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MINNEAPOLIS Health IN THE CITY



A quarterly update from the Minneapolis Health Department

Spring 2015

Pop-up Parks provide positive youth summer activities

If you hear music, laughter and see teens hanging around with smiles on their faces this summer, a Pop-up Park may have arrived in your neighborhood. Pop-up Parks interrupt known hotspots for crime or other negative behaviors by providing youth with pro-social activities. In its second year, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the City of Minneapolis' Blueprint for Youth Violence Prevention will partner to host the pop-ups in Minneapolis neighborhoods. The program will expand in partnership with the Youth Coordinating Board's Minneapolis Youth Congress to include additional summer youth events downtown and at various festivals.

The Pop-up Park tent will literally pop up without advanced notice in neighborhoods that are particularly challenged with street safety and transportation issues, and burst with music, art, games, crafts, dance and more. Teens will be encouraged to join in these events along with their own community gatherings. Each event will feature fun activities, and most importantly, caring, energetic adults to assure that youth are safe and engaged. Beginning in late June, the parks will be in neighborhoods six days a week, typically from 4 to 9 p.m., or during designated times for festivals and events. Outreach will be done to encourage youth ages 12 to 17 to participate and to bring their friends.

Funding is provided through the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention, a project of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs. Minneapolis is one of 15 cities chosen as a member city of The Forum. For more information about pop-up parks or the Minneapolis Blueprint for Youth Violence, contact Sasha Cotton at 612-673-2729 or sasha.cotton@minneapolismn.gov.

School Based Clinics improving services through youth input

The Minneapolis Health Department's School Based Clinics (SBC) are finishing their second year of facilitating the Teen Health Empowerment (THE) Council, a citywide youth advisory board for the SBCs. THE Council members provide recommendations for teen-friendly clinic services. Members meet regularly and are trained as peer educators on a variety of health issues including sexual health and mental health, and educate friends and the broader community while serving as health advocates for the clinics.

This past year, THE Council presented findings from their secret "clinic shopping," which reinforced the importance of providing a warm, welcoming space in clinics, and how valuable relationships with clinic staff are to building trust with teens. They also discussed the importance of privacy, especially in the waiting room and during the clinic check-in process. Other council activities included presenting SBC information to the Minneapolis City Council; appearing on KMOJ radio to talk about the importance of testing for sexually transmitted infections; and participating in a leadership summit hosted by the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women.

This summer, the SBCs are planning to host three current members of THE Council as Step-Up Interns to continue the great work they have been doing during the school year. The interns will help with council planning and recruitment, social media, youth violence prevention events, and have a chance to build their leadership skills and public health experience. For more information, contact Coral Gardner at 612-673-5446 or coral.garner@minneapolismn.gov.

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Public Health Week focuses on the effect place has on health

This year's theme for Public Health Week was "Healthy Where You Are." Minneapolis celebrated by highlighting the impact of place on health. For example, there have been persistent geographic patterns of poorer health in south central and north Minneapolis, which also have higher concentrations of poverty. From April 6 to 12, the Health Department highlighted citywide programs that make it easier for people in these communities to become healthier.

These efforts have worked to increase easy access to healthy foods and establish physical amenities to encourage more physical activity. Others have mitigated health hazards by improving housing to eliminate toxins, monitoring local air quality, and helping businesses convert to less polluting practices. Youth-based programs are providing better access to health care through school based clinics and subsidized care in community clinics, while connecting youth with opportunities to become contributing adults. Outreach has included working with immigrant communities to help them operate successful and safe food establishments; form partnerships to build community resiliency; and outreach and support to new families.

Public Health Week activities featured yoga classes in the City Hall Rotunda (see picture below), a resource fair, and a Public Health Hero Awards ceremony. The awards recognized individuals and organizations that are making a significant contribution to advancing the Health Department's goals (see box for this year's award recipients).



