



Making Water Flow at Riverfront Park

With funding from Building Communities for Better Health (BCBH), a Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) initiative, the Ripley County BCBH Coalition worked with the City of Doniphan to increase access to free drinking water in Riverfront Park.

The Challenge

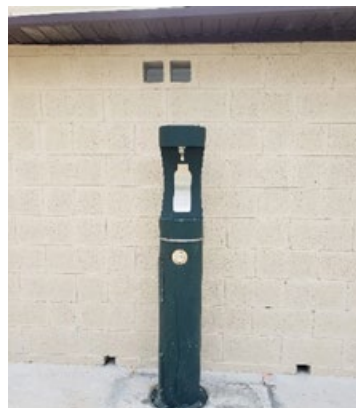
Water is essential to individual health. Drinking sufficient amounts of water, particularly instead of sugar-sweetened beverages, has many benefits such as fewer cavities, lower risk for obesity, and improved student focus in the classroom. Unfortunately, most U.S. adults, adolescents, and children do not drink enough water.

The Solution

Initiatives to enhance access to, and promotion of, free, drinkable water, and policies that favor the promotion of water over unhealthy beverages are increasing in public spaces nationwide. Moreover, the recent COVID-19 pandemic has heightened health and safety concerns associated with water fountains—perfect places for germs and contaminants to spread. Additionally, the desire to reduce solid waste resulting from the sale of bottled water has demonstrated the value of one-touch or touchless water filling stations.

When water is available, easily accessible, and from non-fountain sources such as filling stations, people drink more of it. Further, when people carry and use reusable bottles they take giant steps toward reducing pollution from plastics, lowering costs associated with trash removal, and limiting our carbon footprint.

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The Outcome

Riverfront Park connects with some of the Ozarks' most scenic rivers and forests. Together, this area is a major draw for both residents and visitors alike. Ensuring access to free, drinkable water and encouraging the reduction of plastics are important efforts in the promotion of individual and community health.

The Ripley County BCBH coalition worked in collaboration with the City of Doniphan's Parks and Recreation Department and the Mayor's Office to make a water filling station a reality at Riverfront Park. In addition to supporting visitors, residents have expressed excitement in what the city has done to enable this new, positive change in the park.

What's Next?

While water filling stations are self-sufficient, the City of Doniphan has agreed to maintain the station at its own expense. This assurance extends beyond the water filling station; it demonstrates the city's commitment to the health of its residents and visitors by ensuring the sustainability of access to free drinking water for years to come.

**To learn more about our work call the
Ripley County Health Center at:
573-996-2181**