

SUCCESS STORIES 2016





September 2017

Dear Colleagues, Stakeholders and Public Health Partners,

It is my pleasure to share with you the 2016 Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Success Stories. Funded by the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), CHC is working to increase opportunities for physical activity, improve access and affordability of healthy food, and assure tobacco-free living for all Ohioans.

CHC coordinators in 23 counties across the state have activated and engaged local stakeholders through coalitions to accomplish objectives and ensure sustainability. Examples of this work include healthy small food retail, bike infrastructure improvements, and adoption of tobacco free public places. In 2016, the CHC program impacted more than 700,000 Ohioans and leveraged more than \$4 million to support these sustainable changes. Included in this booklet, you will find information about our statewide initiatives as well as success stories from each of our funded counties. We hope you enjoy reading about how CHC is making the healthier choice the easier choice where Ohioans live, work, and play.

Thank you for your continued support of the CHC program.

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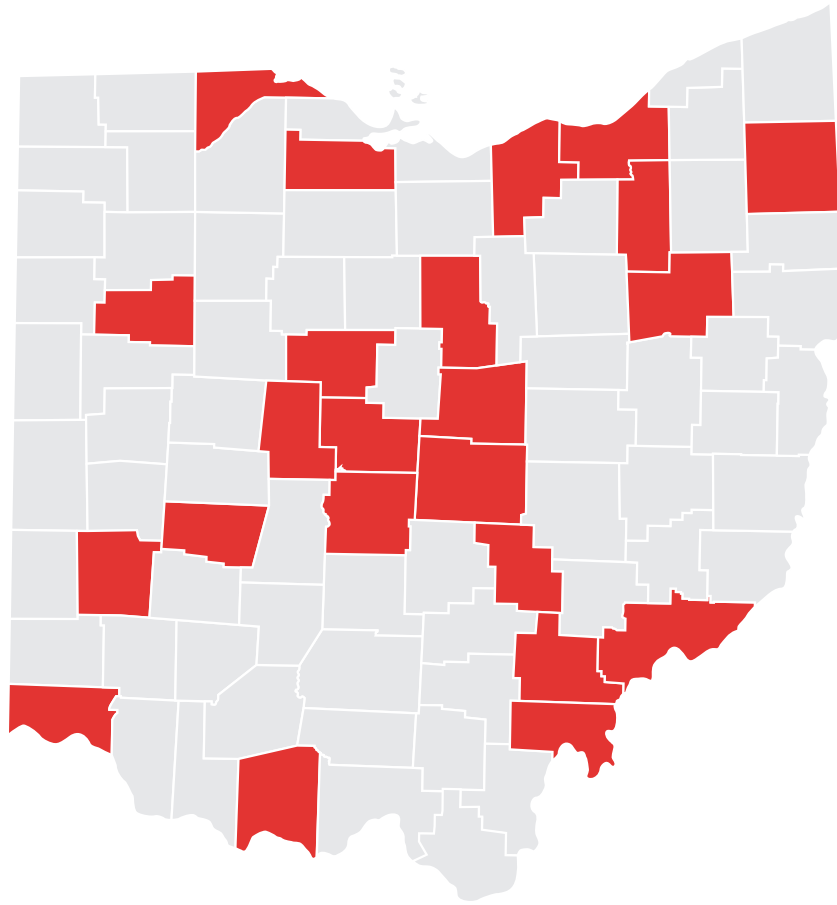
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Vision:

Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice

Mission:

Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) is committed to preventing and reducing chronic disease statewide. Through cross-sector collaboration, we are activating communities to improve access to and affordability of healthy food, increase opportunities for physical activity, and assure tobacco-free living where Ohioans live, work and play. By implementing sustainable evidence-based strategies, CHC is creating a culture of health.



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Statewide Training and Technical Assistance



All-Project Meetings

CHC hosted three in-person meetings in 2016 to provide training on evidence-based strategies and facilitate peer to peer networking.

March Topics

Community engagement; Aligning state and local plans; Developing an elevator speech

July Topics

Health equity;
Experiential education
(walk audit/bike rides)

November Topics

Disability and health;
Identification and assessment
of inclusion



Agenda

- Announcements
- Communication
- Securing Coalitions
- Early Childhood Update
- Polls/Questions
- Adjourn

Remove the barrier to connect neighborhoods and people

Policy, System, and Environmental Changes

- Implement one statewide educational campaign on promotion of healthy beverages
- Increase built environment changes
- Healthy Retail-Good Food Here
- School Siting

Monthly Webinars

Webinars were hosted monthly to highlight local progress, hear from subject matter experts and provide updates on statewide initiatives. Topics from 2016 included: coalition building and maintenance, community engagement, disability in health, program evaluation, early childhood obesity prevention, and measuring impact, and more!

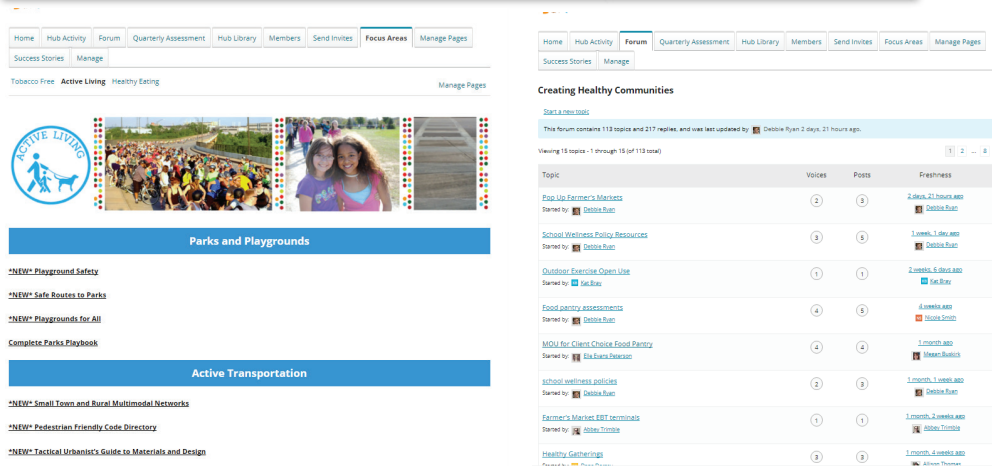
Quarterly Site Visits

CHC program consultants visit each county to provide one-on-one technical assistance to local CHC coordinators. Site visits also include attending local coalition meetings, community tours and project kick-off events.



Community Commons

The CHC Program utilizes an online, peer-to-peer networking “hub” on the Community Commons website. The hub allows for resource sharing, forum discussions, and collaborative document development for local coordinators and state staff.





Statewide Healthy Eating Initiatives

**GOOD
FOOD
HERE**
EAT RIGHT OHIO

Good Food Here

Good Food Here (GFH) is a statewide initiative that was developed to make it easy for consumers to recognize and purchase healthy foods. In Ohio, GFH is making its way into grocery and corner stores, vending, concessions, cafeterias, and food pantries.



Healthy Food Retail

In 2016, strides were taken to increase the amount of resources and technical assistance available for healthy food retail strategies. Quarterly networking calls were held to discuss topics such as resident engagement, store recruitment, and distribution. Network members formed a working group to help develop the GFH Coordinator Guide, revise the Store Owner Guide, and expanded marketing materials to include a variety of healthy food items (see below). As of 2016, the Ohio Healthy Food Retail Network has established 80 small healthy food retail establishments in 12 counties across the state.



**FILL YOUR
BAG
WITH
FRUITS &
VEGGIES**

**DELICIOUS
DIPPERS**



**TAKE
A FRESH
LOOK AT
FROZEN**





Food and Beverage Guidelines

A second working group was established in 2016 to develop a toolkit and supportive materials for adopting food and beverage guidelines. This toolkit is designed for worksites and community organizations that are looking to make changes to create a healthier food environment. Included is guidance on customer buy-in, nutrition standards adopted from the American Heart Association, sustainability considerations, evaluation tools and marketing suggestions.

Brand Expansion

In addition to the marketing materials created for small retail stores, the GFH brand was expanded to promote efforts in worksites, community organizations, food pantries and retail checkout lanes (see examples below).



Water First for Thirst

Water First for Thirst is a statewide campaign to educate Ohioans about why water should be the first beverage of choice. Originally developed by Columbus Public Health, Water First for Thirst provides tools that empower communities to make more informed choices about their beverages.



Work@Health

In 2016, CHC staff trained 18 worksites in the CDC's Work@Health Program. Employers learned how to develop or improve their worksite wellness programs through science-based strategies that principally address chronic health conditions.

Following the training, technical assistance was provided on strategies to improve nutrition and physical activity opportunities for employees.



Healthy Food Retail Network Partners

- CHC Local Grantees
- Communities Preventing Chronic Disease (CPCD) Local Grantees
- United Way of Central Ohio
- Live Well Toledo
- Activate Allen County
- Case Western Reserve University Prevention Research Center
- The Food Trust

Food and Beverage Guidelines Partners

- CPCD Local Grantees
- American Heart Association
- Ohio State University (OSU) Extension
- OSU Health Promotion and Wellness
- Ohio Business Enterprise Program
- Columbus Public Health
- Ohio State Agency Wellness Ambassadors
- West Central Ohio Regional Health Care Alliance

Other State Healthy Eating Initiatives

- Ohio Nutrition Incentive Network
- Ohio Food Policy Network
- Building Capacity for Obesity Prevention





Statewide Active Living Initiatives



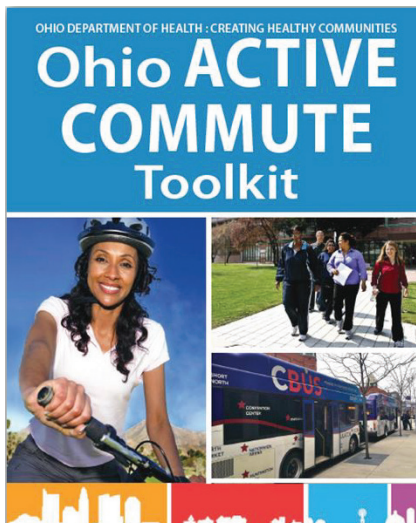
Active Transportation

Active transportation has been a key component of CHC's work to increase physical activity. CHC staff have partnered with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) to co-lead the Ohio Active Transportation Team, facilitating quarterly webinars and spearheading the implementation of the Active Transportation Plan (AT Plan).



Complete Streets

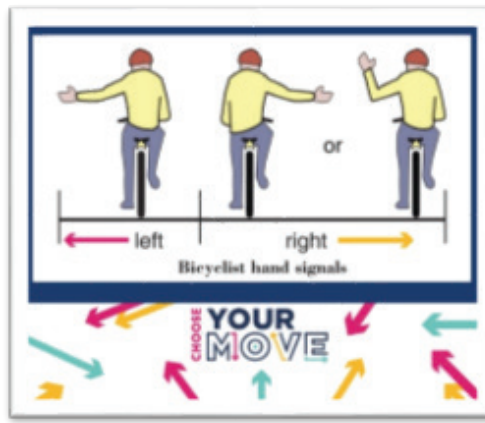
Complete Streets policies ensure that all road users – no matter age, income or ability – are considered in the design, construction and maintenance of roadways. In the fall of 2016, CHC hosted five regional complete streets workshops in Marietta, Nelsonville, Mansfield, Lima and Marion to support policy development in urban, suburban and rural communities. During the process, 12 champions participated in a complete streets train-the-trainer process to sustain on-going technical assistance around complete streets policy development.



Active Commute

In 2016, 10 state agencies were engaged in an initiative to support active commuting, such as walking, biking or taking public transit. With support from agency Wellness Ambassadors, these worksites are making it easier for more than 4,000 employees to incorporate physical activity into their daily routine.

Technical assistance and resources to support active commute strategies also increased in 2016. The Ohio Active Commute Toolkit was developed to aid worksites in conducting assessments, gaining leadership buy-in, adopting policies, making infrastructure changes, educating employees, and evaluating their efforts.



Your Move Ohio

In September and October of 2016, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and ODOT piloted a safety and education campaign around active transportation. As part of the AT Plan, this campaign focused on two goals: decrease injury and fatality; and increase the number of people choosing active forms of transportation.

The Your Move campaign was piloted in five Ohio communities: Mansfield, Nelsonville, Akron, Columbus and Massillon. The pilot consisted of print media, social media and “experiential education”, which teaches residents how to replace car trips with bike trips through on-road training. Ten ride leaders were trained to conduct experiential education rides in their community.



