

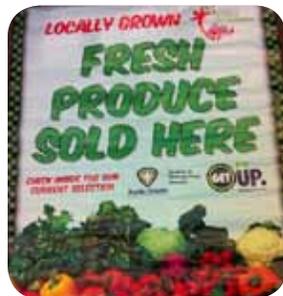


Creating Healthy Communities

Preventing Chronic Diseases in Ohio

Success Stories 2012







May 2013

The Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program is funded through the Preventive Health and Health Services (PHHS) Block Grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Through policies, systems, and environmental changes, CHC is working to increase opportunities for physical activity, improve access to and affordability of healthy food, and assure tobacco-free living to improve the health of Ohioans and prevent chronic disease statewide. CHC is helping communities, schools, worksites, healthcare and faith-based institutions to become places where healthier choices are easier choices.

CHC has ongoing projects in 16 Ohio counties and continues to be efficient and cost-effective with annual funding averaging only \$80,000 per county. Through community partnerships and coalition support, these 16 counties have almost matched their initial awards in leveraged funding from outside sources. These counties are seeing impressive results and outcomes that have a positive impact on millions of Ohioans.

In 2012, local CHC program coordinators were asked to write a success story on one of their initiatives. Success stories not only serve as a showcase of outcomes for the program, but also as a call to action for increased community involvement around the importance and need for chronic disease prevention. The 15 stories included in this report are a testament to the hard work of local CHC grantees and show the dedication this program has on improving the health of Ohioans.

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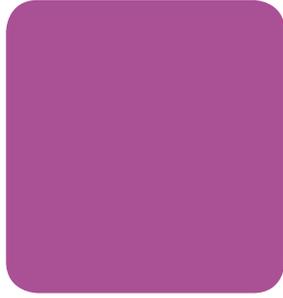


Table of Contents

Worth the Investment	1
Barriers to Health in Ohio	2
A Path to Improved Health	3
Program Impact.....	4
Leveraged Funding	5
Program Map.....	6

Local CHC Program Success Stories:

Adams and Brown Counties: An “Early Head Start” for a Healthy Future.....	8-9
Allen County: Local Churches Lay the Groundwork to Healthy Food	10-11
Athens County: Fresh, Healthy Foods are Transforming Food Pantries	12-13
Cincinnati City: Urban Farming- The New Design of Social Sustainability	14-15
Columbus City: Get Moving Central Ohio! Summit Propels Strategies to Increase Physical Activity	16-17
Cuyahoga County: Walk and Roll to School in East Cleveland.....	18-19
Lorain County: Putting Wellness at the Top of the Agenda	20-21
Lucas County: Local Food Pantry Helps Community by Offering Increased Food Options	22-23
Marion County: A Healthier Way to Celebrate	24-25
Meigs County : Youth Action for a Healthy Community	26-27
Montgomery County: An Innovative Approach to Healthier School Meals	28-29
Richland County: Pounds of Produce and Bushels of Benefits through Community Gardening	30-31
Summit County: Intergenerations CATCH Some Fun	32-33
Trumbull County: The Students are Customers at Warren City School’s Cafeteria	34-35
Washington County: Healthy Meals and Active Play Are Effective Tools for Appalachian Preschools	36-37

Worth the Investment



\$6 for every
\$1 spent on
prevention

Obesity and chronic disease cost Ohioans approximately \$56.8 billion per year.¹ But an investment of \$10 per person annually in community-based programs to increase physical activity, improve nutrition, and prevent tobacco use can save Ohio more than \$685 million per year, including \$185 million to Ohio Medicaid, within five years.² **This is a return of approximately \$6 for every \$1 spent on prevention activities**, like the CHC program.

This investment in prevention is modest compared to the costs Ohio incurs from treating cardiovascular disease (CVD). Between 2005 and 2009, Ohio invested \$1.93 million per year in CVD prevention; comparatively, \$3.41 billion was spent annually on treating tobacco-related illness.³ In 2007, direct costs (total annual medical costs) of treating hypertension were estimated to be \$1.37 billion, and the direct costs of treating heart disease were \$3.65 billion.⁴



\$10
per person

Can Save Ohio
\$685
Million
Annually

¹ Milken Institute (2007). An unhealthy America: The economic impact of chronic disease.

² Trust for America's Health (2008). Prevention for a healthier America: Investments in disease prevention yield significant savings, stronger communities.

³ Ohio Tobacco Prevention Foundation (2008).

⁴ Milken Institute (2007). An unhealthy America: The economic impact of chronic disease.

Barriers to Health in Ohio

CHC works in areas of highest need within each county, removing barriers to health such as:

- **Lack of access to healthy foods at home and in the community**
 - ~25% of rural Ohioans live more than 10 miles from a store selling fresh fruits and vegetables.⁵
- **High availability of and exposure to inexpensive, unhealthy foods**
 - ~25% of rural Ohioans live closer to fast-food restaurants than full-service grocery stores.⁶
- **Lack of access to places for children to play and adults to be active**
 - Only 50% of people in Ohio have parks or playgrounds, community centers, and sidewalks or walking paths available in their neighborhoods.⁷
- **Lack of access to healthy food and adequate physical activity in schools**
 - Only about 25 % of high school students in Ohio are physically active.⁸
- **Lack of ability to use active transportation to get to work or school**
 - Ohio is one of only 13 states that does not have a transportation and travel policy to encourage active transportation to work and school.⁹
- **Increased use of and exposure to tobacco among less educated and minority groups**
 - 38.5% of Ohioans without a high school degree smoke, compared to 13.6% of Ohioans who have greater than a high school degree.¹⁰
 - 25.1% of African Americans and 31% of Hispanics in Ohio smoke, compared to 20.7% of Caucasians.¹¹

To overcome these barriers, the CHC program requires grantees to use evidence-based public health strategies such as those recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Institute of Medicine. Through public-private partnerships, CHC is working to transform communities through policy, systems, and environmental changes. This approach is an essential component in prevention of chronic disease.

⁵ Muamba, F., Clark, J.K., & Betz, N. (2010). Food access gaps in rural Ohio (Research Brief #2010-5). Center for Farmland Policy Innovation Department of Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2010). State indicator report on physical activity.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007-2008.

¹¹ Ibid.

A Path to Improved Health



In 2012 alone, Creating Healthy Communities has **IMPACTED OVER 1 MILLION OHIOANS**

More than **100,000** Ohioans have increased access to fresh fruits and vegetables through the establishment of:

- **Community gardens** that provide the opportunity for residents to grow their own food and donate extra produce to local food pantries
- **Farmers markets** that accept senior coupons, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Women, Infant and Children (WIC) vouchers
- **Healthy corner stores** that previously sold little or no fresh produce
- **Client Choice food pantries** that allow for community members to take home healthy foods that they like and know how to prepare

Over **200,000** Ohioans have increased access to physical activity opportunities through the development of:

- **Bike and walking trails**, including supportive infrastructure such as bike racks to encourage safe biking and walking around the community
- **Playground builds** in areas where there was previously no place for children to be active
- **Complete Streets policies** to create a streetscape plan that incorporates active methods of transportation

Over **120,000** students are eating healthier and moving more by:

- Adding **physical activity breaks** into existing classroom curriculum
- Offering **salad bars** in schools to increase consumptions of fruits and vegetables
- Adopting policies that **discourage using food as a reward** in classrooms
- Implementing **Safe Routes to School** programs so children can walk/bike safely to schools

Over **80,000** Ohioans are now breathing cleaner air since the adoption of:

- Six **100% tobacco-free school campus** policies
- Nine **100% tobacco-free worksite** policies

Over **40,000** Ohioans are able to include healthier behaviors into their work routine because they now have access to **healthy vending machines, healthy meeting guidelines and exercise equipment.**

2012 Leveraged Funding

Through coalition building, public and private partners help CHC secure additional funding above their initial award to enhance and further support change throughout the community. The addition of leveraged funding and volunteer labor time helps to advance efforts and expand the overall reach of the Creating Healthy Communities program. In 2012, leveraged funding was obtained for the following areas:

\$10,768 for worksite wellness initiatives

\$13,794 to host trainings and workshops for community members and partners

\$15,367 for professional development of CHC staff

\$19,055 to increase physical activity in the community through walking trails and playground builds

