StairWELL UPenn: Reducing Energy and Improving Health
Final Report: UPENN Green Fund

July 30th 2018

Submitted by the Center for Public Health Initiatives
About StairWELL UPenn

In July 2017, the Center for Public Health Initiatives (CPHI), in partnership with Space, Planning and Operations (SPO), launched StairWELL UPenn in coordination with the City of Philadelphia’s StairWELL Campaign to increase the use of stairs on campus. StairWELL UPenn aims to increase the use of stairwells on campus thereby increasing regular physical activity during the work/school day, and decreasing energy cost and use of elevators.

The primary goals of the campaign are to:

- Increase levels of physical activity among employees via use of stairwells
- Increase sustainability via decrease use of elevators
- Increase safety and attractiveness of stairwells while decreasing usage deterrents via stairwell beautification

The initiative is supported by Healthy Penn, a cross-sector partnership at the University of Pennsylvania between CPHI, Human Resources, Campus Health, Penn Recreation and Penn Athletics, and the Penn Green Campus Partnership.

Summary of Project

Through the Green Fund proposal, we proposed to pilot the initiative in one stairwell in the Anatomy Chemistry building. We chose Anatomy Chemistry since we had dedicated support from building facilities and employees. The goal was to create low-budget changes to ensure that the stairwells were accessible, safe, attractive and thereby well utilized throughout the day. With these modest physical changes to stairwells, combined with motivational signage, we aimed to help employees and students be active during the day, while saving money on energy usage from elevators. We hoped to make this a pilot so that this initiative could be rolled into other buildings and stairwells.

Progress July 2017 – July 2018

In the past year, we were able to successfully complete our pilot project in Anatomy Chemistry within the timeline that we projected. This included the pre-planning and baseline evaluation, the design and implementation, and the post evaluation. As proposed, one stairwell in the Anatomy Chemistry Building received a treatment that consisted an installation of a designed vinyl wall graphic and complementary signs that we received from the City of Philadelphia’s Stairwell Campaign. Each stairwell received a colorful decal and motivational wordage (see photos below). We launched a baseline and a follow-up survey approximately three months before and three months after final installation (see results attached).
To achieve these goals, we have created a workgroup which includes facilities managers and individuals from CPHI and SPO to assess targeted stairwells and discuss an affordable intervention in one to three sites. Initial sites will serve as a model for other campus buildings to adopt affordable and
### Evaluation Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Baseline*</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>3 months Post*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased stairwell use</td>
<td>Self-reported stairwell usage more than 2-4X/day</td>
<td>Stairwell Usage Survey (Appendix B)</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>10% increase over one year</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased elevator usage</td>
<td>Self-reported elevator usage more than 2-4X/day</td>
<td>Stairwell Usage Survey (Appendix B)</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>10% decrease over one year</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased safety and attractiveness of stairwell via painting, lighting and signage</td>
<td>Attractiveness and safety responses</td>
<td>Questions 10 and 11 in stairwell walkthrough tool (Appendix C)</td>
<td>Answered “yes” to 3 out of 8 safety measures and 0 out of 4 attractiveness measures</td>
<td>Answered “yes” to at least half safety and attractiveness measures</td>
<td>Answered “yes” to 5 out of 8 safety measures and 3 out of 4 attractiveness measures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*There were small samples for both the pre (37) and post (n=16) evaluation online surveys. In particular, the post evaluation had less than half the number of responses than the pre evaluation.

### Opportunities and Challenges

Overall, this is a great, low-cost initiative that has the potential to have impact on how many people the stairs in a given day. Based on feedback in our survey, participants really liked the enhancements and found the stairwells more inviting. With added light, paint and décor, we were able to efficiently increase the attractive and overall appeal in our pilot stairwell.

An existing challenge is the maintenance of the stairwells. Some people reported that – despite changes – the stairwells weren’t adequately swept / clean to maintain a pristine look. In addition, we were only able to do one stairwell in the building. Finally, this is a long process from beginning to end where patience and persistence is required.

### Next Steps

In continued partnership, we have identified additional buildings to receive the motivational signage and we are waiting on approval. We hope to find additional funds to repeat the pilot in another identified stairwell that has low-traffic and good potential for use.