Shared Use

Making facilities, such as school playgrounds, more accessible to the public is an evidenced-based strategy to increase physical activity. CHC developed a toolkit with a variety of resources to support the establishment of shared use agreements and open use policies. Examples include fact sheets, sample agreements, and a presenter's guide with instructions on developing agreements and policies from starting the conversation through implementation.

Ohio Active Transportation Emphasis Area Team

- ODH Creating Healthy Communities
- ODOT Offices of Safety, Transit, and Statewide Planning & Research
- Ohio Department of Education
- Ohio Association of Regional Governments
- Ohio Alliance of YMCAs
- SRTS National Partnership
- Yay! Bikes
- Ohio Bicycle Federation
- Columbus Public Health
- Bay Village Bicycle Coop
- Cleveland Safe Routes to School
- Bike Miami Valley
- ...and many more!

Active Transportation by the Numbers

- 4 # of Cross Sector Dialogues/Town Hall Meetings
- 5 # of local complete streets workshops
- 6 # of weeks Your Move was piloted in 5 communities
- 11 # of Complete Streets Trainers trained
- \$2 Million leveraged for active transportation projects
- 8 Professional Development Rides in CHC/CPCD communities

2016 Local Impact



16 Healthy Small Food Retail

14 Community Gardens

10 Farmers' Markets now accept EBT and/or WIC

8 New Farmers' Markets

7 SNAP Incentive Programs at Farmers' Markets

4 Food and Beverage Guideline Policies

4 Food Pantries

4 Water Fountains

39 Bike Infrastructure Improvements

24 Parks or Playgrounds

7 Multi Use Trails

9 Safe Routes to School Projects

4 Shared Use Agreements

4 Active Transportation Campaign

2 Public Transit Improvements

23 Smoke Free Open Spaces

11 Smoke Free Multi Unit Housing

5 Tobacco Free School Districts

3 Tobacco Free College/ Technical Schools

4 Smoke Free Worksite Policies

2 Discouragement of Tobacco Sales

Healthy Eating
249,228

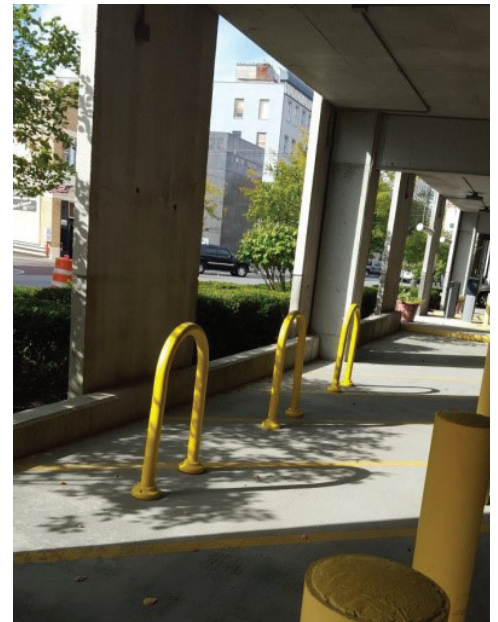
Active Living
288,130

Tobacco
181,888

Ohioans Impacted: 719,246



2016 Success Stories





Adams County

Adams County Youth Benefit From Summer REC Program

Summary

Through the efforts of multiple community and health leaders, Adams County youth now have the opportunity to be physically active and receive healthy meals throughout the summer months. Adams County, a rural Appalachian community, has one of the highest rates of childhood obesity in Ohio. Thanks to the Creating Healthy Communities Program and many generous donors, the free summer Respect, Education, and Character (REC) program was established in 2015. The program provided structured recreation, healthy meals and snacks, and education on healthy habits to more than 150 children in both 2015 and 2016. Thanks to an anonymous donation, the REC program will continue to provide healthy food and recreation opportunities to Adams County children for many years to come.

Challenge

Childhood obesity is one of most important public health issues in Ohio, with more than 30 percent of children and adolescents classified as overweight or obese. Adams County has even higher childhood overweight and obesity rates. According to a 2011 report from the Ohio Department of Health, childhood obesity in Adams County increased from 31.0 percent in 2004 to a staggering 48.8 percent by 2010. Additionally, the 2016 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps report showed Adams County ranking in the bottom three of 88 counties in overall health factors and health outcomes. The health and emotional consequences of obesity can greatly affect a child's ability to be academically successful in school, and efforts to reverse the consequences from these alarming statistics must be available to our children. To address this

epidemic, leaders and organizations were called upon and recruited throughout the county to find a solution to this local health epidemic.

Solution

In 2015, a group of community and health leaders came together to look at the many factors that can influence children's health in Adams County. Thanks to funding from the Creating Healthy Communities Program, and more than \$80,000.00 in additional funding leveraged from community partners, a free summer REC program was launched. Transportation to and from the summer REC program site was provided, where all participants engaged in structured physical activity, received a healthy breakfast, lunch, afternoon snack and water as the first choice for drinking.



Children also received a multitude of educational opportunities that addressed healthy habits they could use to improve their overall health and well-being, including cooking classes and fitness evaluations.

Results

In 2015, 187 children, ages 8-16, registered for the eight-week program, with an average daily attendance of 124 (66 percent). In 2016, 165 children, ages 8-14, registered for the six-week program, with an average daily attendance of 90 (54.5 percent).

An evaluation of the program showed an overwhelmingly positive response, yielding 90 percent student approval and 80 percent parent/guardian approval in 2015. In 2016, responses were quite similar, with a 95 percent student and 99 percent parent/guardian approval. The summer REC program has proven itself to be a valued addition to children and their families in Adams County.

"I feel anytime we can provide a safe environment and enriching activities for our youth, it is worthwhile."

—Sue Fulton, Director,
Adams County Job & Family
Services

Sustaining Success

In 2016, the summer REC program added a community playground renovation project to the program. Children helped to restore two swing sets, five basketball hoops, and a set of teeter totters that had not been in use for more than 15 years. The space will now be available for use by children and their families in the community. In 2016, the program also received an anonymous donation by a private benefactor who felt its sustainability was essential to improving the overall health of the children of Adams County.

Your Involvement is Key

Community members, schools, business leaders and healthcare providers can work together to address the social and environmental factors that contribute to childhood obesity. When these leaders come together to provide opportunities to increase accessibility to healthy food and recreational opportunities, all children will benefit in the battle against childhood obesity. We have received overwhelming support of the summer REC program thus far, but continued community support is essential.



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Allen County Safer Routes to School Gets Kids Moving

Summary

For many students in the Spencerville School District, there is a lack of safe routes that allow active transportation (walking, biking, skating) to school. In 2012, the school district developed a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Travel Plan and applied for SRTS funding. The village received funding that allowed the first project of the travel plan to be completed in 2016 bringing infrastructure changes to the village. Thanks to collaboration between the Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Program, the Village of Spencerville, the Spencerville School District, and other community partnerships, the students and families of the school district have a safer route to walk or bike to school. Along with increased physical activity, the students can develop a sense of freedom, responsibility and safety all while supporting an environmentally

friendly activity and creating a safer area around the school.

Challenge

The Spencerville School District buildings sit on the eastern edge of Spencerville, just off the state route. Many parents, patrons, and stakeholders in the school district share concerns about the limited safe travel options for students due to the lack of sidewalks, inadequate lighting, and limited identifiable crosswalks. As a result, there is minimal encouragement for children to walk or bike to school.

Solution

The Village of Spencerville used SRTS funding to extend sidewalks along 2nd Street, connect sidewalks with the shared-use path on the school

grounds, and support multiple forms of transportation, such as walking, biking, skating (in-line, skateboarding), or wheelchairs to the school buildings. Other strategies in the SRTS plan were implemented to improve safety and connectivity, encouraging active transportation among students at the school. For example, educational resources were provided to the school teachers through the CHC program. The physical education teacher used these resources to educate students on walking/biking safety and took the students on a visit to the shared-use path. Adding signage to the shared-use path helped students and the public identify the location of the safest route for students to travel to and from school. Additionally, bike racks were provided to the school by CHC to supplement existing racks that were often full when the weather is nice.



Results

The new sidewalks provide a safe route for students to access the school grounds from one of the main areas of Spencerville. More than 650 students now have a way to get to school other than a vehicle. The sidewalks also provide students, families and village residents with access to the shared-use path for weekend recreation and use as a safer route to the nearby library. Updated signage at pedestrian crosswalks has greatly improved safety as well, allowing parents to feel more comfortable letting their children walk/bike to school. Incorporating safety lessons into the school curriculum assures that students will continue to be encouraged to walk/bike to school. More than 250 students participated in Spencerville's Walk/Bike to School Day in 2016. The event will continue twice a year, once in May with Bike to School Day and once in October with Walk to School Day.

"As a mom, I take my kids on bike rides to the school from our house to play on the playground, visit their dad at football practice, or even to head out to the library. We use the sidewalks to ride our bikes or walk. It's a straight shot for us and there's very little traffic. The kids quickly learned the path and I could see them doing this by themselves when they are older."

— Brooke Zerbe,
K-8 Guidance Counselor,
Spencerville Local Schools

Sustaining Success

The Safe Routes Committee of Spencerville will continue to address the additional recommended strategies for proposed projects in the School Travel Plan as funds become available. The school district will continue to promote walking/biking safety with their students using the resource materials provided and continue to provide community activities, such as Walk/Bike to School Day so students have the opportunity to actively travel to and from school. The CHC program will continue to promote active transportation in the Village of Spencerville in 2017 by offering bike racks to businesses and community organizations interested in providing secure bike parking and promoting physical activity to their employees.

Your Involvement is Key

The SRTS project is a collective community effort. As a parent, help encourage your children to walk or bike to school, volunteer to walk with a group of students or be present at crossing locations to increase safety for active transportation. As a community member, watch your speed when driving in school zones and keep an eye out for children walking/biking to school.

For more information on ways to support active transportation in Spencerville, including the SRTS project, contact the Allen County Creating Healthy Communities Program.



Contact:

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Allen County Public Health

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Athens County

Building Safe Places to Play with Local Partnerships

Summary

The Athens City-County Health Department, with support of the Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) grant, and Rome Township Trustees collaborated to create a plan to give the Savannah Park in Guysville, Ohio a much needed update and safety overhaul. This project aims to create a safe and healthy environment for local children and adults to have a place to be active in their community. In collaboration with township trustees, the Athens County Creating Healthy Communities program rejuvenated the playground at Savannah Park by replacing broken and worn out playground equipment to promote physical activity among neighborhood children.

Challenge

In Athens County 40.4 percent of third graders were overweight or obese from 2009-2010 according to the Ohio Department of Health's Report on the Body Mass Index of Ohio's Third Graders. Studies show that overweight and obese children are at a significantly increased risk of diabetes, hypertension, asthma and stroke. Childhood obesity can profoundly affect children's physical health, social, and emotional well-being and self-esteem. It is also associated with poor academic performance and a lower quality of life experienced by the child. Evidence shows that physical activity helps reduce obesity and risk factors for chronic disease. After the Ohio Township Association Risk Management Authority (OTARMA) conducted a visit to Savannah Park, the park was deemed not safe

for play. With quotes from playground companies estimating more than \$65,000 to fix and update the park, township officials had to look elsewhere. Through partnership and collaboration with CHC, a solution was proposed.

Solution

Communities play a vital role in the health and well-being of all people. With help from community partners, funding and time were leveraged to make this project a success. CHC worked with the township fiscal officer to review a recent risk assessment done on the park, where many safety issues and violations were found. With funding from CHC, equipment was purchased, such as rubber mulch and other materials needed to resurface the park, new swings, hardware, safety



mats, and new basketball rims and nets. Lowe's volunteered time to remove unsafe playground equipment, paint the swing sets and fill cracks on the basketball court. Through a contract with Hocking College, the park was able to be resurfaced.

Results

With all these improvements to the park, it is now a safe place for community members to visit and play. In September 2016 with help from Lowe's and Hocking College, the park was resurfaced, unsafe equipment was removed, swing sets were repainted and cracks on the basketball court were filled. A project expected to cost \$65,000, that a single township couldn't achieve, ended up being accomplished with more than 15 hours of donated time and resources from partners. Work continues to take place to replace the rusty, unsafe hardware in the park. Springtime will bring many new park visitors.

"Our park had a lot of issues and we didn't have the resources to fix them. I'm pleased we were able to create a partnership with the Health Department, Hocking College & Lowes to make this park go from an unsafe place to play, to a safe one. It was a great process to see unfold."