\$40,000 for diabetes prevention programming

\$84,258 toward childhood obesity prevention in schools and the community

\$75,541 to increase food access through community gardens

\$90,015 to conduct Health Impact Assessment (HIA)'s, CDC's School Health Index, and data collection

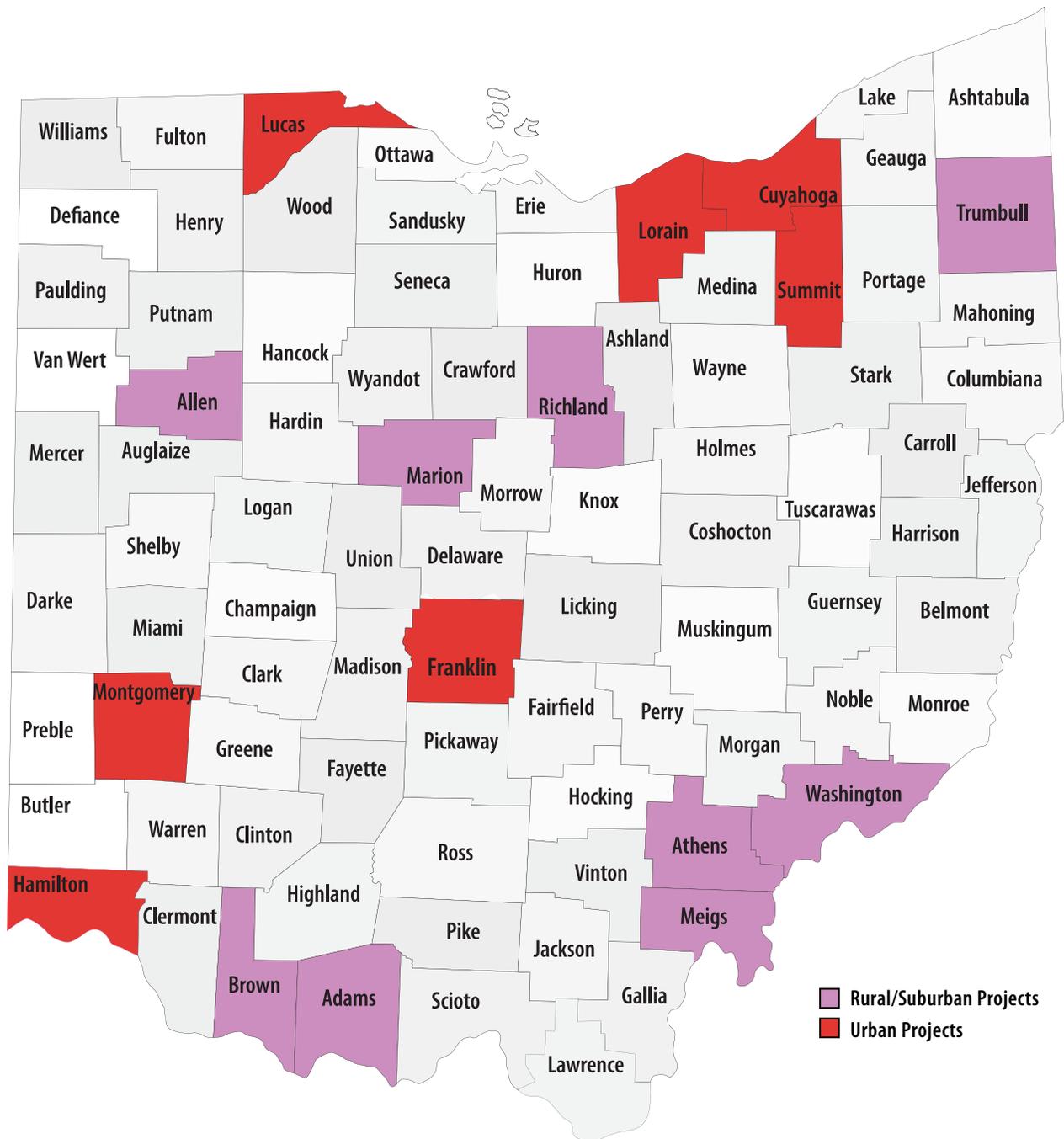
\$96,750 to plan Complete Streets

\$564,000 for Safe Routes to Schools

\$1,009,548 Total*

***This does not include the countless hours of in-kind contributions such as volunteer hours and donated supplies.**

Creating Healthy Communities Program 2012



Adams-Brown Counties

An “Early Head Start” for a Healthy Future

Summary

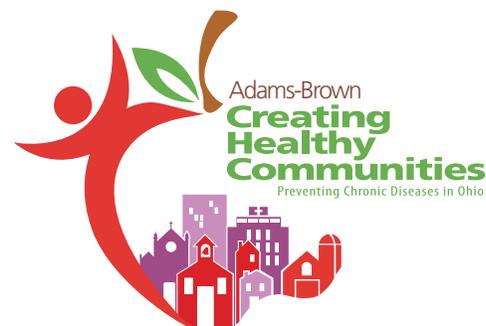
Nearly 75 lower-income families with children ages 0-3 years are receiving nutrition and physical activity guidance as part of their enrollment in the Adams-Brown Early Head Start (ABEHS) home-based program. This was made possible through training and program consultation provided by the Adams-Brown Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program for the Ounce of Prevention (Ounce) Program. The Ounce Program is a multiple-encounter intervention program with the goal of preventing childhood obesity. Care providers using this program help parents to promote age-appropriate healthy eating and active living with their children through handouts, counseling, and ongoing tracking of weight-for-length and/or body mass index (BMI) data. Program training conducted with the ABEHS staff has resulted in two major system changes that have had significant impact on child health assessment and family nutrition.

Challenge

One out of every two Adams County third-graders and nearly two out of five Brown County third-graders are overweight or obese, so early prevention efforts are key for decreasing childhood obesity. This rural Appalachian area has more cases of diabetes and early deaths due to heart disease and stroke than the state average. Lower-income children are more likely to be overweight and to have higher risks for chronic disease. To make matters worse, families with lower incomes often have problems with access to care due to the lack of transportation.

Solution

The Adams-Brown Early Head Start Program provides parenting education, information and referral services, and social support to approximately 75 low-income families with infants and toddlers through weekly visits from trained Home Visitors. These ABEHS Home Visitors develop a very good rapport and trusting relationships with these parents and young children. The CHC program provided Ounce training for the seven ABEHS Home Visitors in August 2011. This training session included a discussion with staff and program administrators about perceived barriers to effectively using the program and suggestions for addressing these barriers.



Your Involvement is Key

Adams-Brown Early Head Start’s experiences with the Ounce of Prevention Program should encourage additional Early Head Start and other early intervention programs to consider using the Ounce Program.

Several program training options are available, including a Web-based training. The Ounce of Prevention toolkit can be downloaded for free from the Ohio Department of Health’s Healthy Ohio Program website: www.healthyohioprogram.org



Results

The ABEHS Home Visitors continue to implement the Ounce Program with enthusiasm. The Ounce Program training also substantially increased the Home Visitors' capability for providing nutrition and physical activity guidance/counseling to parents and families. Besides providing parents with an increased awareness about nutrition and physical activity messages, the Ounce Program has led to two significant changes within the ABEHS Program since the Ounce staff training in August 2011:

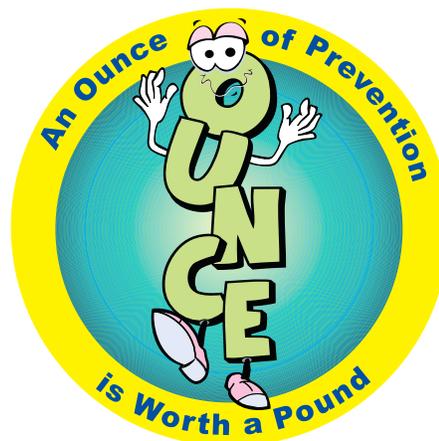
1. The ABEHS invested in two portable infantometers for use at home visits to more accurately measure length/height of infants and children younger than two years, and
2. ABEHS switched the types of snacks and beverages that staff provides for families at each home visit from processed food snacks and fruit juice to fresh food snacks (fruits, vegetables, yogurt, and cheese) and bottled water.

