



NRPA ACHIEVE Case Studies

Successful Practices
for Building Healthier
Communities

SEPTEMBER 2010



National Recreation
and Park Association

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THE NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION

(NRPA) is pleased to present *NRPA ACHIEVE Case Studies: Successful Practices for Building Healthier Communities*.

This publication documents successful practices that communities across the country have implemented to promote health and wellness initiatives through ACHIEVE (Action Communities for Health, Innovation, and EnVironmental change). These communities are funded through NRPA by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Healthy Communities Program. It is our hope that other park and recreation agencies can learn from these practices to create positive behavior changes and improve the health of people living in their communities.

The purpose of ACHIEVE is to bring together local leaders and stakeholders to build healthier communities. ACHIEVE promotes leadership for health and wellness initiatives through policy, systems, and environmental change strategies. Efforts such as eliminating tobacco use and promoting physical activity and healthy eating reduce the risks associated with chronic diseases

such as obesity, diabetes, arthritis, cardiovascular disease, stroke, and cancer. ACHIEVE teams develop coalitions of community leaders representing schools, businesses, public health agencies, municipal and county governments, and other key policymakers to plan and implement strategies that address the health issues that are most relevant to their communities.

Since 2009, NRPA has awarded ACHIEVE grants to 20 park and recreation agencies. These agencies have generated numerous successful strategies in a short time, such as:

- ▶ Improving school food policies to make healthy choices available for lunches and snacks;
- ▶ Adopting worksite wellness policies that promote healthy lifestyle choices for staff and the community;
- ▶ Establishing smoke-free environments in parks;
- ▶ Establishing farmers' markets;
- ▶ Creating community gardens; and
- ▶ Establishing policies that create more walkable and bikeable communities to promote physical activity and broader access to nutritious foods.

This publication describes some of the successful strategies undertaken by the 10 communities that were funded in 2009 by NRPA. The strategies encompass a wide range of efforts, reflecting the different ways the communities have addressed chronic health problems. Each chapter features case studies of two major ACHIEVE efforts from the first year of ACHIEVE and additional efforts in progress. Each chapter also offers lessons learned about best practices for working collaboratively to make policy, systems, and environmental changes for a healthier community.

For more information on ACHIEVE or to contact an ACHIEVE community, please visit www.nrpa.org/achieve or www.achievecommunities.org.



National Recreation
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ACHIEVE CASE STUDIES GLOSSARY

Glossary terms are noted in italics on first reference in each community's chapter.

CHART: Community Health Action Response Teams. A team composed of local community leaders and stakeholders who plan and oversee policy, systems, and environmental changes. CHARTs generally are led by the ACHIEVE coaches and provide oversight for all local ACHIEVE efforts.

CHANGE: Community Health Assessment and Group Evaluation. A CDC assessment tool that provides a community snapshot of the policy, systems, and environmental change strategies currently in place and helps identify areas for improvements. For more information, see <http://www.cdc.gov/healthycommunitiesprogram/tools/change/downloads.htm>.

Complete Streets: An urban planning concept of designing or upgrading roadways that considers the access needs of all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, public transportation riders, and people of all ages and abilities. For more information, see www.completestreets.org.

Coaches: The designated local ACHIEVE affiliates' representatives who provide leadership for the CHART. For NRPA's ACHIEVE communities, the coaches include (at a minimum) one representative from the local parks and recreation agency, and one local leader representing another sector of the community, such as schools, worksites, or healthcare.

Community Action Plan (CAP): A "living document" created by the ACHIEVE community that provides an overview of the policy, systems, and environmental changes that are planned for implementation in the community. The CAP lays out all of the community's objectives and the action steps the CHART plans to take to accomplish those objectives. The CAP generally is created to address improvement areas identified in the CHANGE assessment.

Policy Change: Strategies that rely on the passage of new laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols, or procedures that are designed to guide or influence behavior. Influencing policies increases the likelihood that the change will be sustainable and institutionalized. Policy change may occur at a legislative, community, or organizational level.

Systems Change: Strategies that impact all elements, including social norms of an organization, institution, or system. These may include a policy or environmental change strategy. Policies are often the driving force behind systems change.

Environmental Change: Strategies that are designed to influence the physical, social, or economic factors that affect people's behavior. These types of changes may include structural improvements to the built environment, added services, positive changes in attitudes or behaviors, and the presence of financial incentives or disincentives to encourage a desired behavior.

Food Desert: A community or neighborhood that has little access to healthy foods. Food deserts may be served by fast food restaurants or convenience stores, but typically have few or no sources of fresh produce, such as grocery stores or farmers' markets. Lack of access to healthy foods may be due to a variety of issues, including the distance of stores from residential areas, lack of public transportation, and insufficient incomes to purchase fresh foods.

Safe Routes to Schools: An initiative that encourages communities to make improvements to streets, sidewalks, roadways, and other transportation elements that allow children to safely walk or bike to school. For more information, see www.saferoutesinfo.org.

**Please see Glossary on page 4 for definitions of terms in italics.*

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Chicago

Humboldt Park & West Humboldt Park

ILLINOIS

Located on the northwest side of Chicago, Humboldt Park and West Humboldt Park are two of Chicago's 77 officially designated neighborhoods. The 3.6 square-mile densely populated Humboldt Park neighborhood includes the 207-acre Humboldt Park. Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of the 100,000 residents are Hispanic (specifically Puerto Rican), and 24 percent are African-American. In 2008, the median household income was a relatively low \$35,100, and 28 percent of individuals lived below poverty level. In the adjoining West Humboldt Park, also known as Kells Park, the majority of residents (98 percent) are African-American. In 2008, the mean household income in West Humboldt Park was a relatively low \$27,230, and 40 percent of individuals lived below poverty level. The Chicago Park District, which is administered independently from the City of Chicago, applied for ACHIEVE to focus on both neighborhoods.

Obesity and diabetes are the major chronic health problems in the two neighborhoods. A large proportion of adults (34 percent) and children (50 percent) are obese. The diabetes rate among Puerto Rican adults in the neighborhood is 21 percent, which is nearly double the U.S. average. Most residents do not engage in adequate physical activity to maintain good health, according to a 2002-2003 Sinai Urban Health Institute obesity survey. Ninety percent of residents reported that they lived near a park, but about two-thirds said that they did not feel safe walking in their community because of crime and lack of safe physical access. The majority of children in the neighborhood participated in only two days of physical education per week in school, few played on an organized sports team, and nearly half spent more than three hours each day in front of a television, video game, or computer. The neighborhoods previously had received grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and other organizations to work on reducing childhood obesity.

**Please see Glossary on page 4
for definitions of terms in italics.*

► CASE STUDY 1

Promoting Physical Activity Through Safe Park Zones

To address the communities' high obesity and diabetes rates, the Humboldt Park and West Humboldt Park CHART set a goal of piloting at Humboldt Park the implementation of a state law that established safe park zones. The CHART is working to implement the 2006 State of Illinois Safe Routes to Schools and Parks law, which requires lowering speed limits to 20 miles per hour around schools and parks, and increases fees for traffic violations. The safe zones law is enforced by city police around schools because safe school zone and 20 m.p.h. signs are posted on the streets. The law generally is not enforced around Humboldt Park because there are no slower speed limit signs posted.

Implementing the safe park zones law around Humboldt Park would create safe access for bicyclists and pedestrians, including seniors, families with young children, and people in wheelchairs or with other mobility challenges. The CHART believes that safer park zones will encourage more people to become physically active in the parks.

Safe access to Humboldt Park presents multiple challenges: The park is bordered on four sides by major urban boulevards; on the north side, for example, vehicles in four lanes of traffic travel between 40 and 50 miles per hour in a posted 30 m.p.h. zone along North Avenue/ State Highway 64. Cars also tend to speed on Sacramento Boulevard, which bisects the park. The CHART and one of its partners, the Active Transportation Alliance, are working with the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), which oversees State Highway 64, to install safe zone and 20 m.p.h. signs and step up enforcement of the safe park zone law. IDOT has agreed to design the signs, which CHART members believe will support police efforts to enforce the law more rigorously.

The Humboldt Park pilot effort is considered a model for the city: Successful safe park zone improvements such as signs and bike lanes would be retained as permanent infrastructure changes to the streets surrounding

The CHART* has four coaches who lead efforts in four policy areas. Two coaches work for the Chicago Park District: Colleen Lammel-Harmon, wellness manager, and executive director of the Mayor's Fitness Council, and Jackie Payne, ACHIEVE wellness program specialist. The other coaches are Edward Boone, community organizer for the Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children (CLOCC), and Lucy Gomez-Feliciano, the RWJF's Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities Chicago Partnership director. The CHART also includes representatives of the Chicago Department of Public Health, the Chicago Public Schools, the Humboldt Park Advisory Council, the West Humboldt Park Development Council, and the Active Transportation Alliance.



Humboldt Park and on Sacramento Boulevard, and would ideally spur implementation of safe park zones around all Chicago Park District parks and recreation facilities.

On a larger scale, the CHART is working with the City of Chicago to integrate safe park zones with the city's adopted *Complete Streets* policy and its Pedestrian Plan, which is being developed. The CHART is advocating that parks become a priority for Complete Streets. This means that parks would be designated as a priority for traffic-calming efforts such as slower posted speed limits and infrastructure changes such as speed bumps, special crossing signals, lighting, and extended crosswalk intervals. The Chicago Park District would work closely with CDOT on right-of-ways around parks and park facilities to ensure safe access for pedestrians, cyclists, and people with wheelchairs, strollers, and other modes of transportation. Meanwhile, the CHART has secured a "soft" commitment to include parks within the Chicago Pedestrian Plan, which will create a framework for right-of-ways around parks and will designate parks as priority spaces for improvements.

► CASE STUDY 2

Improving Nutrition in the Parks

The Humboldt Park and West Humboldt Park CHART launched an effort to combat obesity and diabetes by setting a goal of offering 100-percent healthy choices in the vending machines at all Chicago Park District facilities. In 2009, as ACHIEVE was starting, the district's wellness team requested that the district establish a new contract that would require vending machines to sell only healthy food items.

The wellness team, led by ACHIEVE Coach Colleen Lammel-Harmon, presented research from the American Heart Association and the National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN) that healthy vending could be profitable as well as beneficial to the community's health and wellness.

Soon after, the contract covering vending machines at 250 park district buildings expired, and the machines were removed. The district wanted to take advantage

of being between contracts, and tried to create a new contract requiring healthier items in new vending machines for the same facilities. But the district's permit department said the CHART would have to write a contract to cover all 556 Chicago parks comprehensively because it was a policy change that would have to apply citywide for equity reasons. This new contract requirement became effective when the previous vending contract expired and was not renewed.

To prepare the new contract, the ACHIEVE coaches consulted with NPLAN about legal language regarding policies on healthy beverage and food items. The coaches also researched healthy food guidelines through the Alliance for Healthier Generations, a partner of the American Heart Association, and developed a draft contract that spelled out requirements companies would have to meet regarding healthier foods. One of the ACHIEVE coaches received approval from the city for a new contract, and in August 2010 issued a request for proposals (RFP) for vending companies that required the provision of 100-percent healthy food items. The RFP provided specifications with limitations on calories, fat, sugar, and sodium. The district hopes to have a new contract signed with a vending company by late fall 2010.

The ACHIEVE coaches also have begun promoting the new vending machine policy and providing nutrition education sessions at park district staff meetings. In their first education session at Humboldt Park, for example, ACHIEVE coaches instructed the staff on how to read labels and provided information on why some snacks are healthier than others. They also provided data on the incidence of obesity and diabetes in the community, and offered taste tests of healthier snack items that will be offered in the new vending machines.

The feedback from park staff has helped the ACHIEVE coaches realize that they need to do more nutrition education in the community, because many people have not been exposed to healthier food options. "They can relate to a Snickers, but they've never tried a fruit crisp bar" with reduced sugar and whole grains, says ACHIEVE Coach Jackie Payne. The feedback from kids who have been offered healthier snacks in the park district's after-school programs has been positive, she says, and has helped ACHIEVE coaches realize that kids could be instrumental in convincing their parents to eat healthier foods.