*— Willard Dunfee,
Rome Township Fiscal Officer*

Sustaining Success

The success of this project was due to the excellent participation and collaboration from those involved. The Rome Township Trustees are very proud of this park and are committed to keeping it a maintained and safe place for local residents. The Athens Creating Healthy Communities Coalition will continue to create partnerships like the ones seen in this story, to create more ways and safe places for the residents of Athens County to be physically active.

Your Involvement is Key

Join the CHC Coalition to help with similar efforts by contacting Athens City-County Health Department. Show appreciation for your local park and visit it often. This will show your community the importance of keeping the space well maintained and safe for all community members to use.



Contact:

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Cincinnati Winton Hills Residents Connect with Trails

Summary

The Winton Hills Community in Cincinnati was in need of improved access to transportation, recreation opportunities and healthy food. With a low rate of car ownership in the community, residents had to explore alternative methods for safe passage out of the community. A wooded trail that took commuters off of busy, high-traffic roads and directly to their desired destinations was just the answer. Thanks to Community Captain, Dazree Williams, the trail is being designed with the community in mind.

Challenge

The 4,787 residents of Winton Hills are geographically isolated and are keenly aware of the transportation and access challenges they face every day.

Residents often have to travel out of the community on a regular basis for jobs, food, health care, schools, and recreation. The community has a low rate of car ownership, only 15 percent of residents own a car according to the U.S. Census. Cost, scheduling, and access to important stops and routes are barriers for many residents making transit options not ideal. Sidewalks and bike lanes, where they exist, are often impassible or perceived as unsafe due to the high traffic volume on nearby streets. This has left many residents feeling stuck in the neighborhood.

Solution

The Winton Hills Neighborhood Council partnered with the Cincinnati Health Department's Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program and local

trail group, Groundwork Cincinnati, to explore trail options. Groundwork Cincinnati is currently building the Mill Creek Trail, which will run less than one mile from Winton Hills and eventually connect to a loop trail, allowing for travel all around the city. The neighborhood council hired a Community Captain, Dazree Williams, to engage community members and get feedback on creating a trail project that would create a connection between the isolated community, public transit stops, the grocery store and the Mill Creek Trail.

Results

Williams excelled at her role as Community Captain and gained feedback from her neighbors and their children about the idea of a trail that would lead out of the community and improve



access to bus stops serving desired routes, local businesses and recreation areas. Community members rallied around a wooded trail that had fallen into disrepair, but offered a direct route to desired locations. Williams also led countless walks around the trail and shared her vision for improvements. A survey of participants showed that not only did residents feel like they had a say in the trail design, making them more likely to use it, all of the neighbors also said that they would like to continue to participate in community projects in the future.

“The trail has brought a sense of warmth to children of Winton Hills, collectively giving them the sense that anything is possible, and they were to connect to long missed friends, family and a lost and hidden treasure history of the community.”

— Dazree Williams,
Community Captain

Sustaining Success

The completion of this project will include a professional set of design plans that the community can use to procure funding for the building phase of the trail project. The large base of community support for the project will help to ensure the project is not forgotten before funding is secured. Additionally, the community hopes to take on even more community improvement projects and continue the growth and revitalization of their neighborhood.

Your Involvement is Key

If you would like to get involved with the Winton Hills Trail Project please contact the Winton Hills Community Council at whcc4848@gmail.com or Ellen Berninger with the Creating Healthy Communities Program.



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Clark County

New Carlisle Creates Tobacco-Free Zones in Parks

Summary

To combat the hazards that smoking poses to community members and the environment, the City of New Carlisle partnered with the Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Program at the Clark County Combined Health District to create smoke-free zones throughout city parks and recreational areas. This environmental change provides healthy spaces that are free of tobacco litter, with clean air.

Challenge

The current smoking rate in Clark County is 20 percent. The City of New Carlisle is a rural community with a population of about 5,730 people. Within the city there are many parks, recreational facilities, and event pavilions, as well as

a 2.5 mile paved bike trail. The parks and trail are the only free outlet for physical activity. In June 2016, a litter clean-up project was conducted in Smith Park. The clean-up revealed more than 70 pieces of tobacco-related litter in the park. Tobacco-related litter is a danger to the environment, children and pets. Exposure to secondhand smoke can contribute to many long-term health issues.

Solution

The City of New Carlisle has implemented an ordinance prohibiting smoking within 20 feet of all playgrounds, concession and spectator areas, recreational facilities, bathrooms, swimming pools, open-air shelters, and venues. All smoke-free areas are marked by signs. Smoke-free policies can help to change community norms as well as protect community members from litter and secondhand smoke.

Results

New Carlisle made significant progress in its goal of becoming a healthier city. Smoke-free zones have been created in all playgrounds, concession and spectator areas, recreational facilities, swimming pools, open-air shelters, and event venues. Smoke-free signage has been placed in all designated areas and includes the city ordinance number. In October, another round of litter clean-up was conducted. This effort yielded very little evidence of smoking activity, with only six cigarette butts and six other tobacco-related materials. Creating increased awareness of tobacco use and the effect of secondhand smoke on people as well as the environment was crucial to New Carlisle's success in creating smoke-free zones in the city.



"We have noticed a significant reduction in the amount of tobacco-related waste as well as an increase in park usage. The citizens are noticing these changes and are sharing positive feedback with city officials."

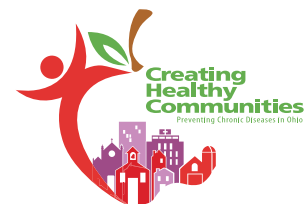
— Randy Bridge,
City Manager of New Carlisle

Sustaining Success

In the future, New Carlisle might consider extending its smoke-free zones to include entire parks. The Clark County CHC Program continues to inform residents about the benefits of smoke-free parks and promote compliance. It is New Carlisle's hope that these shifts towards smoke-free living will continue to improve the health of its residents.

Your Involvement is Key

Smoke-free parks, recreational facilities and green spaces are essential to a healthy environment. You can help keep the environment clean and healthy by coordinating a litter clean-up along a trail segment or in a local park and by living smoke-free. You can also help encourage smoke-free parks by educating residents on the benefits of smoke-free public spaces. Join the Clark County Creating Healthy Communities Coalition and learn more about how you can get directly involved with this important effort locally. For more information on joining the coalition, contact Elle Evans Peterson, Coordinator for the CHC program, at Clark County Combined Health District: eevans@ccchd.com



Contact:

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Clark County Combined Health District
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Columbus

Homeport Supports Healthy Living through Smoke-Free Housing

Summary

Smoking and tobacco use contribute significantly to chronic disease in the Linden, South Side, and Westside communities of Columbus. Residents of affordable housing are more at risk because of higher rates of smoking among low-income populations and decreased ability to move if affected by secondhand smoke (SHS). Through a partnership between Homeport and Columbus Public Health's Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Program, smoke-free policies have been implemented in all Homeport properties throughout Columbus.

Challenge

According to the research article, *Predictors of Smoke-Free Policies in Affordable Multi-Unit Housing*, SHS exposure is of particular concern in multi-unit housing (MUH), where SHS can easily travel between

units. Unfortunately, almost half of MUH residents with personal smoke-free home rules still experience SHS infiltration in their homes. Because many residents in affordable housing are children, elderly, or have a disability, they may experience more detrimental health effects due to SHS exposure (Stein, 2015)¹. In addition to residing in MUH, smoking and tobacco use contribute significantly to chronic disease in the Linden, South Side, and Westside communities of Columbus. These areas have the highest prevalence of smoking, with 35 percent of adults currently smoking in the South Side, 34 percent in Linden and 31 percent in the Westside, as compared to 22 percent in Franklin County overall (CDC, BRFSS, 2011-2014)². Tobacco use is a contributing factor to 4 out of 5 leading causes of death in these communities, thus people living in these areas are in need of smoke-free housing policies and resources to protect the most vulnerable population from SHS in their homes.

Solution

Homeport is a non-profit real estate company focused on affordable housing, homebuyer education, foreclosure prevention and financial counseling. It provides rental and for-purchase homes, access to out-of-school programming, service coordination for food and furniture, and connections to emergency assistance for rent and utilities. Homeport partnered with Columbus Public Health in developing and implementing a smoke-free policy for its properties. As part of their implementation plan, residents have a 90 day on-boarding process, which includes resident meetings where Columbus Public Health comes on site to explain the importance of smoke-free living, answer questions, address concerns, and link residents to cessation services if needed. Homeport utilizes a warning and "three strikes" enforcement process before an eviction is ever issued. Homeport social



workers are also available for residents who need additional resources and support to quit smoking and adhere to the smoke-free policy.

Results

Homeport now has 16 properties that have successfully implemented the 100 percent smoke-free policy, impacting more than 1500 single and multi-family homes. Specifically in Linden, South Side and Westside, four properties have implemented the smoke-free policy, impacting 196 housing units and more than 470 residents. Rachel Eiland, a resident of Homeport, is a former long-time smoker who had the upper portion of her left lung removed following cancer. After the adoption of the policy she said she could notice the air was cleaner and that she felt at ease knowing that she would no longer be impacted by SHS while at home. Rachel is five years smoke free and cancer free; with the support of the smoke-free policy, she plans to keep it that way. The smoke-free policy also persuaded Waymond Williams, a.k.a. "Friendly," also a Homeport resident, to quit smoking "cold turkey," following 33 years of smoking. He had a two pack a day habit and decided he was not going to let smoking get in his way of living in his home.

"To see people embrace the change has been very encouraging... It's been more positive than negative. The smokers say, 'Maybe this is the time to stop.'"

— Brenda Moncrief,
Asset Management Service
Manager, Homeport

Sustaining Success

In November 2016, The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released a ruling requiring all federally funded housing to go smoke-free. The ruling allows public housing authorities 18 months to implement smoke-free policies. The goal of the ruling is to ensure that all public housing residents are equally protected from SHS.

Columbus CHC and its partners through the Tobacco Free Collaborative, a network of organizations, businesses, and individuals focused on building support for tobacco prevention and control in Columbus, will continue to provide technical assistance to property owners, managers, and residents implementing smoke free housing policies in support of the recent HUD ruling.

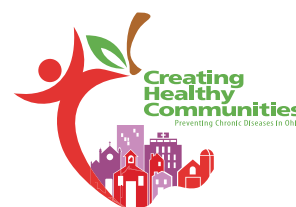
Through partnerships and collaborations, CHC will support residents to successfully uphold the smoke free housing policies and avoid violations and eviction, by providing tools and cessation resources. It is CHC's goal to support all residents, those who smoke and those who do not, throughout the entire process by creating a supportive atmosphere that will protect health and improve lives.

Your Involvement is Key

Are you interested in getting involved with these initiatives or learning more about the CHC program at Columbus Public Health? Would you like to join the Tobacco-Free Collaborative? Please contact Amber Jones at acjones@columbus.gov for more information.

¹Stein, Anna. "Predictors of Smoke-Free Policies in Affordable Multiunit Housing, North Carolina, 2013." Center for Disease Control and Prevention. May 14, 2015. https://www.cdc.gov/pccd/issues/2015/14_0506.htm

²Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2011-2014. Analysis by Office of Epidemiology, Columbus Public Health.



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Cuyahoga County

New Grocery Store Provides Healthy Food and Jobs in Euclid

Summary

Thanks to the collaboration among Simon's Supermarket, the Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Program, the City of Euclid, and the Healthy Food for Ohio (HFFO) Program, residents in Euclid, Ohio have a new supermarket. Simon's Supermarket, Simon Hussain's third Cleveland area grocery store, is offering fresh, healthy foods at affordable prices in a neighborhood once classified as a "food desert".

Challenge

More than 13,000 residents in Euclid were living in a food desert, according to a 2012 analysis of food access in Cuyahoga County. The highest density of people living in a food desert in Euclid were along the Euclid Avenue corridor in

the south side of the community. Many people living in the area are people of color or seniors, have limited income, and lack transportation. For several years, the CHC program has worked with residents to improve healthy food access, with the long term goal of opening a new supermarket. In December 2015, the City of Euclid Planning Department notified the CHC program that a commercial property had recently been purchased and the owner was interested in developing a full service supermarket. The owner was facing unexpected costs and needed additional financing in order to implement the project.

Solution

The CHC program collaborated with local residents, the City of Euclid, and Hussain to submit an application

to the HFFO program to help cover in-store construction costs. The HFFO program provides funding support to increase supermarkets in low-income communities across Ohio. Residents and leaders of the City of Euclid, including Ward 3 City Councilperson Taneika Hill, and the CHC program worked together to develop local legislation to dedicate \$125,000 to Simon's Supermarket. From Euclid's Housing and Urban Development (HUD) storefront renovation program, the funding assisted Simon's Supermarket with necessary exterior repairs. Prior to the opening of Simon's Supermarket, residents attended three community forums to share concerns and priorities with regards to food access. More than 100 people joined a Q&A forum and store tour with the store owner.



