

# SUCCESS STORIES 2019



**Ohio**

Department  
of Health



## Dear Colleagues, Stakeholders, and Public Health Partners,

It is my pleasure to share with you the 2019 Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Success Stories. Funded by the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), CHC is working to increase opportunities for physical activity, improve access to and affordability of healthy food, and assure tobacco-free living for all Ohioans.

CHC coordinators in 23 counties across the state have activated and engaged local stakeholders through coalitions to accomplish objectives and ensure sustainability.

Examples of this work include community gardens, produce prescription programs, bike infrastructure improvements, new and renovated parks and playgrounds, and adoption of Tobacco 21 policies. In 2019, the CHC program impacted more than 800,000 Ohioans and leveraged more than \$6 million to support these sustainable changes. Included in this booklet, you will find information about our statewide initiatives as well as success stories from each of our funded counties. We hope you enjoy reading about how CHC is making the healthier choice the easier choice where Ohioans live, work, and play.

Thank you for your continued support of the CHC program.

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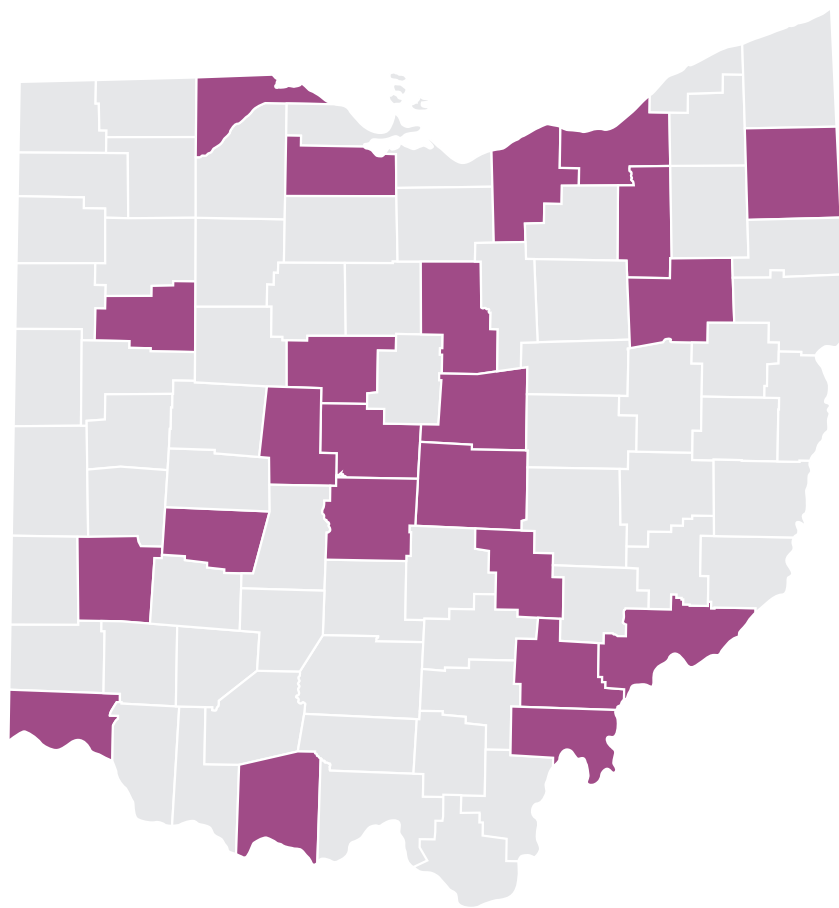
Ryan Vollrath, MCRP

### Website:

[www.odh.ohio.gov/chc](http://www.odh.ohio.gov/chc)







### **Vision:**

Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice

### **Mission:**

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

### **Commitment to Equity:**

Health equity is achieved when all people in a community have access to affordable, inclusive, and quality infrastructure and services that, despite historical and contemporary injustices, allows them to reach their full health potential.



## Table of Contents

### State Level

Training and Technical Assistance .....	1
Healthy Eating Initiatives .....	2
Active Living Initiatives .....	3
<b>Local Level</b> .....	4
Program Impact .....	4

### County Success Stories

Adams County .....	6
Allen County .....	8
Athens County .....	10
City of Cincinnati .....	12
Clark County .....	14
City of Columbus .....	16
Cuyahoga County .....	18
Delaware County .....	20
Knox County .....	22
Licking County .....	24
Lorain County .....	26
Lucas County .....	28
Marion County .....	30
Meigs County .....	32
Montgomery County .....	34
Perry County .....	36
Richland County .....	38
Sandusky County .....	40
Stark County .....	42
Summit County .....	44
Trumbull County .....	46
Union County .....	48
Washington County .....	50





# Training and Technical Assistance



## All-Project Meetings

CHC hosted three in-person meetings in 2019 to provide training on evidence-based strategies and facilitate peer to peer networking.

### April Topic

Land Use and Public Health

### August Topic

Program Sustainability

### November Topic

Peer Networking, End of Grant Cycle Celebration



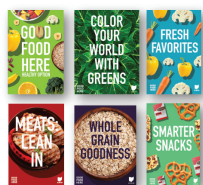
CHC Program Staff with former ODH Director, Dr. Amy Acton, 2019

### Agenda

- Roll Call
- Food Service
- Produce
- Active Living
- Announcements
- Adjourn

#### Active Transportation Plan 2019

- 2019 workplan – began in New Lexington only
- January decided to hold a meeting there was enough interest in the entire county
- March 27 held a 2 hour meeting
- April, Perry County ready to work with Toole Design
- PCHD has an Advisory Committee for mapping project safety issues and concerns



## Monthly Webinars

Webinars were hosted monthly to highlight local progress, hear from subject matter experts, and provide updates on statewide initiatives. Topics from 2019 included produce prescriptions, food service guidelines, farmers' markets, active transportation, park improvements, coalition evaluation, Tobacco 21, and more!





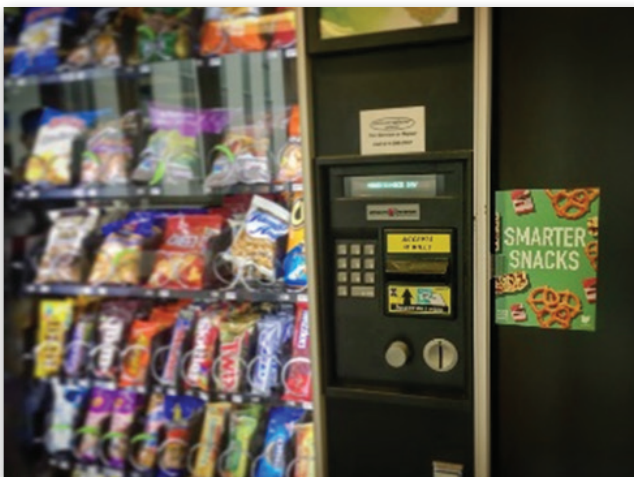
# Statewide Healthy Eating Initiatives

## Produce Prescriptions

In 2019, CHC continued a partnership with national non-profit Wholesome Wave to pilot a produce prescription program with two Federally Qualified Health Centers, Community Health and Wellness Partners of Logan County and Hopewell Health in Athens. A total of 241 patients with a diagnosis of prediabetes or diabetes enrolled in the program, attended nutrition education classes, and received vouchers for fresh fruits and vegetables to redeem at local farmers' markets and grocery retail stores. The pilot will continue into 2020, but initial program results have shown increased fruit and vegetable consumption, weight loss, and improved A1C levels in some participants.



## Food and Beverage Guidelines



ODH state staff conducted outreach to worksites and community settings throughout Ohio to help increase healthy food offering in venues where food is served within their organizations. The team re-invigorated previous work with healthy vending at ODH, increasing the percentage of healthy items offered in vending machines to about 35% and strengthening the relationship with the Business Enterprise Program and the new vendor for ODH, in order to continue increasing healthy options for ODH staff. The team applied for, and was accepted into, the Food Service Guidelines Action Institute scheduled for February 2020 to receive additional technical assistance on policy development. State staff also began a collaboration with the Ohio Department of Aging and the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, to improve commissary options for inmates as well as healthy vending for visitors.





# Statewide Active Living Initiatives

## Land Use and Public Health

In 2018, the CDC introduced land use interventions as an active living strategy, encouraging health professionals to think about the connections between public health outcomes and the built environment's development patterns. This strategy aims to increase activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations by making it safe, easy, and comfortable to walk or bicycle for recreation and transportation. In 2019, CHC's Active Living Services contractor, Toole Design, hosted a series of *Land Use and Health* workshops to educate health professionals about land use planning. Workshops provided an opportunity for cross-sector conversations about land use and health, centered around equity issues. More than 200 people attended the workshop series, representing more than 130 organizations from cities, suburbs, and small villages in both urban and rural counties. Sixty percent represented government agencies from health, planning, transportation, development, law enforcement, and other fields. Two-thirds of all participants agreed or strongly agreed that they received skills and knowledge that they can apply to their jobs and professional goals.

## New Resources

In 2019, a number of new resources were developed in preparation for the 2020 competitive grant cycle. Fact sheets were created for each active living strategy supported by the local CHC grant including: Complete Streets Policies, Active Transportation Planning, Worksite Active Commute Support, Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure, Safe Routes to School, Safe Routes to Healthy Food, Transit Improvements, and Health Equity. All resources can be found on the CHC website, [odh.ohio.gov/chc](http://odh.ohio.gov/chc).





### Active Transportation Planning

#### Frequently Asked Questions

**What is active transportation planning?**  
Active transportation planning (ATP) is a process that provides a framework for improved walking and bicycling conditions. It is a collaborative process involving all levels of government, from local to state, and includes the private sector. ATP is a key component of the transportation planning process and is required by federal law for all states and metropolitan areas with populations over 50,000.

**Related Resources:**  
[Bicycle Infrastructure FAQ](#)  
[Pedestrian Infrastructure FAQ](#)  
[Complete Streets Policies FAQ](#)

**Who might be involved in planning?**  
Active transportation planning is typically done by government agencies. Staff working on a plan may have administrative, engineering, health, safety, recreation, planning, zoning, or transportation expertise.