2015 Public Health Hero Awards

Betsy Bartek of The Family Partnership for her work towards A Healthy Start to Life and Learning

Ricardo McCurley, Stephanie Hankerson, and Charlene Sundermann of Southeast Como Improvement Association for their work towards A Strong Urban Public Health Infrastructure

Princess Titus, Michelle Horwitz, and Tasha Powell of Appetite for Change for their work towards Healthy Weight and Smoke-Free Living

Dr. Phoung Do, Dr. Emily Pietig, Carla McMorris, Juan Alva, Jeff Vartleson, and Sarah Wovcha of Children's Dental Services for their work towards Thriving Youth and Young Adults

Minneapolis Highrise Representative Council and Active Living Advisory Committee for their work towards A Healthy Place to Live

Latino Economic Development Center for their work towards Safe Places to Eat, Swim, and Stay

Environmental Initiative for their work towards A Healthy Environment

Additionally the Health Department recognized four Public Health Champions in Daily Life who make a profound impact on the lives of Minneapolis residents: **Steve Knutson, Neighborhood Health Source; Tim Crumley, CommonBond; and Mishka Vertin and Mike Jurasits, Mile in My Shoes.** For more information, contact Gretchen Musicant at 612-673-3955 or gretchen.musicant@minneapolismn.gov.

2015 PeaceMaker Awards

This year, in partnership with Minneapolis Public Schools and PeaceMaker Minnesota, the Health Department hosted the third annual PeaceMaker Awards ceremony at Urban Venture's Colin Powell Center. The cornerstone of National Youth Violence Prevention Week (March 23-27), the PeaceMaker Award recognizes youth and adults doing exceptional work to promote peace and non-violence in schools across Minneapolis. Seventeen awards were given out, with four awards in the amount of \$1,000 each given through the generous sponsorship of PeaceMaker Minnesota. This year's winners included one youth, Dijon McCain, from Henry High School, and three staff: Elisabeth Geschiere from Washburn High School; Jacy Hildreth from Hope Academy; and Abdul Wright from Best Academy. To learn more about PeaceMaker Minnesota, visit <http://peacemakermn.org>.

URBAN HEALTH AGENDA: ReThink Your Drink, Every Sip Counts!

When people think about their diet, they generally think about the food they eat. Yet beverages make up a significant part of a diet and impact weight and health. Experts have identified sugary drinks as major contributors to poor diet and rising obesity rates. Americans are now consuming about 300 more calories a day with almost half of these calories coming from sugary drinks. Consumption in children and adolescents has increased as well, with sugary drinks being the largest source of added sugars in their diet.

While almost all Americans consume sugary drinks, low-income populations and communities of color are more likely to regularly consume sugary drinks and are at a higher risk for obesity and other related chronic diseases. To address this health disparity, the Health Department partnered with five community organizations to implement a healthier beverage initiative called ReThink Your Drink, Every Sip Counts: Hmong American Mutual Assistance Association, Indigenous Peoples Task Force, Minneapolis American Indian Center, St. Mary's Health Clinics, and Neighborhood Hub. In their respective communities, each organization is raising awareness about sugary drinks and increasing the availability of healthier beverages in different settings. These efforts will start to reach the Hmong, American Indian, Latino, and African American communities. Due to the success of this

initiative at a grassroots level, the Health Department is integrating healthier beverage messaging into other Health Department projects with youth, restaurants, clinics, and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

In the coming months, to expand awareness raising efforts, the Health Department is launching ReThink Your Drink this Summer, Every Sip Counts! - a summer campaign focused on empowering all Minneapolis residents to rethink their drink choices and choose healthier beverages such as Minneapolis tap water, low-fat milk, and 100% juices over sugary drinks.

This project is funded through the Statewide Health Improvement Program, Minnesota Department of Health. For more information, contact Vish Vasani at 612-673-3861 or vish.vasani@minneapolismn.gov.