“With the Ounce training, our Home Visitors provide valuable information to our clients. This information has made parents more aware of making better food choices for their family. Their understanding of a healthy weight and BMI has initiated conversations between parents and pediatricians.”

-Ramona Applegate, Program Manager, Adams-Brown Early Head Start
Decatur, OH

Future Directions

Although the Ounce Program was originally developed for use by primary health care providers in office settings, the ABEHS Program has demonstrated that the Ounce Program and toolkit materials are appropriate for use by trained ABEHS Home Visitors. In fact, ABEHS Home Visitors have more frequent contact with these families than most health providers have, which helps to develop stronger rapport and trusting relationships between the ABEHS staff and families. Also, working with families on their own “turf” gives the EHS staff greater insight into strengths and barriers each family has in terms of healthy eating and active living.



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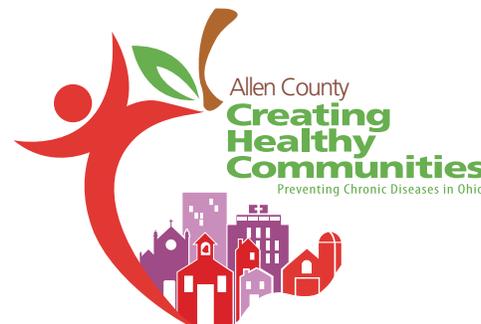
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Allen County

Local Churches Lay the Groundwork to Healthy Food

Summary

Churches and gardens? This combination has proved to be a valuable solution to making healthy food affordable in neighborhoods and communities. Churches with summer youth programs can give children firsthand experiences on how to grow, prepare and enjoy fresh produce. In addition, churches can offer garden plots to members and/or neighbors. By creating more ways people can access affordable healthy food, the rates of chronic disease will decrease, one neighborhood at a time.



Challenge

In Allen County, two in five adults are obese, well above national and state averages. The rate is disproportionately higher among those living in low income communities in Lima, Ohio. Nearly one in two low-income residents are obese, placing them at risk for chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease.

A healthy lifestyle helps prevent these chronic diseases, but residents in a number of Lima communities have limited access to healthy and affordable foods, due to lack of transportation and income challenges. Neighborhood community gardens can help make these foods more available, but land, water, and leadership are needed to make these gardens successful.

Solution

Churches have interested members, land, and water - three key resources that are needed to start and sustain the gardens into the future.

In February 2012, the Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program, in partnership with the West Central Ohio Health Ministries Program, invited an urban farms coordinator from Cincinnati to present a community gardening workshop. Participants learned about and shared resources available to start and maintain gardens. Two Lima churches started gardens as a result of this effort, The Elm Street Church and The Future Church.

Your Involvement is Key

The Allen County motto is "Real American Strength." You can help Allen County stay strong by creating neighborhoods, workplaces, schools and churches that support health instead of disease. Creating gardens that provide local fresh fruits and vegetables is one solution. Find out if your own faith-based or community organization is interested in starting a garden.

Help us continue to create health in our community, where we live, work, play and pray.



Results

The Elm Street Church of the Brethren partnered with members of Salem Mennonite Church, a rural church, who shared their gardening expertise to help get the gardens started. Together they built 10 raised-bed gardens. The 167 pounds of produce grown supplied community meals for church members and donations to the local food pantry.

The Future Church of Lima garden served the produce to their summer school program, as well as church and community members. The program director, Nicole Hughes, reported

that the children ran to the garden every day to see how their garden was growing. "They measured each day, and that helped with math skills. The older ones learned to chop and sauté them (the vegetables) and share them at lunchtime." The children gave 42 pounds of food to church members, the community, and the soup kitchen. "It was an amazing project for the children and community," she added.

"Many [kids] had never had those vegetables before, and almost nobody had gotten to cook them before. Without the Creating Healthy Communities program, this garden would not have been possible. We already have plans to expand the garden next year!"

-Nicole Hughes, The Future Church Program Director

Future Directions

The Creating Healthy Communities program will continue to work with churches and faith-based organizations to increase access to healthy foods by building community gardens to sow the seeds of good health.

In 2013, the project plans to assist Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen with developing their garden, the Lima Allen County Neighborhoods in Partnership (LACNIP) with their community gardens, and will work with with other groups interested in increasing access to affordable foods in Allen County.



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Athens County

Fresh, Healthy Foods are Transforming Pantries

Summary

Community leaders in Athens County believe everyone has a right to healthy food. Issues of food injustice are being solved by health organizations, local non-profits, food producers, pantries and other invested community members. Access to healthy food is necessary for good health no matter who you are or where you live. Improving systems that provide healthy food for those in need can be solved through building skills, increasing production and distribution, and maintaining a commitment to equitable opportunities of good health.

Challenge

Athens County residents who rely on food pantries do not have the same food options as others in the community. Food pantries can only offer the food that has been made available to them, limiting the amount of healthy food distributed. Food pantries depend on donations offered by local businesses, low-cost items through the Southeast Regional Food Center, and the good will of their neighbor's donations. Here in southeastern Ohio, the Regional Food Center serves almost 124,000 households each year. These centers (or food banks) are supplied by USDA farm surplus, the "rescue food" from regional manufacturers of processed food, and bulk food lots that are purchased at a reduced rate. Local food pantries are run by volunteers who have limited resources but big hearts. The need for food is always greater than the amount of food available, especially for healthy, fresh produce and whole grains. Among the greatest challenges to local food pantries is dealing with storage, refrigeration, and the lack of experience among their patrons in preparing fresh whole foods.

Solution

To help food pantry patrons eat a healthier diet, the Healthy Communities Coalition in Athens County, led by the Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Coordinator and in partnership with Live Healthy Appalachia, provided nutrition and cooking workshops for three rural food pantries. The food pantry workshops for patrons included information about how what we eat affects our health, how to stretch food dollars and how to prepare healthy meals. Pantry coordinators also received training on storage, sanitation and distribution of produce. The CHC grant provided funding for workshop speakers and necessary cooking equipment for participants. The Athens Foundation funded healthy food for four weeks after the workshop. Community Food Initiatives, a local non-profit, provided almost 4,000 pounds of produce for the 40 families that participated.



Your Involvement is Key

Appalachia has a long history of neighbors helping neighbors. We have experience in relying on our own resources to make the positive changes that need to happen.

- Local businesses and concerned citizens can support their local food pantries or Regional Food Center by providing regular donations of money and time.
- Local farmers and home gardeners can donate a portion of their yield to their local pantry or Regional Food Center.
- Some pantries are even starting their own gardens and planting orchards.



Results

As a result of the food pantry coordinator training and food pantry workshops for patrons:

- Two of the three local food pantries increased their use of the Donation Station. The Donation Station is a program managed by Community Food Initiatives that collects monetary and food donations at the Athens Farmers Market. Money collected at the Donation Station is put back into the local economy by purchasing produce at the farmers market and donating it to local food pantries.
- Half of the food pantry participants increased their consumption of fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- All of the participants reported liking something new that they tried and most continued to prepare recipes they sampled in the workshops.
- Among food pantry patrons who volunteered for health screenings, more than half reduced blood pressure and glucose levels several weeks after the initial workshop presentation.
- The Regional Food Center has increased their commitment to consistently offer fresh and whole food items.

“I try different foods now, like tofu and different lettuces, and I lost 6 pounds! I really enjoyed the program, and I learned a lot.”

- Chauncey Participant

Future Directions

A long-term strategy for strengthening local food pantries is to support the Regional Food Center, which receives state resources based on how much food pantries report distributing to their communities. Currently, more food is being distributed than is being reported to the Regional Food Center. Improving reporting strategies will increase Regional Food Center resources. The Regional Food Center is working with Community Food Initiatives to act as a food hub that can collect and distribute local food and expand educational workshops to pantries in the region. Engaging business

partners to encourage employees to make regular donations to the Regional Food Center through paycheck deductions can also provide a system of ongoing support for local pantries.