**What is the difference between Complete Streets and active transportation planning?**  
Complete Streets policies are designed to ensure that all streets are safe, usable, and comfortable for all modes of travel, including walking, bicycling, and driving. Active transportation planning is a process that provides a framework for improved walking and bicycling conditions. It is a collaborative process involving all levels of government, from local to state, and includes the private sector.

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### Complete Streets Policies

#### Frequently Asked Questions

**What are Complete Streets?**  
Complete Streets are streets designed and built for all users. They are safe, usable, and comfortable for all modes of travel, including walking, bicycling, and driving. Complete Streets policies are designed to ensure that all streets are safe, usable, and comfortable for all modes of travel, including walking, bicycling, and driving.

**Related Resources:**  
[Bicycle Infrastructure FAQ](#)  
[Pedestrian Infrastructure FAQ](#)  
[Complete Streets Policies FAQ](#)

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### Active Commute Support

#### Frequently Asked Questions

**What is active commute support?**  
Active commute support involves ways of getting to work that result in higher levels of physical activity than driving a car. It includes walking, bicycling, and taking public transit. Active commute support can have a positive impact on employee health, happiness, and productivity and contribute to decreasing health care costs. Workplaces can create support programs and infrastructure that encourage employees to make active commuting a habit.

**Related Resources:**  
[Bicycle Infrastructure FAQ](#)  
[Pedestrian Infrastructure FAQ](#)  
[Complete Streets Policies FAQ](#)

**Why focus on commuters?**  
In Ohio, 80% of adults do not meet recommended physical activity guidelines. 27% of adults engage in less than one physical activity session per week. 14% of adults usually bicycle or walk to work. Adults frequently report "lack of time" as a challenge that prevents them from being physically active. Many people spend a significant amount of their day at work, and over the last 10 years, the percentage of people who work in occupations that require physical activity has significantly decreased. Making it difficult for adults to be physically active during work hours. Adults may struggle to be active as they balance the competing demands of work, family, and personal life. Encouraging workplaces to support active commuting can help physical activity fit into their routines without a big time commitment.

**Employers that encourage physical activity during the workday have reported less absenteeism and higher productivity due to lack of illness, obesity, injury, or chronic conditions.**

**Why should businesses care about supporting active commuters?**  
Physical activity is good for businesses. Increasing physical activity for employees can lead to benefits and savings for businesses, including:  
- **Reduced health care costs:** Physical activity helps control weight and reduces the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes. It can also help to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression.



### Safe Routes to School

#### Frequently Asked Questions

**What is Safe Routes to School?**  
Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is an approach that has been used successfully in many communities to increase physical activity and improve walking and bicycling conditions. SRTS programs are designed to encourage children to walk and bicycle safely to and from school. SRTS programs are designed to encourage children to walk and bicycle safely to and from school. SRTS programs are designed to encourage children to walk and bicycle safely to and from school.

**Related Resources:**  
[Bicycle Infrastructure FAQ](#)  
[Pedestrian Infrastructure FAQ](#)  
[Complete Streets Policies FAQ](#)

**Is Safe Routes to School in Ohio?**  
Ohio has a successful and robust SRTS program, with programs in 57 of Ohio's 88 counties. Ohio's program is funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and administered by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). The Ohio SRTS program has two types of projects:  
- **Infrastructure projects:** These projects focus on improving the physical environment to make walking and bicycling safer and more comfortable. Examples include building sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes.  
- **Education and promotion projects:** These projects focus on encouraging children and parents to walk and bicycle safely to and from school. Examples include walking school buses, bike to school days, and parent training.

**In 1969, 41 percent of children 5 to 14 years of age usually walked or bicycled to school.**  
**In 2009, 13 percent of children 5 to 14 years of age usually walked or bicycled to school.**  
Source: National Center for Safe Routes to School (2011)

# 2019 Local Impact



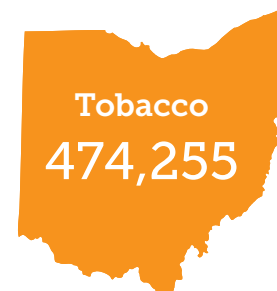
- 9 Community Gardens
- 9 Produce Prescription Programs
- 8 New Farmers' Markets
- 8 Food Pantries
- 7 Community Gardens
- 6 Early Childcare Center Nutrition Policies
- 5 Breastfeeding Support Policies
- 4 School Gardens
- 3 Safe Routes to Healthy Food Projects
- 3 Food and Beverage Guideline Policies
- 2 Farmers' Markets now accept EBT and/or WIC
- 2 Healthy Food Retail



- 26 Parks or Playgrounds
- 26 Bike Infrastructure Improvements
- 9 Active Transportation Commute Support
- 2 Bike Rental Projects
- 2 Multi Use Trails
- 2 Shared Use Agreements
- 2 Safe Routes to School Projects
- 2 Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plans
- 1 Complete Streets Policy
- 1 Public Transit Improvement



- 4 Tobacco 21 Policies
- 2 Smoke Free Parks
- 1 Smoke Free Multi Unit Housing



**Total Impacted: 883,339 High Risk Ohioans**





# 2019 Success Stories



County Success Stories







# Adams County

## Village Improves Physical Activity Access for Residents

### At a Glance

In Manchester, Ohio, the Adams County Creating Healthy Communities Coalition (ACCHC) collaborated with the Village Council and mayor to increase places and opportunities for residents to be physically active. A new bike park and improvements in another park over the past few years now promote and encourage physical activity in more than one location in the village. Addressing the county's significantly high rates of overweight and obese youth and adults, the development of a bike park was a mutual decision between the coalition and the village, as many children were observed riding their bicycles in the streets, where safety was a big factor. Now, more than 2,000 residents have access to the new bike park.

### Public Health Challenge

The 2017 Adams County Community Health Assessment (CHA) indicated that 75% of Adams County adults were either overweight (35%) or obese (40%). Additionally, almost half of Adams County's seventh and 10th graders are overweight or obese, both significantly greater than Ohio and national averages, as reported by the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). Further, the 2019 Adams County Kids' Health Fair, where age, height, and weight were recorded for 339 Manchester school-aged children, revealed that 47% of children were reported to be overweight or obese, with nearly 30% reported as obese. The 2017 CHA further reported a 12% higher rate of adults diagnosed with diabetes and a greater percentage diagnosed with heart attack, angina, or coronary

heart disease, compared with state and national averages. According to the 2018 County Health Rankings, only 40% of the Adams County population has adequate access to locations for physical activity, compared with 85% of Ohioans. Providing a park that is specific to cyclists is a way to not only promote bicycle safety and physical activity, but also to decrease the levels of obesity and chronic disease.

### Approach

Partnerships are key to any project, particularly development and rehabilitation to areas for active living. Having a strong relationship with the economic and community development director, the Village of Manchester, and a volunteer group from the General Electric-Peebles Test Operation, these projects progress relatively easily. The





Manchester Village Council expressed interest in a bike park, as they witnessed children riding bikes on the streets, a major safety concern. The Village Council assessed a location for a new bike park and began planning. The goal was to enhance the area's natural beauty and add components that would entice riders of all ages to use the park rather than the streets. Coalition partners helped develop the park and volunteers poured concrete and assembled and installed ramps and signage.

## Results

According to the Adams County Economic & Community Development Office statistics, more than 2,000 Manchester residents now have access to a bike park where adults and youth can be physically active in a safe, aesthetically-pleasing area. The park also has a smaller area for beginning riders. In the past five years, through the partnership between CHC and the Village of Manchester, bike racks and a bike fix-it station were installed within the village to support bicycling. The village has demonstrated its commitment to developing opportunities to improve the overall wellness of residents. When surveyed, adults specifically report that their children use the bike park, sometimes as often as daily, and that they "love it."

## What's Next

The CHC Coalition has focused on creating opportunities for physical activity in all county villages. The group plans to work on pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements throughout the county. The Village of Manchester continues to find additional funding to improve infrastructure and parks to enhance the quality of living for all residents.

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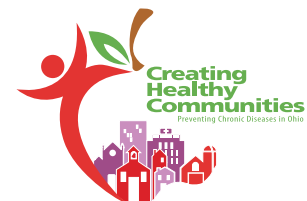
*"The Manchester bike park has provided hours of outdoor activities for my 12-year old son and his friends who would otherwise be playing video games inside. I also enjoy going to the bike park with my 8-year old daughter. It's very refreshing to see new things for families to do together."*

— Brie Haag, mother,  
Manchester resident

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## Find Out More

To learn more about the bike park and future work of the ACCHC, contact a coalition member or visit [www.achwc.org](http://www.achwc.org). The coalition's mission is to protect and improve the health and wellness of Adams County residents through collaborative partnerships that implement sustainable strategies for health promotion and disease prevention.



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# Allen County

## Reaping the Benefits of a New Community Garden

### At a Glance

Residents in Delphos can now grow their own fresh, local produce at the first community garden in the City of Delphos. Through a partnership between the Allen County Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Program, the Lima-Allen County Neighborhoods in Partnership (LACNIP), Mercy Health – St. Rita’s Medical Center, and the City of Delphos, 14 raised garden beds were built at Suever Park in Delphos. Nine gardeners participated in the project, from building the beds to planting, tending, and harvesting. This project not only improved healthy food access by providing fresh, local produce to those in need, but also provided garden education and skill development to those involved.

### Public Health Challenge

The most recent Community Health Assessment indicates that Allen County residents exhibit many risk factors for chronic diseases, like heart disease and diabetes. Lack of fruit and vegetable consumption is a contributing factor to increased risk of chronic disease. Almost 90% of adults in Allen County are consuming less than the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables each day, 53% are eating less than one vegetable serving per day, and 18% report eating no fruit servings in the past seven days. In addition, residents have limited access to healthy foods, especially fresh produce, at a low cost. In Delphos, which is saturated with convenience stores and restaurants, there’s very limited fresh produce available. Low-income residents struggle to get access to quality, healthy foods.