ADDITIONAL ACHIEVE EFFORTS: Community Gardens

The Humboldt Park and West Humboldt Park CHART is collaborating to install two community gardens that will demonstrate how to grow fresh produce. The neighborhoods are considered *food deserts*. There are no comprehensive grocery stores, local produce stores do not have fresh high-quality items, and farmers' markets and fruit sales are held only occasionally. One of the community gardens being constructed on a half-acre plot in Humboldt Park is a work project and learning opportunity for the local alternative high school, Albizu Campos. The school's principal, Carlos De Jesus, began the project two years ago and has worked to secure a garden permit and raise money to build and plant the garden. The garden planter boxes were installed in the summer of 2010, and planting was scheduled for late summer. The other garden, located in West Humboldt Park on a city site that was secured with help from a dozen community groups, is in the planning stage.



Lessons Learned

ACHIEVE coaches in Humboldt Park and West Humboldt Park offer the following observations and advice:

- ▶ Working from the outside to help make change in tightly knit communities requires adapting to the cultural norms of the community and building trust before you can be effective. Working with the mostly Puerto Rican Humboldt Park neighborhood, for example, required CHART members to become familiar with the traditional foods and customs of residents, and to do outreach through advisory councils and other neighborhood organizations.
- ▶ In some policy areas such as worksite wellness, people need to be convinced that behavior changes are essential for better health. Employers cannot require employees to change their behavior or direct them to eat or not eat certain foods because of union laws and other employment safeguards. Policy efforts that promote healthier choices also are more effective if worksite or community leaders lend their support.
- ▶ Policy changes are more credible within the community if the models or policy language come from national organizations such as the National Heart Association and the American Medical Association, whose job it is to advocate or do research on health issues. Parks and recreation agencies generally do not have staff to do analysis or write policy guidelines.

Davenport, IOWA

The City of Davenport is an older urban community located on a bend in the Mississippi River in eastern Iowa. The city has a population of 102,000 residents living in approximately 65 square miles. Davenport is the hub and the largest of the Quad Cities, a metropolitan area with a population of 400,000 that actually includes five cities: Davenport and Bettendorf, Iowa, located north of the Mississippi River, and Moline, East Moline, and Rock Island, Illinois, located south of the river. Davenport is located in Scott County. In 2008, the county's median annual household income was \$52,013; 7 percent of families lived below the poverty level, and between 5 percent and 9 percent were unemployed. The majority of residents (88 percent) are White, 7 percent are African-American, 2 percent are Asian, and 2 percent are two or more races. Some 5 percent of the total population also are identified as Hispanic/Latino.

In 2008, 60 percent of Scott County residents were overweight, including 25 percent who were obese. Some 16 percent of residents smoked. These health issues contribute to heart disease, which is Davenport's biggest chronic health problem and the cause of death for between 22 percent and 33 percent of the county population over age 25.

Davenport's *CHART**, called Davenport THRIVE, is led by ACHIEVE Coaches Theresa Hauman, senior recreation manager for the Davenport Parks and Recreation Department, and Jennifer Best, extension educator for Iowa State University. The CHART also includes representatives of the Davenport Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the Scott County Health Department, the Quad Cities YMCA, Community Health Charities, Genesis Health System, Scott Community College, the Iowa Quad Cities Chambers of Commerce, and the City of Davenport Planning Department.

**Please see Glossary on page 4 for definitions of terms in italics.*

► CASE STUDY 1

Promoting Physical Activity Through Parks and Trails

Scott County's high rate of heart disease prompted Davenport THRIVE to choose to work on reducing obesity. To encourage community members, and especially children, to maintain a healthy weight, Davenport THRIVE established a goal of increasing physical activity in the city's 50 parks and on over 15 miles of walking and biking trails. Davenport has also established a goal of connecting all the city's walking and biking trails as a key part of its alternative transportation system.

With the ACHIEVE grant, Davenport THRIVE in 2009 began addressing how to encourage people to use the parks and trails more and has developed strategies to increase their use for fitness and health, as well as for environmental reasons. "Kids and families overall are less active," notes ACHIEVE Coach Theresa Hauman. "Our strategy to encourage more people to become physically active is to use the parks and trails, because they are free and accessible."

Davenport THRIVE has been working with the Davenport Community Schools, which oversees 30 public schools, to determine how kids could be motivated to walk or ride their bikes to school on city trails. The school district in 2008 conducted a transportation assessment of all the schools, including how many students were walking or riding bikes.

With the ACHIEVE grant, Davenport THRIVE has worked with the city planning, police, and public works departments to help the district's *Safe Routes to Schools* committee determine where improvements to parks and trails could encourage more kids to walk and bike to school. "We know we have a traffic problem, and we asked ourselves, 'Why are [kids] not walking and riding?'" says Hauman. "That started a conversation: Isn't it safe on the bike path? Oh, it floods in places? Let's find some solutions." The safe-school-routes team has used a walking survey conducted by the district to determine which walking and biking routes needed sidewalks, surface repairs, and lighting.

Many of the city's walking and biking trails connect with parks and playgrounds, but some of the trails are not used much because they are in poor condition. Davenport THRIVE has been working with the city to assess the conditions of the trails. Their goal is to ensure that all trails are even and smooth, so seniors and others with mobility problems, as well as people who use bikes, strollers, and wheelchairs, can use them safely.

In May 2010, a group of 40 people, including Davenport THRIVE and city council members, conducted a survey of trail needs during a bike ride along the nine-mile Duck Creek Parkway Trail. As a result of ACHIEVE, the city in July 2010 repaved the trail, expanding it from six to eight feet wide and re-striping it for bike lanes. The city also added signs that note mileage and provide information on distances to specific places, locations of restrooms, and safe crossings of roads and the creek. The city and Davenport THRIVE plan to survey the rest of the city's trails and make similar improvements in the spring of 2011.

The CHART also has launched several endeavors to help motivate kids to be more physically active within the parks. One is "Let's Move Davenport," an anti-obesity campaign that debuted in May 2010. Sponsored by the city and another Davenport THRIVE member, Genesis Health System, the opening event at a city recreation facility featured a lively celebration with kids hula-hooping, jumping rope, and running.

Another ACHIEVE effort to encourage kids to be physically active during the summer months is the Davenport Parks and Recreation Department's Mobile Playground, a decommissioned fire truck stocked with games, crafts, and activities that brings recreational opportunities to 10 neighborhood parks in low-income areas. During the summers of 2009 and 2010, two staff members supervised activities, including sports such as soccer, an obstacle course, and parachute games. Local newspapers publicized events every week, including a back-to-school party.





ADDITIONAL ACHIEVE EFFORTS: Stairwell Signs and Beautification

Under an NRPA effort called Step Up to Health, Davenport THRIVE member Genesis Health System, a regional healthcare group, is creating common signage for stairwells to promote exercise by encouraging employees to use stairs rather than elevators. Working through the Chamber of Commerce, this strategy has been introduced in five buildings representing different sectors, including city hall, the school district administration building, a community college building, and Genesis Health's own office building. To further encourage stair climbing, the project includes the cleaning and painting of stairwells, as well as the installation of signs and art work on the walls.

"Kids and families overall are less active," notes ACHIEVE Coach Theresa Hauman. "Our strategy to encourage more people to become physically active is to use the parks and trails, because they are free and accessible."



► CASE STUDY 2

Establishing Tobacco-free Parks and Trails

In 2009, Davenport THRIVE set a goal of establishing a city policy prohibiting smoking and tobacco use in parks and on trails. During the process of collecting data for the *ACHIEVE CHANGE*, it became clear that Davenport residents were confused about enforcement of state legislation passed in June 2008 that banned smoking in public facilities and on public land. The law had been viewed by many people as an ambiguous statewide mandate that banned smoking everywhere. However, communities experienced a wide range of enforcement responses.

In Davenport, the law typically is enforced only within the interiors of buildings and not on public land. The police may issue tickets for smoking on the streets and sidewalks outside establishments such as bars and restaurants, but people still smoke in parking lots and at baseball fields and playgrounds. Tobacco use is not ticketed at parks and at festivals where people are listening to music and drinking alcohol, such as at riverfront festivals on summer weekends. The law is vague about park lands, and tickets are issued to the land owner, not the person caught smoking. If an individual was caught smoking on city park land, the police would issue a ticket to the city.



Lessons Learned

ACHIEVE coaches in Davenport offer the following observations and advice:

- ▶ **Davenport THRIVE found that it benefited ACHIEVE efforts to spend time at the beginning of the ACHIEVE process getting the right people at the table. ACHIEVE efforts need people who are well-connected and can get things done, and the coaches should be thoughtful about selecting people who have connections to city council, the school board, state government, and other entities that will best serve the community.**
- ▶ **Parks and recreation agencies tend to focus on programs, which yield more immediate results than policy efforts. While ACHIEVE focuses on policy, systems, and environmental change, programs can be an important component if they support policy efforts, educate the public about healthier lifestyles, and encourage the public's use of resources to reduce chronic diseases.**
- ▶ **Davenport THRIVE coaches advise focusing on a variety of strategies—some short-term and some longer-term—and include some easily accomplished tasks (“low hanging fruit”) so the team has a sense of accomplishment.**

Davenport THRIVE has been collaborating with Tobacco-free Quad Cities on how to educate the public, increase enforcement, and prepare to change city policy.

Davenport THRIVE plans to put up signs that notify the public that smoking is prohibited in parks, on trails, and both inside and outside public recreation facilities. The signs will help establish some ground rules for enforcement, says ACHIEVE Coach Theresa Hauman. “It’s like littering. As long as you have signage up, that empowers people to enforce a law, and it will encourage an individual to say, ‘You can’t smoke here in the park.’”

A smoking ban on school property is already in place, and is enforced consistently, which should help the tobacco-free parks efforts because most schools are located next to or near parks, note ACHIEVE coaches. The team also wants to protect families biking on the trails from second-hand smoke, which is particularly harmful to children. Iowa is a conservative state whose residents value ‘citizens’ rights,’ says Hauman, “so we’re trying to pitch the wellness aspect and play up the benefits for kids.”

Davenport THRIVE wants to expand the smoke-free parks and trails policy. It is working with the city to assess the feasibility of passing an ordinance prohibiting all tobacco use in all parks and on trails. The CHART wants a local ordinance to clarify that park lands are tobacco-free, and seeks to enhance enforcement to ensure that police will ticket individual offenders.

The CHART has invited the police department to join in the ACHIEVE effort to develop the tobacco-free policy, which is supported by Davenport’s Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. The team will meet with the mayor and city council members in early fall 2010 to discuss drafting an ordinance. But the issue is controversial, and Davenport THRIVE may wait until after city council elections in November 2010 to pursue their goal.

Greenville County, SOUTH CAROLINA

Greenville County, located in northwestern South Carolina, is the state's most populous county with 438,000 residents in 790 square miles. The county encompasses dense urban neighborhoods, such as those in the City of Greenville, as well as rural areas and fast-growing suburban areas.

Greenville's ACHIEVE grant focuses on three densely populated urban communities with high obesity rates. These three communities—Sterling, Nicholtown, and Berea—are among the county's poorest, with a 2008 median household income of \$44,850, and a 2007 poverty rate of 11 percent (nearly 30 percent for single-mother families). All three communities have high crime rates, and some residents are afraid to walk or bike on the streets and sidewalks. Sterling is located half within the City of Greenville and half within the county, and has 1,000 residents (70 percent African-American and 25 percent White). Nicholtown is located within the city, and has 4,500 residents (84 percent African-American and 14 percent White). Berea is located in the county, and has 14,000 residents (76 percent White, 16 percent African-American, and 8 percent other races; some 13 percent

of the total population also are identified as Hispanic). The ACHIEVE *CHART** began working with the Sterling community in 2009. It will begin working with Nicholtown and Berea in the second and third years of ACHIEVE.

Obesity is the county's largest health problem, with smoking another cause for concern. Over half (55 to 59 percent) of adults are overweight or obese, 42 percent have high cholesterol, and 23 percent smoke. A 2009 study by the Piedmont Health Care Foundation found that 41 percent of the county's youth were overweight or obese, with the highest rates among African-American (49 percent) and Hispanic (44 percent) youth.