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City of Cincinnati

Urban Farming- The New Design of Social Sustainability

Summary

In 2012, six community-based farms in Cincinnati provided thousands of pounds of fresh produce to residents in disadvantaged neighborhoods. The Urban Farming Program, part of the Cincinnati Health Department's Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program, partnered with Urban Farming Inc., a Detroit, Michigan-based non-profit, as part of a national initiative to convert unused parcels of land into community-based urban farms. The program increases access to healthful foods, addresses issues of health disparities, and works to establish local food systems.



Challenge

For Cincinnati, food access is an issue of health equity. Access to healthful foods has been recognized as a major issue for Cincinnati residents. A recent study of Cincinnati showed that 69% of residents live at least 1.5 miles or more (a 30-minute walk) from a mainstream grocery outlet. This was true for 82% of African-American residents compared to only 41% of Caucasian residents, further emphasizing the disproportionate inequities amongst minority populations and increasing risk of malnutrition, diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and other chronic health conditions.

Solution

The Urban Farming Program, led by the Creating Healthy Communities program, assesses current food access issues and works with local government, policymakers, and community stakeholders to establish healthful and sustainable local food systems.

Since its inception, the practice of urban agriculture has rapidly expanded throughout Cincinnati's many neighborhoods. The Urban Farming Program recognizes urban agriculture as an innovative and comprehensive approach to improving the health of social, ecological, and economic systems. Additionally, there is an increase in physical activity, community involvement, and education of healthful lifestyle practices and eating habits.

Your Involvement is Key

The task of strengthening our regional food system and farming economy, and ensuring that all people have access to affordable healthy food, is a comprehensive commitment. Any serious ambition to scale up local food production requires a system that has the ability to bridge the gap between a fragmented supply and the volume and scale of demand. You can help with this initiative by becoming involved in an existing community garden, starting your own garden, and/or supporting local foods in your area.



Results

Through community engagement and small-scale intensive farming methods, six community-based farms are able to provide nutritious foods to neighborhood residents, community recreation centers, community food pantries, and local senior centers. Since 2010, there has been an annual increase in food production and community participation with over 5,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables produced in 2012. The distribution process is unregulated, meaning the food is available to all community members, regardless of participation. There are no barriers or fencing restricting access to each site, and community members are trained on proper harvesting techniques and sustainable gardening practices.

The Cincinnati City Health Department recognizes the development of local food systems as a key initiative to the sustainable health of our region. In 2012, the City of Cincinnati adopted programs and policies to help with this effort, including a mobile food and produce vending program and approval for a commercial composting facility.

“I love to see kids who were eating hot fries and other processed foods out of a bag asking to get food from our garden. I do not say no. “Ms. Lauri, we are hungry. Can we go get some mustard greens?” Would anyone say no to that?”

-Lauri Aultman, Winton Hills CRC Assistant Director

Future Directions

These results/initiatives serve as a call to action for organizations, entities, policy makers, and community stakeholders to acknowledge and holistically address issues of local food systems. Long-term sustainability requires a ‘local food infrastructure,’ an economic network of people and activities in which year-round food production and aggregation, processing, distribution, access, consumption, and resource/waste recovery are tied to our geographic region. Short-term goals include the expansion of our community farming initiatives through identifying and

leveraging assets, enhancing networks and policy support to sustain environmental and systems changes – while increasing production and consumption of healthful foods.



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Columbus City

Get Moving Central Ohio! Summit Propels Strategies to Increase Physical Activity

Summary

Members of the Central Ohio Alliance for Active Communities came together to explore new ways to implement the strategies outlined in the Franklin County Physical Activity Plan. A national consultant on public health and the built environment, Mark Fenton, inspired the audience to incorporate physical activity changes into existing environments within multiple sectors. Fresh and innovative approaches were shared by members and staff from the Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program at Columbus Public Health helped members move their strategies forward.



Challenge

CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) local data shows that neither adults nor children in Franklin County are getting the recommended amount of daily physical activity. Rates of overweight and obesity have risen over the years. Community partners from allied sectors including education, industry, and development, have been working together in Columbus and Franklin County since 2007 to increase access to physical activity opportunities. They collaborated by developing a local physical activity plan and by rallying behind initiatives such as Complete Streets, Safe Routes to School, and employee wellness policies. In early 2012, key challenges to long-lasting change were identified and a Summit to bring together partners in an effort to create a groundswell of support for new and existing initiatives.

Your Involvement is Key

Joining a coalition such as the Central Ohio Alliance for Active Communities can lead to a positive contribution to the future of any community.

Reaching out to a local health department program such as Creating Healthy Communities is a simple and effective way to gain tools and resources needed to move forward.

Solution

On July 10, 2012, CHC brought together local leaders and stakeholders – including Dr. David Sabgir, a locally recognized physician and expert on physical activity, and Mark Fenton, an internationally known public health and transportation consultant. Together, they explored new approaches to making physical activity a part of daily life in Central Ohio. Following the summit, participants were invited to reach out to CHC staff for assistance in implementing their strategies. Joanne St Clair, local Neighborhood Liaison to the City of Columbus, shared her strategy of training local area commissioners in spreading the message about the importance of physical activity. Jen Morel, of Healthy Columbus, the City of Columbus Employee Wellness program, asked for assistance in researching Qualified Transportation Benefit programs such as pre-tax bus passes to employees.



Results

Participants at the Get Moving Central Ohio! Summit walked away with the tools and knowledge necessary to inspire others to think about physical activity in new ways. New members were drawn to the summit and took the messages back to their places of work, with a new perspective on how their daily work affects access to physical activity in their community. As a result of attending the summit, Ms. St Clair and Ms. Morel were inspired to think more creatively about their possible impact on access to physical activity. Thanks to technical assistance from the Creating Healthy Communities program, they gained even more tools and insights into how their suggested strategies might be implemented. The groundswell of support for making the community more

conducive to physical activity was the result of the summit. Innovative strategies were propelled forward by inspiring and thought-provoking discussions brought about by the convergence of partners from various disciplines and the guidance of Mark Fenton.

“I was transfixed by the ability to act with others in response to the presentation by noted activist Mark Fenton [...] I will continue to spread the word and plant the seeds to help our communities to become more walkable and consequently safer.”

- Neighborhood Liaison, Columbus South Side

Future Directions

The success of the Get Moving Central Ohio! Summit is a call to action for individuals in every sector to support the implementation of strategies to increase physical activity in their community. In 2013, the Creating Healthy Communities program plans to expand the number of schools implementing Safe Routes to School by piloting a standardized crossing guard training in at least three Columbus neighborhoods.



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Cuyahoga County

Walk and Roll to School in East Cleveland

Summary

The East Cleveland Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Coalition, coordinated by the Cuyahoga County Board of Health's Creating Healthy Community Program (CHC) and Environmental Public Health Services works to increase physical activity and improve safety for children walking and biking to and from school. The coalition is a group of community partners and stakeholders who have collaborated to raise almost \$500,000 for implementing the Ohio Department of Transportation's (ODOT) SRTS program for infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects within the city.

Challenge

The city of East Cleveland has many safety concerns that impair walking and biking to school. It also has a disproportionately high rate of obesity. The decline in population, disinvestment, fears of crime, foreclosure issues, lack of coordination among community partners, and a decaying infrastructure have contributed to East Cleveland's current state. The city lacks adequate resources to maintain and improve the infrastructure within the community. These issues result in parents being fearful of allowing their students to walk and bike to school.

Solution

The opportunity of funding for SRTS from the Ohio Department of Transportation to improve safety was a unifying incentive that community partners identified as a mechanism for change. The SRTS program is multi-faceted in that it addresses both the physical environment and educating children about how to travel safely to and from school. The SRTS Coalition wanted to make every effort possible to supervise children traveling to and from school in order to make it safer and provide assurance for parents. The police bike patrol, increasing visibility of walking guards, and implementing parent and student patrols will make motorists aware of students and help students safely cross the street in designated areas.



Your Involvement is Key

East Cleveland SRTS Coalition welcomes community support for increasing awareness of the efforts to increase safe walking and biking for students.

- Policy makers can support Ohio Department of Transportation's funding for the Safe Routes to School program.
- Increasing safety is something that everyone can support. If more children can safely walk and bike to school, children will develop a lifelong habit of being physically active and reduce the risk of chronic disease and obesity.