### Approach

A Delphos resident surveyed the community and found there was great interest in starting a community garden. She heard about CHC through another initiative at her workplace and recognized that a garden project would align with the goals of the CHC program and the county’s Community Health Improvement Plan goal to increase access to local produce. CHC then partnered with LACNIP to develop a garden at Suever Park. The Mercy Health Foundation provided funds to help purchase materials for beds, residents donated seeds and plants, and CHC provided a water tank. Nine gardeners registered for garden beds, some utilizing multiple beds. Garden mentors provided advice and helped





with the gardens. A nearby shelter house provided shade and a meeting place for gardeners and the garden was built on a large green space that will allow for expansion of the garden in future years.

## Results

During the first growing season, gardeners used most of the produce for themselves and their families, but some also donated their produce to the community. Most gardeners did not weigh all their produce, but tracked the number harvested. Produce donated included 31 yellow squash, 25 zucchini, 33 bell peppers, 12.4 pounds of cucumbers, and 5.5 pounds of kale.

Most gardeners felt they ate healthier and consumed less fast food, spent less money on food, and felt good about where their food came from. Gardeners gained new gardening skills that they are teaching to their families and friends — and after donating food to residents, they felt more involved in the neighborhood. Project organizers saw many short-term and long-term benefits for Delphos, including an increase in healthy food access for low-income community members, community connections created among individuals/groups participating in the project, and an opportunity for children and adults to interact with nature and learn about growing food.

## What's Next

The Delphos Community Garden committee is committed to sustaining and improving the garden and will continue to grow fresh produce for themselves and the community. While community gardens alone will not solve food insecurity issues, they do play a significant role in the food system. Allen County CHC and the LACNIP Community Garden program plan to continue to expand community gardening in other areas of the county. As community gardens expand and local produce increases, access to healthy foods will be easier for Allen County residents.

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*"This allows me a chance not only to give more produce to my family and friends but also to give to the community."*

— Kathy Stemen,  
community gardener

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## Find Out More

You can help your community achieve better health and greater access to healthy foods through participation in community-based gardening programs. Join the Allen County Food Policy Council or the Delphos Creating Healthy Communities Coalition to get involved with local health initiatives. If you would like to enjoy growing your own food in a community garden, let us know.



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## Athens County Grocers Role in their Customers' Health

### At a Glance

To address food access and chronic disease, Hopewell Health Centers and the Athens County Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program partnered with Wholesome Wave to develop a produce prescriptions pilot, called Wholesome Rx. Physicians and behavioral health specialists at Hopewell Health, a local Federally Qualified Health Center, provided vouchers for fresh fruits and vegetables to patients with pre-diabetes and diabetes. More than 250 people, in 115 households, participated in the Athens County Wholesome Rx program.

### Public Health Challenge

Residents in Athens County have limited access to healthy foods, especially fresh produce at an affordable price. According to Feeding

America's Map the Meal Gap, Athens County has the highest food insecurity rate in the state of Ohio. Risk factors like obesity, high blood pressure, and lack of fruit and vegetable consumption are major contributors to increased risk of chronic disease and poor health outcomes. According to the Athens County Community Health Assessment, only 1.5% of Athens County residents report eating five or more servings of fruit per day and 8% report eating five or more servings of vegetables per day. Of those who don't eat five or more servings per day, 34% say it is because these foods are too expensive. With regard to chronic health conditions, 40.5% of adult Athens County residents have at some point been told by a health professional that they have high blood pressure, and about 39.4% have been told they have pre-diabetes or diabetes.

### Approach

Healthcare professionals often recommend changes in diet, but they can be limited in their ability to address patients' social drivers in making a diet change. Writing a prescription for free fruits and vegetables is an effective tactic that can address the challenge of healthy food access. The CHC coalition partnered with Hopewell Health Centers to pilot a produce prescription program in Athens County. Hopewell received funding to pilot the program from the Ohio Department of Health, with technical support provided by Wholesome Wave. CHC provided additional local support to retailers throughout the pilot to address any technical issues, such as voucher reimbursement, and created additional access to redeem vouchers in more geographically isolated areas, through





a pop-up farm stand (Country Fresh Stop). For this pilot, patients received \$30 a month to use toward fruit and vegetable purchases for each person in their household. They also were given access to nutrition and cooking classes, grocery store and market tours, and diabetes support groups. Participating retailers were chosen based on location, since transportation and food access are issues in Athens County. These vouchers could be redeemed at seven retail locations across the county, which included a farmers' market, a larger grocery store, a small local grocery store, a pharmacy, and a farm stand at a Hopewell Health clinic.

## Results

More than \$62,000 of vouchers were redeemed during this pilot. This dollar amount represents the added produce in residents' diets and the added dollars in the local economy. Throughout this pilot, it was easy to see that a relationship developed between participants and retailers. Many retailers commented on how they were asked questions about produce and how to cook different items. Key to the success of this program was the excitement retailers shared with their customers to encourage participation in the pilot and engage in conversation about food. Enthusiasm was shared over trying new items, purchasing favorite fruits or vegetables, and sharing new recipes. More than 80% of retailers said they would like to continue participating in this program, and the majority of retailers said they wanted to be involved in helping provide healthy food to their community and customers. This pilot not only helped provide more experience with cooking and eating fresh produce, it assisted in creating

access to fresh fruits and vegetables when, normally, most would not be able to afford these items. Early health outcomes included significant weight loss and a reduction in A1C levels, a measure of blood sugar.

## What's Next

Hopewell Health Centers will be running another cohort in 2020, as a result of this pilot's success and additional funding from the Ohio Department of Health. Partners are reviewing what went well and are looking into areas for improvement in the next cycle. Partners are working to create permanent food access in the Village of Coolville, after a successful farm stand was piloted through this Wholesome Rx program. Produce prescription programs work to address food access when local retailers, community partners, and the medical community work together. The hope for all partners is to make this a sustainable part of the community and a clinical collaboration.

## Find Out More

To learn more about the produce prescription program and how to implement it in your community, visit <https://www.wholesomewave.org/how-we-work/produce-prescriptions>. Residents of all socioeconomic backgrounds deserve to live in a place where nutritious foods are accessible and affordable. Help create this environment in your community by letting store owners know there is a demand for healthier food items and encouraging them to offer these foods. To get even more involved in healthy food access, join the Athens County CHC coalition.



***"We participated in this as a retailer because we think it's important to help provide healthy food for our customers and it brings money into our community."***

*—Local retailer in Athens County*



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## City of Cincinnati Cincinnati Health Department Implements Tobacco Retail License to Enforce Cincinnati Tobacco 21

### At a Glance

On Dec. 12, 2018, Cincinnati's city council passed the Cincinnati Tobacco 21 (T21) ordinance, increasing the minimum legal sales age of tobacco products from 18 to 21. To ensure enforcement of T21, the Creating Healthy Communities Program at the Cincinnati Health Department (CHD) and its partners and stakeholders began working toward implementation of a Tobacco Retail License (TRL) regulatory policy. The TRL protocol requires tobacco retailers at all stores that sell/distribute tobacco and/or tobacco products to purchase an annual license. The license, which allows for regular inspections and enforcement activities, empowers CHD to ensure compliance with the Cincinnati T21 Policy.

### Public Health Challenge

Tobacco use accounts for nearly 480,000 deaths annually nationwide, making it the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States and the Greater Cincinnati region. Despite laws that prohibit sales of tobacco products to minors, nearly 4,000 youth try their first cigarette each day. Certain populations, such as racial and ethnic minorities, low-income individuals, the LGBT community, those with mental health conditions, and members of the military, are disproportionately affected by tobacco use and are at higher risk of tobacco-related illnesses and deaths. A T21 policy is one component of comprehensive tobacco control. Other components include passing smoke-free laws, increasing the price of tobacco

products, and increasing funding for tobacco use and prevention programs. Combined with community outreach efforts, tobacco retailer education, counter-marketing activities, education, and cessation, the T21/TRL initiatives will play a critical role in preventing youth tobacco use and reducing racial and ethnic disparities in tobacco use in Cincinnati.

### Approach

In February 2018, the Tobacco 21 working group, made up of the Cincinnati Health Department and its member organizations, discussed the potential barriers, challenges, and methods to approach setting up an online system for retailers. Creating an online system would allow retailers to set up an account, sign up for a



license, and pay the \$500 license fee online. BLDG, a local graphic design company, helped create retailer packets that consisted of Tobacco 21 signage, FAQs, and stickers for the point of sale to send to more than 450 retailers. A CHD sanitarian will enforce the policy by making sure every retailer has a Cincinnati tobacco retailer license.

## Results

At the end of the year, the Cincinnati Health Department, Cincinnati Area Geographic Information System (CAGIS), Interact for Health, and the American Heart Association successfully created an online system for retailers. On Oct. 1, 2019, the Tobacco Retailer License System went live, and retailers were able to obtain their tobacco licenses. The Creating Healthy Communities Coalition worked with CAGIS and designed the licensing system to allow tobacco retailers to purchase a license online, whether an annual license or temporary license. The Cincinnati Health Department is also utilizing their food sanitarians to help complete the inspections. Currently, more than 25% of all the retailers in the Cincinnati area have applied for and successfully been issued a Tobacco Retail License.

## What's Next

It is anticipated that the tobacco retailer license fee will generate roughly \$250,000. This will fund the Tobacco 21 sanitarian work and allow the Cincinnati Health Department to continue to educate community members and retailers in the Cincinnati area. The Cincinnati Health Department will continue to educate retailers on Tobacco 21 and how to apply for a tobacco retail license. The sanitarian will also work with local students across

Cincinnati to conduct compliance checks to make sure that retailers are not selling to anyone younger than 21.

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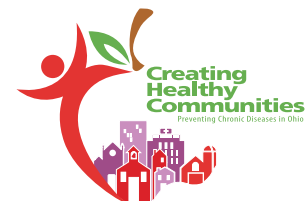
*"Even lifelong smokers know that cigarettes are bad for them, over 90% of smokers started before they were 21 years old."*

– Cincinnati Councilwoman  
Tamaya Dennard

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## Find Out More


You can learn more about the tobacco retail license by going to <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/health/cincinnati-health-department-programs/healthy-communities/tobacco-21/>. Here, you will see information on Tobacco 21 and the FAQs that were given to retailers in the Cincinnati area. Also, you will be able to see what the retailer license application looks like and how easy it is to sign up.