ACHIEVE has expanded the impact of efforts by a number of organizations engaged in childhood obesity prevention in Greenville County and leveraged further support. The city and county parks and recreation departments applied for ACHIEVE on behalf of these organizations. With ACHIEVE, the community was able to secure a \$360,000 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) grant that focuses on obesity and community health. The Piedmont Health Care Foundation provided \$25,000 in local matching

grants. The RWJF grant was purposefully written to mesh with ACHIEVE, and focuses on the same three communities. Staff support for both RWJF and ACHIEVE is currently provided by YMCA staff, who ensure that assessments and planning are coordinated for policy, systems, and environmental change.

There are four ACHIEVE coaches: Mike Teachey, director of community relations for the Greenville County Recreation District, Jan Cox, community program manager for the City of Greenville Parks and Recreation Department, Katy Smith, executive director of the Piedmont Health Care Foundation, and Eleanor Dunlap, director of the YMCA's ACTIVATE Greenville. The CHART also includes representatives of Bon Secours St. Francis Health System, Furman University, the Greenville Chamber of Commerce, the Greenville County School Board, the Greenville County Department of Planning, and the Greenville Hospital System.

"It's a matter of social justice," says ACHIEVE

Coach Katy Smith.

"Sterling community knows resources are going elsewhere, and it's hard for the community to advocate for themselves.

But that's changing."

**Please see Glossary on page 4 for definitions of terms in italics.*

► CASE STUDY 1

Improving Nutrition Through a Farmers' Market and Community Gardens

To address Greenville's primary focus of preventing childhood obesity, the CHART set a goal of influencing countywide policies to ensure better access to healthy foods. The CHART's Access to Healthy Foods work group has begun exploring policy, systems, and environmental change strategies to promote community gardens and provide a support and learning network for current and future gardeners. They also are promoting the establishment of farmers' markets, satellites of larger farmers' markets, mobile markets, and produce stores.

Most county adults (81 percent) eat fewer than the recommended five servings of fruit and vegetables per day. One reason Sterling residents do not eat more fruit and vegetables is they do not have access to healthy fresh foods within walking or bus distance and have to travel as far as three miles to shop at a comprehensive grocery store. For several years, residents had been discussing the idea of starting community gardens to produce fresh vegetables and fruit within their neighborhoods. But finding available sites for community gardens proved challenging. A subgroup of the CHART initiated a policy review of zoning ordinances and discovered that no specific policies existed regarding the use of land for gardens and markets. The group is planning to develop a policy allowing these uses, which it will propose to Greenville's city and county governments.

Focusing on the Sterling neighborhood, the CHART in 2009 organized a walkability tour with city and county planners to consider issues of land use, zoning, and transportation planning, and to help them plan for better access to healthy foods in the community. They looked at sites for potential community gardens and the locations of bus stops. They conducted a second tour with the RWJF group to look at additional food-access factors, such as whether sidewalks were safe and maintained and whether stores and restaurants offered healthy food options. The CHART completed assessments of corner marts and convenience stores to determine where healthy

versus unhealthy foods were sold. The county planning department then produced maps for use in determining priorities for action.

Efforts by CHART member Maxim Williams from the Bon Secours St. Francis Health System motivated one active Sterling landowner and former resident to approach a state-supported farmers' market operating in another community about establishing a satellite market in Sterling. They partnered with the respected Long Branch Baptist Church, which is located just outside Sterling and serves two low-income neighborhoods, to begin a pilot program to bring in affordable fresh produce. The market was held in the church parking lot the first two Saturdays of the month during the summer of 2010. Community and church leaders have worked with the farmers' market organizers to get the word out to residents. The market has been so successful that it has sold out most Saturdays. The organizers are planning to increase produce quantities, and in the fall of 2010 will assess whether to expand the market to be held every week.

In an effort to create a more sustainable system for providing access to healthy food, the CHART is also collaborating with the City of Greenville and the Greenville County Redevelopment Authority to identify sites that could host a more permanent produce market or a store that could provide fresh foods. It also is looking into the feasibility of mobile produce markets and, perhaps eventually, urban farms.

► CASE STUDY 2

Promoting Physical Activity Through Complete Streets

In an effort to get more local residents to engage in physical activity in their communities, the Greenville CHART has set a goal of supporting an environment that promotes walking and biking. Two of the CHART's work groups have focused on making Greenville County more walkable and bikeable, with the City of Greenville leading the way in adopting a *Complete Streets* policy to create safer pedestrian and bike routes.

Focusing again on the Sterling community, the CHART in 2009 completed a preliminary walkability/bikeability study in collaboration with city and county planning, transportation, and traffic engineering staffs. The CHART first conducted a walking tour with the transportation and traffic engineering staffs, and then compared their observations with city and county maps. The tour revealed discrepancies such as a section of sidewalk on a major street that was depicted on a map but had been demolished; the map had never been changed to reflect that a section of sidewalk was missing. Other sections of sidewalks were found to be unusable because of maintenance issues. The concrete was uneven and broken from the force of tree roots, for example, and people had to walk into the street to avoid these sections.

Due to the discrepancies and maintenance issues seen on the walking tour, the county created a new map for the walkability/bikeability study using geographic information system (GIS) technology to determine where elements like safe and usable sidewalks and crosswalks could or should be. To complete the study, a new color-coded map was created to show which entity (city, county, state) owns and maintains the roads so residents will know whom to address about construction and maintenance of streets and sidewalks. The walking tour and map revision efforts led to city and county policies requiring traffic engineers and planners to have to walk entire sites before making recommendations or decisions that would impact pedestrian or bicyclist safety and convenience.

ACHIEVE has also resulted in other policy changes. When Sterling in 2009 started a master plan update for the community, the CHART advocated including elements of Complete Streets, such as sidewalks that are connecting and maintained. "It's a matter of social justice," says ACHIEVE Coach Katy Smith. "Sterling community knows resources are going elsewhere, and it's hard for the community to advocate for themselves. But that's changing." ACHIEVE coaches say having a written statement in the master plan specifying that sidewalks will be provided is an important policy provision that indicates support for safe pedestrian access throughout the community. The Sterling master plan now is providing a foundation for determining priorities for Complete Streets improvements and the use of local resources.



ADDITIONAL ACHIEVE EFFORTS: Healthy Kids Healthy Greenville

The Greenville County ACHIEVE grant has provided the foundation for a much broader and more sustainable coalition: Healthy Kids Healthy Greenville. This new coalition is working to build momentum, leadership, and political will, and to ensure communication and coordination of policy, systems, and environmental changes throughout the county. Healthy Kids Healthy Greenville includes 65 individuals representing education, healthcare, government, human services, community organizations, and communities. The coalition will become the primary entity that initiates and supports changes that promote good health within neighborhoods, school and after-school settings, churches, worksites, municipalities, and the county. Eight CHART work groups in the summer of 2010 developed community action plans that will serve as the county's agenda for creating a healthier community.



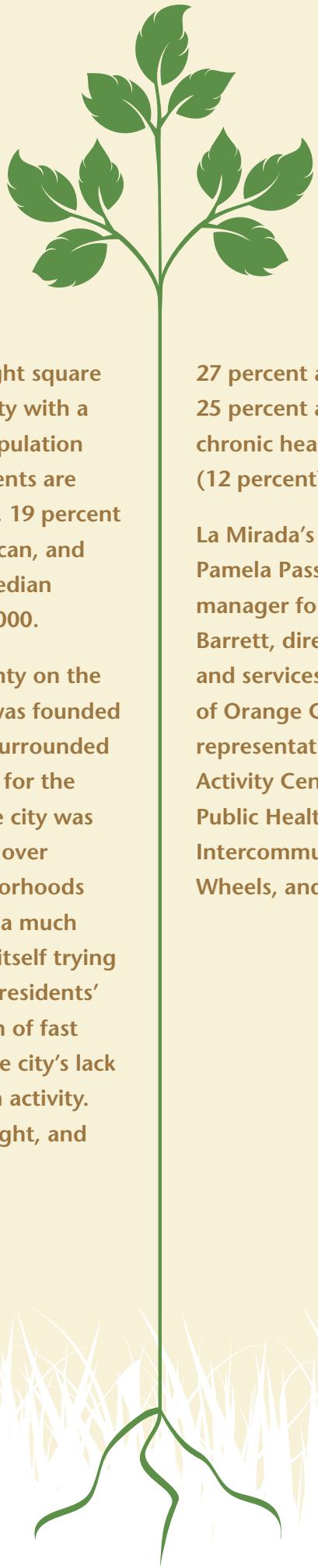
Lessons Learned

ACHIEVE coaches in Greenville County offer the following observations and advice:

- ▶ Reviewing the *community action plan (CAP)* after the first year with additional community representatives can help refocus ACHIEVE efforts and gain broader leadership and participation. Greenville held a communitywide retreat in March 2010 and invited 120 people, including elected officials, hospital and school administrators, and residents from the three ACHIEVE communities. "It was a top-down and grass-roots effort to revisit our CAP and break up into work groups to affirm or revise," explains ACHIEVE Coach Eleanor Dunlap.
- ▶ The Greenville CHART originally did not include healthcare clinicians working directly with kids to prevent childhood obesity. The CHART determined that it wanted more direct communication and collaboration with clinicians to understand policies and practices of individual pediatricians and clinics, such as obesity screening processes and protocols when children were identified as overweight or obese. The ACHIEVE coaches say the direct involvement of clinicians on the CHART is helping focus obesity prevention efforts.
- ▶ With the successful launch of a project such as establishing a farmers' market, it may be tempting to expand the days or hours of operation. ACHIEVE coaches caution that it is best to hold off on making significant changes for a season or more to assess whether the project continues to be successful.



La Mirada, CALIFORNIA



La Mirada is a quintessential small (eight square miles) southern California suburban city with a racially diverse and mostly affluent population of 51,000. Fifty-seven percent of residents are White, 21 percent are Hispanic/Latino, 19 percent are Asian, 2 percent are African-American, and 1 percent are American Indian. The median income is between \$75,000 and \$100,000.

Located in southeast Los Angeles County on the border of Orange County, La Mirada was founded on ranch land, and by the 1940s was surrounded by fruit groves and olive trees planted for the production of olive oil. By the time the city was incorporated in 1960, it had grown to over 8,000 homes, many of them in neighborhoods without sidewalks. A generation later, a much more developed La Mirada has found itself trying to reverse the health issues related to residents' car-centered lifestyle and consumption of fast food from the strip malls, as well as the city's lack of infrastructure to support pedestrian activity. Among adults, 41 percent are overweight, and

27 percent are obese. Among children, 25 percent are overweight or obese. Other chronic health problems include diabetes (12 percent) and tobacco use (11 percent).

La Mirada's *CHART** is led by ACHIEVE Coaches Pamela Passow, the community services manager for the City of La Mirada, and Dolores Barrett, director of community partnerships and services for Community Action Partnership of Orange County. The CHART also includes representatives from the City of La Mirada Activity Center, the Los Angeles County Public Health Department, Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital, La Mirada Meals on Wheels, and Biola University.

**Please see Glossary on page 4 for definitions of terms in italics.*

► CASE STUDY 1

Promoting Physical Activity Through Complete Streets

To address the city's obesity issue, the La Mirada CHART established a goal of increasing physical activity through the use of public space, and has focused on promoting physical activity by working to make policy and environmental changes related to the city's physical infrastructure.

Results of La Mirada's *CHANGE* assessment indicated that the city had no policies related to promoting physical activity, developing a network of walking/biking routes, or providing sidewalks to connect residential areas with each other and with commercial areas. Many residential neighborhoods have no sidewalks. The city has 14 miles of bicycle lanes along streets, but there is little connectivity between them.

The commercial establishments along the city's main thoroughfare, the 3.5-mile-long and six-lane-wide La Mirada Boulevard, also known as the Imperial Highway, are set back on arterial roads that parallel the highway and have no sidewalks. Buildings are separated and surrounded by parking lots, and people tend to drive from one establishment to another. Residents who live in apartment complexes next to the stores and restaurants, and those who live in the single-family residential areas beyond, are forced into cars for convenience and safety. There is limited public transportation in the form of a local dial-a-ride service and regional buses on Imperial Highway. For the most part, people do not attempt to walk or bike because it is unsafe and unpleasant.

In 2009, ACHIEVE Coach Pamela Passow met with the city's planning, public works, and public safety staffs to discuss ways to encourage more physical activity in development projects that impact the physical environment. After the city received a grant from the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) to develop the Imperial Highway Corridor Improvements Specific Plan, the CHART asked to be included in planning for policies associated with redeveloping the commercial corridor.