Results

Goals for the first year include increasing walking and biking to school, improving knowledge about safety, and decreasing accidents between cars and pedestrians/bicyclists. The police bike patrol started Fall 2012. The initial response has been very positive, with officers identifying hazards and encouraging students to walk in highly visible areas (known as the Safe Routes). Parents appreciate the increased police presence at the time of arrival and dismissal. SRTS programs in general have overwhelmingly increased physical activity and improved the built environment. Studies have shown the link between physical activity, including walking and biking to school, and higher achievement test scores, lower school nurse visits and decreased tardiness. All of the strategies

selected by the SRTS Coalition were identified as best practices by the National Safe Routes to Schools Network, and approved by the Ohio Department of Transportation.



“Safe Routes to Schools will help us increase safety and physical activity of our students.”

- Ms Corley, Superintendent, East Cleveland School District

Future Directions

The SRTS Coalition is currently collecting data to determine if walking/biking has increased from before the action plan's implementation. The SRTS Coalition is also working to:

- Implement the student safety patrol
- Provide additional equipment for crossing guards
- Work with the police department to identify locations where new crossing guards are to be located (once hired)
- Implement parent patrols (includes identifying parents, conducting background checks, and identifying locations for parents to patrol)
- Organize motivational speakers, bike rodeo, and BMX safety event
- Promote the SRTS messages throughout the community through social marketing
- Continue to monitor how many students walk and bike to school through classroom tallies
- Work with ODOT assigned engineer to develop infrastructure improvement plans

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Lorain County

Putting Wellness at the Top of the Agenda

Summary

The Coordinated School Health (CSH) Workshop Series provides professional development for teachers, administrators, and other school employees committed to improving the health, academic success, and well-being of students. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) CSH process is used to guide schools in the development of wellness initiatives, aimed at addressing the connection between health and academic performance. Schools that invest staff time in attending the workshop series are able to move forward with school-specific wellness objectives more efficiently and effectively.

Challenge

The health of young people is strongly linked to their academic success. It is not reasonable or realistic to expect schools to know how to integrate health and academics on their own because schools' focus has been centered upon the academic component of educating their students. However, when focusing solely on academics, the needs of the whole child are not addressed. Schools cannot achieve their primary mission of preparing students to be productive citizens if students and staff are not healthy. Schools have direct contact with more than 95% of children ages 5–17 years, for about six hours a day, and for up to 13 years of their development. Education professionals want to help their students achieve their maximum potential but have not been provided with the tools to integrate wellness into the school day.

Solution

The CSH Workshop series has been a product of the CSH Coalition, conducted through the Lorain County General Health District (LCGHD) Creating Healthy Communities program to meet the local need for resources, networking and planning. The resources provided develop the attitudes, knowledge and skills needed to increase the degree of importance placed on school health and support the sustainability of school-based wellness efforts. The workshop series fills a gap in professional development for schools at the local level regarding low-cost/no-cost, school-based environmental system changes. This workshop series has taken place for the past 13 years.

The LCGHD has invested in the CSH process because schools are community hubs that influence the next generation's lifestyle choices. Improving student health attributes to an increase in students' capacity to learn, reduction in absenteeism, and improvement in physical fitness and mental alertness.



Your Involvement is Key

Administrators:

Your staff can identify areas for improvement, learn about and use proven practices, solve problems, develop skills, and practice new school-based strategies by attending the Lorain County CSH Workshops.

Teachers & Parents:

Be a role model by practicing positive social interactions and health behaviors such as healthy eating, active living and living tobacco-free.



Results

Although Wellington Exempted Village Schools, Clearview Local School District and the Constellation Schools serve different populations with both rural and urban areas, socio-economic diversity, and disparities in terms of access to resources, each have received benefits by attending the annual workshop series.

- The Clearview School District increased sales of reimbursable school lunches by 32% as a result of eliminating all a-carte candy/snacks.
- Westwood Elementary in Wellington leveraged several funding sources to start a school garden and school-based community walking path.

- The tri-county Constellation Schools updated their mission statement and school improvement plans to include wellness.

All three schools have completed CDC's School Health Index and developed school health teams in at least one of the school buildings within their district. Ideas, resources and technical assistance for these initiatives were received through the CSH Workshop Series and the Lorain County CSH Coalition.

“Attending the Coordinated School Health Workshops provides me with the tools and resources to push the integration of health and academics with my school’s administration.”

- Kimberly Stanislo, RN, BSN, CPNP, Supervisor of Health Services at Constellation Schools & Member of Coordinated School Health Coalition

Future Directions

The Lorain County CSH Workshop series is just one component of a multi-faceted delivery system for professional development in Lorain County. The CSH coalition provides instructional materials, links to online courses and other resources through its website resource center as well as scholarships to attend state conferences.

In 2013, the Coalition will continue to conduct two workshops and will add an additional event designed to specifically support school food service staff. The continued professional

development to front-line staff within schools will create healthier learning environments for students who are being educated as the next generation of employees. The LCGHD CHC efforts will also facilitate four coalitions, five local workshops for schools, farmers’ markets, worksites and faith-based organizations and nine community-based physical activity, nutrition and tobacco-free environmental systems change initiatives.

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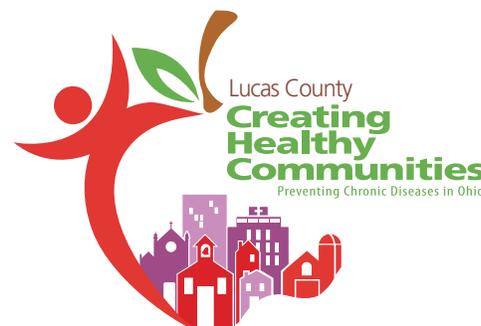


Lucas County

Local Food Pantry Helps Community by Offering Increased Food Options

Summary

South Toledo is a neighborhood with many families living at or below the poverty level. Cindy's Corner Outreach Program, part of St. Lucas Lutheran Church, strives to provide emergency food assistance to community members in need. With the support of Lucas County Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program and Ohio State University (OSU) Extension, Cindy's Corner was transformed from a food program that offered primarily a bag/box of processed packaged foods to a 'Client Choice Food Pantry' where patrons are provided education and guidance in making healthy food selections.



Challenge

In 2011, approximately 17.3% percent of Lucas County residents were living below the poverty level resulting in an increased need for access to affordable and safe nutritious food, known as food security. Food pantries are becoming an important part of meeting food security needs for people in Toledo. With this in mind, Cindy's Corner initially addressed the problem of underserved families through various methods, which included pre-boxed food baskets. However, pre-bagged and pre-boxed food baskets can result in unanticipated results. The main concern is that food waste may be increased because clients are not familiar with the foods offered or have the skills and means to prepare them. Other concerns included lack of appropriate food donated to the pantry, lack of client buy-in for nutritious foods, and lack of nutrition education information for the pantry staff and clients. Lucas County CHC program, OSU Extension and Cindy's Corner have come together to find a solution for both the client and the pantry staff.

Your Involvement is Key

The overall goal of this initiative is to increase access to healthier food options through implementing a 'Client Choice Food Pantry.'

You can help by:

- Learning more about how 'Client Choice Food Pantries' empower communities.
- Volunteering at your local food pantry.
- Donating nutritious foods to your local pantry.
- Obtain a copy of a 'Best Foods to Donate' flyer by emailing a request to: maziarza@co.lucas.oh.us

Solution

CHC met with Cindy's Corner Outreach Program management to share information about the benefits of a 'Client Choice Food Pantry.' A toolkit with guidelines on operating a 'Client Choice Food Pantry' was developed, the pantry was redesigned and new shelving was supplied and installed. Resources were also developed to share with clients who utilize the pantry. CHC staff worked side by side with Cindy's Corner staff to organize food items according to USDA MyPlate guidelines and stock the new shelves. The pantry staff were trained on the 'Client Choice' guidelines and resources while helping clients make good food choices from the pantry. Lastly, the "Grand Opening" of Cindy's Corner Outreach Program was shared with the St. Lucas Church community, local community organizations and the media.