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## Clark County

### "Indestructible" shed renews hope and participation in Springfield community garden

#### At a Glance

Food insecurity is a concern in Clark County, with many residents having limited access to healthy fruits and vegetables. Thanks to the collaboration between Clark County Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) coalition and Clark County Combined Health District (CCCHD), with Springfield Ohio Urban Plantfolk (SOUP) and other local partners, an elementary school garden has been restored and now boasts an "indestructible shed." The success of this project has led to growth of farm stands in food deserts throughout Clark County, increasing access to healthy foods with an output of 200 pounds of produce each week.

#### Public Health Challenge

Springfield is an urban community in Clark County with a population of 60,608 (2010 census data). About 15,000 people (or 25.6%) live below the poverty level, with about 6,000 being children under 18. A food security scan of Clark County completed in June of 2019 by Clark County CHC staff with the aid of student workers determined that healthy food access largely depends on residents having a personal vehicle. Public transportation is extremely limited, and many parts of the county are unsafe for pedestrian traffic. In urban settings, the availability and accessibility of healthy foods varies widely between census tracts. This is confirmed by USDA's Food Access Research Atlas, where 2015 data shows that, out of Springfield's 28 urban

census tracts, 10 are low income and have low access (within 1 mile) to food. It should be noted that, since 2015, two of the full-service grocery stores in Springfield have been permanently closed, leaving one grocery store to serve the entire southern half of the city.

#### Approach

The CHC coordinator met with the grassroots leaders of SOUP, a gardening group that addresses food insecurity, to determine what CHC could do to help bolster SOUP's efforts and assist in delivering gardening education and fresh produce to food insecure communities. Many needs were identified, but a frequently vandalized shed at a school garden was a top priority. The shed had been targeted

for vandalism so often that it was nearly falling down. This was not only disheartening for the group, but also made storage of tools and supplies for gardening and education difficult. SOUP facilitator Sherry Chen was aware of a matching grant from the Clark County Solid Waste District for using recycled materials in community projects. She teamed up with David Cook of Plastic Lumber to design an “indestructible” shed resistant to vandalism. Other project collaborators included the women of the local carpenters’ union, Springfield City Schools, and neighborhood volunteers.

## Results

The shed was completed in June 2019, restoring the functionality of the garden. Prior to this, watering was near impossible due to the lack of storage for hoses, which endangered garden participation. Since the shed has been constructed, vandalism has ceased. The group has seen full restoration of garden function, including contributions to pop-up farm stands on school property. These stands run through the summer months and operate in food desert census tracts (USDA 2015), distributing through sale and donation approximately 200 pounds of produce each week. The planning and building of the shed required cross-sector collaboration and community engagement. This process has created new community relationships, and awareness of local funding opportunities to support efforts addressing food insecurity in south Springfield. Additionally, the improved appearance of the garden has increased the enthusiasm and engagement of the facilitators, the school, and the garden participants.

## What’s Next

Clark CHC will continue to partner with SOUP to address food insecurity. Because the shed wasn’t completed until mid-season 2019 due to weather, 2020 is the first full season with restored garden function. SOUP will continue to be present at school-sponsored events to recruit new gardeners. Engagement in this community allows for recruitment for other projects addressing food insecurity, including volunteering at the group’s greenhouse or farm stands. The greenhouse supplies gardeners with seeds and seedlings, and in 2020, will begin efforts to provide hydroponic lettuce to Springfield City Schools. SOUP plans to continue to educate youth and community members on garden science and connecting the dots from seed to plate.

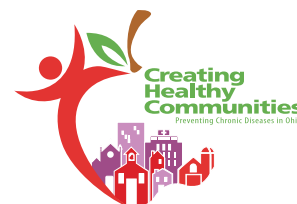
## Find Out More

Having functional, beautiful garden spaces where people can grow their own food is critical not only to address food insecurity, but also to creating a sense of community ownership and pride. You can help contribute in south Springfield by volunteering with SOUP’s gardens, greenhouse, or farm stands. Joining the Clark Creating Healthy Communities coalition can plug you in with similar projects happening county-wide.



*“Every day we wondered what new damage we were going to find (to the shed), it was such a feeling of dread. Then we would have to do our best to fix it, or work around it and move on. The new shed is a sign of new hope and has boosted morale.”*

*—Sherry Chen, Springfield Ohio  
Urban Plantfolk*



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## City of Columbus

### Farmers' Market Provides Healthy Food Options and Local Business Opportunities to the Linden Community

#### At a Glance

Between 2016 and 2018, both national chain full-service grocery stores in the Columbus neighborhood of Linden closed and access to fresh fruits and vegetables became even more limited for residents. Fortunately, the City of Columbus and Franklin County Local Food Action Plan served as a framework and guide for selecting evidence-based strategies to increase access to healthy, local food. The Linden Farmers' Market was selected as a community informed strategy. Columbus Public Health's (CPH) Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Local Food Systems Strategies Team engaged with community stakeholders and Linden residents to plan, fund, and launch the Linden Farmers' Market in the summers of 2018 and 2019.

#### Public Health Challenge

Most of the Linden community has been identified as low income and low access by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), a designation that many refer to as a food desert. This means that many of the residents in Linden lack the financial resources to buy food and live more than half a mile away from a full-service grocery store. This disparity was increased for Linden residents as both national chain full-service grocery stores in the Linden neighborhood closed between 2016 and 2018. In 2017, there were approximately 13 emergency food distribution sites (e.g., food pantries, community meals, free produce distributions, etc.) in the Linden neighborhood and approximately 35.3% of Linden residents lived below the federal poverty level. Low access and low income are social

determinants of health that together contribute to higher rates of chronic disease in the Linden neighborhood. According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data, 14% of Linden residents, versus 9% of Franklin County residents, have been told by a healthcare professional they have diabetes, and life expectancy is more than seven years shorter than Franklin County as a whole.

#### Approach

Farmers' market experts, stakeholders, and community residents, including the Community of Caring Development Foundation (COC) came together to plan and launch the Linden Farmers' Market. Associated with New Salem Baptist church, one of the largest and oldest congregations in Linden, COC has deep roots in the community and provided leadership for the market.





Home to more than 50 congregations, Linden draws parishioners from the entire region and Sunday afternoons offer a prime opportunity for a successful market. The Ohio Farmers' Market Network and Ohio State University Extension Franklin County provided technical assistance and Columbus City Council provided financial support for the pilot season. CHC funding and nutrition incentive programs dollars were leveraged to ensure equitable access for all residents. A fall/winter community supported agriculture (CSA) program was offered for shoppers using the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

## Results

On July 1, 2018, Columbus City Council Member Priscilla Tyson and Columbus Health Commissioner Dr. Mysheika Roberts welcomed the first shoppers to the Linden Farmers Market. The market has hosted more than 30 vendors per season, with almost one-third Linden-based and more than half minority- or woman-owned and operated businesses. Vendors sold fresh produce, cottage foods, and prepared foods, as well as body products, clothing, and gifts. An estimated 7,000 customers have visited the market and, in 2019, total vendor sales reached approximately \$3,500 each week. More than \$5,500 in nutrition program and incentive dollars, including WIC Farmers' Market Coupons, SNAP, Produce Perks, and Linden Farmers' Market Greens helped make the market

accessible to low income residents. Up to fifteen WIC and SNAP customers have received fall/winter CSA shares each year to provide continued access to fresh produce after the market season.

## What's Next

Planning for the 2020 season is underway and the Community of Caring Development Foundation, a Linden-based non-profit, will operate it as a self-sustaining farmers' market in the coming seasons. They are committed to creating opportunities for investment, growth, and sustainability for minority farmers, gardeners, and food producers, while highlighting the partnerships between local community organizations and residents of Linden for years to come.

## Find Out More

You can support your local food system by shopping at farmers' markets in your community. If in the Central Ohio region, please take the opportunity to shop at the Linden Farmers' Market, offering locally grown produce and welcoming all. Local food councils provide a great opportunity to get involved in food-related issues in communities. Visit the [Ohio Food Policy Network website](#) to find a local food policy council in your community.

To learn more about how Creating Healthy Communities partners can support farmers' markets in underserved communities, contact Katie Stone, CHC director, at [klstone@columbus.gov](mailto:klstone@columbus.gov).



***"I enjoy visiting farmers' markets because I love to buy local fresh produce in the summer. As someone who lives and worships in Linden, I was thrilled that a market was opening in my neighborhood. In addition to providing another fresh food option, the market provided a place for old friends to catch up and new friendships to develop."***

*— Jocelyn Armstrong,  
Linden resident and  
Farmers' Market customer*



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# Cuyahoga County

## Building Trust through Food and Communication

### At a Glance

A core component of the Cuyahoga County Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program is disability inclusion, which includes providing equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities to participate in everyday activities. This work includes those who are deaf. Deafness is not simply a sensory difference, and many deaf individuals are proud of their uniqueness and choose to use their hands to communicate rather than their voices. In many farmers' market settings, transactions are negotiated verbally between customers and growers, which presents a barrier to people who are deaf when purchasing produce at the farmers' market. By offering sign language interpreters and training vendors about accessibility for customers who are deaf, a farmers' market in Lakewood has become a welcoming space for members of the

deaf community to buy produce and consume healthier foods. In addition, opportunities to learn about healthy eating in settings that are welcoming, relevant, and comfortable for people who are deaf have become a priority.

### Public Health Challenge

Local experts serving the local deaf community identified communication challenges and lack of knowledge to cook fresh produce as barriers to shopping at farmers' markets. In Lakewood, where the market is located, more than 14% of the population (nearly 15,000 people) participates in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) program. But in 2018, only 7% of market revenue came from SNAP. This redemption rate indicated a barrier to SNAP recipients using the farmers' market to buy food. In 2018, a sign language interpreter audited the farmers' market and provided

suggestions to make the market more accessible for people who are deaf. Farmers' markets that lack signage or do not have sign language interpreters on site present a challenge to volunteers explaining the benefits of SNAP and Produce Perks, an Ohio program that doubles SNAP dollars spent on fresh produce. Better market accessibility gives community members a reliable source of affordable produce while increasing market sales.