The CHART has been educating city planning staff about how redevelopment could offer opportunities to improve community health and wellness through the design of *Complete Streets*. To provide specific ideas

for how Imperial Highway could be redeveloped to promote physical activity, Passow conducted a walkability assessment of sites along the corridor and led the highway planning team, composed of city staff, SCAG representatives, and consultants, on a tour. They looked at parking lots and access points, as well as impediments that pedestrians and bicyclists experience in trying to gain access to the highway, the arterial roads, commercial businesses, and housing.

The CHART and the planning team discussed how the corridor could be changed to make it easier and safer for people to walk, ride a bike, or ride in a wheelchair by adding urban design elements such as sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian-activated stoplights, and ramp access points in parking lots. They also discussed the benefits of pedestrian-oriented street design, including easing traffic congestion, improving air quality, and increasing foot traffic and thus business and sales-tax revenues.

The city's planning staff is receptive to many of the CHART's ideas, and is working with the CHART to ensure that walkability and accessibility are included in the Imperial Highway plan. The CHART has reviewed the first draft of the plan and has suggested changes to bring the plan more in line with Complete Streets concepts. The idea behind the plan is that improvements, paid for by developers, land owners, and business owners, will be made gradually over time under the new policies. "We don't want to make [retrofits] cost-prohibitive for owners, and minor improvements are better than no improvements," says Passow.

The CHART also is working to ensure that all future redevelopment in the city will be approved on the basis of urban design policies that promote physical activity and alternative transportation. The city previously had focused on issues such as the number of parking spaces and the aesthetics of the architecture, explains Passow, but it now is beginning to look at the bigger picture of how urban design can support community health and wellness.

"The most encouraging thing has been working with the [planning] department, and actually having a city staff that understands that any kind of development or redevelopment project has health implications," says ACHIEVE Coach Dolores Barrett. Passow adds that ACHIEVE "has motivated us to go to the next level, and has made it easier to promote ideas with city staff, to explain why we are doing this, and to get acceptance for ideas because they will benefit community residents."



ADDITIONAL ACHIEVE EFFORTS: Tobacco-free Public Zones

La Mirada's CHART in 2009 began an ambitious effort to get the city to charge a retail fee to stores that sell tobacco. The fee revenues would be directed to enforcing tobacco laws in businesses. The city council, however, did not support what it viewed as a tax on individuals. The CHART has shifted its focus to creating a policy on tobacco-free campuses in La Mirada for adoption by the city council. The campuses would include all city-owned facilities and parks. If the city council is not ready for tobacco-free campuses, the CHART plans to help with enforcement of a state law that prohibits smoking inside and within 20 feet of public buildings. The law is enforced within the city's public buildings, but generally is not enforced outside. The CHART plans to create signs that would educate the public about the tobacco-free zone outside of public buildings. The CHART has applied for grant funding to pay for signs to mark these zones within the city. They hope that once the city council observes that the signs are contributing to consistent enforcement, and hears that people appreciate the healthier air, the council may view other tobacco-free efforts more favorably.



► CASE STUDY 2

Working with Worksites to Improve Health and Wellness

Addressing health and wellness at worksites, the La Mirada CHART has set a goal of trying to change the culture at public agencies and local businesses to adopt wellness policies that emphasize physical activity and good nutrition. The CHART has focused on encouraging the city to set an example for local businesses by providing facilities and incentives that encourage physical activity. The CHART is working with La Mirada's existing city employee wellness committee, which is headed by ACHIEVE Coach Pamela Passow and the city's personnel manager. They are developing a cafeteria-style "menu" of health and wellness policies from which the city and local businesses will be able to choose for possible adoption.



The city has led the way by starting a walking club: A group of city employees meets every Monday at the clock tower on the municipal campus and walks for one mile or more together. The walk is advertised in the city's employee newsletter. The city also provides all employees free use of the showers and lockers at the aquatic center, which is located on the municipal campus. This does not cost the city money because the center is already open and staffed, and it means that employees can ride their bike to work or go for a run at lunch and be able to shower and keep their belongings in a safe place.

By providing more opportunities for city staff to engage in physical activities, the CHART hopes to increase the chances of city council buy-in to establish a citywide health and wellness policy. The CHART hopes that seeking city council endorsement for such a policy will raise the level of recognition of the community's health problems and will gain broader support and acceptance for prevention measures.

Through the city's efforts, the CHART plans to show businesses how they could provide similar opportunities. "We're looking past city government to the private sector," says Passow. She is leading efforts to create incentives and recognition for businesses that launch health and wellness efforts, such as installing bike racks for employees or starting a walking club. Some possibilities are recognizing businesses at city council meetings and in the city newsletter, the local newspaper, and other publications.

After this first year of ACHIEVE, the CHART has decided it will pause to re-examine its progress before taking any further steps on worksite wellness. "We'd like to get a good assessment of what we've done and what additional funding or partnerships are available," says Barrett. The CHART is focused on sustainability, and in particular how other institutions can help continue ACHIEVE worksite wellness efforts. The CHART, for example, is working to establish a stronger partnership with Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital, which has a worksite wellness policy for employees. The CHART also is working closely with the Los Angeles County Public Health Department, which has provided interns to assist with community assessments.

Lessons Learned

ACHIEVE coaches in La Mirada offer the following observations and advice:

- ▶ **ACHIEVE efforts at the municipal level can help change land-use planning to encourage more walking, biking, and use of public transportation. Most cities do not see themselves in the business of health—the counties handle that, says ACHIEVE Coach Dolores Barrett. "Cities are involved in land use, and maybe the lesson learned is that we need more work at the local municipal level to help city officials understand their role in healthy land planning that leads to a healthier community."**
- ▶ **Meetings of the CHART are not as important as the activities of the CHART. People often are not able to attend meetings, but they can be good supporters, especially if their involvement in ACHIEVE fits within their job responsibilities. The La Mirada CHART works with some partners who do not have the time to meet but have agreed to leverage their influence and resources whenever they are needed.**
- ▶ **The La Mirada CHART has found that having community partners present controversial issues, such as tobacco-free parks, for city council approval, helps demonstrate broader support within the community for ACHIEVE.**

Longview, WASHINGTON

Located on the Columbia River, rural Longview is the largest and most influential city in Washington's Cowlitz County, and serves as a regional hub for as many as 40 smaller communities. In 2007, Longview had 37,584 residents, and the county had 100,400 residents. Almost 85 percent of residents are White, 10 percent are Hispanic/Latino, 2 percent are Asian, and 1 percent are of another race. Nearly 9 percent of households speak a language other than English at home. With a struggling local economy long dependent on mills, two of which have closed in recent years, Longview has a high unemployment rate—nearly 15 percent in 2010.

The median household income is a relatively low \$34,798; between 23 percent and 27 percent of families live below the poverty level. The divorce rate is 50 percent, and many children of single-parent households fall into the low-income category.

Risk factors for developing diabetes and cardiovascular disease are common among county adults. Primary risks include high rates for overweight and obesity (67 percent), insufficient physical activity (37 percent), high cholesterol (30 percent), hypertension (28 percent), and smoking (24 percent, including 28 percent of

pregnant women). With an environment affected by air pollution and tobacco smoke, 22 percent of youth are being treated for asthma, one of highest rates in the state. The overall impacts of chronic health problems on Longview and Cowlitz County are higher healthcare costs and an average lifespan that is three years less than the state average. Deaths due to chronic disease, as well as accidents and suicides, are also higher in Cowlitz County than state averages.

The ACHIEVE coaches are Steve Plampin, recreation supervisor for the Longview Parks and Recreation Department, and Paul Youmans, director of Pathways 2020, a community agency. Youmans also is director of Cowlitz on the Move, a coalition of 35 local individuals and organizations that promotes good nutrition, physical activity, and tobacco cessation. The coaches organized the *CHART**, called Team Longview, as a unit of Cowlitz on the Move. The CHART includes representatives of the City of Longview, the Cowlitz County Health Department, the Longview School District, PeaceHealth Wellness Services, Our Father's House, and the Cowlitz Family Health Center.

**Please see Glossary on page 4 for definitions of terms in italics.*

► CASE STUDY 1

Improving Nutrition Through a Farmers' Market Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Option

Team Longview established a goal of increasing access for Longview residents to affordable nutritious foods, and has focused one of their efforts on improving access to the Cowlitz County Farmers' Market for residents enrolled in the state-subsidized supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP).

Held weekly at the county fairgrounds from May through October, the Cowlitz County Farmers' Market has been a community institution for 20 years, providing produce and other food items from local family farms. In the fall of 2009, CHART members approached the farmers' market board about changing their vendors' agreement to allow for a credit/debit electronic benefits transfer (EBT) machine at the market so that residents enrolled in SNAP could have access to healthy locally grown food. Two years ago, the market board and manager were not receptive to this policy change; they had looked into providing a way for patrons to purchase food from the market with food subsidy funding and determined it was too much work.

Team Longview pitched the EBT option as a business incentive. "We explained how the market could help provide healthier food to low-income residents and increase profits," says ACHIEVE Coach Paul Youmans. They discussed how the credit/debit machine would introduce a new group of customers who previously could not afford to shop at the market. Youmans and other CHART members explained how the credit/debit machine would provide a more convenient way for all customers to purchase market items. Credit cards are not accepted by vendors, and there is no nearby automated teller machine. CHART members said changing the market's policy to allow the credit/debit machine likely would draw additional new customers not enrolled in SNAP, and increase sales of market items because of the convenience of getting cash at the market.

The CHART worked to simplify the proposed system and presented the process to the market manager and vendors. To use the new EBT credit/debit machine, a customer who wishes to purchase \$10 worth of fruit and vegetables from a vendor would get a script for that amount from the vendor and take it to the manager's

booth, where the customer's EBT card would be run through the machine. The customer then would return to the vendor with a receipt to receive the produce. The vendors observed that the idea of using script was a simple low-cost method where no cash or market coins were exchanged, and that the process also would work for debit and credit card purchases. "It was an 'aha' moment, when a number of vendors said, 'Yes we can make it work,'" says Youmans.

Team Longview worked on developing relationships with the farmers' market board president and vendors, and made a point of buying vegetables and flowers from market vendors while also mentioning their efforts to broaden access to healthy foods for more people. The next step was to work with the board to launch the EBT option with a three-month trial period in the summer of 2010. If the trial was successful, the CHART and board would create a policy allowing permanent EBT access. After four months of discussions, however, the market board in May 2010 rejected the proposal. The board's reason for opposing the EBT was that they had discussed it before, and their opinions had not changed.

Team Longview was frustrated by this setback, but has modified its strategy and will continue to work for environmental change by supporting local produce stands in low-income neighborhoods. State requirements for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and food stamps are expected to change within the next two years. This change will bring new pressure on the farmers' market to use EBT, explains Youmans, and Team Longview will support that effort.





ADDITIONAL ACHIEVE EFFORTS: Increasing Activity and Expanding Education Efforts in Schools

The Longview Parks and Recreation Department is working with the Longview School District to increase the number of minutes students spend being physically active and to expand nutrition and tobacco-prevention education. Funded by a physical education program grant from the state's Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the effort so far has paid for fitness and weight equipment, as well as training for physical education and health teachers. A continuing challenge is the district's building-based decision-making process, which means some students may have less time scheduled for physical activity and health education than others, depending on which schools they attend.

Changing the community "is like turning an ocean liner with a rowboat," says ACHIEVE Coach Paul Youmans. "It is not impossible, but it takes a lot of time. But if you have 20 rowboats, it makes the job easier."



► CASE STUDY 2

Tobacco-free Parks

Concerned over Longview's high rate of tobacco use, Team Longview has set a goal of reducing residents' exposure to second-hand smoke. The CHART has focused on introducing a city policy of tobacco-free parks, which it hopes would create a culture of nonsmoking, a cleaner environment, and healthier spaces for the community to engage in free opportunities for physical activity.

The tobacco-free parks goal is a challenging one, says ACHIEVE Coach Paul Youmans: "Attempting to achieve smoke-free environments is probably our most volatile issue." Longview's efforts to eliminate smoking in parks has met with some resistance as local residents echo statewide concerns representing a vocal minority's view that the government has too much control and is taking away personal rights and freedoms. Team Longview coaches also describe resistance to spending tax money for efforts that could improve community health.

