



Ramadan Street Feast in Willmar, Minnesota

SPREAD IDEAS TO COMMUNITIES IN RURAL MINNESOTA

With Blue Cross Blue Shield

ABOUT BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD

Blue Cross Blue Shield is one of the largest health care providers in the U.S. As such, they are committed to addressing health disparities and are focused on the social determinants of health.

Through ChangeX, they invested in 65 new projects across rural Minnesota. The yearlong initiative supported communities as they brought the best ideas from around the world into their local areas.

WHAT THEY NEEDED

Local community engagement

For Jason Daum, Principal, Community Health & Health Equity at BCBS, supporting rural communities is a personal passion as much as it is part of his job. Before working with ChangeX he had already run a fund to support new projects in Willmar, MN. When he began meeting with ChangeX, a big question for him was how to engage people regularly and sustainably.



“As a corporation, it can be difficult for us to be effective on the ground. Having ChangeX as a partner allowed us to provide opportunities for folks who wanted to do something but didn’t know where to start. Through their online platform and personal engagement, ChangeX also provided a lot of support that we couldn’t have provided ourselves.” - Jason Daum



WHAT WE DID

Localized solutions

Focussing on rural Minnesota, BCBS particularly wanted to invest in solutions to integrate new immigrant populations with communities that had a larger presence.



DATE

Nov. 2017 – Dec. 2018



REGION

Greater Minnesota



INVESTMENT

\$ 150,000

IMPACT



IDEAS

15



NEW PROJECTS

65



PEOPLE IMPACTED

1038

The community of Willmar, where BCBS has supported projects before, was a key focus of the partnership, with the goal of supporting 15 new projects in the area.

Street Feast & Welcome Dinner as flagship ideas

In order to connect people across cultures, we focused on two ideas that bring people together for conversations over a shared meal. While Street Feast is a public pot-luck dinner, Welcome Dinners are hosted in private homes and connect two families.

A total of 15 such meals were hosted over the course of the year, many of which turned into regular events.



Evaluation and iteration

ChangeX hosted several community events in Willmar to guide people to ideas that addressed their needs most. These convenings were central to finding people who would step up and take on new ideas.

“ ChangeX turned out to be a great tool to build up new leaders in communities. People raised their hands who wouldn’t typically get involved with community projects because everything is laid out for them. For us, it’s important that people take ownership for the projects and keep going when we step away as a funder of the work. - Jason Daum ”

Activation

We used our community funding product to incentivize people to kick-start ideas. 30 of the 65 starters received funding for their idea, which gave them small amounts of funding to cover food or materials while they started to build the community to sustain their ideas locally.

“ Working with ChangeX was glorious, wonderful, and exciting. There was fantastic energy as the starters flowed in and the ideas came to life. Everyone on our team who was involved loved it. - Jason Daum ”

PRODUCTS & SERVICES USED

- Creation of idea portfolio
- Local changemaker activation & support
- Hosting of community events
- Community Fund
- Live impact reporting

GLOBAL GOALS ADDRESSED



STORIES



ABDI AHMED
STREET FEAST WILLMAR

The Street Feast was the best event I ever organized. Muslims and their neighbors enjoyed a meal together. The Willmar of today is totally different than the one of yesterday.



HERB
ROSEVILLE MEN'S SHED

When my wife died I had not a friend in the world. Now, after finding Men's Sheds, I have this whole room full of friends!