Results

As a result of working with Creating Healthy Communities and the OSU Extension programs, Cindy's Corner Outreach food pantry became more client-centered and efficient. A 'Client Choice Food Pantry' improves the health status of those served by offering a better selection of food options, providing nutrition and health information, and arranging a grocery store-like atmosphere where clients can shop for the foods they prefer with some food selection guidance based on the USDA MyPlate guidelines. The 'Client Choice' model has proven to be beneficial for the clients and the pantry organization as well. It supports the dignity of the client and meets their food security needs. For the pantry, it limits waste and saves money.

An evaluation of the 'Client Choice Pantry' revealed the following:

- 89% of clients liked being able to make their own choices at the food pantry
- 89% of clients were able to find foods that met their special dietary needs
- 100% of clients enjoyed having fresh fruits and vegetables available

"We follow the 'Client Choice Food Pantry' model because we believe food is a personal choice."

- Theresa Johnson, RN Co-Director of Cindy's Corner

Future Directions

The 'Client Choice Food Pantry' model helps to make patrons the number one priority and empowers them to make their own healthy food choices. Future plans include working with other local pantries to help them incorporate the 'Client Choice' model. Next steps for Cindy's Corner includes:

- Evaluating the pantry to identify needed changes
- Marketing the pantry to the community and stakeholders
- Securing healthy donations from local food banks, churches and individuals
- Training and educating pantry volunteers on the 'Client Choice Food Pantry'

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Marion County

A Healthier Way to Celebrate

Summary

Sometimes a cupcake is more than just a cupcake, especially when classmates Emery and Caleb have the same birthday—February 14th—a day that also happens to be Valentine’s Day.

The health of our children is closely linked to their ability to learn and grow into thriving, productive adults. Three school districts in Marion County answered the call to make critical system changes with regard to classroom celebrations and rewards.



Challenge

A shared concern of three community coalitions—Creating Healthy Communities, Pioneering Healthier Communities and the Marion County School Nurse Coalition—is the alarmingly high rates of childhood obesity in Marion County. A shared goal throughout all coalitions is to create system and environment changes that will help children live the healthiest life possible.

Schools are one of the most influential systems in the life of a child and thus a logical area to focus change initiatives. Classroom celebrations rose to the surface as a primary issue for Marion health coalitions to address. A single birthday celebration can result in large quantities of sugar consumed by students. Still, when surveyed, the vast majority of elementary teachers in Marion County were against policy changes limiting classroom celebrations.

Your Involvement is Key

Help is needed to further the steps already taken with regard to healthy school environments. Community members can get involved to advocate for school policies addressing healthy behaviors both inside and outside the classroom.

Ensuring the healthy future of today’s children is vital in reversing projections that the current generation of children will have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.

Solution

Since support for policy change was lacking, the coalitions opted to pursue the adoption of guidelines to suggest and support healthy options in classroom celebrations. A document entitled “Guidelines for Healthy Celebrations and Classroom Rewards” was created. Coalition members worked through several drafts to ensure suggested measures were in line with current health standards and best practices. The intention was for local schools to adopt the guidelines and implement them as routine practice in each of their buildings.



Results

The “Guidelines for Healthy Classroom Celebrations and Rewards” document was presented to area school boards in May, 2012 and a resolution in support of the guidelines was requested. Three Boards of Education voted to support the guidelines. As a result, more than 6,000 children in Marion County returned to school in the fall of 2012 with a greater ability to make healthy choices while celebrating in the classroom setting.

Implementation of the guidelines is in process. Some schools declared themselves “cupcake-free zones” while other schools have reported elimination of food-based classroom parties.



“I am privileged to work in a district where the staff and the school board support every effort to keep kids healthy, which in turn allows them to be better students.”

- Kelly Wagner, BSN, RN, NCSN, School Nurse, River Valley

Future Directions

Developing strong partnerships between public health and public school systems is key to creating a healthy community. Relationships locally have been strengthened by aligning agendas and being flexible in pursuit of “big picture” changes for one common goal: healthy, bright futures for our children.

Next steps include working together to address ways to make fundraising in Marion’s public school systems profitable, while focusing on healthy offerings. Additionally, physical activity offerings will be addressed through collaboration

with local non-profits, such as the Marion Family YMCA, to offer extra-curricular activities and after-school programs.

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Meigs County

Youth Action for a Healthy Community

Summary

Meigs County ranks 85th out of 88 counties in Ohio for overall health. Thirty-two percent of adults are obese and 44% of 3rd graders are overweight or obese in Meigs County, significantly higher than the state and national average for children. In efforts to change this statistic, the Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) community garden project has helped to create access to healthy foods for county residents in need. With the support of Judge Scott Powell of the Meigs County Juvenile Court, two new community gardens were installed in Syracuse and Pomeroy. These gardens involved 40 at-risk youths who volunteered to ensure that needy community members have access to fresh healthy produce.

Challenge

Low-income residents of Meigs County have limited access to affordable fresh fruits and vegetables. While there are numerous private plots for gardens in the county, most families receiving food assistance do not have the opportunity or resources to make their own gardens. This limits their access to and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables and subsequently increases their risk for chronic diseases. Therefore, the Meigs County CHC coalition embarked on implementing community garden projects to assist in filling the fresh fruits and vegetables gap for vulnerable residents in the county.

Solution

The CHC coalition assessed various community organizations to determine their readiness, capacity and willingness to implement a community garden. Based on the assessment, the Meigs County Juvenile Court Community Diversion program was selected to lead the implementation process. With funding from the Creating Healthy Communities Program, materials were acquired to implement two gardens, yielding a variety of vegetables in Syracuse and Pomeroy. Forty at-risk youths from the Community Diversion Program participated in preparing the soil, planting, seeding, tending the crops and harvesting for a total of more than 170 volunteer hours. The work on the gardens was coordinated by Mr. Ronnie Vance, Juvenile Officer.



Your Involvement is Key

CHC's main goal is to address chronic disease risk factors of poor nutrition, tobacco use and sedentary lifestyle through policy, systems and environmental change. Meigs County residents can get involved in CHC activities by contacting the Meigs County Health Department and participating in the CHC coalition activities. Promoting access to healthy food is just one way of reducing chronic diseases in the county. You can help prevent chronic disease by becoming involved in projects like community gardens, installation of playground equipment and more.



Results

As a result of hours of hard work, the gardens produced an immense amount of vegetables totaling more than 500 pounds. The adolescents harvested three varieties of cabbages, broccoli, brussels sprouts, and cauliflower. Other vegetables produced include zucchini and yellow squash, cucumbers, potatoes, two varieties of sweet corn, three varieties of peppers, tomatoes and green beans. Kale, turnip greens, collard greens, turnips and beets were harvested later in the fall. The garden project made significant impacts on two vulnerable demographics in the community, specifically, residents without access to fresh fruits and vegetables and 40 at-risk youths. The adolescents actively participated in starting and completing the project while acquiring work

and life skills through the program. Portions of the harvest were sent home with the youths as well as donated to the Mulberry Community Center Food Pantry run by Meigs Cooperative Parish.

“Many of the young people participating in our garden project felt a sense of achievement in doing something worthwhile to help their neighbors and community. They were also enthusiastic consumers of fresh vegetables, many for the first time.”

-Ronnie Vance, Juvenile Court Officer

Future Directions

The prevailing health situation in the county must serve as a wake-up call for community involvement and action. The ultimate goal is to have not only community gardens, but to also have gardens at schools and worksites tended by students and employees to highlight the importance of fresh fruits and vegetables for community health and wellness.

The Meigs County CHC coalition will continue to work on healthy eating, active living and tobacco-free lifestyle initiatives that are necessary in communities, workplaces, schools, and healthcare in order to prevent chronic diseases.

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Montgomery County

An Innovative Approach to Healthier School Meals

Summary

More than 25,000 students in Montgomery County are sampling more fruits and vegetables, new recipes, and eating healthier meals at school. The Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program partnered with Ohio Action for Healthy Kids to sponsor a workshop in March 2012 for more than 70 school food service professionals. The goal was to present practical ideas for meeting the new USDA school meal requirements. As a result, four large school districts with more than 25,000 total students implemented workshop ideas for healthier menus.



Challenge

In Montgomery County, 24% of children ages 2-14 are considered to be obese; while only 28% of children eat the recommended amount of 5+ servings of fruits and vegetables a day. In the underserved communities of East and Old North Dayton, it is hard for families to access and afford fresh produce.