In December 2009, the CHART presented the idea of a smoke-free policy for the parks to the Longview City Council. The city council agreed to the formation of an ad hoc committee to gather information. In the process, the ad hoc committee changed the emphasis from smoke-free



to tobacco-free, an expansion of the smoke-free concept to include other tobacco products. At an Earth Day celebration in April 2010, Team Longview conducted a tobacco-free park survey. The survey asked respondents to choose one of three options: 1) 100 percent tobacco-free parks; 2) partially tobacco-free parks (tobacco use banned within 50 feet of playgrounds and ballfields); or 3) not interested. The survey also was administered on three opening days at the city's ballparks. An on-line version of the survey was posted on the City of Longview and Cowlitz on the Move websites. Results of the survey of 1,466 people indicated that most (65 percent) voted for a tobacco ban everywhere in the parks, and 24 percent supported a partial ban. Some 11 percent said they did not want to restrict the parks with any kind of ban.

In May 2010, the ad hoc committee presented their recommendation for a ban on tobacco use in the parks, except in designated places. As part of its presentation, the committee displayed a gallon jar filled with cigarette butts picked up in the parks to emphasize the harmful effect littering and cigarette smoke have on the environment. In July 2010, the city council reviewed and adopted an ordinance for tobacco-free parks. The ordinance specifies that 11 of the city's 17 parks that are smaller neighborhood parks will be 100 percent tobacco-free. The six largest parks, which often are the sites of regional sporting and recreational activities, will have designated tobacco-use areas. These designated areas will be chosen by the Longview Parks and Recreation Department, and must be located away from park buildings, restrooms, playgrounds, and picnic areas.

Some Longview residents remain skeptical about the value of the ordinance. The local newspaper published an editorial opposing the idea, calling it another effort intended to create a "nanny state." Team Longview will work with the city's park and recreation department to develop a community education program about the tobacco ban, focusing on the benefits of protecting the health of children and maintaining the beauty of Longview's parks.

Lessons Learned

ACHIEVE coaches in Longview offer the following observations and advice:

- ▶ **It is best not to assume that community members involved in health and fitness-related professions automatically will want to be part of the CHART. Invite them to become part of ACHIEVE, and be sure they wish to participate before taking any action or making any announcements.**
- ▶ **The key to working on healthy community issues is building relationships with people. Policy change cannot be forced on a community or group. Once people see themselves as part of the process and the solution, they will be more open to becoming part of ACHIEVE.**
- ▶ **"Changing the community and changing certain behaviors is like turning an ocean liner with a rowboat," says ACHIEVE Coach Paul Youmans. "It is not impossible, but it takes a lot of time. But if you have 20 rowboats, it makes the job easier."**

Lynnwood, WASHINGTON



Lynnwood is a suburban city of 33,173 residents located 15 miles north of downtown Seattle, in the heart of two major interstate highway corridors. With an average household income of about \$60,000, the community is home to middle-class and blue-collar workers, as well as retail industries with large regional shopping centers. Over three quarters (76 percent) of the residents are White, 16 percent are Asian, 4 percent are African-American, and 5 percent are of two or more races.

Lynnwood's most significant health problem is obesity, especially among children. A total of 43 percent of adults are overweight, including 26 percent who are obese. Among youth, 14 percent are overweight, and 9 percent are obese. A December 2008 Snohomish County Health Department report indicated that Lynnwood was among the top third of communities with the highest obesity rates. The report noted that Lynnwood zip codes with the lowest income levels had the highest obesity rates. "How Big Are We?", a May 2007 report on obesity in Snohomish County, cited the key obesity risk factors as inactivity and poor eating habits.

Since 2009, the ACHIEVE grant has allowed the Lynnwood Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts Department to expand on an initiative begun by the Snohomish County Health Department. As part of the county health department's Healthy Communities Project, a task force of more than 50 representatives from different community sectors in Lynnwood assessed the city's strengths and barriers related to physical activity and nutrition. The task force developed an outline and action plans for policy and environmental changes in the built environment, schools, and physical activity opportunities. The Lynnwood *CHART** has continued the work of the Healthy Communities task force.

The ACHIEVE coaches are Lynn Sordel, director, and Marielle Harrington, ACHIEVE/Healthy Communities coordinator, both of whom work for the Lynnwood Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts Department. The CHART also includes representatives from the Edmonds School District, Edmonds Community College, Community Transit, Stevens Hospital, the Lynnwood Food Bank, Senior Services of Snohomish County, and the City of Lynnwood, as well as two community members.

**Please see Glossary on page 4 for definitions of terms in italics.*

► CASE STUDY 1

Promoting Physical Activity Through Safe Routes to Schools

As a step toward reducing obesity among youth, the CHART established the goal of improving Lynnwood's network of walking and biking routes to encourage more children to walk or bike to school. Lynnwood youth typically do not get much exercise, and are driven most places by their parents, say ACHIEVE coaches. Budget cutbacks in the schools also have reduced time for exercise in physical education classes. Fewer than half of the county's students spent 20 minutes or more being active in a physical education class three or more times a week, according to "How Big Are We?" The report noted that obese students watched more television, played more video games, and used the computer for fun more than other students.

With nine public schools in Lynnwood, the Edmonds School District is one of the Lynnwood ACHIEVE program's most effective partners. The school superintendent and the principal of Lynnwood Elementary School are CHART members to ensure close collaboration. The school district is committed to reducing obesity because of the associated health risks for students, but also because of obesity's impact on school achievement. "How Big Are We?" reported that obese students had lower grades and lower expectations of how far they would advance in school than those who were not obese. They also were more likely to suffer from depression and suicidal thoughts and actions.

In 2009, the Edmonds School District, facing budget reductions, withdrew busing for students who live less than one mile from school. Lynnwood's CHART recognized the lack of bus transportation as an opportunity to encourage more students to walk or bike to school. The CHART created a schools committee and decided to work on a pilot effort to improve the safety of walking and biking to schools. The committee chose Lynnwood Elementary School for the pilot effort because it presented the greatest opportunity to get more students walking and biking. Lynnwood Elementary has an internal ACHIEVE champion, Principal Chris Lindeloom, and is located downtown near city offices.

Using maps and conducting a walking audit, Lynnwood Elementary staff, parent volunteers, and the CHART assessed the feasibility of routes and identified barriers to safe walking and biking within one mile of the school. The results of the walking audit indicated, for example, that a three-block stretch of 48th Avenue West, one of the major routes within a half-mile of the school, needed sidewalks on both sides. The city, which has experienced budget reductions, did not have funds to install the sidewalks. The school and the CHART also surveyed families on how students planned to get to school without the bus service. Survey responses showed that a large percentage of the school's students would be willing to walk or bike to school if safe routes could be established.

Working with Lynnwood Elementary's staff and parent-teachers association (PTA), the CHART prepared and in May 2010 submitted a proposal for a \$250,000 grant from *Safe Routes to Schools*, a national program that provides funds for sidewalks, crosswalks, and other transportation safety elements. Lynnwood Elementary and the CHART hope to receive notification about the grant early in 2011, and if they are successful, plan to work with the city to install the missing sidewalk links and striping for bike lanes on 48th Avenue West. They also plan to expand their work by seeking additional support from Safe Routes to Schools to improve the safety of walking and biking routes for other Lynnwood schools.

Meanwhile, the CHART is developing walk and bike-to-school routes with Lynnwood's police and public works departments. Principal Lindeloom and the CHART also plan to develop pedestrian and bike-safety lessons for the elementary school curriculum during the 2010-2011 school year. Future plans include working with the PTA and neighborhood groups to develop a "walking school bus" program for Lynnwood Elementary to encourage students to walk safely in groups accompanied by parents.



ADDITIONAL ACHIEVE EFFORTS: Working with a New Strategic Partner

The Lynnwood CHART has begun a new partnership with Swedish Hospital, which has merged with and, in September 2010, will take over administration of Stevens Hospital, a facility of the local public hospital district. "We're very excited about the opportunity of a strategic partner to measure outcomes," says ACHIEVE Coach Lynn Sordel. He says discussions with the new hospital administration have encouraged the CHART that more funds and collaborative efforts will become available in the future for ACHIEVE activities directed at chronic disease prevention.

Focusing on policy rather than programs "is a learning curve for a lot of people," says ACHIEVE Coach Marielle Harrington. "Some people think we'll just give everyone a pedometer and say, 'Let's go!'"



► CASE STUDY 2

Improving Nutrition Through a Farmers' Market

Another Lynnwood ACHIEVE effort to reduce obesity has focused on the goal of creating policy and a framework for establishing a weekly farmers' market to provide the community fresh produce. The idea of establishing a farmers' market has elicited considerable community interest for the past several years, says ACHIEVE Coach Lynn Sordel. However, two previous attempts at establishing a farmers' market were not successful, mainly because of their locations, which lacked parking

and visibility. Lynnwood is not an agricultural area, but there are many farms and orchards within 100 miles to the east that supply successful farmers' markets in nearby communities.

In 2009, the CHART created a farmers' market committee, which has worked with the Chamber of Commerce and published information about the farmers' market efforts in "Inside Lynnwood," a quarterly newsletter published by the city and sent to every mailing address. As a result of this publicity, the farmers' market effort now has nine community volunteers, two of whom have become CHART members.

The farmers' market committee has been studying best practices for successful markets, and is preparing a business plan that will be reviewed by the CHART in September 2010. The committee has been looking at potential locations, and has discussed a potential site with the management company of a major shopping mall. The site is located in the heart of the community near a transit center, with good visibility and plenty of parking. The farmers' market committee has had discussions with potential vendors, and has determined that the market will be held one night a week and will be scheduled so it will not compete with other markets in the area.

The next steps for Lynnwood's ACHIEVE team will be to finalize the farmers' market business plan and then appoint a board to begin searching for a market manager with the goal of opening the market in the spring of 2011. The market manager will seek vendors, and the board will seek seed funding to establish the market from the city, local businesses, and organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club. Once the market is established, the CHART plans to work toward offering residents enrolled in state-subsidized nutrition assistance programs access to healthy locally grown food by providing an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) machine at the market.



Lessons Learned

ACHIEVE coaches in Lynnwood offer the following observations and advice:

- Focusing on policy rather than programs "has been difficult because it is a learning curve for a lot of people," says ACHIEVE Coach Marielle Harrington. "Some people think we'll just give everyone a pedometer and say, 'Let's go!'" Large and small policy changes are challenging, take time, and require collaboration from many people, says Harrington, but they have the greatest and most lasting impact on the health of a community.
- Collaborative partnerships are key to the success of ACHIEVE work. Through strong alliances with the Edmonds School District, the Chamber of Commerce, and other institutions and organizations, Lynnwood is working to make ACHIEVE efforts sustainable and transferable across community groups and sectors.
- It is important to promote ACHIEVE efforts and to market the idea that reducing obesity and other chronic diseases is essential for community health. Not everyone sees ACHIEVE as 'must do' work. But they can play a critical role in health equity by providing opportunities for everyone in the community to access healthy food and participate in physical activities.

Montgomery County, ALABAMA

Montgomery County (population 223,510), located in south-central Alabama, encompasses two municipalities: the City of Montgomery and the Town of Pike Road. Twelve percent of the county's 793 square miles are rural. The county's population is 53 percent African-American, 44 percent White, and 2 percent Hispanic. The median household income is about \$44,000, and 15 percent of families and 18 percent of individuals live below the poverty level.

Montgomery County's primary health issues include obesity, which affects 35 percent of the population, hypertension (32 percent), and smoking (24 percent). In a Gallup-Healthways national survey released in March 2010 that graded 185 metropolitan areas on well-being, the Montgomery metropolitan area ranked at the bottom of the list for being the most obese. The Montgomery metro area also ranked near the bottom regarding the percentage of people who regularly ate fruits and vegetables, exercised, had a safe place to exercise, had health insurance, and earned enough money to buy food.

The ACHIEVE coaches are James Williams, parks and recreation superintendent for the Montgomery County Commission, and Jennifer Anderson, planner for the Central Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission. The *CHART** also includes representatives of the City of Montgomery Parks and Recreation Department, the Montgomery County Commission, the Montgomery Area Community Wellness Coalition, the Montgomery County Cooperative Extension Office, the Montgomery Public Schools, the Montgomery County Health Department's Tobacco Control Office, the Montgomery YMCA, the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries, and the Alabama Department of Public Health/Healthy Communities Branch.

