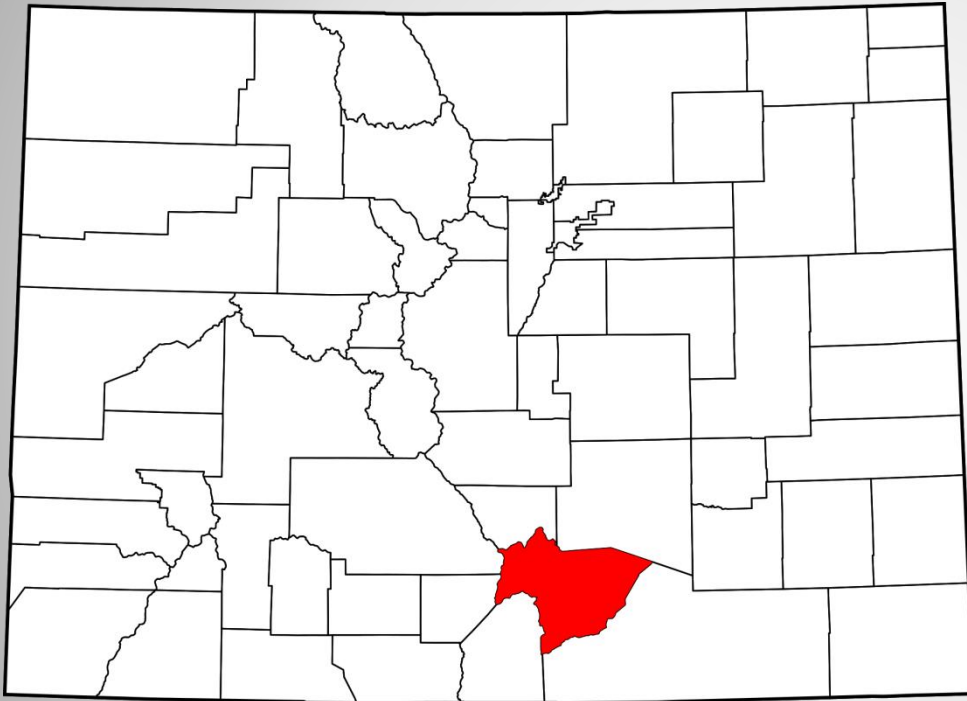


# Washington Underground (The WU)

A Recreation Center in Walsenburg, Colorado



# Huerfano County



Factors that contributed toward the County becoming a LiveWell Community Investment in 2011

1. Ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in Opioid Overdoses
2. Ranked 58 out of 64 in median income
3. Ranked 57 out of 64 for health outcomes
4. Walsenburg considered to be a vulnerable footprint – due to low graduation rates and childhood poverty rates.

**2011- 2013**  
**Community Engagement**

**2014 – 2016**  
**Implementation/Build on Momentum**

**2016 – Present**  
**Sustainability**

Life Cycle of the WU

## Photovoice – grassroots photojournalism – Sage Consulting

1. Gave disposable cameras to caregivers and asked them to photograph *Barriers to and Facilitators of Healthy Eating and Active Living.*
2. *Identified themes*
3. *Had an Image to Action Community Event to develop an action plan to address barriers.*



Rachel Martinez, Walsenburg, CO (Huerfano County)

People drive fast on this long busy street with big looming trees, no sidewalks, streetlights or speed bumps. At night it is dark and scary. Can we get solar lights, a sidewalk or maintained path through the dirt and weeds?

La gente conduce rápido en esta larga y bulliciosa calle con grandes arboles, sin aceras peatonales, ni postes de alumbrado público o reductores de velocidad. En la noche es oscuro y da miedo. ¿Podemos obtener luz solar, una acera peatonal o mantener las vías libres de tierra y maleza?