"Everyone should have access to healthy and fresh food for their families no matter their economic situation.

Many of us take something like eating an apple or having fresh carrots and corn for granted. Fresh fruits and vegetables can improve their physical health, which can lower health care costs putting more money back into their pockets.

The people deserve it and I am glad to be part of such a movement."

-Taneika Hill, Euclid City Council

Results

Simon's Supermarket opened its 27,000 square foot renovated full-service store in December 2016. The store received a \$250,000 grant and \$400,000 loan from the HFFO program, and \$125,000 from the City of Euclid's storefront renovation program. The store employs approximately 60 people – most of whom are residents from the neighborhood. The newly renovated store boasts a 100 foot fresh produce section and 230 feet of cooler space for dairy, fresh meat and deli meats. The store mails out weekly circular

advertisements to promote special sale prices and accepts many forms of payments including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP, which provides benefits to low-income individuals and families.

Sustaining Success

Simon's Supermarket opened for business in December 2016 and will host a grand opening celebration for the community in early 2017. Mr. Hussain is very committed to a positive relationship with the community. Starting in January of 2017, the store will be participating in the WIC program, which provides benefits to low-income women, infants, and children. Simon's Supermarket will continue to offer weekly specials and mail circular advertisements to neighbors within a two-mile radius, so that residents are able to take advantage of cost savings. Simon's also offers free delivery (minimum purchase required) which may be helpful to people who have mobility issues. The CHC program will assist with promotion of these services and continue to meet with Mr. Hussain and local community residents to support Simon's achievement of long term success.

Your Involvement is Key

Mr. Hussain is committed to providing Euclid residents with fresh foods at affordable prices. Residents are encouraged to support the store by frequenting Simon's and letting friends and family members know about it. Contact Roger Sikes if you would like to get involved with healthy food access programming related to Simon's Supermarket or other food access initiatives in the area.



Contact:

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Delaware County

Village of Ashley Children Enjoy New Playground

Summary

The Buckeye Valley Local School District (BVLSD) developed a walking path for students, teachers, families and residents to encourage more physical activity. This half mile path includes four different fitness stations, benches and unique scenery. The hope for this path is to unify efforts and connect the district with the community.

Challenge

Obesity continues to be a top health risk in Delaware County. According to the 2013 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Delaware County's adult

population is 61 percent overweight and/or obese. The obesity rate of Delaware County 3rd graders was 25.7 percent according to a 2009-2010 BMI survey. In Oxford Township only 75.9 percent of adults get 30 minutes of physical activity a day compared to 87 percent in the county. Increasing access to physical activity is one strategy to help decrease the prevalence of overweight and obesity. Additionally, the Buckeye Valley Local School District, which services residents in Oxford Township, covers a 200 square mile catchment area across the top half of Delaware County. This creates an interesting challenge when it comes to creating a sense of community in the district that lacks a central town to call their own.

Solution

The Buckeye Valley Middle and High Schools share a campus in the district; students in both schools use the grounds for practice and games. The cross country team has stomped out the half mile path around the practice fields behind the middle school and a local resident recently donated more than enough mulch to cover it. Through collaboration with the Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program at the Delaware General Health District (DGHD), work was contracted and the path was completed in December 2016.



"I want to thank the BVLSD central office, the Delaware General Health District, and Mike Kelley for their team effort to provide a healthy resource for the students and the Buckeye Valley community as well as for the citizens of Delaware County."

— Brian Baker,
Principal at Buckeye Valley
Middle School

Results

The completion of the path has inspired many programs at the middle and high schools to incorporate this resource into their curriculum. The physical education department is planning to utilize the path in their classes by walking and using the resistance training units. The path is also now part of the cross country team's 3.1 mile competition course. The middle school has utilized the path for their annual fundraiser, the Color Run, which helps students in 5th to 8th grade raise money to attend the annual 8th grade trip to Washington, D.C. The soccer and baseball teams will also use the path for training during their seasons.

Additionally, the special education class plans to take advantage of the path for therapy, exercise and the benefits of fresh air.

Sustaining Success

In the short term, the path will benefit students and families in the district by providing a space for physical activity. The middle school principal, Brian Baker, and other school leaders hope that every community member will see this as a resource to use and continue to support the great efforts of the district. To ensure continued growth and use of the newly developed path, communicating the availability of the path is the next project for the school system and the CHC program. Since the path was recently completed in December 2016, efforts will still need to be made to share this asset with the community, which will include a ribbon cutting ceremony in the spring.

Your Involvement is Key

Many communities and school districts are encouraging physical activity options for their residents. Get involved by supporting your local community or school districts efforts to increase physical activity. You can strengthen efforts of ongoing projects to create a healthier lifestyle in your community. Join the Delaware County CHC Coalition.

*Courtesy of Buckeye Valley Middle School
Landon Froehlich, 10 year old 5th grader at
Buckeye Valley Middle School, quickly poses for
a photo during the Color Run Fundraiser on the
path.*



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Knox County

Working Mothers Reap Benefits of Workplace Lactation Programs

Summary

Collaboration between the Danville Local School District and the Knox County Health Department's Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Program is providing a supportive environment and policy-driven program to enable breastfeeding employees to return to work with ease and reach their infant feeding goals. The program is helping to build a culture that promotes breastfeeding, improves the health of babies and moms and lays the foundation for reducing obesity in Knox County.

Challenge

Obesity continues to be a health concern for the residents of Knox County. According to the 2016 County Health Rankings, approximately 34 percent of Knox County adults are obese. The

World Health Organization states that breastfeeding appears to provide infants some level of protection against overweight and obesity later in life. Data from the CDC's *2016 Breastfeeding Report Card* shows that while breastfeeding rates have continued to rise, many mothers are not meeting the recommendations for breastfeeding. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and continued breastfeeding for at least 12 months. Employment can present challenges to breastfeeding, with some mothers returning to work as early as six weeks postpartum. Despite requirements through the Fair Labor Standards Act for employers to provide reasonable break time and a private place for an employee to express breast milk, lower rates of continued breastfeeding suggest that many mothers still lack the breastfeeding support that they need.

Solution

To support breastfeeding, the Danville Local School District has adopted a lactation policy and created a lactation room where mothers can comfortably express and store breastmilk. Working with the Knox County Health Department's CHC Program, the school renovated an existing staff bathroom into a quiet and private room. Staff are provided flexible break times and information and resources to help them balance breastfeeding with their job responsibilities. As a result, mothers are modeling best feeding practices to other school families, thus building a culture that promotes breastfeeding as the norm for Danville residents.



"I plan to use the lactation room in the future. I love the support to be both a mom and a working woman at the same time!"

— Danville Elementary
School Teacher

Results

The Danville Local School District is considered a community champion for working moms who are breastfeeding. The lactation room was put to use by two employees within just a couple months of availability. Employee surveys show support for this policy and environmental change. One staff member stated that they wished the room was available when she had her children. Research shows that providing a lactation support program is not only highly desired by breastfeeding employees who return to work after childbirth, but it can also save a company money in healthcare costs and reduce employee turnover and absenteeism rates. The Danville Local School District's investment goes beyond the importance of breastfeeding and staff support: it is an investment in the health of the community.

Sustaining Success

Women with children are the fastest-growing segment of the work force, and balancing work and family is an important priority for them. Implementation of lactation support programs in the workplace can encourage mothers to continue breastfeeding once they return to work. The Knox County Health Department's CHC Program will use the Danville Local School District's lactation policy as a model for other worksites throughout the county and encourage them to develop similar programs.

Your Involvement is Key

- Help to build a workplace culture that normalizes lactation support as an accepted part of work-life balance.
- Gain knowledge of resources available for breastfeeding moms within your community. Share them with your co-workers who are expecting.
- Communicate support for policies that provide flexible breaks and a clean quiet area for moms to express milk.



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Licking County

Licking County SNAP Customers Enjoy Local Produce

Summary

Thanks to the collaboration of the City of Newark, the Thomas J. Evans Foundation, the Canal Market District and Enterprise Hub, Licking County Job and Family Services, and the Licking County Health Department, the Canal Market District (CMD) in downtown Newark was constructed. Residents now have access to affordable, local, fresh foods by using their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) dollars at the Canal Market District. In 2016, more than 165 people used SNAP at the market to purchase local foods, while putting more than \$7,200 back into the local economy.

Challenge

Low-income residents in downtown and South Newark lack adequate access to affordable, healthy foods. According to the American Community Survey, 38.7 percent of residents living in this area receive SNAP benefits, and up to 53 percent of households in these census tracts have no vehicle. A significant number of low-income residents are more than half a mile from the only grocery store in downtown Newark according to the USDA Food Access Research Atlas. None of the existing farmers' markets in Licking County accepted SNAP. Community members also felt farmers' markets were elitist and were not welcoming of low-income residents.

Solution

The Canal Market District (CMD) farmers' market director and Denison University students engaged residents, farmers/vendors, and community-based organizations through focus groups, discussions, and surveys. These conversations identified the need to address limited access to healthy food for low-income residents by adding SNAP acceptance at the CMD farmers' market. More than 3,500 farmers' markets across the United States accept SNAP, including many in Ohio. In partnership with the Licking County Health Department's Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program, the market obtained a point-of-sale terminal and tokens needed to accept SNAP payments. CMD and CHC staff held a training to educate vendors on the importance of the SNAP program to the community and the benefits of



accepting SNAP as well as USDA rules/regulations. The CMD hired a food access assistant to act as a community liaison, educating residents about the program and encouraging them to shop at the market. In partnership with Licking County Job and Family Services, direct mail postcards were sent to every SNAP household in the county. The marketing campaign also used billboards, radio advertisements, social media and word-of-mouth to educate residents about the SNAP program at CMD.

“SNAP customers shouldn’t be forced to only purchase cheaply made products and should be able to vote with their dollar for the most ethical food choices.”

*— Canal Market District
SNAP customer*

Results

In 2016, CMD became the first farmers’ market in Licking County to accept SNAP. Residents spent their SNAP dollars at the farmers’ market to purchase fresh, local food at an affordable price. With 393 total SNAP transactions throughout the market season, many SNAP customers visited the market more than once. Throughout the 2016 inaugural market season, more than \$5,800 in SNAP was spent at CMD. Fruits and vegetables were the most purchased items. Survey

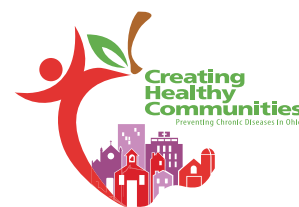
responses indicate that SNAP customers increased their consumption of fruits and vegetables by 6-8 servings per week. In September and October, residents had the opportunity to double their SNAP dollars spent on produce through the Central Ohio Veggie SNAPS program. More than \$1,400 in Veggie SNAPS were redeemed by customers in those two months. Low-income residents can now purchase local, fresh foods previously unavailable to them. When two mothers were asked why they bought food at the farmers’ market instead of the grocery store, they said, “We can get in season produce cheaper here and it stays fresh much longer than food bought at the grocery store.”

Sustaining Success

The Canal Market District’s goal is to reach 250 SNAP customers in 2017, with more than \$8,500 in SNAP dollars redeemed. The Veggie SNAPS program will be implemented throughout the entire 2017 market season to encourage more residents to spend their SNAP dollars at the market. Eventually, there will be a plan to address transportation barriers through community engagement and meeting with transportation officials.

Your Involvement is Key

You can help increase access to affordable, fresh, local foods. Find out if your community farmers’ market accepts SNAP. Visit your local farmers’ market and help spread the word about markets in your community. Join the Licking County Wellness Coalition to support access to healthy foods for all residents.



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Lorain County Lorain Partners "Stepping" Toward Positive Change

Summary

In 2015, Lorain citizens, officials, and community organizations joined to form Live Healthy Lorain (LHL) Partners, a group that evaluates and creates plans to address community health in Lorain. The Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program at the Lorain County General Health District facilitates LHL partner meetings. These meetings provided a forum to plan for park enhancements that promote physical activity and provide access to drinking water at Black River Landing. By the summer of 2016, more than 9,000 people living within one mile of the area were able to enjoy the park and exercise in a safe and appealing space.