### Approach

The Cleveland Hearing and Speech Center (CHSC), Creating Healthy Communities team, and Lakewood's Church of the Ascension partnered together to develop a program to improve accessibility for the 2019 farmers' market for people who are deaf. Strategies to improve accessibility included hiring sign language interpreters for the market and





educating vendors on the importance of signage to communicate with people who are deaf about prices and produce selection. CHC promoted the farmers' market and SNAP/Produce Perks program and provided recipe analysis, nutrition tips, and resources to purchase healthy foods on a budget. CHC staff and market organizers also facilitated a five-class Instant Pot cooking series to build cooking skills and provide resources for deaf residents. Participants learned how to cook meals and received a free Instant Pot if they attended all five classes.

## Results

Thirteen members of the deaf community participated in the Instant Pot cooking classes along with five American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters. Upon completion of the cooking class series, participants reported in evaluations that they learned about nutrition, cooking, and healthy eating on a budget. Participants mentioned they were impressed with the outreach to their community and they enjoyed the community building and fellowship of the classes. Farmers' market staff and vendors learned about deafness, their culture, and how to be more welcoming of the deaf community. Six deaf community members and two ASL interpreters attended the annual farmers' market celebration.

## What's Next

CHC staff shared the positive outcomes with Ohio State University Extension Cuyahoga County, which was then distributed to the rest of the local farmers' markets offering Produce Perks. The Farmers' Market will continue to learn and implement processes that increase accessibility for members of the deaf community. CHC will continue to engage with people who are deaf through the Cleveland Hearing and Speech Center and other avenues to make programming more accessible and relevant to members of the deaf community.

## Find Out More

The Produce Perks program is available at farmers' markets across Ohio. Visit [www.produceperks.org](http://www.produceperks.org) for more information on Produce Perks and farmers' markets. For more information about deafness and working with the deaf community, visit [www.chsc.org](http://www.chsc.org).

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*"The class has been a very great, comfortable effort to make a person feel welcome and it worked!"*

*– Instant Pot class participant*

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# Delaware County

## School Hydroponic Garden Provides Access, Promotes Selection of Healthy Foods

### At a Glance

To increase access to and promote the selection of healthy foods, the Delaware General Health District (DGHD)'s Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program partnered with Buckeye Valley Middle School (BVMS) to install an indoor hydroponic garden. In the school district, about 16.7% of students receive free/reduced lunches, and about 20% of children aged 0-17 live below 200% of the federal poverty level. This puts them at higher risk of poor health outcomes in adulthood. The indoor garden provides students with access to fresh vegetables and herbs, and the opportunity to take part in the growing cycle. Thanks to this partnership, the 486 students in grades six through eight at BVMS now can grow and harvest vegetables year-round.

### Public Health Challenge

According to the 2017 Delaware County Community Health Assessment, more than 65% of adults are considered overweight or obese. This increases to about 75% of those surveyed within the Buckeye Valley School District. Additionally, the 2016/2017 Delaware County Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that only 4% of youth in grades six through 12 ate the recommended five daily servings of fruits and vegetables. The BVMS is located within the Ashley Village-Oxford Township priority community, where only 4.6% of the population has access to a major grocery store within 5 miles of where they live. According to 2017 Feeding America data, in Delaware County, 8.1% of the population is determined to be food insecure; of those, 64% are not eligible for SNAP assistance. In the Ashley-Oxford priority community, 19.4% of households made less than \$25,000 in the past 12

months, and 14.5% of households have received SNAP assistance. Individuals and families who are of a lower socioeconomic status are more likely to experience poor health outcomes and live shorter lives.

### Approach

The CHC program approached BVMS to inquire about needs or capacity for implementing a school garden. BVMS had space allocated for traditional garden plots, however, enthusiasm for the garden program had dissipated over the years. CHC and BVMS then discussed options for revitalizing the garden program. The team experienced barriers gaining buy-in from BVMS staff, as traditional gardening requires a lot of maintenance, and upkeep would take place when school was not in session. So, instead of installing outdoor garden boxes, BVMS and CHC implemented an indoor hydroponic garden. The eighth-grade science



teacher welcomed this idea and offered to coordinate and host the garden inside of her classroom. Two different types of hydroponic systems were installed, one system for the growth of deep-root flowering plants like tomatoes, and one for shallow root plants such as spinach and herbs. To ensure that all students had access to the garden, BVMS created a Hydroponics Club that interested students could join to get involved with the garden. The students were responsible for identifying the plants that would grow, monitoring and adjusting the light and PH level of the garden systems, and researching how changes affect the growth cycle, highlighting the differences between hydroponic versus traditional cultivation methods. The plants the students selected to grow were tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers, lettuce, spinach, basil, cilantro, and other herbs.

## Results

In early February, the hydroponic garden was installed at BVMS. Twelve students joined the Hydroponics Club and completed pre- and post-surveys. The CHC coordinator and supervisor were able to visit the garden and discuss the experiences with the club members. The surveys revealed the following:

- 89% of students reported trying new fruits or vegetables after participating in the garden.
- 56% reported changes in how they eat after participating in the garden.
- "Learning about growing different foods" and "Sharing what I learned with others" were reported to be the most useful aspects of participation.

Students shared that coming together as a club was also beneficial to the experience. Students discussed how they worked together to problem

solve and create tracking sheets to ensure proper maintenance and to track growth. They also shared their ideas for other types of plants they would like to grow, how they could expand the garden in the future, and different types of settings they could see benefiting from indoor hydroponic gardens.

## What's Next

The Buckeye Valley School District is dedicated to the health of its students and providing support for implementation and maintenance of garden programs that will ensure students get hands-on learning experiences in healthy eating. The district also owns a school farm and, at the high school level, has partnered with the local career center to offer an Agricultural Science Program. Within this program, students get involved with plant and animal sciences, as well as use of hydroponic and aeroponics to provide lettuce weekly to the school cafeteria. Discussions with the BVMS Hydroponics Club identified other sites that could benefit from indoor gardens such as food pantries, shelters, and community centers. The CHC program has discussed the possibility of installing hydroponic gardens with two local food pantries in upcoming years.

## Find Out More

The DGHD has a commitment to helping communities and schools work together to increase access to fresh, healthy foods. If you are interested in learning more about hydroponic gardens, or other strategies that can increase access to healthy food, please consider joining the Delaware County CHC Coalition. The CHC coalition works on strategies aimed at increasing physical activity and healthy eating among Delaware County residents.



*"The hydroponics system has been giving me more of a connection with the school. Having this system lets me explain everything we do, and we've been together almost weekly that we are kind of like a family."*

— Anonymous eighth-grade



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## Knox County Community Garden Provides Hope for a Healthy Future

### At a Glance

Thanks to a collaborative effort between teachers, administrators, and the Get Healthy Knox County Coalition, students at Fredericktown Local Schools and the residents in the village of Fredericktown will have better access to fresh locally grown food. Village residents and teachers resurrected a neglected garden space, while students learned about growing food and the importance of consuming a diet rich in fruits and vegetables. The collaboration promises to continue the experience of eating and harvesting healthy foods for years to come.

### Public Health Challenge

Chronic disease is one of three major health concerns affecting Knox County residents. According to the 2018 Knox Community Health Assessment, 73% of Knox County adults are overweight

or obese, known indicators for chronic disease. Thirty-nine percent of adults report consuming zero to two servings of fruits and vegetables a day, which is far less than the USDA's recommended five to nine servings. Access to fresh produce is difficult for residents in rural communities like Fredericktown, where the nearest full-service grocery store is located more than 10 miles away. This is especially challenging for residents facing transportation issues. Throughout the county, the opening of low-cost "dollar stores" is tempting residents with less healthy foods. There are currently eight "dollar stores" in the county, which threaten the balanced diet of some of the county's most vulnerable residents and contribute to underlying health conditions like diabetes and obesity.

### Approach

In the fall of 2018, teachers from Fredericktown Local Schools contacted the Ohio State University (OSU) Extension of Knox County office for assistance with revitalizing garden space. As a member of the Get Healthy Knox County (GHKC) Coalition and the Knox County Local Food Council, OSU Extension was aware of a county-wide effort to identify a location for a community garden. As part of a Knox County Community Health Improvement Plan strategy, coalition members worked with school administrators, teachers, and maintenance staff to re-establish the garden space. Village residents and school staff were surveyed regarding their interest and commitment to a community garden. Input was gathered on redesigning the space for community access and incorporating gardening and principles of food selection into the school curriculum.



## Results

An existing, but neglected greenhouse, a shed full of long-forgotten tools and lots of unused green space made the Fredericktown school campus the perfect location for a community garden. Supplies for raised garden beds and a three-tiered sensory garden were purchased using funds from the Knox County Health Department Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program. Community members and school staff pulled weeds and cleared space to install the new additions. Resident input contributed to an emphasis on native plants and Ohio-grown vegetables. Local businesses showed support by donating and delivering gravel and topsoil. Additionally, curriculum materials were purchased to develop garden-related classroom activities. Indoor grow labs provided students with an opportunity to learn about the importance of soil, light, and water, and to observe lettuce seeds turn into edible salad. Students also participated in identifying and tasting different vegetables and exploring different methods of preparation.

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*"I loved learning about the different parts of the plant and how much water and sun they need. Gardening takes a lot of patience."*

— Fourth-grade student

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## What's Next

Summer upkeep of the garden space, when school is not in session, is particularly challenging in creating sustainable community garden projects located at schools. The GHKC Coalition and Food Council members will ask volunteers for assistance in developing a plan to expand garden access and maintain the space during the summer months when school is not in session. Additional garden plots will be made available for residents to grow their favorite vegetables to provide a nutritious and tasty harvest. Benches may also be purchased so that the garden can be an area of observation and reflection, especially in the three-tiered sensory garden, which incorporates sights, sounds, and smell. Several Knox County partners have applied for a Farm-to-School planning grant, which could further assist in gardening and nutrition programming.

## Find Out More

The GHKC Coalition is comprised of agencies and individuals who work together to make wellness an easy choice for Knox County residents. CHC funding has helped improve access to and affordability of healthy food, increase opportunities for active living, and assure tobacco-free living where residents, live, work and play. The coalition website, [www.gethealthyknox.org](http://www.gethealthyknox.org), has information on how local residents can get involved in other projects like the Community Garden project.