HEALTHY CITY UPDATES:

New video helps residents identify lead poisoning hazards

Lead paint is poisonous and especially harmful to children who can suffer from damage to the brain and nervous system that may slow a child's growth, damage hearing, cause aggressive behavior problems, reduce IQ, and make it harder to concentrate or do well in school. Since 82% of Minneapolis housing was built before lead paint was banned, lead poisoning is a significant public health issue. Just last year, 253 children in Minneapolis had lead poisoning. But the good news is that lead poisoning is entirely preventable. Now, the Health Department has produced a video to help home owners identify lead paint hazards in older structures and how to work safely with lead during property maintenance. The video is available online in English, Hmong, Somali and Spanish at: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/health/homes/index.htm>.

Keeping Inner-City Childcare Safe program

The Keeping Inner-City Childcare Safe (KICS) program helps keep children safer by eliminating structural health and safety issues in home daycare settings. Traditionally, KICS has focused on replacing defective roofs, addressing tripping hazards

such as crumbling or uneven concrete steps, removing radon gas from the home, and creating safer, larger play areas. Now, the program will expand to reduce airborne allergens by educating daycare providers about the link between poor air quality and asthma. In addition, participating daycares are provided with air purifiers and air filters for furnaces. Through this HUD-sponsored grant, daycare providers will be able to better focus on their work to educate pre-school children and ensure they are school ready.

Older Americans Month Celebration

Each May, the Administration for Community Living celebrates Older Americans Month to recognize their contributions to the nation. On May 12, the [UCare Skyway Senior Center](#) hosted this annual celebration with food, fun and games. In honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the Older Americans Act, this year's theme, Get into the Act, focuses on how older adults are taking charge of their health, getting engaged in their communities, and making a positive impact in the lives of others. This annual celebration provides an opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of community engagement as a tool for enhancing the wellbeing of older adults and preventing elder abuse. The Minneapolis City Council also sponsored a resolution in honor of Older Americans Month.

Staff Updates:

Living our Values Award Winners—each quarter Health Department and other city employees are recognized for improving community health by meeting Health Department values.

Bob Becker: Invest in a Healthier Community. Working with local, state and federal partners, Bob devised a system to identify and eliminate many food safety hazards at the MLB's All Star Game last July, which led to not a single food borne illness call during the event week.

Charlene Muzyka: Exercise Leadership in Public Health and Engage with Communities. Not only did she successfully design and implement the Healthy Communities Assessment Tool to monitor the physical, social and economic conditions of Minneapolis communities in specific neighborhoods, but she also did a great job in managing the data collection and determining the indicators.

Lynn Rychly, Finance Department: Quality Inspires our Work. As the Health Department's "go-to" person for grant finance information, Lynn deftly guides staff through budget planning activities and expertly navigates the federal electronic payment and financial reporting systems to ensure staff work goes uninterrupted.

Paul Rebman: Engaging with Communities. As an AmeriCorps VISTA placement, Paul has quickly become an integral part of the Youth Violence Prevention team by rebooting a hospital-based violence prevention program through engaging critical communities and agencies to create a resource list for youth victims of assault.

Oliviah Walker: Exercise Leadership in Public Health. In her tireless work to establish the Native Youth Workers Circle, Oliviah has helped youth workers better serve the Native American community by forming this collaborative so that local and statewide organizations can improve their services to Native youth and families.

Departing Employees

Charlene Muzyka has returned to Winnipeg after almost three years with the Health Department. During her time, she served as Healthy Start program evaluator and co-investigator for the Focus on Father research project and led the Healthy Communities Transformation Initiative.

New Staff

Welcome to **Christine McCune-Zierath** who is a new Lead Risk Assessor on the Healthy Homes team. She has spent the past several years working in Special Education in St. Paul.

Kate Boyle-Steed has joined the School Based Clinics as a Public Health Specialist I.

New interns

Welcome to new seasonal staff and interns: Nicklaus Koreen, Brittny Douglas, Cole Thompson, Hawa Fofana, Jane Catherine Anderson, Johnathan Boettcher, Samuel Wondimu, Urban Scholar and Jessica Jensen.

Gretchen Musicant, Health Commissioner

For reasonable accommodations or alternative formats please contact the Minneapolis Health Department at 612-673-2301 or email health@minneapolismn.gov. People who are deaf or hard of hearing can use a relay service to call 311 at 612-673-3000.



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