Significant improvements in childhood nutrition could be seen with the passage of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which updates the school meal requirements for the first time in more than 15 years. Because many students eat one-to-two meals at school, this policy has the potential to impact healthy eating habits and childhood obesity. Although this policy is mandatory for schools participating in the National School Lunch Program, many schools have been slow to implement changes to the lunch menus. Barriers such as lack of administrative support, untrained food service staff, and tight budgets make the new policy seem overwhelming to some schools.

Your Involvement is Key

Immediate action must be taken to address these alarming unhealthy trends.

Reducing childhood obesity involves a long-term community commitment. The CHC program works to implement policy, systems, and environmental changes that are sustainable. Improving childhood nutrition through healthier schools meals is a step in the right direction, but involvement of parents, afterschool programs, sporting activities, and leaders in the community is critical for long-term positive outcomes.

Solution

To help overcome these barriers, CHC and Ohio Action for Healthy Kids sponsored a workshop titled "Simply Balanced: Nutritious School Lunches Made Easy." More than 70 school personnel from 21 school districts participated. Attendees heard from a Food Service Director from Cincinnati on their success with salad bars as a way to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables. The Ohio Department of Education gave detailed information on the new school meal pattern requirements. The workshop ended with a cooking demonstration and tasting of several recipes that had been "kid tested and approved." Participants left excited about the ideas that could be implemented at their schools to meet the new meal pattern requirements.



Results

Several schools have been successfully implementing ideas from the workshop. Of those surveyed, 56% indicated they now serve only 1% or skim milk and have increased fruit and vegetable offerings. Thirty percent of those surveyed offered a tasting of new menu items with great success. Dayton Public Schools and Carroll High School (CHS) like this idea because students become familiar with new recipes before it is served as a meal.

Recipe “make-overs” cuts calories while preserving taste. Forty-four percent of those surveyed said they tried a recipe from the workshop. For example, CHS, Northridge Local School District, and Kettering City Schools tried the

southwest ranch dressing which mixes low-fat ranch dressing with salsa and a small amount of Tabasco Chipotle Sauce. Students have loved this on both salads and wraps.

“I talk to the kids about healthy eating, remind them to eat their veggies and fruit, praise them for doing so, and give healthy rewards. I also try to influence our parent group to provide healthy snacks/incentives.”

- Dayton Public Schools Second Grade Teacher

Future Directions

In 2013, CHC will continue to provide resources and offer technical assistance to help schools implement the new USDA meal pattern requirements. The workshop in 2012 focused on the changes to lunch menus, but additional requirements for breakfast must be implemented starting the 2013-14 school year. Providing a network for sharing success stories will help school food service staff smoothly and successfully transition to the healthier meal guidelines.



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Richland County

Pounds of Produce and Bushels of Benefits through Community Gardening

Summary

Activities of the Raising Richland Community Garden Network with collaboration from the Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program and local funding resulted in the growth and expansion of community gardens throughout Richland County. Neighbors, schools, organizations, churches and community volunteers united in planting and harvesting hundreds of pounds of fresh produce during the summer of 2012. A wide variety of fruits and vegetables were shared with families, food pantries and meal programs benefiting residents who lack access to healthy food.



Challenge

Like many communities across the nation, Richland County experiences chronic disease as its leading cause of death. The incidence of diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and some cancers are directly related to lack of access to healthy foods and physical inactivity. A recent community health assessment showed:

- 73% of adults in Richland County were overweight or obese
- Only 6% of adults ate 5 or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables as recommended for a healthy diet

Access to fresh, healthy foods can be impacted by financial pressures, unemployment, and transportation difficulties to travel to a full service grocery store or farmers market. The availability of quick, inexpensive and often less healthy foods creates a default choice for many. Strategies to improve the availability and ease of consumption of fruits and vegetables are a necessity for our community.

Solution

To encourage the development of gardens, community partners have organized and hosted an annual Raising Richland Community Garden Summit. Held in the spring, this workshop educates, inspires and connects gardeners of all varieties. A garden grant program, funded by the Richland County Foundation, was developed by the North End Community Improvement Collaborative with support from its partners. This provided supplies for the creation or expansion of gardens. The Raising Richland Community Garden Network provided a forum for sharing of resources and talents and continues to offer on-going communication and learning opportunities.

Your Involvement is Key

A community garden is planted and harvested for the benefit of one or more families. The success of community gardens rests in the sharing of resources and talents.

Consider the assets you have in land, labor or materials. Join the movement to make fresh healthy food an easy choice for everyone.

Currently a gardener? Consider planting an extra row and sharing with neighbors, friends or with a local food pantry.



Results

The annual Community Garden Summit, garden grant program and activities of the Raising Richland Community Garden Network have led to the expansion of community gardening efforts throughout the county. The number of gardens has grown from 17 to more than 26 gardens in 2012. Contacts for the Raising Richland Network have more than doubled to more than 280 interested gardeners and community members.

Survey results from gardeners who received grant funds in 2012 all documented the sharing of garden produce with local families, church members or community food programs. More than 2,000 pounds of produce and an additional 1,250 ears of sweet corn were harvested.

Less tangible benefits from community gardening were also reported. Survey results showed that 90% of respondents believed that their garden did something positive for their community, and that the garden brought people together in a cooperative effort. Fifty percent of the garden organizers indicated that gardening led them to consume more fruits and vegetables, and 80% reported increased physical activity because of their gardening.

“What a blessing to be part of a community who shows how much they care. Gardening is hard work, but what a privilege to be able to plant, grow and harvest fresh produce for families in need.”

-Patricia Constance, Village of Lucas Resident

Future Directions

The whole community benefits from community gardening. Future plans to support gardens include:

- The Third Annual Raising Richland Community Garden Summit: Thursday, March 14, 2013
- Pursuit of grants and local funding
- Outreach to schools and businesses with opportunities for volunteerism or the creation of new gardens
- Long-term planning and collaboration to enhance the local food system



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Summit County

Intergenerations CATCH Some Fun

Summary

In an effort to combat the increasing risk of chronic disease in children, Summit County's Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program hosted a workshop to educate child care centers, after-school programs, and summer enrichment programs on the importance of incorporating healthy eating and physical activity into their daily curriculum. As a result of the training, three local centers have incorporated strategies to help children have fun while exercising and making healthy food choices.



Challenge

Childhood obesity has tripled during the past 30 years. Children who are overweight are more likely to be overweight as adults and have a 4-in-5 chance of becoming obese. Obesity contributes to preventable chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and heart disease. Children who are obese are at risk of developing these conditions in adulthood.

The Department of Health and Human Services Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommends that children and adolescents get 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Sedentary behavior is attributed to increased screen time (TV, computer and video games) and contributes to the decrease in physical activity, which increases the risk of obesity. Studies have shown that an increasing number of children are less active than what health experts recommend, and that characteristics of the childcare environment have been observed to be associated with decreased physical activity in children.

Solution

Summit County's Creating Healthy Communities program hosted an all-day workshop on the evidence-based program Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) Kids Club to educate child care providers on the importance of incorporating physical activity and healthy eating into their daily curriculum.

CATCH Kids Club (CKC) is specifically designed for after-school and summer youth programs for children in grades K-8. The overall goal of the program is to instill long-term behavior changes in children, subsequently decreasing the risk of becoming obese or developing a chronic disease.

Your Involvement is Key

A recent study shows that kids who are physically active achieve better grades.

- Be a role model. Rather than send children out to play, join them!
- Look for activities that are fun, include all participants, and increase heart rate

Ask if your pre-school, school, after-school program or community center has a policy that:

- Limits sugar-sweetened beverages
- Serves healthy meals and snacks
- Requires daily physical activity

Ask for CATCH Kids Club in your community!
Visit www.catchinfo.org for details.



To help get started with these initiatives, three participating after-school centers received CKC supplies including balls, hoops, a parachute, bean bags, a blender, an electric skillet, and measuring utensils.

Results

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) hosted a 90-minute program for six weeks. Seventeen residents from three generations learned the importance of healthy eating and physical activity. The program is now being expanded to include Shopping Matters, a grocery store tour conducted for low-income adults by non-profit groups.

