

# **Joint-Use Agreements: Increasing Physical Activity in Pacific Islander Communities**

**Fahina Tavake-Pasi  
National Tongan American Society  
Utah Pacific Islander Health Coalition  
Mi Zazzy Life  
Salt Lake City, Utah**

## **National Policy and Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN) defines Joint-Use Agreement:**

“...a formal agreement between two separate government entities – often a school district and a city or county– setting forth the terms and conditions for the shared use of public property or facilities.... joint use agreements can play an important role in increasing recreational opportunities for children and their families”

# Pacific Islanders in Utah

- Approx 40,000 NHPIs living in Utah.
- Approx 28,000 live in Salt Lake City alone.
- Salt Lake City and West Valley City have largest and second largest Tongan-American population in the U.S.



# HEALTH ISSUES of Pacific Islanders in Utah



- ✦ NHPIs are #1 in obesity
- ✦ NHPIs are #1 in infant mortality
- ✦ NHPIs have one of the highest rates of Diabetes
- ✦ NHPIs

# The Salt Lake Tribune

December 11, 2011

**Utah's Pacific Islanders show  
extreme rates of obesity,  
diabetes risk..**

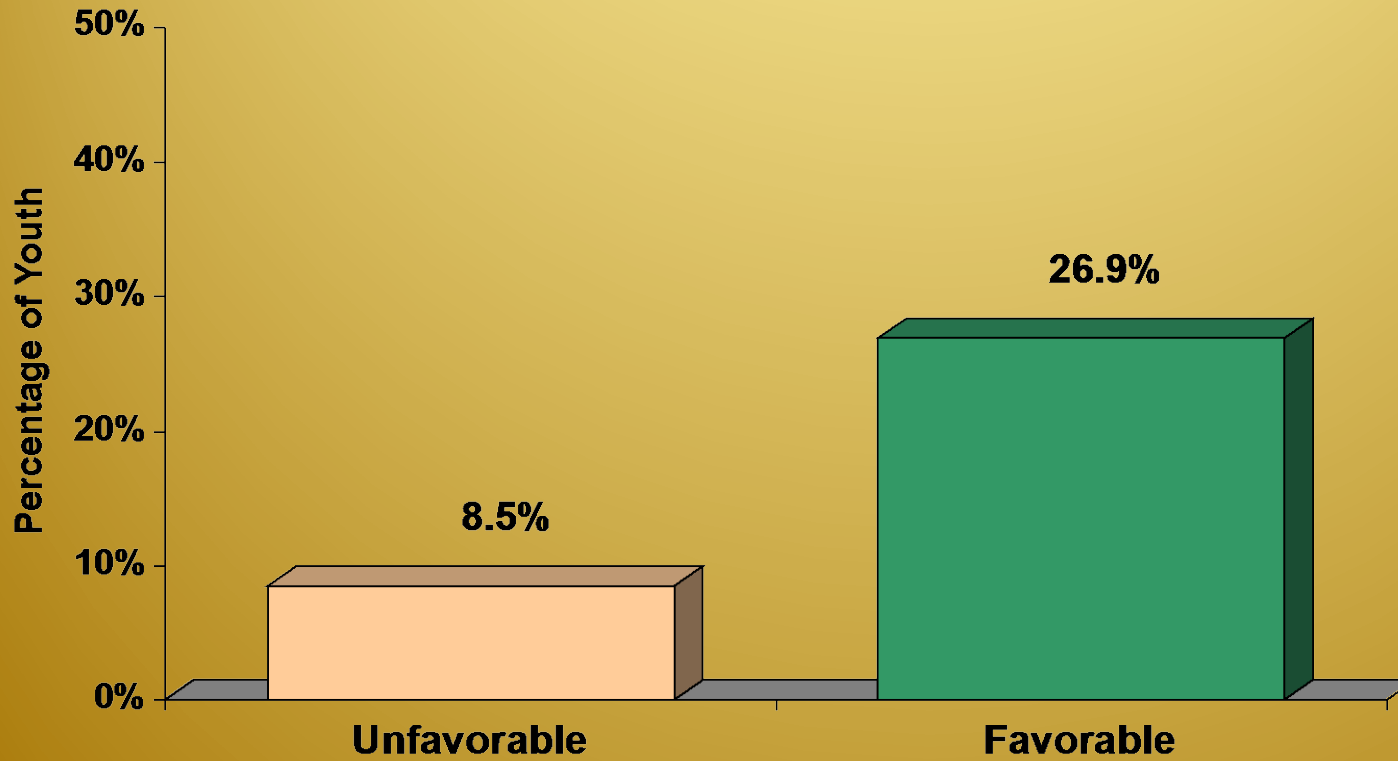


# Environmental Assessment

Tongan Youth Risk Survey 2010

- ✦ Three questions about neighborhood
  - ✦ See people walking or jogging
  - ✦ Safe to walk at night
  - ✦ Free or low-cost recreation facilities
- ✦ Scored environment favorable or unfavorable by zip code

# Participation in Physical Activity Among Pacific Islander Youth Favorable vs. Unfavorable Environment Tongan Youth Risk Survey 2010




# PROBLEM: ACCESS TO HEALTHY LIVING

- ✦ Safety: majority of PI reside in unsafe area
- ✦ Cultural barriers
- ✦ Language barriers
- ✦ Poverty
- ✦ Low walkability access
- ✦ High cost of rec centers





# Barriers to Physical Activity Cited by Youth



- ✦ Lack of self-discipline
- ✦ Lack of energy
- ✦ Lack of interest
- ✦ Lack of company
- ✦ Lack of time / distance