Challenge

Among the adult population in the City of Lorain, 29 percent are obese and 39

percent are overweight, according to the Lorain County Community Health Assessment (CHA). Lorain City faces high poverty rates (28 percent vs. 10 percent county wide) and its citizens are faced with difficult social factors that make healthy lifestyles more difficult to achieve. LHL coalition meetings have revealed that in addition to economic reasons, safety concerns and connectivity issues also hindered outdoor physical activity and traveling throughout the community by cycling, running, or walking. Research supports that the lack of safe and attractive places to be active is a barrier to regular exercise. The Lorain CHA revealed that one out of five (21 percent) Lorain County adults did not exercise or participate in physical activity in the past week. Inactivity leads to unhealthy weight status and an increased likelihood of chronic health issues for Lorain residents.

Solution

LHL completed the Community Health Assessment and Group Evaluation (CHANGE) tool in 2015, which assessed Lorain City schools, worksites, community organizations, and the city as a whole through interviews, community conversations, and photos. It was determined that a community recreation space with adequate lighting, potable water and distance markers would help to address some of the concerns around attractive spaces for physical activity. The Lorain Port Authority (LPA) emerged as a unique partner with an existing, multi-purpose green space called Black River Landing. Through CHC funds and leveraged resources, the site was upgraded with walking routes, a filtered water station and way-finding signs. The new signs show distance and travel time of safe walkable routes, and also directs users to nearby park destinations along

the lake front. The hydration station provides a free, healthy alternative to sugary drinks, reminding visitors to choose *Water First for Thirst*.

Results

The LPA leveraged more than \$2,000, by covering all installation costs of the hydration station, signs, and fees for event space such as concerts and 5Ks at Black River Landing. Summer events drew crowds of more than 1,000, and park enhancements were highlighted on the event stage through local media, by LHL partners on social media, and printed flyers. Surveys obtained at the events showed that families now come to the park to exercise more often. Observational data tracked by the LPA staff showed an average of 25-30 day-time pedestrians on site, viewing walking maps and walking on the paths. About 25 percent of visitors with pets frequented the new hydration station and attached pet dish. The initiative inspired the LPA to fix all of their water fountains, which were not working prior to installation of the hydration station. Enhancements improved perceptions of the area as a safe, welcoming and family friendly place to be active outside.

Sustaining Success

The CHANGE assessment revealed further community improvements that could be made to encourage healthier lifestyles in Lorain County residents. In addition, the assessment poised the community to plan solutions to the identified health challenges and has also helped to preserve buy-in for future community

health plans. Due to transportation barriers identified in Lorain, LHL partners are now focusing on promoting walking and biking initiatives in the school and community. The team will address how bike and pedestrian master plans can improve connectivity, safety and economic development to move the needle on the community's health. Way-finding signs at Black River Landing is one strategy that can be duplicated in other parts of the community to highlight connectivity and places to exercise.

"I exercise and can tell a difference in the amount of people who come out to Black River Landing. My parents live nearby and come up to walk. It's great to highlight what Lorain already has available and make it better so more people like my parents can benefit."

— Stacy Santiago, Lorain resident

Your Involvement is Key

Join Live Healthy Lorain Partners. Become a voice for your community, help identify needs, and be part of the solution. Let's work together to make the *healthy choice* the *easier choice* in the city of Lorain!



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Lucas County

Bike Parking Increases Physical Activity Participation at South Toledo Community Center

Summary

The collaboration between the CHC program, the Believe Center, and We Are Traffic, provided bike infrastructure allowing the opportunity to increase physical activity to more than 1,400 youth in South Toledo. Survey results indicated that with a secure location for bike parking, more youth are increasing physical activity by biking to and from the center to participate in planned activities. The bike racks have had a positive impact on this South Toledo community where bicycles are a main mode of transportation for youth.

Challenge

Childhood obesity has been an ongoing concern for the state of Ohio. According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation,

30.8 percent of Ohio youth ages 10-17 are overweight or obese with Ohio ranking 24 out of 51. Childhood obesity can lead to chronic health conditions later in life such as asthma, sleep apnea, Type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Increasing physical activity is essential in preventing obesity so it is important to have infrastructure that supports those who wish to, or need to, bike or walk to their destinations. Many families in underserved areas lack access to cars, which may leave bicycles as the only means of transportation. Installing bike racks at key destinations helps to provide a safe place to secure bikes and promote physical activity.

Solution

Lucas County Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) coalition brought together community stakeholders

to determine the need for bike infrastructure for underserved youth in Lucas County. Through a partnership with We Are Traffic, a non-profit bicycling advocacy group, South Toledo's Believe Center was identified as a prime location. The Believe Center is a community organization that promotes youth sports programs, education, and other activities to approximately 1,400 youth per year. A survey of all youth participating at the center indicated a high need for secure bike parking and bike safety education. To fulfill these needs, CHC worked with We Are Traffic to select bike racks and work with the Believe Center to coordinate a bike-fix-it event. As a result of the collaboration, two bike racks were installed as well as a bike-fix-it event that included bike repairs by Toledo Bikes, educational materials, a bike-safety game and helmet fittings by Safe Kids Greater Toledo.



Results

The installation of bike rack infrastructure at the Believe Center has been beneficial. A post survey of youth at the center indicated that 56 percent of youth have used the bike racks since their installation. Results also have shown that installing bike racks has had a significant influence (92 percent) on whether or not youth will ride their bike to the center for activities. Furthermore, observations of bike rack usage during the fall season show that the majority of youth participating in football use bicycles as their main mode of transportation to and from practice. After bike racks were installed, it was also discovered that there was an unforeseen need for bike locks in order to best utilize the bike racks. As a result, the Believe Center is now providing bike locks for youth to borrow when securing their bikes.

"The Believe Center has benefited from the bike racks because more kids are coming to activities since they have a safe place to park their bikes."

*— Tonya Duran, Director
of The Believe Center*

Sustaining Success

CHC will continue to partner with the local active transportation planning groups of the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments, the City of Toledo, City of Oregon, Toledo Biking Coalition, and We Are Traffic to expand active transportation opportunities. Work will continue in 2017 to increase access to physical activity via promotion of Complete Streets policies, improving and expanding biking/walking trails, providing Share the Road education opportunities for safe biking and walking, and increasing bike infrastructure in underserved areas to make Lucas County a bike friendly community.

Your Involvement is Key

- Participate – Get on the road and join your local biking coalition
- Connect – Help connect local needs with local resources. Visit <https://wearetraffic.org/>
- Encourage – Follow www.facebook.com/yourmoveohio



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Marion County

Bridging the Gap of Food Insecurity through Inclusivity

Summary

Individual health is more than just individual choice and behavior. Many influences impact a person's health, such as safe neighborhoods, access to employment, education and healthcare, as well as affordable healthy food access and safe spaces to be physically active. It is essential to use a multi-sector approach to improve community health because the health of an individual and the community at large has so many variables. The Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) coalition is utilizing a collective community inclusion strategy to tackle one of our largest known health disparities.

Challenge

Marion County has many challenges when it comes to healthy eating. First, according to the 2015 Marion County

Health Assessment (CHA), 76 percent of adults and 85 percent of youth reported eating fewer than the recommended five servings of fruits/vegetables. Second is that Marion received a 5.8 rating in 2015 on the RWJF Food Environment Index which is a rating range from 0 (worst) to 10 (best) weighing limited access to healthy food and food insecurity together as indicators of the food environment. . Third, there are many residents living below the federal poverty level, which according to U.S. Census Bureau includes 37 percent of west-side residents and nearly 48 percent of north-end residents. Additionally, the CHA identifies approximately 17.4 percent of Marion County's population as having a disability, who as reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), suffer from higher rates of obesity and other health factors. With all this information in mind and community inclusion as a goal, local partners joined together to increase healthy food access,

remove transportation barriers, reduce food insecurity and integrate those living with disabilities into a community-wide solution.

Solution

In an effort to mitigate health inequities that exist in our community, a multi-disciplinary approach was developed to address one of our community's largest health disparities: access to healthy and affordable foods. This can be a challenge due to several factors, which include transportation, location of food retailers, financial constraints, and the additional challenges of those living with chronic disease and disability.

A community inclusion strategy was developed to address these issues. In October 2016, Marion County launched its first mobile produce pantry. Based on community data and supported by



the United States Dairy Association's Food Access Research Map, distribution sites were selected based on locations that would positively impact those most adversely affected by poor health outcomes. The mobile produce market not only serves to improve food access in the community, but also provides community volunteer- and work-related skill development opportunities for individuals living with disabilities.

Results

Initial data suggests that this system change is impacting more than a 100 families on a bi-weekly basis, including 25 individuals living with disabilities. Beyond that, improved healthy food access is the secondary goal of community inclusion for individuals with disabilities. This strategic alignment of resources and assets is helping to assure that individuals with disabilities are provided work skills that aid in future employment and volunteer opportunities. While this program is still in the infancy and pilot stages, there are already many favorable responses. In one month, participation has grown by more than 50 percent and high worker satisfaction with individuals living with disabilities is noted by repeat work experience. Furthermore, improved geographic availability of healthy food options to underserved and vulnerable populations has improved. In addition, the CHC coalition is working on providing training and resources to coalition members so they can also implement strategies supportive of individuals living with disabilities. This work is being done by providing training, resources, and the adoption of an inclusion policy.

Sustaining Success

The establishment of this mobile produce pantry is a step towards improving food

insecurity in Marion County. However, this short term solution is part of a much larger, more comprehensive food plan and community-wide commitment to community inclusion envisioned by the CHC Program. Partnering with the Marion County Board of Developmental Disabilities (DD) has allowed the CHC coalition to strategize additional sustainability inclusive solutions to further address access to healthy food and physical activity for our community. The Marion County Board of DD seeks volunteer and skill training opportunities that foster community inclusion.

Your Involvement is Key

Communities can start with small improvements to improve inclusivity. These accommodations can lead to big changes over time.

- Actively recruit people with disabilities, family members and other disability advocates to be represented and/or to provide consultation as appropriate.
- Convene meetings and hold activities in facilities and areas that are accessible for people with disabilities.
- Ensure publications and marketing efforts depict a diverse population of participants in coalition activities, including people with disabilities
- Educate and advocate to other community leaders on inclusion strategies, along with information on disability, accessibility and health disparities experienced by people with disabilities.
- Encourage other organizations to adopt similar commitments and/or present educational information at their representative organizations and other committees.



"The community partnerships to put this together have been amazing."

— Jessica Trainer, Director of Human Resources, Marion County Board of Developmental Disabilities



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Meigs County Making a Splash in Middleport

Summary

Accessing physical activity opportunities close to home is a challenge for many Meigs County families. A recent focus group reported that Meigs County residents have little to no recreational opportunities that are free and open to the public. As a result, the Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) coalition has been working to improve the parks and playground spaces throughout Meigs County. More specifically, a splash park was implemented in Middleport at the location of the previous Middleport pool, bringing new life to Hartinger Park.

Challenge

As reported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings, Meigs County scored a 33 percent in access to exercise opportunities. Access is defined as living within a half mile radius of a park or playground or in a three mile radius of a recreational facility. Lack of access to recreational opportunities in Meigs County was also reported in the 2015 Community Health Assessment as a need. When surveyed, participants were asked to indicate the number of outdoor recreation in the community; more than two-thirds of respondents reported that there were only "a few" or "none." The few existing areas for recreation throughout the county are in poor condition and in need of repair.

In Middleport, Hartinger Park previously had an above-ground public pool, but

because of the cost of maintenance and repair, the pool was left unused for more than a decade. The pool was eventually demolished, but not without an uproar in the community. Even though the pool was not in operation, the community felt a sense of hopelessness when it was destroyed.

Solution

The Meigs County CHC Coalition identified a splash park as a unique way to increase access to recreation opportunities that are free and open to the public. Additionally, the splash park would be located in the place of the previously demolished pool at Hartinger Park, giving residents of all ages a place to play and cool off during the hot summer days.



Through teamwork and consistent effort, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds were identified as partner funds for the Splash Park. The county commissioners re-allocated the unspent funds, received approval, and the project took on a quick construction timeline.

As soon as the funds were identified to purchase the splash park, David Williams and Associates was contracted to build the park.

Results

Construction of the park was finished on July 27 and news of the newly constructed park spread quickly. On opening day, the original Facebook post on the Meigs County Commissioners page was shared 199 times. The splash park was a huge success. Upon observation, at any given time approximately 15-20 kids, ranging from 1 year old's to young teenagers, could be seen playing at the park. Parents were also seen enjoying the park and playing alongside their children. After gaining attention, residents from the neighboring counties of Gallia, Ohio and Mason, West Virginia called to inquire about the process of getting a splash park in their own community.