**Please see Glossary on page 4 for definitions of terms in italics.*

► CASE STUDY 1

Improving Nutrition Through Community Gardens

The Montgomery CHART identified improving access to healthy foods as a priority because of the county's obesity and hypertension rates, and set a goal of establishing community gardens to provide fresh produce for residents. Montgomery County's rural areas are *food deserts* in which some residents have to drive 20 miles to reach the nearest grocery store. Many rural residents have lower incomes and live in trailer parks or modest homes where they cannot have a garden. Many also are elderly, and do not have family close by to help them garden or shop for food.

In 2008, the county's cooperative extension office presented the idea of working on better access to healthy foods to some community leaders, including the parks and recreation departments for the city and the county and the regional planning and development commission. These multiple agencies applied for and received an ACHIEVE grant, which has been focused on rural parts of the county where the need is greatest. The county's rural residents have little access to fruits and vegetables, and the CHART wanted to give them tools to help change their environment so they would be able to produce fresh healthy food. The idea of establishing community gardens was a natural choice, says ACHIEVE Coach Jennifer Anderson, because "people in the community had been talking about community gardens for a couple years."

The ACHIEVE efforts have focused on installing community gardens in pocket parks managed by the county in rural areas. Working with the county cooperative extension office, one of its key member agencies, the CHART in 2009 began planning for nine community gardens in the pocket parks, which are located next to facilities such as community centers, libraries, and churches. The two to nine-acre parks all have picnic areas, grills, walking trails, and playgrounds. One rural area has two gardens, including one at a K-12 school that has an agriculture program.

The first garden, located in the Flatwood area, where most residents are seniors, was installed in the summer of 2009 with the help of students and seniors who use the community center. The extension office installed two eight-by-eight-foot raised beds constructed of railroad

ties and provided the garden soil to fill them. The beds were raised to make it easier for seniors to garden without bending over or kneeling. The seniors planted seeds—collard greens, tomatoes, peas, zucchini, okra, and other vegetables. Children enrolled in a county parks and recreation summer program helped tend the gardens and harvested the produce with the seniors, distributing it to the community during the summer and fall months.

Since 2009, four more gardens similar to the Flatwood community garden have been installed. One garden planned by a women's group (whose membership includes a landscape architect) eventually will be surrounded by stone paths. Another garden established at the Ramer School already had railroad-tie beds; the school asked the extension office to help the agriculture teacher and students plant the garden and figure out how to distribute the produce. The school is planning "A Taste of Ramer School" for the fall of 2010, and will invite parents and the community to the harvest and demonstrate how to prepare healthy recipes with the produce.

The gardens have been received enthusiastically not only for the food they have put on tables, but also for the activity of gardening and the sense the gardens provide of harkening back to the community's cultural history. Particularly for older residents, says Anderson, gardening "goes back to their roots or their parents' roots as sharecroppers." Many community members did service work, farming or cleaning houses most of their lives, she says, and they are enjoying getting back to their roots through planting and harvesting the community gardens. "They know more about this than we do," she says, and they take great pride in their accomplishments.

As part of ACHIEVE, the county cooperative extension office has organized events such as a workshop held in May 2010 in which seniors learned about container gardening, a good choice for people with little space who prefer raised planting areas. The extension office's nutrition service also has taught community center classes on how to cook the community garden produce in healthier ways. The classes demonstrate, for example, how to steam collard greens with a smoked turkey wing or red peppers so they are flavorful but have less fat and sodium (the traditional method is to fry with salt pork or fatback). These classes have led to other cooking activities to celebrate Mother's Day, Christmas, and events at the community center.



ADDITIONAL ACHIEVE EFFORTS: Providing Healthy Food at Meetings

Events and meetings at community centers in Montgomery County now feature healthier foods, thanks to ACHIEVE. “In the South, every event has food, so we try to provide a healthy option,” says ACHIEVE Coach Jennifer Anderson. “If we have some fried chicken, we’ll provide more baked chicken.” The healthier foods policy applies to all meetings organized by the county parks and recreation department and other county agencies.

“With the ACHIEVE grant, the focus was: How can we use what we have, how can we make it better, and how can we get the community out exercising?” says ACHIEVE Coach James Williams.



► CASE STUDY 2

Promoting Physical Activity Through Walking and Biking Routes

The Montgomery CHART, concerned about the county’s high rate of obesity and related diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and arthritis, established a goal of providing walking and biking routes in the county and promoting their use. Rural residential areas are spread out over nearly 800 square miles of the county, and many residents cannot travel because of lack of income and transportation, so the Montgomery County Parks and Recreation Department tries to bring activities to them.

With the ACHIEVE grant, the county’s parks and recreation advisory board and the county commission decided to focus on improving local parks. In 2009, walking trails were installed around the perimeter of the county’s nine pocket parks. The walking trails vary in length from a quarter mile to a half mile loop within each park. “With the ACHIEVE grant, the focus was: How can we use what we have, how can we make it better, and how can we get the community out exercising?” says ACHIEVE Coach James Williams, the county’s parks and recreation superintendent.

After the parks and recreation department installed the trails, Montgomery County Commissioner Reed Ingram, a CHART member, helped launch a program in the Ramer area called “Come Walk a County Mile.” (The phrase is a play on the colloquial southern phrase, “Come walk a country mile,” a joke because a ‘country mile’ usually means four or five miles.) The county parks and recreation

department made T-shirts and gave out water bottles and pedometers, challenging the community to come out and walk a mile a day in the park. Approximately 250 rural residents responded to the invitation, and the first of six walking groups in five rural areas was formed.

The walking groups consist of eight to ten people who walk the loop trails in the parks four or five days a week. Each group has a team captain who records weekly mileage for each person on a message-board chart at the park. Some groups are composed of moms in their twenties to forties; others have senior walkers. "We are hearing, 'When are you going to start a walking club in my area?'" says Williams. "We're getting requests for family walking clubs and youth walking clubs." Williams recently began working with the Montgomery County Board of Education to start walking clubs for students.

The Montgomery CHART also has begun a campaign to get more county residents out biking on the rural roads. The CHART asked the Montgomery Bicycle Club, located in the city, to identify their preferred routes through the county. Some of the routes they identified are 45 miles one way, and others pass through county parks. The Montgomery County Parks and Recreation Department hired an engineering firm to draw up a map of the bike routes identified by the bike club, and has launched a public awareness campaign about the parks, bike safety, and driving with bikes on the roads. The CHART is planning to have the bike club participate in community rides and safety demonstrations in the parks.

In the first phase of the biking public awareness campaign, the CHART in June 2010 arranged for 50 "Share the Road" signs to be installed on the designated routes to promote safe biking. The CHART publicized the bike safety signs, which have encouraged residents to try biking on the rural roads. In phase two, the county will survey the roads included in the bike routes and identify improvements needed, such as wider shoulders and bike lanes.



Lessons Learned

ACHIEVE coaches in Montgomery County offer the following observations and advice:

- ▶ "We went after big problems, not the big goals," says ACHIEVE Coach Jennifer Anderson. The Montgomery CHART analyzed where the county was low in their CHANGE assessments and created strategies for improvement. The CHART tries to achieve multiple strategies each year, doing the easiest ones first.
- ▶ It is important to have health and wellness representatives on the CHART who are flexible and willing to work toward even a partial victory. For example, if you cannot get approval for a comprehensive ban on smoking in public places, try for a smoking ban within a specific distance from public buildings or playgrounds.
- ▶ It is also key to have policymakers on your CHART. Montgomery County invited two county commissioners to become CHART members and attend ACHIEVE training, and since then, they have been strong supporters of ACHIEVE efforts on the county commission.



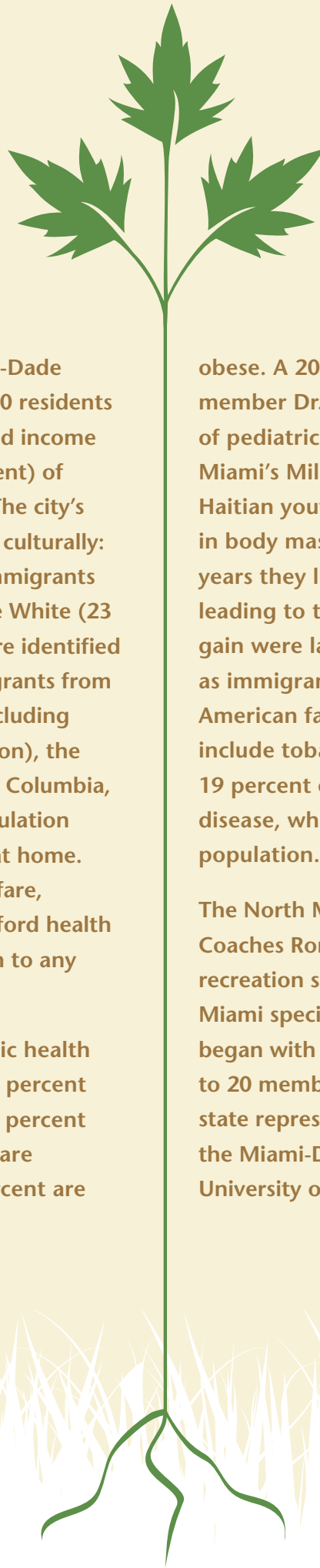
North Miami, FLORIDA

Located in the middle of urban Miami-Dade County, North Miami is a city of 60,000 residents with a relatively low median household income of \$29,778. Nearly one-third (33 percent) of households live below poverty level. The city's population is very diverse racially and culturally: 55 percent are African-American or immigrants of African descent, and 35 percent are White (23 percent of the total population also are identified as Hispanic). The city has many immigrants from the West Indies and Latin America, including Haiti (31 percent of the total population), the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Honduras, Columbia, and Venezuela. Two-thirds of the population speak a language other than English at home. Many residents do not qualify for welfare, Medicaid, or Medicare, and cannot afford health care, thus leaving them no connection to any healthcare system.

North Miami's most significant chronic health problem is obesity. Among adults, 24 percent are overweight, and an additional 38 percent are obese. Among youth, 17 percent are overweight, and an additional 13 percent are

obese. A 2009 study conducted by CHART member Dr. Sarah Messiah, assistant professor of pediatric clinical research at the University of Miami's Miller School of Medicine, found that Haitian youth in North Miami gained 3.7 percent in body mass index in each of the first three years they lived in the U.S. The primary factors leading to the significant and rapid weight gain were lack of exercise and changes in diet as immigrant youth became assimilated into American fast-food culture. Other health issues include tobacco use (17 percent of youth and 19 percent of adults smoke) and cardiovascular disease, which affects 13 percent of the population.

The North Miami *CHART** is led by ACHIEVE Coaches Ronald Bell, City of North Miami recreation supervisor, and Andrea Ramos, North Miami special events supervisor. The CHART began with 11 members and has been expanded to 20 members, including North Miami's mayor, state representative, and representatives from the Miami-Dade County Health Department, the University of Miami, Johnson & Wales University,



► CASE STUDY 1

Working with Worksites to Improve Health and Wellness

The North Miami CHART established a goal of improving employee health by creating a policy of healthy snacks for meetings and vending machines, and by promoting physical activity through a stairwell and walking campaign. The CHART planned the worksite wellness initiative to be modeled by city agencies and then rolled out to businesses, universities, and other community organizations.

The CHART in 2009 began worksite wellness efforts for city employees by changing the policy on food provided for city department meetings and events. The parks and recreation department developed a written policy requiring healthy snacks at meetings and events that has also been implemented by the offices for the mayor and city council. Prior to 2009, snacks and meals often included donuts, chips, soda, and fast food. As a result of the ACHIEVE-inspired policy change, meetings and events now feature healthy snacks and meals, including granola bars, fruits, vegetables, and water.