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## Licking County Bike Parking Project Increases Awareness for Biking in Downtown Area

### At a Glance

According to the American Community Survey (2013-2017), approximately 20.5% of residents in the City of Newark are living at or below the federal poverty level. For many of the residents living in poverty, transportation is an issue. Without access to a vehicle or public transit system, many individuals rely on a bicycle. In 2019, Licking County Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) partnered with Licking County Area Transportation Study (LCATS) and the City of Newark to improve bike infrastructure in downtown Newark by adding covered bike parking. As a result, 10 bike racks were installed in a downtown parking garage

### Public Health Challenge

The City of Newark serves as the county seat, housing many of the county's social service agencies. Residents often

travel downtown for appointments, services, and daily errands. Currently there is no public transportation system in the county providing regular route services for residents. According to the National Transportation Database, approximately 7% of county households have no vehicle, with 60% of those households in Newark. While those living in poverty face severe issues with transportation and daily living, there is also concern among seniors and people with disabilities who do not have access to a vehicle. Not having access to transportation is a barrier for getting to everyday destinations like the grocery store or a doctor appointment. Some residents rely on a bicycle as their primary form of transportation. It is common to see bicycles around the square downtown on a typical day, so access to bike parking is important. With some residents biking year-round, a covered parking option provides protection against the elements.

### Approach

In 2019, LCATS and CHC began discussing how to improve bike infrastructure in downtown Newark to make it more accommodating to bicyclists. Bike lanes and some bike racks were installed with the revitalization of the Newark Square laying some groundwork. Pre- and post-surveys were conducted to get a better idea of the community's perception of biking downtown and how bike-friendly they felt it was. Three themes emerged from the initial survey: bike parking, awareness for current bike parking, and bike safety. CHC approached the city about adding covered bike parking to be more accommodating to bicyclists commuting downtown. Rather than adding a stand-alone unit, it was decided to look at a parking garage located downtown and request permission from the county commissioners to add bike parking spaces.



## Results

In July, the Licking County Board of Commissioners signed a resolution granting two spaces in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Parking Garage for bike parking. Ten bike racks were installed, providing covered parking for up to 20 bikes. While there are many bike racks downtown, surveys and observations showed they were not being used. LCATS created a bike rack inventory map showing 20 existing bike racks throughout the downtown area to raise awareness for current bike parking options. After the bike racks were installed and the map was shared, another survey was sent out for additional feedback. Of those who took the survey, 20% said they were likely to use the covered parking and 28.5% indicated it is easy to find a bike rack. To address bike safety, CHC worked with Toole Design Group to conduct an experiential ride centered around Newark's bicycle infrastructure. The workshop gave a mix of riders the opportunity to learn about bicycle safety and try riding on the streets and through roundabouts in downtown Newark.

## What's Next

CHC and their partners are committed to working together on additional active transportation planning efforts in 2020, including a formal active transportation plan. The development of an active transportation plan will help to guide future projects over the next several years and set long-term goals. The community still expresses concerns around bike safety and understanding the laws that apply. Education on bike safety will be ongoing and incorporated in future initiatives.

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*"The new addition of safe and covered bike racks in the downtown area make leaving your bike during the day a safe and secure proposition and can encourage active commutes to work in downtown Newark."*

—Tim Bubb,  
Licking County Commissioner

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## Find Out More

Making bicycling safe and convenient are keys to improving public health, reducing traffic congestion, improving air quality and quality of life. Join the Licking County Wellness Coalition and learn more about how you can get directly involved in these efforts and support active transportation to get everyone moving more in your community.



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# Lorain County

## Bike Checkout Benefits More Than Health

### At a Glance

In 2018, the City of Lorain finalized a combined Active Transportation and Safe Routes to School Plan (Lorain ATP). Since then, community partners, including organizations, residents, and schools, have collaborated to implement strategies to improve walking and biking conditions. The Lorain Public Library System, Lorain County Metro Parks, Lorain County Community Action Agency, and Lorain County Public Health's Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program launched Go Lorain, a no-cost bike share program that makes bicycles available for checkout through the library. Since launching in May 2019, 12 bikes have been checked out 91 times. Patrons report biking to work, to run errands, and for leisure.

### Public Health Challenge

Lorain is the largest and most diverse urban center in Lorain County. About 26% of Lorain City residents identify as Hispanic/Latino and about 15% of residents identify as African American/Black. Residents face barriers in health and wealth that contribute to health inequities. Lorain City has a high poverty rate (29%) compared with Lorain County (13.7%). Many low-income residents (24.4%) live on the south side of Lorain, in the county's largest food desert. South Lorain also has many abandoned storefronts, high crime rates, and high unemployment. These residents face higher rates of health issues compared with other county residents: diabetes (26% vs. 13%), high blood cholesterol (36% vs. 34%) and high blood pressure (44% vs. 34%). In addition to these challenges, 12% of Lorain households don't have access to a vehicle, so biking and walking

are often a necessary means of travel. Despite the need to walk or bike, the environment does not always support safety and accessibility. Lorain residents report their top three concerns about biking as riding bikes in the road with traffic, lack of bike-friendly routes, and not owning a bicycle.

### Approach

Lorain Connected is the active living subcommittee of Lorain's CHC coalition tasked with implementing the Lorain ATP. The Lorain ATP includes equity-focused recommendations to engineer better roads, enforce rules, and educate and encourage residents to choose active transportation. The Lorain ATP identified the bike share program as a feasible strategy with high interest and community support. Partners then launched Go Lorain, which aims to provide free bike access to anyone with a library card and to increase



bicycle trips in Lorain. The bicycles were donated and grant funding covered bicycle baskets, lights, and kickstands. The existing library circulation system tracks checkout data and provides information to branches on utilization.

## Results

In May 2019, the Go Lorain bike share had a soft launch at an event, Lorain Better Block, which had 800 attendees. There, attendees had a chance to experience temporary bicycle lanes on low traffic streets. The event also helped get the word out about the program. Between May and August 2019, news outlets including U.S. News & World Report, the Ohio Library Council, and local television and newspapers featured the bike share. The media reached an estimated 1,330,800 people. Library patrons use the bikes for transportation to and from work, to run errands, for fitness, and for fun. There were 91 checkouts between May and November 2019. At a recent church-sponsored community meal, a man told library staff that the bike had been a lifesaver for him that day. His car had broken down and he needed to get to an important legal appointment and to the store. Without the bike share he would have spent all day walking around town, or might have even missed his appointment. Because of the Go Lorain bike share, he was able to get everything done.

## What's Next

The Lorain Public Library System hopes to expand the bike share to all library branches. They will continue to expand their fleet and to promote the service. The Lorain County Community Action Agency will implement maintenance schedules for the fleet and assist with related programming. While there is not a simple solution to solving health disparities, Lorain has a strong coalition in place to address problems uniquely. Led by Lorain County Public Health's

CHC program, policymakers, local organizations, business and community leaders, school, childcare, and healthcare professionals, and individuals are committed to working together to create an environment that supports a healthy lifestyle. Lorain Connected will be sustained through shared facilitation between Lorain County Public Health, the city, and the schools.

## Find Out More

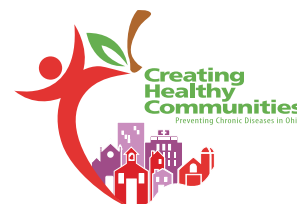
Since adopting the Lorain ATP, Lorain Connected has leveraged more than \$1 million in funding for both infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects like the Go Lorain bike share. This work is only possible because of the strong partnerships in Lorain County. Get involved to help make a difference in your community. Partners are organizing throughout Lorain County to determine ways to improve health and to prevent chronic disease. To get involved in projects that help make the healthy choice the easy choice, contact Lorain County Public Health.

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*"A patron stopped me in the library and told me that he had been checking out a bike several times a week because he has paperwork that he needs to file in various offices across town, and the bikes have been a lifesaver. He sought me out specifically to let me know that he greatly appreciates the fact that the library is providing this service."*

— Susan Spivey,  
Main library outreach manager

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## Lucas County Pop-up Farmers' Markets Provide Fresh, Local Produce to Inner-City Neighborhoods

### At a Glance

Farmers' markets are an effective way to offer healthy food options in underserved areas. When farmers' markets are equipped with the ability to accept federal nutrition assistance benefits, access to fresh fruits and vegetables for underserved populations rises, increasing produce consumption. Lucas County Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) collaborated with the Toledo Farmers' Market to provide two pop-up farmers' markets in two Toledo neighborhoods, Central City and East Toledo. Accepting WIC Farmers' Market, Senior Nutrition, and SNAP/Double Up vouchers at the markets provided residents the opportunity to redeem their vouchers for fresh, healthy produce.

### Public Health Challenge

In the 2016/2017 Lucas County Health Assessment, 96% of Lucas County adults reported eating less than the recommended five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Lucas County also has a poverty rate of 17.9%, which exceeds the state level of 13.9%. Many individuals live in food deserts, defined as areas where people have limited access to a variety of healthy, affordable food. In addition, 17% of Lucas County residents receive SNAP benefits; more than 20,000 seniors receive Senior Nutrition vouchers; and 4,590 WIC participants receive Farmers' Market vouchers. Farmers' markets have been proven to provide a positive impact on the health and diets of their communities. They bring healthy, nutritious foods to residents, especially those who participate in SNAP, WIC, and the Senior Farmers'

Market Nutrition program. To address the issue of low produce consumption in Lucas County, pop-up farmers' markets were implemented in strategic community locations to increase access and convenience for people in target community.

### Approach

In an effort to provide access to fresh, healthy foods, Lucas County CHC collaborated with the Toledo Farmers' Market. Currently, the Toledo Farmers' Market has two locations, operating twice per week. Through discussion with the Farmers' Market manager and the Lucas County WIC director, it was determined that there was a need for pop-up farmers' markets to better assist the community. CHC worked closely with the Farmers' Market manager to determine locations, days, times, and farmers



for the pop-up farmers' market. Each market would accept WIC Farmers' Market, Senior Nutrition, and SNAP/Double Up vouchers. CHC reached out to community organizations to provide services and resources at the markets. In addition, CHC registered the two pop-up farmers' markets with the Department of Agriculture and marketed the event through Facebook, news releases, newspapers, other media and community partners. This approach provided an opportunity to increase access to locally grown produce as well as increase redemption of WIC Farmers' Market, Senior Nutrition and SNAP/Double Up vouchers.