"This is a great place for family and friends to spend some fun times! Thank you for all the hard work to make this happen."

— Community Member

Sustaining Success

The implementation of the Middleport Splash Park brought new excitement to the Village. As a result, Middleport Village Council appointed a new parks and recreation committee. The goal of the committee is to continue to develop existing and new parks and playgrounds, and maintain the current parks and playground equipment to a satisfactory standard.

The Splash Park will be opened on May 15-September 15, 2017 from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. The CHC program is helping the Village of Racine plan and build a splash park at Star Mill Park, with a tentative completion date of summer 2018 because of the overwhelming success in Middleport.

Your Involvement is Key

- Get out and be active! Engage in 30 minutes or more physical activity every day.
- Become a member! Join the Creating Healthy Communities Coalition to make the healthier choice the easy choice.
- Advocate for health! Discuss with your community ways to improve health and take action.
- Like the Meigs County (Ohio) Health Department on Facebook for updates and happenings around the county.



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Montgomery County

Produce Perks Helps Montgomery County Families Eat Healthy

Summary

In an effort to increase the availability of affordable, healthy foods in Montgomery County, the Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program partnered with two farmers' markets to initiate Produce Perks. Modeled after programs in Cincinnati and Cleveland, the program provides a dollar-for-dollar match to food assistance recipients at participating farmers' markets. To date, Produce Perks has provided more than \$7,000 in incentives for families to purchase healthy foods. Through strategic partnerships with community organizations such as Homefull Solutions and Green Umbrella, CHC hopes to expand the program in 2017 and beyond.

Challenge

Throughout Montgomery County, there is a high demand for affordable, healthy food options. Many neighborhoods are considered food deserts, as residents live further than one mile from the nearest grocery store. According to the 2014 Montgomery County Community Health Assessment, 24 percent of adults in Montgomery County are eating less than one serving of vegetables per day. Additionally, 41 percent consume less than one serving of fruit each day. A healthy diet that includes fruits and vegetables can help prevent obesity in children and adults, as well as decrease the risk of chronic diseases such as cancer, type 2 diabetes and heart disease. The challenge of consuming healthy foods is in large part attributed to issues of accessibility and affordability.

Solution

In 2016, CHC identified the Market at Wright Stop Plaza and the Shiloh Farmers' Market as pilot sites for Montgomery County's Produce Perks program. The goal of Produce Perks is to increase access and affordability of healthy fruits and vegetables for underserved residents. Modeled after programs in Cincinnati and Cleveland, the program provides a dollar-for-dollar match (up to ten dollars per day) to food-assistance recipients at participating farmers' markets. The initiative is made possible through the partnership between both markets and other community stakeholders, including Montgomery County's CHC Coalition, Green Umbrella, and Homefull Solutions. Produce Perks strengthens the food security system in Montgomery County by ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce gets into low-income households where it is needed most.



Results

Two Montgomery County markets have increased access to locally grown produce by promoting and offering Produce Perks because of this initiative. The Market at Wright Stop Plaza is located in the heart of downtown Dayton at the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) Main Transit Center. Open from May through December, this location is very convenient for local residents, employees of downtown businesses and bus riders who can dash in for a basket of produce before walking home or transferring buses. The Shiloh Farmers' Market provides an additional access point, offering Produce Perks from May through October. The Produce Perks program has provided more than \$7,000 in incentives for families to purchase healthy foods. Both markets have experienced an increase in new customers, Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) sales (food assistance dollars), and total market sales.

Sustaining Success

A Produce Perks sustainability plan is being developed; several of its key elements will need to be implemented in 2017 and beyond. In 2016, the markets received exposure in the local media that helped strengthen connections within the community and built networks for future sustainability. Securing funding for ongoing Produce Perks operations is a challenge. Though strategic partnerships, CHC hopes to establish a structure for securing additional Produce Perks funding and to expand the program to include all Montgomery County farmers' markets.

"The WIC program referred me to the Shiloh Farmers Market.

While at the market, I used my EBT card to buy apples, grapes and strawberries for me and my two-year-old daughter. The EBT clerk at the market was so nice, she informed me about the Produce Perks Program, and I really like the incentive.

My daughter and I visit the market every Saturday."

— Pamela Heard
Montgomery County Resident

Your Involvement is Key

You can help improve the neighborhood's built environment, increase access to healthy foods, and make a positive contribution to your community by joining the Creating Healthy Communities Coalition. Visit www.phdmc.org to learn more about Produce Perks and the Montgomery County Creating Healthy Communities program.



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Perry County

Mt. Aloysius Opens its Doors to the Community and Gardening

Summary

Perry County, an Appalachian county located in rural southeastern Ohio, is considered a food desert. Access to healthy food is limited due to distance and economic disparity. Residents experience high rates of obesity and cardiovascular disease. Through a partnership between Mount Aloysius, a private live-in facility for adult men with developmental disabilities, and the Perry County Health Department's Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Program, the community was invited to grow healthy food for their families and their neighbors in a newly-created community garden.

Challenge

Data collected from the Perry County Community Health Assessment indicates that only five percent of Perry County residents consume the recommended number of fruits and vegetables.

Solution

Mount Aloysius expressed interest in a partnership with CHC to develop the community garden on its grounds. The property already had a greenhouse and many acres of green space. Plans for 2016 included an 83 foot by 86 foot garden area consisting of eight raised garden beds and seven in-ground beds. Water,

soil and fencing were provided and are maintained by the facility. The project director for Mount Aloysius provided gardening experience as an experienced horticulturalist as well as passion for community engagement.

Results

Twenty-eight gardeners (ages 27-70), participated during the 2016 growing season raising nine different varieties of vegetables and 20 varieties of plants and herbs. Community partners included the New Lexington High School Future Farmers of America, Hocking College, Evolutions and the Village of New Lexington Tree Commission.



"The partnership between the CHC project and Mount Aloysius is such an excellent opportunity to increase the locally grown produce available to our residents. Being able to provide Perry County citizens with access to a greenhouse and community garden increases active living, fresh produce and will create an opportunity for intergenerational social engagement."

— Angela DeRolph

Sustaining Success

Plans to further develop the garden in 2017 include the adding seven gardening spots, an orchard with fruit trees and berry vines, providing educational classes taught by Perry County OSU Extension, and the installation of an "honor system" vegetable stand located at the entrance to the property. Conversations have begun with local school officials to bring youth and families to help with the gardening projects and learning experiences. Mount Aloysius staff are working with many community organizations to create a plan for continued support of the garden and orchard. Stanton Villa and Evolutions Treatment Centers residents are planning to maintain the community garden areas and the herb garden.

Your Involvement is Key

Are you interested in the local food movement, or do you have a passion for healthy living? Join the Perry Neighborhood Connection. We are working to connect our residents to resources and organizations that may have similar interests. The Perry Neighborhood Connection meets on the third Tuesday of every even numbered month. Contact the Perry County Health Department at 740-342-5179 for more information!



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Richland County

At the Intersection of Health and Education: The Story of the Green Peoplez

Summary

The Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) project, North End Community Improvement Collaborative (NECIC) and others have invested in the full development of the Blust Avenue Teaching Garden, located in the North End of Mansfield. This has become a vibrant site for fresh food production, garden-related learning programs, and a source of produce for the summer North End Farmers Market (NEFM). As such, it was a perfect site to host a youth garden club as part of the Real Opportunities for Achievement and Readiness (ROAR) mentoring program for students of the Mansfield City Schools. From the development of the youth garden club came a small team of market vendors who called themselves the Green Peoplez.

Challenge

For many children in Mansfield, educational and economic barriers put them at a disadvantage for lifelong health and wellness. The City of Mansfield has suffered in recent years from employment shifts, economic decline and neighborhood blight.

The Mansfield City Schools, serving the majority of students from the City, reflect that of the larger community. More than 84 percent of the students within this school system are from families facing economic challenges where food insecurity, jobs, housing and transportation are a daily struggle. The Mansfield City School district is considered to be a low performing district with four-year graduation rates below those of similar districts and the overall state average.

Solution

The NECIC received grant funding through the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) to establish a ROAR mentorship program for students of the Mansfield City Schools in grades 7-12. The goals of the ROAR program are aligned with ODE objectives to build positive futures and a sense of resiliency, to support character development and assist students in finding their pathway to achievement.

A youth garden club was developed as one of the mentoring opportunities for students and took advantage of the space and facilities of the Blust Avenue Teaching Garden. Students came to the garden weekly to learn all aspects of growing healthy foods, from seed to table. They were mentored to develop entrepreneurial and marketing skills. Students were given real life work experience as vendors at the NEFM.



Results

During the school year, the ROAR youth garden club engaged about 18 students. They arrived with varied interest in outdoor garden work, transportation and family challenges, and interpersonal-group conflicts. The garden experience, along with immediate gratification and excitement about growing food, quickly became a positive influence and helped the teens overcome behavioral and learning issues; it became a refuge and provided strong support for them. It also allowed garden club members hands-on learning and work experience away from family and school, and a break from the pull of technology. Teamwork and physical exertion provided an outlet for stress and isolation while promoting positive emotional health. Constant opportunities for healthy social interaction—such as between students and the general public at the Blust Garden and the NEFM—proved to build confidence, self-image, and improve social skills.

A committed group of four students continued working in the garden throughout the summer even though the ROAR program had ended. Naming themselves the “Green Peoplez” they became a strong group of exceptional market gardeners. They performed the physical effort of growing, tending, and harvesting vegetables; learned to prepare produce for market by weighing, keeping records, and pricing items; created their own market booth for the NEFM; and were present weekly to handle set-up, customer service and sales transactions.

Surveys and interviews completed with the Green Peoplez showed positive results from their experience. The youth increased their consumption of vegetables during their time in the garden. Most of their families benefited

as well from excess produce, which was distributed for the students to take home. All students reported forming new friendships and improving their social skills and emotional control through their work in the garden, gaining a sense of hopefulness about their futures.

Sustaining Success

ROAR will continue as a school-community partnership to engage, support, and enhance the community and educational experience of MCS students. The youth garden club will begin again in the early spring.

The Blust Avenue Teaching Garden will continue to offer space, programming and education for youth and adults in the community. It has been developed to near capacity and offers space for growing both fruits and vegetables.

Your Involvement is Key

Solutions to community problems can best be found in the community itself. The Blust Avenue Teaching Garden has grown to become a strong community asset, a driver for healthy food production and an avenue for increased fresh food access in the North End community. This space, as well as the local garden experts, are available to individuals, youth programs and others.

The ROAR mentoring program relies on the support and participation of mentors from the community. Investing in the growth and development of our youth can change the future for them and for our community. Each of us has something to offer a young person. To get involved, contact NECIC at 419-525-3101.



“We grow many things at the Blust Avenue Teaching Garden, but watching those students blossom into responsible young adults was our most satisfying crop.”

— Candace Harrell, Teaching Garden Coordinator, North End Community Improvement Collaborative



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Sandusky County

Sandusky County Rolls toward Active Transportation

Summary

Active modes of transportation such as walking and bicycling allow individuals to integrate physical activity into their daily routines. However, not all communities have the infrastructure or practices in place to support these users. From closing the streets off for a day to allow the community to engage in healthy physical activity for “Street Play Saturday” to initiating a county-wide active transportation plan, the Sandusky County Creating Healthy (CHC) Communities Program has taken several steps towards making active transportation safe, convenient, and viable for residents.

Challenge

Regular physical activity can reduce the burden of chronic disease. Despite the known benefits of being physically active, only 52 percent of Sandusky

County adults and 30 percent of youth are meeting the recommended physical activity guidelines¹. There are multiple barriers to being physically active in Sandusky County, including lack of time, lack of social support, and limited access to affordable and safe places to engage in physical activity. According to Federal Highway Data, 43 percent of all vehicle trips are for distances of three miles or less². Thus, there is a huge opportunity to increase physical activity by engaging in active modes of transportation, such as walking or biking. However, the proper infrastructure and practices need to be in place to support these active modes of travel. The Sandusky County CHC Program identified the need for active transportation support after administering a bicycle education survey. This survey found that one in three residents did not know bicyclists should ride with the flow of traffic.

Solution

Sandusky County CHC program implemented a “Share the Road” campaign to encourage active modes of transportation, educating both drivers and bicyclists on the rules of the road. In addition to this campaign, CHC partnered with the City of Fremont to improve bicycle infrastructure throughout priority neighborhoods by installing road signs that read, “Bikes May Use Full Lane.” This opened the door to then launch Northwest Ohio’s first open streets initiative called, “Street Play Saturday.” Street Play Saturday consisted of temporarily closing the streets to vehicle traffic and transforming them into a giant street park, allowing residents of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to engage in activities that improve their health.