The CHART also has changed the policy for vending machines at city offices to meet a goal of offering only healthy options. Beginning in 2009, the team focused on working with the city's purchasing department to develop a new contract that would require vending machines to offer at least 50 percent healthy choices in city offices and 100 percent healthy choices in public facilities such as community centers and parks. The healthy items would include bottled water, 100-percent fruit juices, and whole-grain snacks that are low in fat and sugar. The vending machine policy was supported by the mayor and city manager and approved for inclusion in the city's new vending contract in May 2010. The policy applies to the city's four community centers and six major parks, and is being implemented by all city departments. The CHART meanwhile is researching vending machine companies for a new contract, and has found a local company that supplies a private school with healthy food items that have proven more popular than unhealthy ones.

Florida International University, the Miami-Dade School of Nursing, United Healthcare, Heroes Unite, the South Florida Health Council, FLIPANY (Florida Introduces Physical Activity and Nutrition for Youth), the Education Fund, and city staff from the transportation and community planning and development departments.

“We want people to thrive in their cultural community, but also to shift to a healthier lifestyle,” says ACHIEVE Coach Andrea Ramos.

**Please see Glossary on page 4 for definitions of terms in italics.*

Employee wellness efforts also have focused on a campaign to market healthy eating and physical activities. Some of the official marketing messages delivered to city staff by stairwell posters are, “Stop and think before you eat,” “Healthy food is healthy people,” and “Take a walk after you eat.” Many city employees now bring healthy brown-bag lunches, and encourage each other to walk after eating. A walking club for city employees takes a brisk two-mile walk every day during a morning or afternoon break. In the hot and humid summer months, the group moves indoors to stairwells in the municipal buildings. The city is planning to paint and decorate municipal building stairwells to make the activity more enjoyable.

The CHART has begun looking at expanding the city’s healthy eating and exercise policies for adoption by businesses, universities, and community organizations. For example, in 2010, Johnson and Wales University began a worksite wellness program in which staff and students are encouraged to use the stairs.

► CASE STUDY 2

Promoting Physical Activity Through Complete Streets

One of North Miami’s early CHART goals was to expand elements of the built environment to make it more conducive to healthier lifestyles. The CHART is working with the city to make policy, systems, and environmental changes that will create a comprehensive bicycle network in North Miami, as well as safer and more attractive pedestrian connections through *Complete Streets* concepts.

“We’re a built-out city, so we’re catching up, and it’s much harder because the street infrastructure has already been developed,” notes ACHIEVE Coach Ron Bell. North Miami’s Transportation Master Plan, approved in July 2005, established the groundwork for an east-west walking-biking trail system, which has provided the physical framework for many of the CHART’s efforts. Beginning in 2009, the CHART worked with the city to obtain a \$100,000 grant from the Miami-Dade County Health Department, with funds supplied by the American

Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The grant will jumpstart the city’s Bike, Park, and Ride program, which encourages bicycling by providing safe and adequate bicycle facilities. The grant will fund the installation of bike racks, bike shelters, bike lane striping, and related signage throughout the city, along with bicycle promotion and education.

CHART members also have been working with partners including the city’s planning and development, transportation, and public works departments, the Florida Department of Transportation, and the Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade County—to create policies that support biking for exercise, fun, and transportation purposes. As a result of the CHART’s collaborative efforts, the city has begun installing bike-parking facilities, “Share the Road” signs, and traffic-calming measures such as traffic circles along NW 131st Street, a major connecting road.

“ACHIEVE has built the momentum for [the bike and pedestrian connections] to happen,” says Bell. “We are working with other departments within the city toward one common goal.” It has helped, he says, that the mayor, a CHART member, was an early supporter of the biking efforts and in June 2010 led an 11-mile community bike ride. The bike ride has since become a monthly event.

The city has a better existing environment for pedestrians than for bicyclists; 90 percent of North Miami has completed and connected sidewalks. As a result of advocacy by the CHART, the city is working to construct the remaining 10 percent of sidewalks and to adopt a Complete Streets policy. In one effort to meet this goal, the City of North Miami in 2009 entered into an agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation regarding two projects to improve walkability. The first will create new sidewalks to provide a safer route for walking and biking to William Jennings Bryan Elementary School. A larger-scope future project will replace inadequate and unsafe sidewalks in North Miami’s downtown commercial district and install crosswalks, curb extensions, improved landscaping, bus shelters, and bicycle parking.



Lessons Learned

ACHIEVE coaches in North Miami offer the following observations and advice:

- ▶ Attracting high-profile spokespeople for ACHIEVE efforts is important. “It is a voice that parks and recreation agencies don’t have,” says ACHIEVE Coach Ron Bell. North Miami’s mayor, former mayor, and state representative, all of whom are CHART members, gave early vocal support, which helped North Miami get the word out about ACHIEVE efforts.
- ▶ North Miami ACHIEVE coaches advise putting policy changes in writing. They say written policies serve as documentation of the community’s commitment and provide the framework and background for decisions. Written policies also are clear, unambiguous, and sustainable, while “understood” policies can lead to misunderstandings.
- ▶ To reach North Miami’s different cultural communities, the CHART is targeting mass media, including a Haitian radio station, to communicate about healthy foods and fitness. “We want people to thrive in their cultural community, but also to shift to a healthier lifestyle,” says ACHIEVE Coach Andrea Ramos.
- ▶ North Miami in June 2010 received the All American City Award from the National Civic League. One of the key factors was the city’s implementation of policies to improve community health through ACHIEVE.

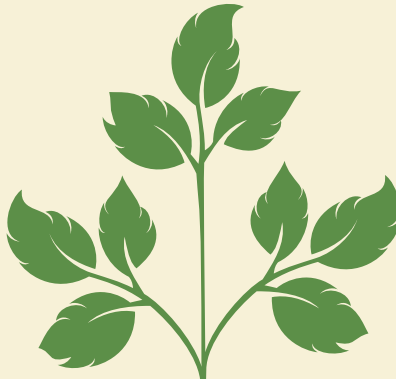


ADDITIONAL ACHIEVE EFFORTS: Community Gardens

North Miami’s CHART has led the planning for the city’s first community gardens. CHART member Alice Billman, executive director of the local nonprofit organization Heroes Unite, collaborated with Florida International University to install the first community garden on city park land. The garden combines environmental art with garden beds for growing vegetables and fruits. Students at David K. Lawrence K-8 School planted the garden last fall. Billman and the city are planning two additional community gardens on city property. The second and third gardens, which will be planted in the fall of 2010, will incorporate a cultural theme. The CHART also is working with a new member, the Education Fund, which has extensive experience in South Florida introducing community gardens to schools.



O'Fallon, MISSOURI



Located about 30 miles west of St. Louis, the City of O'Fallon encompasses nearly 30 square miles. From a rural town of 1,300 people in the mid-1950s, O'Fallon has grown to become the largest city in St. Charles County, with nearly 80,000 residents. Most of the growth is on the south side of the city, with many new subdivisions and businesses. The estimated median household income in 2009 was a relatively affluent \$81,973. The community is 95 percent White, and 5 percent belong to other racial groups. Some 3 percent of households live below poverty level, and the unemployment rate is 8 percent.

O'Fallon's primary health issues are obesity and high cholesterol: Over a third (34 percent) of adults and children are overweight or obese. Nearly 40 percent of adults have high cholesterol. Other chronic health problems include arthritis (32 percent), high blood pressure (29 percent), and tobacco smoking (20 percent).

The CHART*, called Live Well O'Fallon, includes ACHIEVE Coaches Shelley Reed, recreation coordinator, and Ty Joyce, fitness specialist, both of whom work for the O'Fallon Parks and Recreation Department, and Dr. Heather Escobar, a chiropractor and owner of O'Fallon Wellness Works. The CHART also includes representatives from the O'Fallon Parks and Recreation Department, the O'Fallon City Council, the Ft. Zumwalt School District, the Middendorf-Kredell Library, Progress West Health Care Center, and Healthy Communities St. Charles County.

O'Fallon "is not a community where people can walk or bike," says ACHIEVE Coach Shelley Reed. "We're working on making it a safer community to be active in."

**Please see Glossary on page 4 for definitions of terms in italics.*

► CASE STUDY 1

Improving Nutrition through School Vending Machines and Lunches

To address childhood obesity, Live Well O'Fallon established a goal of improving nutrition in the schools. The CHART includes Paul Becker, the student nutrition services director for the Ft. Zumwalt School District, which with 12 schools is the largest of three public school districts in O'Fallon. Working with the CHART, Becker has proposed numerous changes to the school district Wellness Committee and the Ft. Zumwalt School Board to offer healthier choices in school vending machines and lunches. The school board adopted the policy changes to ensure school vending machines and school lunches offer healthy choices.

In 2009, the Ft. Zumwalt schools began implementing these policy changes by removing most unhealthy snacks and beverage items from vending machines. The vending machines now offer healthier items such as pretzels, fruit juice, and water; a few junk food items are still available, but they are more expensive to encourage kids to eat the healthier items. All items in the vending machine have their nutritional information posted and are color coded to represent "good, ok, or not so good" choices. Although Becker has received some negative feedback, the changes have been welcomed by most.

In another CHART policy change led by Becker, the school lunch program reduced the frequency of offerings of foods that are fried, fatty, and carbohydrate-heavy. French fries used to be served daily, but now are offered only once a week, and pizza is offered only once a month. Lunchrooms provide fruits and vegetables every day, and all pasta, bread, and pizza crusts are made with whole wheat flour.

In 2009 Becker also began to acquire some of the lunchroom fruit and vegetable offerings from farms on the outskirts of O'Fallon. For the 2010-2011 school year, he plans to expand offerings of fresh fruits and vegetables from local farms, an arrangement that supports local agriculture while providing healthier school lunch options for students. He has developed agreements with local farmers to purchase as much corn, apples, strawberries, and other produce as they can provide. The farm-to-school lunch offerings have been well-received by students, school staff, and parents.





► CASE STUDY 2

Promoting Physical Activity Through Complete Streets

In another effort to combat obesity and other chronic health problems, Live Well O'Fallon established a goal to make O'Fallon a walkable and bikeable community that is safe for all ages. O'Fallon has seven parks, as well as soccer and baseball complexes and other recreation facilities, but "it is not a community where people can walk or bike," says ACHIEVE Coach Shelley Reed. "We're working on making it a safer community to be active in." Live Well O'Fallon is focusing on how to retrofit the city with more parks and trails, and is working with the planning and streets departments to introduce *Complete Streets* concepts and get them adopted as city policy.

During the 1970s through the 1990s, the city grew so quickly that the development of a parks and trail system was overlooked. Subdivisions were developed without sidewalks. The newer southside subdivisions have sidewalks, but they do not connect to each other or to main roads. A citywide needs assessment in June 2009 indicated that residents wanted a trail system and places to be active, and that most residents were not active unless they worked out at a fitness center. Some residents do bike or run, but the routes are dangerous; the roadways are not striped with bike lanes, and most cycling is done on narrow roadway shoulders.

Highway K, for example, the city's four-lane-wide main thoroughfare, is lined with restaurants, stores, a library, and other venues. There are no dedicated bike lanes, and the shoulders are narrow. There are few crosswalks, and sidewalks are available for pedestrians only intermittently because three different jurisdictions—the city, St. Charles County, and the Missouri Department of Transportation—own and maintain the highway and do not coordinate the installation and maintenance of sidewalks along the more than 10 miles it extends through O'Fallon. Live Well O'Fallon has suggested a way to reconfigure Highway K into two lanes, with a median and turning lanes, as well as bike lanes and continuous sidewalks. "If we can get it connected, we can have people walking the whole stretch" of the highway, says Reed.

ADDITIONAL ACHIEVE EFFORTS: Live Well Expo

Live Well O'Fallon organized the Live Well Expo, held in June, 2010 outside the Renaud Spirit Center (the community's indoor recreation complex) to showcase numerous ways to eat healthy and become fit. One CHART member, inspired by attending the popular "Veggie Fest" vegetarian festival in Chicago, arranged for 30 local vendors in the health and nutrition fields to present demonstrations. One vendor, a culinary school, showed how to cook a healthy meal of grilled fruit kabobs, turkey burgers, and couscous salad. There was a demonstration on how to pack a healthy lunch, and another on how to create a community garden. Fitness specialists encouraged parents to take their children outside for fun activities—a walk or a bike ride, or playing at the park—instead of using the computer or watching television. Attended by hundreds of people, the Live Well Expo was deemed a big success by participants and vendors. The CHART plans to repeat the festival annually.