- ✦ Unsafe location / cost

Source: Tongan Youth Risk Survey 2010

# How Can We Increase Physical Activity?



# Partnerships



Funder: Asian Pacific  
Islander American Health  
Forum



Grantee: NTAS



Coalition: Utah Pacific Islander Health Coalition

# STRIVE's Main Goals

- To increase the ability of AA and NHPI community-based organizations and coalitions to implement high-impact, population-wide, evidence- and practice-based strategies that reduce health disparities due to lack of physical activity, poor nutrition and/or weight.
- To ensure meaningful involvement and input from AA and NHPI populations in the development and implementation of a community health action plan focused on high-impact, population-wide improvements



# National Tongan American Society Goals



- ✦ Establish 10 Joint-Use Agreements in areas of Salt Lake County with the high concentrations of Pacific Islander population
- ✦ Reach 75% of the Pacific Islanders in Salt Lake County

# Steps

- ✦ Received guidance and technical assistance from APIAFH / UDOH
- ✦ Met with the University of Utah professor who had done a statewide scan of JUAs
- ✦ Sought buy-in from local pastors, school staff, two state congresswomen



# More Steps

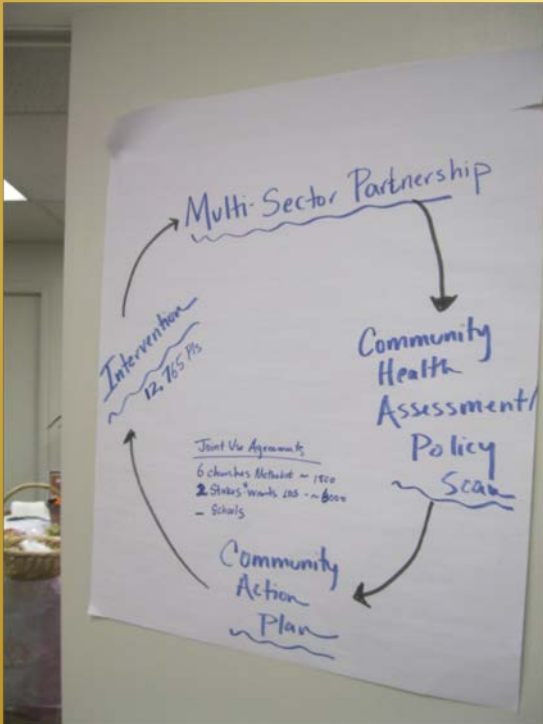
- ✦ Developed a presentation identifying how JUA programs were used in other states and their successes.
- ✦ Worked with the attorney from Change Lab Solutions to create Joint Use Agreements / MOU that were comfortable and agreeable for leaders to sign.
- ✦ Shared the health needs of local community and the role each of these facilities can play in creating a healthier community
- ✦ Identified key person to assist with introduction to 'true' decision makers. Some of the schools, we still were not able to connect with the 'true' decision makers.
- ✦ Used weekly radio announcements -- KRCL 90.9 FM – to help to get information and updates on the project out to the community.
- ✦ Billboards and social media to promote and get the word out on open facilities.