## Results

The two pop-up farmers' markets combined reached more than 9,000 residents in the Toledo area. Redemption rates for both farmers' markets were obtained from the Toledo Farmers' Market manager. The combined redemption rates for both pop-up markets resulted in a total of \$275 of WIC vouchers, or 55 vouchers redeemed; \$275 of senior vouchers, or 55 vouchers, and \$95 in SNAP/Double Up. Post-surveys were completed by patrons at both locations. Patrons indicated that having the markets close by and accessible to where they live was a huge benefit. The quality, selection, and price of the produce available was reasonable and acceptable to patrons. Patrons appreciated having local resources and

services available during the farmers' market. Lastly, patrons also indicated that they would like more pop-up markets throughout the summer. The two pop-up farmers' markets were a success for everyone involved.

## What's Next

The CHC program will continue to collaborate with the Toledo Farmers' Market as well as the local WIC department and senior centers to provide additional pop-up farmers' markets in underserved areas of Toledo. The expectation is to provide two more pop-up farmers' markets in 2020 that will be accessible to those who may find it most difficult to access fresh, healthy food. With increased access to these foods, the rate of produce consumption is expected to increase. Reaching more individuals, as well as redeeming more WIC and senior vouchers along with SNAP/Double Up, is the ultimate goal.

## Find Out More

- Support local farmers' markets by shopping and purchasing locally grown produce.
- Visit a local farmers' market to have first-hand experience of what foods are grown in your area.
- Join the CHC coalition, Healthy Youth and Family, to stay current on all the work that is being done to improve access to healthy foods in Lucas County



***"This was a great idea and very helpful. I am busy when I get off work and going to the downtown Farmers' Market is not always easy for me. It was accessible and convenient."***

*— Farmers' Market patron*



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# Marion County

## A Perfect Pair Brings More Fresh Produce to Downtown Marion

### At a Glance

Marion residents now have another option when it comes to fresh and local produce in downtown Marion. This solution comes by way of a bright yellow van dropping off produce boxes each Friday. Members of the Yellowbird Foodshed flock to see what new and exciting fruits and veggies can be found in each week's Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) subscription. These residents are members of a new program being offered in Marion called Yellowbird Foodshed. A foodshed is a region of food that flows from the area where it is produced to the place where it is consumed, including the land it grows on, the route it travels, the markets it passes through, and the tables it ends up on. This regional food access approach proves to be one solution in downtown Marion, an area known to have limited access to fresh produce.

### Public Health Challenge

In 2019, Marion County ranked 85<sup>th</sup> out of 88 counties based on health factors and 88<sup>th</sup> when looking at health behaviors, according to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings. Limited access to healthy foods is a contributing factor that 18% of Marion residents face. In Marion County's last Community Health Assessment (CHA), 76% of adults surveyed reported eating fewer than the five recommended fruit and vegetable servings daily. These health behaviors are influenced by the environment and contribute to the prevalence of diabetes at 15% and rates of obesity at 39%. These symptoms are not just manifesting in the adult population; in the 2015 CHA, more than 30% of Marion youth surveyed were either overweight or obese, and 85% reported eating fewer than the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables. Downtown Marion has been identified as having limited

access to healthy foods, as a full-service grocery store is greater than 1 mile away. Additionally, this area has a large number of households without vehicles at 32%, and more than 40% of persons live below the poverty line per the USDA Food Atlas map. A revitalization of the downtown farmers market and a new downtown market offering produce, slated to open in 2020, will help lessen this disparity. While these solutions are going to undoubtedly improve access, reinforcing activities and environments help reinforce positive behavior change which can ultimately shift cultural norms.

### Approach

In 2018, the Marion County Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) coordinator stumbled across a newsletter that asked, "Do you know where your food comes from?" It was advertising a new CSA membership that was being offered to employees at



the local hospital system by Yellowbird Foodshed, a food production and distribution company that directly connects farmers to its consumers. This service was being offered to hospital employees but hadn't expanded membership outside its staff. The CHC coordinator contacted the founder of Yellowbird Foodshed to establish a meeting with other interested organizations. After the initial meeting, it was necessary to gauge community interest and garner support for this program. To gain interest in CSA membership, Yellowbird hosted lunch and learns at businesses and worksites. Participants got to taste regional produce, ask questions, and learn where their food comes from. Soon there was interest in bringing this to Marion. The next step was to identify a location that could support the distribution of weekly produce boxes. A downtown juice shop proved to be the perfect partner for the Yellowbird Foodshed.

## Results

The initial goal to establish this program in Marion was to have 10 families enroll. Within the first couple weeks, membership had doubled. This has been a win-win, from the farmers who grow the product generating profit, to the consumers eating healthier, to the juice shop owner generating increased foot traffic and sales. Participant surveys revealed that all but one customer reported eating more fruits and vegetables, and the majority participate on a weekly basis. All CSA members plan on continuing membership in future.

## What's Next

Looking forward to the coming year, CHC's coordinator will work with Yellowbird on how this subscription can be more equitable and reach those with fewer financial resources. CHC's coordinator and founder have already

begun conversations on how this could be expanded. They are possibly looking at the acceptance of EBT or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits or exploring the acceptance of fruit and vegetable prescriptions. The mutual goal is to have all residents enjoy fresh, local products.

## Find Out More

To find out more about Yellowbird Foodshed, visit: <https://yellowbirdfs.com/>.

To know where your food comes from, follow these simple steps:

- Shop at your local farmers market.
- Grow a garden.
- Host a farm-to-table event.
- Visit a local food producer.
- Eat seasonal products.
- Join a CSA.

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*"The best partnerships are sometimes found by accident. When the Yellowbird Foodshed met with Marion Public Health for the first time, we knew that we could bring some good food to the community, but we needed a place to drop it off. Erin recommended that I go get a juice at the Main Squeeze and that first encounter with them was what set the whole thing in motion. I left a box of veggies, bought a juice, and the next time I went in they were super excited about becoming a partner. Now we have good food being pushed at multiple levels, to multiple audiences, and the response has been fantastic."*

—Benji Ballmer, founder of Yellowbird Foodshed

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## Meigs County Sharing the Harvest in Meigs County

### At a Glance

For years, Meigs County has been attempting to establish a sustainable farmers' market. In 2019, this goal was achieved through a partnership with the Meigs County Health Department's (MCHD) Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) coalition. Together, community partners and the MCHD were able to implement the Meigs County Farmers' Market. The market ran from the beginning of June to the end of October along the Ohio River within the historic Village of Pomeroy. From 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Saturday at the Pomeroy Levee, residents were provided access to fresh local produce.

### Public Health Challenge

Food security greatly impacts Meigs County. According to the most recent Feeding America data nearly 4,000 people in Meigs County, or 17% of the entire population, are food insecure.

Furthermore, 7% of the county has limited access to healthy foods. There are several social determinants of health that negatively influence health outcomes within the county. Poverty is one of these determinants. The 2019 Ohio Poverty Report lists Meigs County as the fourth poorest county in Ohio. Additionally, County Health Rankings list the county as having 32% of children living in poverty. More than half (56%) of children are also eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. This financial barrier of access to healthy food options has directly impacted the health of the community. Nearly 40% of Meigs County adults are obese. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention determined from 2015-2017 there was a heart disease death rate of 363.5-422.1 per 100,000 deaths in Meigs County among individuals who were between the ages of 35 and 64. Diabetes is also a health concern with the prevalence being 14%.

### Approach

In order to increase access to healthy and affordable local produce, the Meigs County CHC program established partnerships with local community members and the Village of Pomeroy to establish a county-wide farmers' market initiative. These community members formed a market board and, with the technical assistance of the CHC coalition, established policies and rules for market operation. The village generously allowed the market to be located at the Pomeroy Levee, conveniently situated in the business district within the county seat. This prime location provided for a central, picturesque, and easily accessible space for the market to call home. The market offered a variety of items and activities for patrons including fresh fruits and vegetables, locally made food and teas, handcrafted goods, cooking demonstrations, a child booth, and more.



## Results

With a dedicated market board and staff, and an enthusiastic community, the market had a very successful first season. No matter the weather, the community made sure to participate in the market each Saturday. The market had more than 20 participating vendors. In total, the 2019 season saw more than 19,000 pounds of produce sold. The market provided an affordable resource for individuals to purchase fresh produce by accepting Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and Senior Farmers' Market vouchers. Also, through sponsorship, the market provided a free vendor spot for local children under the age of 18 to sell their handmade products and produce. This program was deemed the Y.E.S (Young Entrepreneurs Succeeding) Program and was a crowd favorite. Vendors also donated produce to the Mulberry Community Center's Kitchen. This produce was used to create inexpensive and often free meals for citizens in need.

## What's Next

The Meigs County Farmers' Market board and staff are driven to make the market sustainable and successful for years to come. The market will be open one day during the winter to provide the community with further access to fresh produce. Moreover, the market has submitted applications to be a non-profit entity and to accept the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The non-profit status will allow the market to be eligible for further grant assistance in the future.

## Find Out More

- Support the market by becoming a member for only \$25 a year.
- Visit the market's Facebook page and website, [www.meigscountyfarmersmarket.com](http://www.meigscountyfarmersmarket.com)
- Contact the market at [meigscountyfarmersmarket@gmail.com](mailto:meigscountyfarmersmarket@gmail.com).
- Join the Meigs County CHC Coalition in its efforts to promote healthy food access through community-based programming and policy development.