A Project of Sage Health Consulting, LLC (2011) [www.sagehealthconsulting.com](http://www.sagehealthconsulting.com)

**2011- 2013 Community Engagement**

## **Community Engagement Coaching - Rich Male and Associates**

1. Weekly coaching calls
2. Quarterly convening with a cohort of other communities working on Community Engagement
3. Conduct interviews
  1. What do you love about Walsenburg?
  2. If you had a magic wand, what would you change about Walsenburg?
  3. Who else should I talk to?
4. Formation of a resident council
  1. No elected officials
  2. No nonprofit representatives
  3. Large voice for youth

2011- 2013 Community Engagement

## Conclusions

### Community Engagement and Resident Council –

There needs to be more for youth to do in Walsenburg.

### PhotoVoice –

1. Create more indoor spaces to be healthy
2. Increase access to healthy food
3. Increase community and personal pride



Adrianna Souza, Walsenburg, CO (Huerfano County)

Maintaining this indoor pool is expensive and membership fees limit access to children and seniors. Let's find ways to expand access to healthy activities for the public.

El mantenimiento de esta piscina es caro y las cuotas de afiliación limitan el acceso de los niños y ancianos. Vamos a encontrar la manera de ampliar el acceso a actividades saludables para el público.

A Project of Sage Health Consulting, LLC (2011) [www.sagehealthconsulting.com](http://www.sagehealthconsulting.com)

# 2011- 2013 Community Engagement





1. School gave permission to turn it into a recreation center.
2. Basement of old school – sitting empty for seven years.

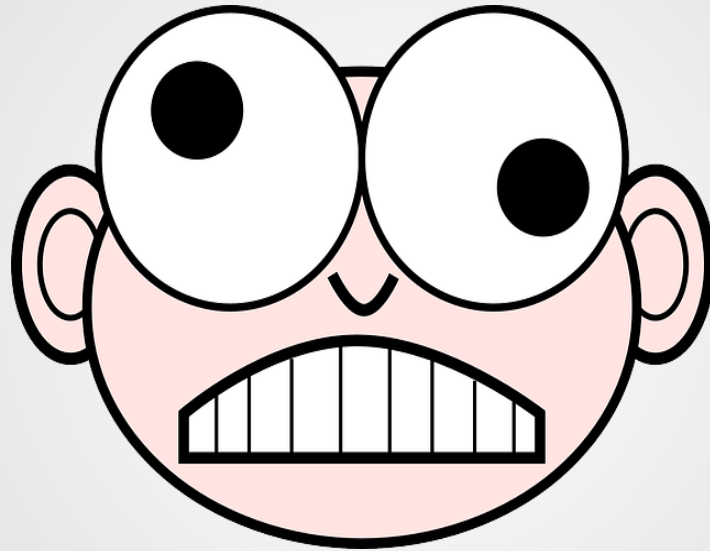
**Phase 2 – Implementation – Build on Momentum**  
***The Fun Stuff***

1. Continue with Community Engagement – Everywhere (grocery store, on the street, at the gym and ALL Huerfano County meetings)
2. Start with donated equipment – 1 bench press machine and 4 sets of dumbbells (70lb 80lb and 90lb), then used equipment and now a few new pieces.
3. Learn how to run a rec center
  1. No rules on first week
  2. 10 rules by the 6<sup>th</sup> month (Wear a shirt, no offensive music, no one under 14 in weight room, no swearing, no DRUG Deals in the bathroom).
4. Look for money to keep the rec center open and buy equipment. (Colorado Health Foundation and El Pomar)

**2014 – 2016 Implementation/Build on Momentum**



**2014 – 2016 Implementation/Build on Momentum**



**Phase 3 – Sustainability**

Goal – WU a pilot project that show residents the importance of a recreation center and then look for an organization with the capacity to levy taxes to take the center on.

1. Huerfano Parks and Recreation District (HPRD) was the target organization
2. One full year of intense negotiations and strategic planning resulted in HPRD taking over the center in January 2019.



## **Phase 3 – Sustainability**

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Washington Underground Recreation



<http://www.thewuco.com/>

**For More Information**