At another center, Kidspace, 17 K-6th graders are now participating in more teacher-initiated physical activities and pre-school teachers have included dancing in their daily curriculum for 20 students. Fresh fruit smoothies are served and lesson plans allow children to make their own lunch from menus that include more fresh produce, whole grains and 1% milk. Cooking is next!

The CKC also enhanced the Akron Urban League's summer youth program. The 10-week camp runs from 9 a.m.–3 p.m. daily where 95 (5–12 year old) campers rotate between 45-minute academic classes, life skills, art, dance and physical education. As a result of the CKC program, an additional 30 minutes of physical activity has been added, 1% milk is served, and salsa with baked tortilla chips is a new snack favorite.

“I was very pleased to see such positive interaction between the youth and the older adults. It seems the adults were every bit as interested and involved in the program as the kids.”

- Inese Alvarez, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Director, CATCH trainee

Future Directions

This serves as a call to action to make physical activity and healthy food choices a priority with healthy weight and lowered risk of preventable chronic disease as one of the outcomes.

By promoting healthy eating and physical activity in child care, school, after-school, and community settings, a healthy environment is established. Adopting obesity prevention policies and/or guidelines will be encouraged once trainees have the opportunity to review the effectiveness of the CKC program in their centers.

These policies and/or guidelines can include:

- An increase of physical activity in lesson plans
- Serving healthy foods like fruit and vegetables for snacks and celebrations
- Water as the beverage of choice rather than sugar-sweetened drinks
- Menus that contain whole grains, low-fat dairy and fresh produce

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Trumbull County

The Students are Customers at Warren City School's Cafeteria

Summary

Well-nourished children make better learners. Many studies show a direct link between nutritional intake and academic performance. For example, increased participation in breakfast alone improved daily attendance, reduced tardiness, improved test scores, and was associated with better classroom participation. The Trumbull County Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program has been a catalyst for change for fresh food access in schools and communities.



Challenge

Poor nutrition is the norm in many Warren City homes. Children and parents expect the same types of foods in the schools as at home, usually processed and few fruits and vegetables. Daily participation was down in the cafeteria with less than 30% (350) of high school students eating school lunches. Obesity is on the increase with 38.5 % of the third graders' BMI above the 85th percentile. School nurses reported an increased number of students with type 2 diabetes. If something is not done to avert the problem of poor nutrition, grade scores will continue to drop, diabetes and asthma rates will increase and chronic disease will be on the rise. Changing societal norms is difficult especially in low-income communities where healthy foods are not readily accessible or affordable.

Solution

Trumbull County CHC program formed a coalition of local and state school food service advocates to identify strategies to make school meals more nutritious yet appealing to the students and staff. Annual school food service conferences have been held to help food service staff make improvements in food preparation and marketing. In addition, Warren City schools hired a chef to train staff on how to prepare fresh vegetables and modify recipes to meet the current USDA school meal patterns. The school partnered with the Community Victory Garden and Ohio State University-Extension for additional fresh produce and contracted with Lake to River Food Co-op to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables.

Your Involvement is Key

Parents: Insist that your schools provide nutritious food in all school venues.

Coaches: Get the best performance out of your athlete by advocating healthy pre-game meals.

Teachers: Well-nourished brains perform better. Advocate for breakfast and lunch participation.

Administrators: Work with local producers to engage them in the school food buying process.

Community Members: Lead by example. Offer foods at all community venues including after school programs, sports, summer camps and faith-based events.



Results

After the food service conference, participants networked with other successful lunch programs to help implement their own initiatives. As a result 85% (11,000) of high school students are eating lunch, a 50% increase. The al a-carte line that offered many unhealthy options was eliminated. New chef salads meet the USDA nutrition standards, and the lunch period was extended to a full 30 minutes to allow time for students to eat their healthy meals.

The Community Victory Garden supplied more than 1,000 pounds of fresh produce from their salsa garden for the school. *The Tribune Chronicle*, a local newspaper, published a positive story praising the cafeteria for using the garden as a source of food for it's school lunches.

“I don't buy into the notion that, ‘they won't eat this (in regards to the new healthy foods).”

- Lauren Postlethwait, Warren City Schools Food Service Director

Future Directions

The short-term goal is to continue to supplement school lunches with locally grown produce. The long-term goal is for Warren City Schools to develop policies for healthy school celebrations, fund-raisers and pre-sports meals.

The Creating Healthy Communities program will help school districts to accomplish that goal by providing training and technical assistance on the local level.



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Washington County

Healthy Meals and Active Play Are Effective Tools For Appalachian Preschools

Summary

Healthful changes in Washington County’s preschools are having a positive impact on children’s health behaviors. Children are eager to sample new foods and excited to spend more time outside engaged in new activities with their teachers. Although it may take a while to impact rates of obesity or chronic disease, more than 100 preschoolers are now consuming more fruits, vegetables and whole grains, consuming less foods of little nutritional value, and developing new physical activity habits that will lay the foundation for healthier lives.

Challenge

Despite nutrition guidelines set by USDA, unhealthy foods continue to find their way into Washington County’s preschools, where one in four children are overweight or obese. Although preschools offer children adequate time for unstructured, indoor play, little time is devoted to teacher-led physical activities and outdoor play.

Advance a few grades, and Washington County’s school nurses are witnessing the progression of disease as they are discovering high blood pressure in a portion of the county’s elementary-aged children, of which 40% are overweight or obese. Some of these children are also demonstrating early indicators of diabetes, with a few having already been diagnosed with pre-diabetes and Type 2 diabetes.

Solution

To reverse progression of chronic disease in children, the Washington County Health Department’s Creating Healthy Community (CHC) program partnered with the Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development to offer the “Healthy Children, Healthy Weights” training to preschool administrators and teachers. Training sessions included healthy activities, healthy eating, healthy growing, healthy menus and healthy policies. Following the training, Washington County Health Department CHC staff worked with preschool administrators to implement new health policies to improve the nutritional content of menus and increase the quantity and quality of physical activities within the county’s preschools.



Your Involvement is Key

Although obesity and chronic disease may be daunting issues to confront, we all must accept our roles in reducing its impact. Creating policies, systems, and environmental changes in our schools are viable solutions. Every school in America has room to improve the nutritional quality of the food it serves or the quality and amount of physical activity of its students participate.

Whether you are an administrator, teacher, or parent, you can be an advocate for creating healthy learning environments for children in your community.



Results

As a result of the “Healthy Children, Healthy Weights” training, Your Kids First Learning Center in Belpre and Pioneer Pete Daycare in Marietta have made the following changes:

- Increased fruit and vegetable consumption by five servings per week
- Eliminated pre-fried foods from their menus
- Banned sugar-sweetened beverages
- Replaced 50% of the grains they serve with whole grains

Both facilities now offer additional teacher-led physical activities that are facilitated through the preschool

Coordinated Approach To Child Health (CATCH) curriculum. Your Kids First Learning Center has also developed an outdoor exploration area. This new play area is home to butterfly, tomato, strawberry, and sensory gardens; willow, bean, and morning glory arch tunnels, and a plexi-glass art easel.

“We are always wanting to go above and beyond and offer the best to the children in our care. With the rise of childhood obesity, we know how important it is to implement healthy habits early.”

- Shannon Winland, Administrator at Your Kids First Learning Center

Future Directions

The Washington County Health Department’s Creating Healthy Communities program and the Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development are committed to fostering their partnerships with the county’s preschools in the years to come. Planning is underway to offer a second health policy training in 2013. The training will lead to additional policy, system, and environmental changes that will impact the health of hundreds more children in high-need county preschools.



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Statewide Efforts

The **Creating Healthy Communities (CHC)** program at the Ohio Department of Health is funded from the CDC's Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant. Through 16 counties in Ohio, both rural and urban, CHC is helping communities, schools, worksites, and faith-based institutions to become places where healthier choices are easier choices. Through policies, systems, and environmental changes, CHC is working to increase opportunities for physical activity, improve access and affordability to healthy food, and assure tobacco-free living to improve the health of Ohioans and prevent chronic disease statewide.



www.healthyohioprogram.org/CHC



Ohio
Department of Health

John R. Kasich, Governor | Theodore E. Wymyslo, MD, Director