Results

Street Play Saturday closed nearly one mile of the city's streets to provide free activities that were fun, educational and promoted social interaction. Participants were able to engage in a variety of physical activities including pickle ball, a youth obstacle course, riding bikes in the street, and learning about bike safety. Results from a survey administered throughout the event indicated that the average participant spent more than 70 minutes engaging in physical activities. This initiative led residents to begin thinking about alternative modes of transportation, with 95 percent of participants either agreeing or strongly agreeing that Street Play Saturday has encouraged them to support active transportation.

In addition to the 15 new bicycle signs obtained with CHC funding, the City of Fremont supported active transportation by designating a bike lane along the main street in the historic downtown district. Both of these improvements helped to increase awareness and eliminate barriers to engaging in active transportation and physical activity.

"The new bike signs and designated bike lane have made me feel more comfortable sharing the road with drivers. These additions have also been really helpful in keeping bikes off the sidewalk and on the road where drivers can see them more clearly."

— Mary Boda, Fremont resident

Sustaining Success

Following the active transportation initiatives carried out by the CHC program, several local engineers, city planners, law enforcement, elected officials, municipal decision makers, and other community leaders participated in a professional development ride hosted by "Yay Bikes!", a bicycle advocacy group out of Columbus, Ohio. This experience gave these professionals a clearer understanding of how they can better accommodate people who bicycle for transportation. This training then led to discussions initiating the development of an active transportation plan and policies that support Complete Streets. Sandusky County CHC is also planning two additional open streets initiatives, which will be integrated into the 2017 Downtown Fremont farmers markets.

Your Involvement is Key

You can help make walking and bicycling safe, convenient, and viable for residents of all ages and abilities by:

- Follow "Street Play Saturday" on Facebook to learn the safety guideline for drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians www.facebook.com/streetplaysaturday.
- Getting on the road by joining a local bike group and learn the rules of the road.
- Joining the Sandusky County CHC Coalition! Learn more about Sandusky County CHC by visiting us at <http://www.alwayschoosehealth.com/health-planning--chc>.
- Follow the statewide Your Move Initiative at <http://www.facebook.com/yourmoveohio>.

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¹Sandusky County Community Health Status Assessment, 2013

²Federal Highway Administration. 2009 National Household Travel Survey. <http://nhts.ornl.gov/>



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Stark County

A New Chapter for a Community Park

Summary

In 2015, Live Well Stark County (LWSC) coalition, in collaboration with the Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Program, designated walking routes within the northeast quadrant of Canton. As a part of the 2016 plan to improve physical activity opportunities, a walking route was extended to include a local park. That extension sparked the idea to repair the park at the end of the route. Cook's Lagoon is situated in the northeast quadrant of Canton, Ohio. This 3.72 acre park features a .25 mile walking trail surrounding a lagoon fed by the Nimishillen Creek. For years, many local families gathered to fish in the lagoon and picnic at the park.

Challenge

According to the County Health Rankings, 19 percent of county residents do not have access to adequate physical activity opportunities. 31 percent of Stark county residents are obese, while 36 percent are overweight (BRFSS, 2016). Lack of physical activity opportunities and low access to fresh produce contribute to chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes and heart disease. Furthermore, according to research, low-income, racial, and ethnic minority populations tend to have lower access to high-quality recreational facilities in their communities (Dannenburg, 2011). Low access to places for physical activity contribute to poor health outcomes in the northeast Canton community.

Throughout the years, Cook's Lagoon gained a bad reputation from litter,

vandalism, and overall disrepair and disinvestment. When speaking to a local neighborhood resident, she recalled not being allowed to play at Cook's Lagoon as a child due to her mother's concern for her safety. To make matters worse, the recreation center in the northeast neighborhood was closed, leaving children in the area without an adequate place to play and be active.

Solution

LWSC recognizes the importance of improving physical activity, especially in low-income neighborhoods. Enhancing or improving community environments that are supportive of physical activity not only increases physical activity outcomes, but also deters criminal activity, improves social cohesion and increases mental well-being.



Through partnership and investment, much work was dedicated to improving the face of Cook's Lagoon. Park upgrades include a new bridge, a resurfaced trail, the addition of a handicap accessible fishing spot, and a new kiosk. A cleanup day, sponsored by volunteers from Union Metal Corporation, removed trash from the property. As a result of all the park improvements, a local farmers market relocated to the park and a free running club chose to meet regularly at Cook's Lagoon for their runs. The changes to Cook's Lagoon brought a new sense of community, a new identity for the park, and changed perception for some who grew up around the park. One local resident stated, "When I was young Cook's Lagoon gained a bad reputation. The new renovations and the new activities are changing the reputation of the park."

Results

With hard work and community coordination, Cook's Lagoon now has a fresh look fostering a new sense of hope for the community. Quotes from several farmers' market attendees indicate a new awareness of this park. One said, "I didn't know there was a trail here until today! I will be back to use it." The clearing of the brush has improved the visibility of the Nimishillen Creek, which runs parallel to the park. Kiosk design aides in deterring criminal activity within the park. The new bridge at the front of the lagoon, formally a truck trailer, has been rebuilt and provides shelter and security for those that enjoy it as a fishing location. The bridge at the back of the lagoon now has a fresh coat of stain, thanks to the employees of Union Metal Corporation. "You guys did a really nice job, I used to fish at Monument Park, but come here

now instead even though it's a little further from my house," said one park goer. Visitors of the farmers market stated that they had not been to the park before and would return.

Sustaining Success

With continued programming from the county park district and another dedicated season of the StarkFresh farmers' market, attention will continue to bring this small, yet beautiful park space back to life. On the schedule for 2017 is the Summer Serenades by the Canton Symphony Orchestra and the Annual Fishing Derbies held by both Stark Parks and the Stark Fatherhood Coalition. In 2017 the park will remain as a location on the Stark Walks and Run Club's schedule, as well as an interest point on the Stark Walks route for northeast Canton. In the long term, *Stark County Trail and Greenway Master Plan* sees this site as a trail head, connecting the Stark Electric Railway Trail with the Middle Branch Trail.

Your Involvement is Key

Visit often! Cook's Lagoon is located at 1819 Mahoning Road NE Canton, Ohio 44705. Volunteer with Stark Parks by visiting: <https://starkparks.com/volunteer-program/>

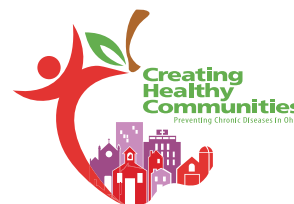
Be an advocate for your community, join your local neighborhood association, pick up litter in your local parks and be the eyes in your community by reporting problems to the appropriate personnel.

To become involved with LWSC coalition or the Creating Healthy Communities Program, contact Mary Grueber.



"This park is a wonderful example of how an area can be improved with some attention and community investment. Thanks Stark Parks!"

— Michael George



Contact:

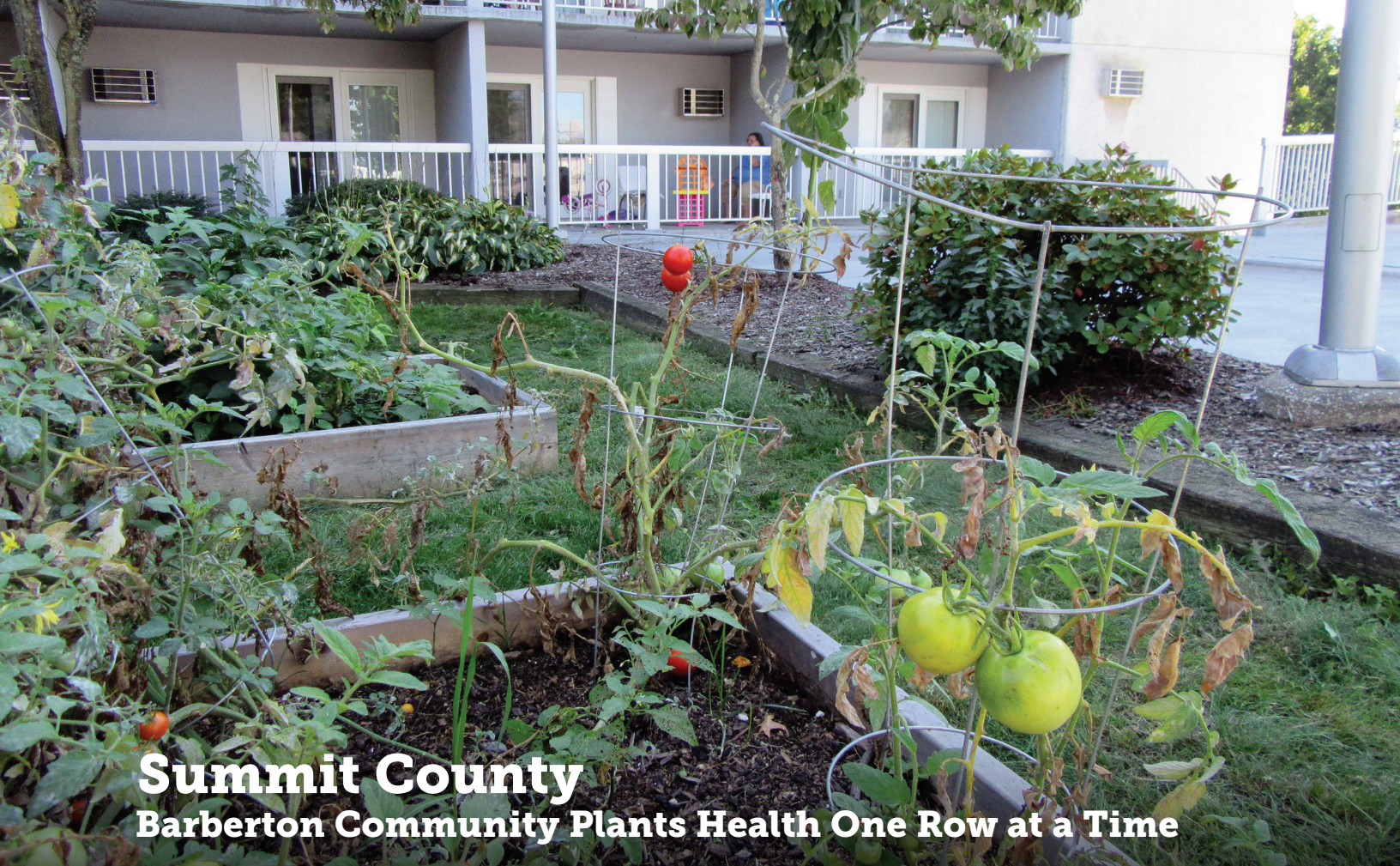
Mary Grueber

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Summit County Barberton Community Plants Health One Row at a Time

Summary

With only a few supermarkets and corner stores in the low-income neighborhood of Barberton, Ohio, residents have limited access to fresh produce near their homes. To increase produce availability, Summit County Public Health's Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Program partnered with Let's Grow Akron and the Barberton Hilltop House Apartments to install community garden beds. More than 25 percent of the Hilltop House residents took part in gardening and at the conclusion of the 2016 growing season, a yield of approximately 472 pounds of produce was harvested from Hilltop House.

Challenge

The burden of chronic disease in Summit County is significant, with nutrition being a key factor. Summit County's Food Environment Index score fell from 7.1 to 6.8 in 2015 and dropped again to 6.6 in 2016. Food access in the county is lower than the national average, reporting 15.67 grocery stores per 100,000 persons. Additionally, one third of Summit County's low-income population lives in a food desert area, which encompasses the Hilltop House. In Barberton, approximately 19.5 percent of the population live below the poverty line. The challenges of poverty and transportation continue to play a key role in addressing food environments. Food environments directly impact eating habits, which in turn, can impact risk factors for obesity and chronic disease. This reality is seen most significantly within low-income communities, such as Barberton, highlighting the need for equity.

Solution

Summit County CHC partnered with Let's Grow Akron, a local non-profit organization, to expand community gardening in Barberton. Initially an audit was conducted identifying potential garden sites. The prospective locations were then subject to a site assessment including soil testing, sunlight monitoring, and evaluation of an adequate water source. In April, the Hilltop House, a senior affordable housing community, was selected as a garden site. Four garden beds were installed, including one wheelchair accessible bed. During the installation of the beds, a resident took interest to become the garden leader. Throughout the course of the growing season, she was able to recruit 20 additional residents to work in the gardens.