The CHART also is developing a citywide list of incomplete streets, sidewalks, and trails, accompanied by photos. It is focusing on trying to get existing subdivisions connected with sidewalks and walking and biking trails, and is discussing a longer-term effort with the city planning department to develop policies that would require all new subdivisions and business districts to have Complete Streets with pedestrian-friendly sidewalks.

To encourage people in the subdivisions that do have sidewalks and trails to use them, the CHART has been working on a plan to add mile markers and create routes with published maps for walking, biking, and running. Designs for mile-marker signs were approved by the city in June 2010. The CHART also has begun a campaign to clear and maintain existing sidewalks and paths. It is focusing on a pilot project along Bryan Road, which runs parallel to Highway K and connects the commercial strip to Winghamen, a large newer subdivision. Live Well O'Fallon plans to recruit volunteers to work with the city to clean up a four-mile stretch of the Bryan Road sidewalk, which is overgrown with weeds and overhanging shrubs, and to install mile markers along the sidewalk. The project is due to start in the fall of 2010.

Live Well O'Fallon also has been working to increase the width of sidewalks throughout the city from four feet to six feet wide so two people can walk comfortably side by side. The city has started constructing wider sidewalks, and has begun to make markings in sidewalks to notify disabled pedestrians that curb cuts for crosswalks are ahead.

To encourage more longer-distance walking and biking, the CHART is working on a larger scale to connect O'Fallon with neighboring communities. The CHART's goal is to connect more neighborhoods to the Katy Trail, a regional walking/biking trail system, and to connect the city with the Dardenne Greenway trail, which is being developed to link all the communities in St. Charles County. The concept of connecting to the greenway has the support of the city's planning and zoning committee, the parks and recreation board, the mayor, and the city council. As part of these regional connection efforts, Live Well O'Fallon also is working with the Great River Greenways District, which is developing the River Ring, a system of greenways, parks, and trails in the St. Louis region.

Lessons Learned

ACHIEVE coaches in O'Fallon offer the following observations and advice:

- ▶ **Widening the ACHIEVE circle to create a network that works in tandem with the CHART can help the team accomplish their goals.** Live Well O'Fallon created a network with representatives from the county health department and the Chamber of Commerce who could not devote the time required for being on the CHART. Network members are invited to attend CHART meetings and are kept informed of activities, but are not required to dedicate a certain amount of time to ACHIEVE. They help with the projects and provide information when they can.
- ▶ **In reassessing the composition of the CHART, Live Well O'Fallon chose to balance the number of community leaders with community members who are able to do the legwork.** ACHIEVE coaches initially recruited community, city, and state leaders who had strong political and networking capabilities. They discovered the CHART also needed members who have the time to focus on ACHIEVE projects. The CHART consequently has been expanded with new members and network members. "Leaders are great for networking, but we need people to attend meetings and do volunteer work," says ACHIEVE Coach Ty Joyce.

Pierre,

SOUTH DAKOTA



Located on the bluffs of the Missouri River, the City of Pierre is the capital of South Dakota and has a population of 14,000 residents within the city and approximately 4,000 residents in the surrounding rural areas. Most of the residents (88 percent) are White, followed by American Indian (10 percent), and two or more races (2 percent). One percent of the total population also are identified as Hispanic. Pierre has a median income of \$52,544 for a family of four. Located in Hughes County, Pierre has a relatively low poverty rate—6 percent of households, though 13 percent of children in the county live below the poverty level.

Childhood obesity is the most significant chronic health problem in Pierre. Among children, two-thirds are overweight (37 percent) or obese (an additional 30 percent). The adult rates are similar. Adults and youth are equally affected by a diet based on the area's ranching-tradition meals of roast beef, potatoes, and corn, supplemented with plenty of fast food. Most parents work, families tend to eat out frequently, and many parents do not prepare school lunches. Pierre is considered a *food desert** because of the

community's lack of access to fresh healthy food. The recent addition of a Walmart Super Center has assured the delivery of more fresh produce, though ACHIEVE coaches note changing the local culture to encourage eating fruits and vegetables will do more to ensure their availability in the local markets. Other chronic health problems include tobacco use; 15 percent of adults smoke. The death rate attributable to diabetes is significantly higher than the state average.

Pierre's ACHIEVE coaches are Mindy Cheap, recreation superintendent for the Pierre Parks and Recreation Department, and Tiffany Sanchez, a community volunteer, former teacher, and parent of four children in Pierre's public and private schools. The CHART also includes representatives of the Healthy Community/Healthy Youth Coalition, the Childhood Obesity Coalition, the South Dakota Public Health Association, the Pierre Indian Learning Center, the YMCA, St. Mary's Hospital Foundation, the State Bureau of Personnel Wellness, the Pierre School District, the City of Pierre, and the local business community.

*Please see Glossary on page 4 for definitions of terms in italics.

► CASE STUDY 1

Improving Nutrition in Schools Through Education and School Lunches

Concerned about Pierre's rapidly increasing rate of childhood obesity, the CHART chose to focus first on a goal of improving nutrition in the schools. The CHART has focused on instruction about healthy nutrition and on establishing policies related to healthy school lunches and snacks.

In the fall of 2008, when the acting U.S. Surgeon General visited Pierre, he challenged school and public health officials to address the fact that 30 percent of Pierre children were obese, according to height and weight assessments taken at the beginning of the school year. The percentages of obese children had increased from the previous year, and were high across socioeconomic and racial lines, but were especially high among certain groups such as American Indians.

Since 2009, ACHIEVE efforts have focused on educating administrators, principals, school food service staff, teachers, parents, and kids about healthy nutrition and how the schools could change lunchroom and classroom policies to make meals and snacks healthier. ACHIEVE Coach Tiffany Sanchez was invited to join the CHART because she previously had started the Harvest of the Month program at St. Joseph's School, a Catholic elementary school that her two younger children attend. The program introduces children to fresh fruits and vegetables, including their history and nutritional benefits. Sanchez presents one vegetable or fruit each month and explains where it grows, how it gets to the grocery store, and how to select ripe ones and prepare them at home. She provides a taste of the fruit or vegetable prepared several ways and asks students, "Which way do you like it best?" She also sends recipes home with the kids.

Sanchez has worked with the Catholic school to make sure children eat healthy treats for celebrations like Valentine's Day and birthdays. Parents have to sign a contract at the beginning of the school year that they will provide only healthy snacks and treats in school. During

the 2009-2010 school year, the CHART took these efforts into the public schools and began working in several elementary schools to implement a healthy treats policy and Harvest of the Month classroom instruction.

The Pierre School District, with six public schools, established a goal for the 2009-2010 school year of promoting student and staff adoption of healthy lifestyles. Following this lead, the CHART's school childhood obesity committee spoke to the school district superintendent, food services director, and principals about the obesity epidemic and what the schools could do to offer healthier breakfasts, lunches, and snacks. Improving the nutrition of food served in the schools could have a big impact on children's health, they said, because over 68 percent of the district's students participate in the school lunch program. "It is similar to physical education," says Sanchez. "This may be the only exercise or nutritious food kids get each day. If you put sugary things and pizza dunkers and hot dogs in front of kids, they'll choose that over an apple. Why can't we give them healthier food?"

Among the positive responses to the ACHIEVE committee's educational efforts: One principal eliminated chocolate milk from breakfast and snack options, and an elementary school physical education teacher monitors the lunch room, allowing kids second helpings of fruits and vegetables only. Overall, however, the committee has met resistance. Most schools still offer, for breakfast, lunch, and snacks, items like chocolate milk, which has added sugar.

"As far as [establishing] policies, it's so hard to get them implemented," says Sanchez. She says internal school district politics make it difficult to change the food service. The superintendent has indicated support for healthier food in the schools, but he has not asked principals to eliminate items like chocolate milk. The school lunch planner says he is meeting federal school lunch standards, and kids will choose not to buy lunch if it is limited to healthier food.

The ACHIEVE school childhood obesity committee has not been dissuaded, however, and has joined forces with another local committee that includes a pediatrician, a family physician, an internal medicine physician, and

representatives of Delta Dental and St. Mary's Hospital Foundation to establish a grass-roots effort to improve school nutrition. "We're moving to the PTAs to talk with parents," explains Sanchez. Rather than trying to influence nutrition at all four public elementary schools at once, the CHART committee recently chose one, Washington Elementary, which had committed \$12,000 from a school fundraiser for wellness efforts.

In another school nutrition effort, the CHART committee is trying to eliminate food as rewards in the public schools, and has been promoting healthy nutrition at school events. They began with an event in April 2010, the Jefferson School Family Fit and Fun Festival and Walkathon, an annual event in which kids and their families participate in fun fitness activities such as running an obstacle course and jumping rope. Carnival prizes from past years, such as candy, cupcakes, and soda, were replaced with healthy snacks and prizes. Students raised \$13,000 in walkathon pledges that will be used to purchase new playground equipment for their school. The playground equipment is due to be installed in the fall of 2010.



► CASE STUDY 2

Promoting Physical Activity Through Parks and Trails

To help reduce Pierre's obesity rate, the CHART is working toward a goal of getting more people in the community as a whole to participate in physical activities. They are focusing on walking and biking, encouraging residents to use the city's parks and trails for exercise.

The Pierre CHART is working to promote physical activity by encouraging use of the city's infrastructure for walking and biking. Pierre has over 50 miles of hiking and biking trails along the Missouri River, extending north into downtown, west across the river to Fort Pierre, and crisscrossing La Framboise Island Nature Area in the middle of the river. The CHART has applied for a state grant to post trail markers with maps at four points along this trail network.

Meanwhile, throughout Pierre, the city is pursuing environmental changes in response to ACHIEVE efforts, such as installing mile markers and garbage receptacles along walking and biking paths. The CHART and the city are working to install bike racks throughout the community at schools, grocery stores, and workplaces. They also are working to extend the infrastructure for physical activity by developing a city policy that would require walking and biking paths to be incorporated in new commercial and residential developments.

In another effort to get more people exercising, the CHART is developing a "prescription map" to give to local physicians for use with patients who have been identified with chronic health problems such as obesity. The map will provide information about free and low-cost places to get exercise in the community, including walking and biking paths, swimming pools, horseshoe pits, and volleyball courts.



Lessons Learned

ACHIEVE coaches in Pierre offer the following observations and advice:

- ▶ In a small city like Pierre, it helps ACHIEVE to have CHART members with multiple connections to local institutions and organizations. People with multiple roles and professional relationships in the community can act as a catalyst for change in more than one sector. In Pierre, a CHART member who is the PTA president at a local school and also the director of school health for the South Dakota Department of Education has been instrumental in working toward health-related policy changes at the local and state levels.
- ▶ The CHART is actively publicizing what schools and worksites have done for health and wellness as a way to gain more support for ACHIEVE. CHART members have written articles for the local newspaper highlighting examples of school and worksite activities that promote healthy choices, behaviors, and lifestyles. The CHART hopes to encourage readers to do the same at their school or worksite, and to encourage a little friendly competition.
- ▶ Pierre ACHIEVE coaches advise learning to be happy with small victories first, such as having people in the community who are interested in healthy eating and becoming more fit and who also want to become part of ACHIEVE.



ADDITIONAL ACHIEVE EFFORTS: Healthier Snacks at Offices, Institutions, and School Concessions

The Pierre ACHIEVE team is working to increase the nutritional value of meals and snacks offered in local institutions, such as the hospital, state government offices, and sports concessions. In the summer of 2009, the city's outdoor swimming pool concession stand began offering healthier choices, including baked chips, granola bars, vegetables with dip, and low-fat yogurt. The CHART is also developing a list of healthy snacks for organizations such as youth soccer and baseball leagues that operate food concessions at athletic events.





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ABOUT ACHIEVE AT NRPA:

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), the leading advocacy organization dedicated to the advancement of public parks and recreation opportunities in the U.S., has been a proud partner with CDC on ACHIEVE (Action Communities for Health, Innovation, and EnVironmental changeE) since 2008. NRPA believes that local park and recreation agencies can be strong leaders for health and wellness initiatives in their communities, as has been demonstrated by the successes of NRPA-funded ACHIEVE communities. Through ACHIEVE, local park and recreation agencies are able to create and strengthen partnerships that support their efforts to advance community wellness. NRPA is committed to our continued support of health and wellness through ACHIEVE, and encourages new agencies to join us in these efforts to improve the health of communities across the nation.

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