# Identified zip codes with highest Pacific Islander populations





# Weekly Meetings



# Success!

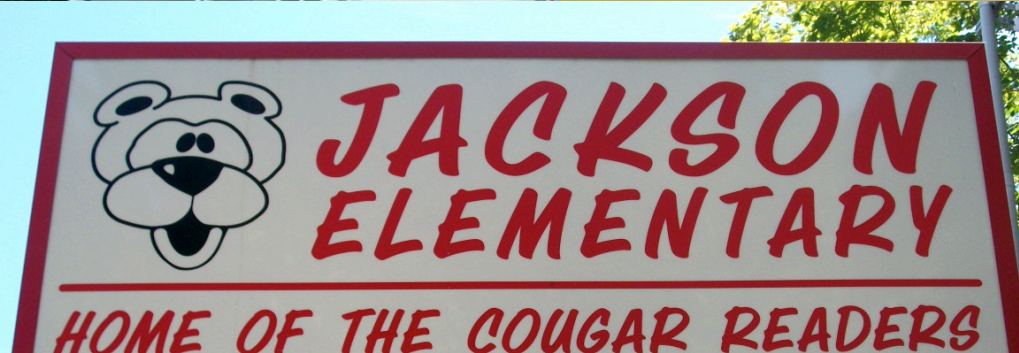


12 Joint-Use Agreements are  
in place





# Schools and Churches



# Places to walk safely





# SAFE, FREE AND INDOOR FACILITIES



# OUTCOMES

- ✦ 12 Joint-Use Agreements
  - ✦ 5 Schools
  - ✦ 5 Churches
  - ✦ Added one recreation center and one cultural center
- ✦ Reached 13,912 Pacific Islanders
  - ✦ Target: 16,817
  - ✦ We actually met our target as we limited our counts to the zip codes in which the JUA facilities were located
  - ✦ People come from surrounding zip codes and throughout the county
  - ✦ People who are not Pacific Islander come to Zumba

# What Worked

- ✦ Starting with people we already knew in churches and schools
- ✦ Optimizing connections and existing partnerships
  - ✦ Utah Department of Health / UofU had experience with Joint Use Agreements
- ✦ Establishing a more/less formal approach
  - ✦ Brochures
- ✦ Understanding Pacific Islander culture
  - ✦ “Pacific Islanders love to get together and mingle with each other”

# Challenges

- ✦ Steep learning curve about JUAs
- ✦ Identifying the right person in an agency
  - ✦ Who is the decision maker?
- ✦ Fear of liability issues expressed by potential schools, churches, agencies



# Closing Survey

- ✦ Surveyed UPHIC Coalition Members
- ✦ Findings
  - ✦ JUAs increased access to local facilities
  - ✦ The process of planning and negotiating was empowering
  - ✦ Project prompted coalition to develop agreements with new organizations
  - ✦ Project fostered coordination among diverse Pacific Islander organizations

# Lessons Learned

- ✦ Anticipate agency's concerns and be prepared to address them
  - ✦ Liability was the greatest concern
  - ✦ Engaged attorney from Change Lab Solutions
  - ✦ Changed the “name” of JUA to MOU
- ✦ Hold regular weekly meetings to update and strategize
- ✦ Unexpected return: The coalition grew, became more empowered



# Sustainability

- ✦ Five Zumba classes (volunteer instructors)
- ✦ Billboards throughout the county displayed for the year
- ✦ Additional churches and organizations have expressed interest in developing JUAs



# THANK YOU

Fahina Tavake-Pasi, MS  
Executive Director  
National Tongan American Society  
[fahina@ntasutah.org](mailto:fahina@ntasutah.org)  
(801) 467-8712