Results

Hilltop House had a plentiful harvest, yielding approximately 472 pounds of produce. The three ground garden beds produced tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, broccoli, cabbage, collard greens, and zucchini, while the wheelchair accessible bed produced herbs, strawberries, lettuce, and cucumbers. The Hilltop House gardens have improved access to fresh produce among low-income residents and helped encourage healthier eating. Studies have shown that gardeners eat more fruits and vegetables compared to non-gardeners. The gardens also proved to be beneficial for the seniors because it increased their levels of physical activity and encouraged use of all motor skills. Garden leader, Amanda, shared that she is attempting to eat healthier by increasing her intake of vegetables. Her brother noted that the garden gave her purpose and that her attitude and memory improved.

"The entire building benefited since any extra produce was placed in the kitchen areas for anyone to use."

— Amanda,
Garden Leader and Hilltop House
Resident

Sustaining Success

While community gardens will not solve food insecurity, they play a significant role in the food system. Moving forward, Summit County CHC and Let's Grow Akron plan to expand community gardening not only in Barberton but into other communities. The communities will be chosen based on their location in food desert areas across Summit County. A local municipality has already expressed

interest in doubling the size of their current community garden. Technical assistance and support will be provided to Hilltop House community gardens as they start to prepare for the 2017 growing season. As access is improved, educational opportunities will present themselves to assist individuals and neighborhoods in making healthier choices.

Your Involvement is Key

To locate a community garden in Summit County, visit <https://www.summitfoodcoalition.org/community-gardens/>

Join the Summit Food Coalition to stay current on the work that is being done to improve access to healthy food for all Summit County residents.

If you are interested in working on chronic disease prevention strategies within Summit County, join the CHC Coalition at Summit County Public Health. The coalition meets to develop and implement plans that can improve the health of our community.

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Trumbull County Revitalized Park Leads to New Opportunities for Bolindale Residents

Summary

The neighborhood of Bolindale, located in Howland Township, is a registered food desert and the third poorest area in Trumbull County. The Trumbull County Creating Health Communities (CHC) Program worked with Howland Township, Howland Park Board District, and Howland Health and Wellness Committee (HHWC) to make improvements to this area possible. The Bolindale Community Park is now a more appealing place to be physically active and also provides access to fresh produce to about 2,000 residents.

Challenge

In Trumbull County, 29 percent of residents are physically inactive and 16 percent experience food insecurity.¹ The Bolindale neighborhood has a median

household income of \$35,530 with 19.7 percent below the poverty level.² Howland Township, which surrounds Bolindale, has a median household income of \$61,132 with only 7.7 percent below the poverty level.² These numbers depict disparities that exist in the Bolindale neighborhood as it is significantly lower in income and resources compared to the rest of Howland Township. The closest grocery store is located about two miles away and access to public transportation and sidewalks is limited. Although Howland Center has hosted a weekly farmers' market for the past 10 years, it is nearly impossible to get from Bolindale to Howland Center without a car due to a major highway cutting through the township. Along with a poorly maintained park and isolation from Howland Township, there are many barriers for Bolindale residents to have access to healthy foods and physical activity opportunities.

Solution

During the past two years, the Trumbull County CHC program has partnered with Howland Township, Howland Park Board, and HHWC to make improvements to the Bolindale Community Park and provide better access to fresh foods for residents. In 2015, HHWC hosted a park clean-up day with residents to trim branches, pull weeds and lay pea gravel under the newly painted equipment. Howland Park Board purchased new swings and installed security lighting with CHC funds to make the area more inviting and safe for children to play. In 2016, Howland Township also hosted monthly pop-up farmers' markets at Bolindale Community Park from July-September and accepted the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to provide fresh produce to low-income Bolindale residents.



Results

Between the months of July and September, there were a total of 113 people in attendance at the monthly farmers' markets. A survey conducted at each market showed that of those who completed a survey, 88.5 percent were Bolindale/Howland residents. 90 percent of attendees made purchases at the market, with 9 percent using SNAP and Double-Up incentives, a program in which a SNAP user has the opportunity to double SNAP dollars after purchasing \$5 in fresh produce. Based on the survey results, distance was the main reason as to why residents did not attend the weekly farmers' market at Howland Center. 96 percent of participants would attend more pop-up farmers' markets at Bolindale Park if available. When asked about the park changes, 70 percent reported noticing and liking the changes at the park. The top three suggestions for further park improvements included offering more events at the park, installation of a splash pad and pickleball courts.

"It's great to see this park being used again by children and families. And the pop-up farmers' markets have been very convenient for me to purchase produce this summer."

— Bolindale Resident

Sustaining Success

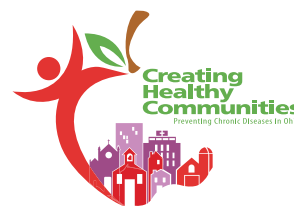
The Howland Park Board has decided to install pickleball courts for residents that will be completed in 2017. Pickleball is a paddle sport that combines elements of tennis, badminton, and ping-pong that is intended for all ages and skill levels. In 2017, Howland Township will work with the Trumbull County CHC program to expand the farmers' market to twice a month at the Bolindale Community Park. HHWC is planning to offer more events at the park and continue hosting the annual park clean-up day with Bolindale residents. The Trumbull County CHC Program will continue to promote the newly repaired park and provide residents with more physical activity opportunities and access to healthy foods.

Your Involvement is Key

- Participate in park events and park clean-up days to keep your local park in good condition.
- Support your local park board in overseeing the operations and maintenance of the park.
- Support your local farmers at farmers' markets to provide access to fresh foods to residents.

Sources:

1. 2016 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/ohio/2014/rankings/trumbull/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>
2. American Fact Finder, United States Census Bureau, <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>



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Union County Garden Programs Grow in Union County

Summary

Many Union County individuals and families struggle with food security. As of 2013, more than 11 percent of Union County residents received food assistance. Even with food assistance, the nutritional quality of available food and limited availability of healthy fruits and vegetables can oftentimes be a concern to those served. Through a collaboration with local Master Gardener Volunteers, the Mental Health and Recovery Board of Union County, Dutch Mill Greenhouse, and West Central Community Correctional Facility, two gardening programs were established to serve vulnerable populations in the community. Volunteers from West Central Community Correctional Facility and Mental Health and Recovery Board

clients and residents worked to plant and harvest healthy fruits and vegetables. Produce was also provided to various food pantries and community centers, which increased access for those in need within Union County. The program not only improved healthy food access but also provided garden education and skills development to those involved with the program.

Challenge

Data from the 2015 Union County Community Health Assessment indicates the county exhibits a high number of risk factors including overweight/obesity (68 percent), high blood pressure (28 percent), high cholesterol (34 percent), and lack of fruit and vegetable consumption (only 8 percent of residents eat five or more servings of fruits and

vegetables daily). These risk factors, along with unhealthy lifestyle choices and lack of access to healthy foods, can lead to cancer, stroke, and heart disease, major contributors to the morbidity and mortality rates within the county.

Solution

To combat the county's risk factors related to inadequate fruit and vegetable consumption and improve health outcomes, the Union County Health Department's Creating Healthy Communities Program partnered with local Master Gardener Volunteers, the Mental Health and Recovery Board of Union County, Dutch Mill Greenhouse, and West Central Community Correctional Facility. These organizations



worked together to implement two gardening programs to improve food access to vulnerable populations within Union County. One garden program supports healthy food access for residents and clients of the Mental Health and Recovery Board, and is tended to by the residents themselves with help from the Master Gardener Volunteers. The second, housed at the Dutch Mill Greenhouse, is tended to by West Central Community Correctional Facility volunteers and Master Gardener Volunteers. This garden provides produce to local food pantries and community centers to be distributed to those in need. Partnering organizations, like the Union County Health Department and Master Gardener Volunteers transported the harvested produce to pantries and a community center within the county.

Results

Both programs yielded positive outcomes. In just a few short months, more than 100 pounds of food were planted, tended to and harvested from the Dutch Mill garden. This produce was delivered to two food pantries and a community center to better reach those in need. Among to 18 residents who took a short post program survey conducted about the Mental Health and Recovery Board garden project, 39 percent stated that their fruits and vegetable consumption had increased as a result of participating in the program. The local Master Gardener Volunteers also provided new educational and skill development opportunities to both the Mental Health and Recovery Board clients and the West Central Community Correctional Facility volunteers.

"The collaboration between the Union County Health Department and the Mental Health and Recovery Board helped to grow good eating habits and lifelong skills for people in recovery."

— Phil Atkins, PhD

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A committee was created, consisting of the original partnering organizations, for each program to build upon the success of the past year and continue to develop sustainability in order to reach more Union County residents. The goal of both programs is to at least double the yield of produce from this past year through the expansion of gardens as well as more advanced planting techniques. The Mental Health and Recovery Board program also seeks to increase the number of participants involved in caring for and utilizing the gardens.

Your Involvement is Key

You can help your community achieve better health and greater access to healthy foods through participation in community-based gardening programs. Many communities already have volunteer agencies and knowledgeable gardening clubs that can help get you started. Contact the Union County Creating Healthy Communities Coordinator to learn more. You can also reach out to your local food pantry and/or local community service center to donate food or volunteer your time to help those in need.



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Washington County Growing Better Health through a Community Garden

Summary

The Marietta Community Garden has contributed to the community's need for access to fresh produce at no cost since 2006. Community gardens allow low-income residents to have a sense of belonging, to be more active in the community and to learn about the process of growing fresh foods. The past success of the Marietta Community Garden has led to the expansion of the garden in 2016. The Washington County Health Department's Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Coalition partnered with Harvest of Hope to extend the Marietta Community Garden to enable more community members to grow their own fresh produce.

Challenge

According to a *Community Health Needs Assessment* produced by Community Commons, 74 percent of adults in Washington County are consuming less than five servings of fruits and vegetables each day. In addition, Washington County has an 81 percent exposure to fast food restaurants and adult obesity rates have risen to 32.8 percent. Access to fresh produce at a low cost is limited for residents in Washington County, which can contribute to an increased risk of developing chronic diseases. According to Feeding America, food insecurity in Washington County is 14.5 percent, indicating more than 8,000 people in Washington County are food insecure. Washington County Harvest of Hope has been fighting to alleviate hunger and combat low access to healthy foods in communities within Washington County for the last decade.

Solution

With the increasing success of the Marietta Community Garden in past years, it was essential to expand the garden. The Washington County CHC program staff, donations, gardeners, and volunteers were essential in helping with the expansion of the community garden. In addition to the CHC funding, \$3,017.05 was leveraged for this project. The expansion served an additional 36 gardeners who were selected based on need. The gardeners were taught the basics of gardening at the beginning of the harvest season. Gardeners could choose what foods they would like to grow and are also able to keep their own produce. Additional produce from the garden was donated to local food pantries.



Results

There were more than 65 gardeners, in six community gardens, who were given the tools they needed to be successful in growing their own produce. They, in turn, donated some of their extra produce to Harvest of Hope and the agencies that Harvest of Hope serves. Overall, 300 pounds of produce was harvested from the Marietta Community Garden in the 2016 growing season. A vast variety of produce was harvested in the garden, such as zucchini, peppers, tomatoes, herbs, green beans, and squash. Harvest of Hope has recovered 774,000 pounds of food since 2006. They have had 66 truck volunteers to deliver the produce to food pantries since 2015. There are 24 agencies/food pantries that are served in Washington County with free food from Harvest of Hope.

"I have been a gardener at Marietta Community Garden for six years now. Gardening is therapeutic for me. It gives me a sense of being independent. I love being down there to garden and have some time to myself."

— Dee Fouss

Sustaining Success

Harvest of Hope has many plans for the future. The main goal of Harvest of Hope is to fight hunger and provide the opportunity for Washington County residents to have access to free, healthy and fresh food items. Plans for the Marietta Community Garden's 2017 harvest season include wheelchair accessible raised beds and a separate section for produce that will solely be used for donations to food pantries.

Your Involvement is Key

Support Harvest of Hope with Smile Amazon. Follow these steps:

1. Go to smile.amazon.com
2. From the list at the right of the screen, choose Washington County Harvest of Hope and click select.
3. Shop, place your order, and Amazon will send a check for purchases directly to Harvest of Hope.

Look out for fundraising events or additional information visit us at <http://www.wchoh.org>

Help us end hunger by donating. Please mail your check to P.O. Box 902, Marietta, OH 45750. Make all checks payable to Washington County Harvest of Hope.

If you would like to enjoy growing your own food in a community garden, call 740-538-8811.



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www.odh.ohio.gov/chc

