Wellness Grant Feature of the Month: Office of Research - IRB Administration
Ambassadors: Marisol Quintana

The Office of Research used the funds from the mini grant to purchase a mini fridge, health magazines, staff workout towels, and gift cards for simple office challenges. The first challenge included a plank challenge, where staff members were timed on how long they can hold a plank for at the beginning of the challenge and again 4 weeks later. The member who could hold the plank the longest or showed the most improvement received a gift card.

More than 50% of the people in the Office of Research participated in the challenges and in making small lifestyle changes. Participation in these challenges increased over time, and staff members started walking during their break, talking about fitness and being positive. In general, the office morale boosted, and colleagues spent more time with each other doing healthy activities.

The main goals of Marisol, the wellness ambassador in the department was to get staff members to start walking during their breaks, to pack their lunches or healthy snacks, and to attempt to make small lifestyle changes outside of work. In order to reach this goal, health and well-being was promoted by getting creative with the office challenges, and trying to make them fun for everyone.

One challenge faced was convincing staff members who did not believe in healthy eating or physical activity to make slight changes and give it a try. Some people took a little longer to make these changes, but as the challenges were for all ages and fitness levels, it helped those who were apprehensive about taking part.

A lot of positive feedback was received from staff and the IRB director on the wellness ambassador’s efforts. Many staff members are still enjoying the challenges and are eager to participate. Others are coming up with healthy ideas on their own and giving me feedback.

Marisol hopes to keep promoting healthy events, programs and announcements that come her way. She has used the office’s bulletin board to put up flyers and advertise events.