activities for children and youth ages 5-19, including wheelchair basketball, power soccer, track & field and handcycling.

Adult Sports offers year-round activities five nights a week, including wheelchair basketball, power soccer, and goal ball (a unique sport for individuals with visual impairments). BORP's Power Soccer program involves youth and adults playing together on the court. Power Soccer is a sport designed by and for people who use motorized wheelchairs. It is played on an indoor court with an oversized soccer ball.

Adventures & Outings serves several hundred families and disabled individuals of all ages with a diverse offering of outdoor adventures such as kayaking, nature hikes, sailing and whale watching, as well as urban outings including museum tours, art festivals, and live theatre.

The **Adaptive Cycling Center** opened at Aquatic Park in Berkeley in 2007 with our fleet of over 40 adapted cycles. Equipment is available from 1-3 days per week, between April and November. With the support of knowledgeable staff and dedicated volunteers, cyclists of all ability levels explore miles of bay-side trails that originate from Aquatic Park or go on organized rides throughout the greater Bay Area. BORP is the only Bay Area provider of this type of program and it's growing in popularity.



Adventures & Outings under the redwoods.

Project Highlights

During 2006-2008, BORP was able to contact and keep in touch with **220 agencies** that serve minority and immigrant populations. As a result, BORP reached over **400 new immigrant and minority individuals** with disabilities, to let them know about existing and new recreational activities. Of these, **380 became participants** and joined BORP for over 15,000 hours of recreation. Using a connection with San Francisco State University and other sources, BORP attracted **38 new volunteers** with linguistic and cultural expertise who assisted us in serving a broader population. These new volunteers brought language skills in Cantonese, Spanish, Vietnamese, French, Tagalog, and Norwegian.

Adult Services includes goal ball for the visually impaired, wheelchair basketball, and power soccer. The percentage of on-going minority participants now stands at 55% of players for goal ball, 44% for wheelchair basketball, and 52% for power soccer.

The **Youth Sports Program** is the longest running sports program for youth with disabilities in the country. The program has achieved national recognition, due in large measure to the extremely high achievement levels of participants and graduates. Many of the graduates have gone on to stellar collegiate and Paralympics careers, competing both nationally and internationally. Of the 100 youth involved in an on-going way, 52% are of minority and immigrant background.

Adapted Cycling is a unique BORP service, made possible by a collection of over 40 tandem, three wheel, hand crank, and other adapted cycles. The BORP bike house is located adjacent to several flat off-road paved bike trails and is open three days per week during the April-November season. There are frequent planned trips as well. Adapted cycling is something that people with disabilities often do with non-disabled friends and family members. During the project, adapted cycling attracted 90 new minority and immigrant participants. In 2007, 40% of riders were minority and immigrants, most of whom had never ridden an adapted bike before. This grew to 50% in 2008. The growth of the cycling program clearly expanded BORP's capacity to serve minorities and immigrants.

The **Adventures and Outings Program (A&O)** was most successful in attracting minority participation when trips were designed to appeal particular minority groups, such as a trip to visit the historical site of a Chinese fishing community. A free overnight camping trip, with gear provided by REI and the East Bay Regional Park District, attracted a number of minority families. Other popular trips with a higher percentage of minority participation included a delta boat cruise, a day at the Oakland Museum, and the No Barriers Conference. Trips to restaurants or festivals featuring ethnic food appealed to specific minority groups as well.

The breakdown of new participants reflects the Bay Area demographics:

African- American	34%
Hispanic	33%
Asian	16%
Multi-cultural	4%
Pacific Islander	3%
Native American	1%
Immigrant	10%

Capacity: BORP has successfully increased capacity to serve minority and immigrant individuals. One of the most significant aspects is the ability to provide accessible transportation, point to point. This is needed for several reasons. Some participants live in neighborhoods too violent to risk waiting at the public bus stop. The logistics of recreation require timely arrival and pick up which cannot be ensured through the public "Dial a Ride" system and families may not own accessible transportation. Even subsidized transportation incurs an expense that can be a barrier. BORP has worked diligently to add additional capacity. With partial funding from the Federal Transportation Administration BORP has obtained a large bus and found support for operating costs. Funds from the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTIA) for the North County Group Trip project at BORP have also helped.

Going Forward: BORP is dedicated to continuing their outreach to immigrant and minority populations as research still confirms that these individuals face the greatest barriers in trying to access recreation and, if unsuccessful, pay a price in physical and emotional health. In 2010, BORP will be moving with eight other disability agencies to the Ed Roberts Campus, which will increase their visibility as a model program.



Matthew and his mom

Matthew's brain cancer, diagnosed at age 3, resulted in 19 surgeries along with chemo and radiation. By the age of 9, he could no longer stand up and was using a wheelchair. He missed playing sports and being active. According to his mom: "At BORP, Matthew saw, for the first time, kids who are both extremely capable and wheelchair users. From the very first wheelchair basketball practice that he attended, we noticed a difference. He saw himself as an athlete again and was motivated to practice and exercise daily. Today he is able to walk about 50 feet independently and can push his chair up ramps, over bumps and around obstacles."



Seventeen year old Oakland resident, Oscar, has used a wheelchair his entire life due to spina bifida. His family emigrated from Guatemala. He discovered basketball and handcycling through BORP. Like many of our young athletes, His family cannot afford accessible transportation, so without BORP he would not be able to travel from his neighborhood in East Oakland to make a twice weekly practice session in Berkeley. In the 2008 Revolution, Oscar rode a BORP handcycle 25 miles through the rolling hills of Sonoma County - a remarkable athletic feat.

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Power Soccer - Photo by Scot Goodman



Wheelchair Basketball - Photo by Scot Goodman

For more information, please contact:

Bay Area Outreach & Recreation Program

600 Bancroft Way
Berkeley, CA 94710

Phone: (510) 849-4663

Fax: (510) 849-4616

Email: info@borp.org

Kaia Burkett, kaia@borp.org
Executive Director

Chris Finn, chris@borp.org
Power Soccer Coach

Lori Gray, lori@borp.org
Adventures & Outings Program
Coordinator

Trooper Johnson, trooper@borp.org
Youth Sports Programs Coordinator

Issac Leff, issac@borp.org
Development & Communications Mgr.

Greg Milano, greg@borp.org
Cycling Program Coordinator

Jonathan Newman, jonathan@borp.org
Adult Sports Programs Coordinator

Michael Webber, mike@borp.org
Office Assistant

Julie "Jay" Yates, jay@borp.org
Administrative Director

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BORP's mission is to improve the health, independence, & social integration of physically disabled individuals through sport, fitness and recreation programs.