



** This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/walk-kansas-2024-wrapup>

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Popular Walk Kansas program sets sights on 25th year

Organizers already looking ahead to programs for 2025

By Pat Melgares, K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. – Just days past the conclusion of the 2024 [Walk Kansas program](#), Sharolyn Jackson already has her sights set on next year's event.

That's because Jackson – the program's coordinator since its creation in 2001 – has big ideas for the 25th year of Walk Kansas, a popular, team-based challenge that encourages teams of six to walk a distance equivalent to the span of Kansas in eight weeks.

"We had a few more people participating this year, compared to 2023," Jackson said, noting that the 4,400 participants beat the previous year's total "by a couple hundred."

Some perspective is in order: Walk Kansas encourages each participant to exercise a minimum 30 minutes a day, five days a week – a guideline from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for all Americans. Following that guideline alone, 4,400 participants would have covered more than 324,000 miles in activity during the eight week program.

Jackson, however, reports that this year's participants did even better. Using the program's system that converts 15 minutes of activity into one mile of distance, Walk Kansas participants topped 614,234 miles in 2024 – nearly 25 times around Planet Earth.

"We really want our participants to have an opportunity to focus on establishing a regular habit of physical activity," Jackson said. "So, our goal is to help them reach at least the minimum (recommended) amount of physical activity...and then build from there."

Walk Kansas organizers publish a weekly newsletter that provides tips about nutrition, motivation, sleep, strength training and more. In addition to recording activity, participants track the number of fruits and vegetables they eat each day.

"I hear many comments from participants that indicate that if they don't start first thing in the morning with some fruits and vegetables, they can't get enough in throughout the day," Jackson said. "We encourage fruits and vegetables for snacks, as well, and that helps to boost their fruit and vegetable consumption throughout the day."

Jackson said one lesson offered to participants this year encouraged good ‘sleep hygiene.’

“This includes thinking about things that help prepare your body and your mind for good rest,” Jackson said. “That includes things like keeping your home at a cooler temperature, not having a technology device near your bed, physical activity during the day, and avoiding caffeine and alcohol after a certain point in the evening. Those can all work against you in terms of getting good sleep.”

Many of those activities will continue during next year’s quarter-century celebration of Walk Kansas, but Jackson said there are more plans taking shape.

“One of the things we’ve talked a lot about is a worksite wellness program,” Jackson said. “It’s very affordable for most businesses and so we’re going to be promoting Walk Kansas to workplaces next year.”

“We’re also planning to form a partnership with the American Diabetes Association to focus on physical activity and healthy eating as it relates to diabetes prevention, or better management of the disease if you currently have diabetes.”

K-State Research and Extension offers other programs throughout the year that have similar goals as Walk Kansas. Jackson noted two: [Walk With Ease](#) and [Stay Strong, Stay Healthy](#).

More information on these programs, as well as Walk Kansas, is available at [local extension offices in Kansas](#).

-30-

FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this article
Walk Kansas, <https://www.walkkansas.org>

Walk with Ease, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/news/stories/2020/07/kstate-launches-walk-with-ease-program.html>

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy, <https://www.k-state.edu/staystrong>

K-State Research and Extension statewide offices, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html>

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Source

Sharolyn Jackson
785-532-5833
sharolyn@ksu.edu

Story by:

Pat Melgares
melgares@ksu.edu