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*"As the market manager I have seen the community come together to support our local farmers and artisans to help stabilize their income and keep money within the county. Also, with our Y.E.S. Program we are helping our youth to become business-minded individuals, and I could not be more proud to be a part of this market."*

— Chris Hamm, Meigs County Farmers' Market manager

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## Montgomery County Pop Up Farmers' Markets Offer Fresh and Healthy Produce to Dayton Residents

### At a Glance

With only a few full-service grocery stores in Dayton, residents have limited access to fresh produce near their homes. To increase the availability of fresh produce, Public Health–Dayton & Montgomery County's Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Program, partnered with Homefull, Miami Valley Organizing Collaborative, CityWide, Co-Op Dayton, Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, and others, to sponsor *Pop-Up Farmers' Markets* in West Dayton.

### Public Health Challenge

Food insecurity can be influenced by income, employment, race/ethnicity, and disability. These factors can also affect the ability to purchase healthier food options even when available. According to Montgomery County's 2019 Community Health Assessment, about 30% of children living in Montgomery County eat less than one serving of fruit and less than one serving of vegetables per day. 41% of Montgomery County adults report eating fruit less than once per day, and 21% report eating vegetables less than once per day. Children not receiving proper nutrition are at risk for developmental issues and chronic conditions such as obesity and type 2 diabetes. Poor nutrition may lead

to obesity and chronic diseases like heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, osteoporosis, and certain types of cancer.

### Approach

To address Dayton's food insecurity and recent grocery store closures, CHC partnered with Homefull and other community partners to create *Pop-Up Farmers' Markets* and increase access to healthy foods for residents living in food deserts. In collaboration with partners such as Miami Valley Organizing Collaborative, CityWide, Co-Op Dayton, Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, and others, a regular West Dayton Farmer's Market was hosted in a food desert (zip code 45417) just across the street from



DeSoto Bass—Dayton's largest public housing site. An additional outdoor *Pop-Up Farmers' Market* was hosted in another food desert (zip code 45406) at the future site of the Gem City Market, a full-service community-and-worker-owned grocery store. Food demonstrations were also conducted with recipe giveaways.

## Results

Community partners opened *Pop-Up Farmers' Markets* featuring locally grown nutritious produce in unique locations in West Dayton. Weekly *Pop-Up Farmer's Markets* were hosted inside the lobbies of the two largest hospitals in downtown Dayton, Kettering Health Network's Grandview Hospital and Premier Health's Miami Valley Hospital. *Pop-Up Farmers' Markets* averaged 15 customers per event, with SNAP-EBT and Produce Perks frequently being used as methods of payment. In addition to increasing accessibility of healthful foods to low-income residents, the *Pop-Up Farmers' Markets* supported local farmers and helped to sustain local economies. This program also provided workers with knowledge on how to operate an actual business. Throughout the season, there was growth of customer participation and worker satisfaction at the *Pop-Up Farmers' Markets*.

## What's Next

In addition to the continuation of *Pop-Up Farmers' Markets*, Homefull and partners will reach Dayton's high-risk, high-need consumers with the inaugural launch of the Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program in 2020. The group will also be hitting the road (literally) with a full-service, state-of-the-art, Freightliner Truck mobile grocery store which will make 14 stops per week in food desert neighborhoods. Plans are also underway for the development of a permanent, large-scale structure for a Food Hub and West Dayton Farmers' Market.

## Find Out More

Are you interested in local food insecurity issues, or would like to support all the great work already going on surrounding food in Montgomery County? Join the Montgomery County Food Equity Coalition. Contact Haley Carretta, Project Manager-Food Systems: [HCarretta@phdmc.org](mailto:HCarretta@phdmc.org), 937-496-3308.

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*"When I found out there was a Pop-Up Market right across the street and I could use my food stamps and get matching money for the vegetables I like, I went back and brought my neighbors too!"*

— West Dayton Food Consumer

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# Perry County

## A New Vision of Perry County: A Road Map for Active Transportation Planning

### At a Glance

Perry County's transportation system reflects its rural character. With 373 miles of highway and 600 miles of county road, the auto-oriented road system accommodates less than 2.4% of residents walking or using transit services for transportation. Such a low rate of active transportation use presents an opportunity to get residents more physically active. The 2019 Perry County Active Transportation (AT) Plan is the first official document to focus on pedestrian and bicycle improvements countywide. The Plan aims to develop a safe, well-connected network that everyone can use, regardless of age or ability. Adopted by Perry County Commissioners in December 2019, the Plan is an addendum to the Coordinated Transportation Plan that was developed in 2017.

### Public Health Challenge

Communities in northern Perry County are more affluent and better connected than the residents of southern Perry County, due in part to convenient access to I-70. An equity analysis completed by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) created composite scores for every census tract in Ohio. Scores for Perry County showed disparities in measures of social vulnerability, including poverty, low educational attainment, and low motor vehicle access between the county's northern and southern halves. Perry County has 16 state routes, three of which carry between 6,000 and 9,500 vehicles daily. Combined with a lack of highway bicycle routes and sidewalks outside of villages, this makes the county very automobile oriented. Local government officials questioned the feasibility of developing infrastructure

necessary to complete an AT network to create more equitable access to transportation infrastructure and opportunities for physical activity.

### Approach

In 2017, Perry County participated in an Action Institute hosted by ODOT and the Ohio Department of Health. The Perry County team co-wrote the Coordinated Transportation Plan during the institute. In 2018, Perry County began to address the projects identified in that plan by hiring a mobility manager, passing a Complete Streets Policy in Somerset, and installing ADA compliant curb ramps in Somerset. In 2019, a safety audit was completed in New Lexington. These early successes paved the way for ODOT to fund the development of an AT Plan led by the Perry County Health Department



with the support of a consultant team from Toole Design Group. With Toole's assistance, Perry County stakeholders assessed existing conditions, reviewed existing plans and safety studies, and engaged with community members to complete the plan. Recommendations within the plan included infrastructure improvements, policy development, and supportive programming.

## Results

Perry County Commissioners adopted the AT Plan as an addendum to the current countywide Coordinated Transportation Plan. Partners who helped achieve the plan's adoption are the Perry County Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) grant, the Village of New Lexington, and Buckeye Hills Regional Council. Champions have been identified to push for project implementation, including the Carroll Street Corridor project, safety audits, Safe Routes to Schools in New Lexington, and the development and maintenance of a multi-use trail system around the Buckeye Lake. Some funding has already been procured as well. The Village of Crooksville received \$750,000 in revitalization funding, some of which will go toward sidewalk improvements. The 2020 cycle of CHC includes development of a bike park for children using training wheels. Five local businesses have committed funding for the park. Upon completion of AT Plan recommendations, 27,297 residents will live within 1 mile of the AT network.

## What's Next

The AT Plan defines the role of stakeholders, provides funding and maintenance strategies, and describes the process used to prioritize projects during implementation. Implementation is a long-term investment in maintaining and expanding the use of AT in Perry County. Stakeholders will be responsible for design, funding, construction, maintenance, monitoring, and evaluation of the projects included within the AT network. Perry County will work closely with ODOT during plan implementation as the plan's proposed network will add more than 183 miles of improvements to ODOT-owned roads. In addition to increasing opportunities for physical activity, AT infrastructure has been shown to increase property value, tourism, and economic development within rural counties. Funding sources, including Clean Ohio Trail Funds, the Highway Safety Improvement Program, and Safe Routes to Schools, will be considered as options to fund implementation in 2020 and beyond.

## Find Out More

- Do you have a passion for healthy living? Are you wanting to get involved? We can connect you to others who feel the same way.
- Join the Perry Neighborhood Connection. We are working to connect our residents to resources and organizations that may have similar interests. The Perry Neighborhood Connection meets on the third Tuesday of every even numbered month. Contact the Perry County Health Department at 740-342-5179 for more information.



***"The Perry County Active Transportation Plan represents and solidifies the entire county and says, with community input, we value the health, wellbeing and safety of our residents, and visitors."***

***— Jeff Ritter, president,  
Bike Buckeye Lake***



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## Richland County

### A Safer and More Walkable Downtown

#### At a Glance

Shoppers, business patrons, and pedestrians now have a safer, more appealing option when visiting Downtown Mansfield. This area is home to many small businesses, restaurants, and organizations, and people are interested in active transportation options to visit these locations. Richland County Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) partnered with Richland County Regional Planning Commission (RCRPC) and the Richland County Foundation to stage a pop-up demonstration of what a pedestrian-friendly street could look like. One city block of 4th Street, between Main Street and Diamond Street, was determined to be the best location for this project, as it is home to several popular businesses that attract several visitors every week. This project made the street safer and more appealing to pedestrians, increasing the number of

people engaging in physical activity by walking from place to place.

#### Public Health Challenge

Many of the blocks in downtown Mansfield do not encourage pedestrian use, and this block of 4<sup>th</sup> Street was no exception. The sidewalks were too narrow for people to walk side-by-side, which made it difficult for couples or families to enjoy walking together. Moreover, despite the many businesses along 4<sup>th</sup> Street, there was no outdoor seating or anything to make the sidewalk aesthetically pleasing for folks visiting the businesses or restaurants. Most people use the free municipal lot on 4<sup>th</sup> Street when visiting downtown, but since there was no midblock crosswalk, pedestrians were unsafely crossing the road, increasing the likelihood of an accident. Since there were no curb-cuts at the midblock, wheelchair users or families with

strollers would need to go all the way to the end of the block to find a ramp, which was not convenient. The fastest route from the municipal lot to the Brickyard, a popular concert and event venue, is through an alley, but there was no lighting along that path, which made pedestrians possibly feel unsafe at night.

#### Approach

CHC partnered with RCRPC to plan and implement a pedestrian infrastructure improvement. This project existed at the intersection of many other community efforts and organizations trying to revitalize the downtown area. Mansfield Rising, a downtown investment plan coordinated by the Richland County Foundation had several Better Block and Active Transportation initiatives listed as possible strategies for downtown improvement. This project benefited from existing community enthusiasm and support and received a lot of social



and local media attention. The project was initially planned as a temporary, pop-up event to generate positive responses from residents and business owners in the hopes that the city would fund permanent improvements. Parking meters along the street were temporarily removed. Sidewalks were extended with markers, and temporary ramps were added to the midblock to facilitate wheelchair users and strollers. Local artists painted a temporary mural to mark a midblock crossing. Small tables, chairs, and planters were added along the sidewalk and outdoor string lights were added to the alleyway leading to the Brickyard.

## Results

The improved pedestrian infrastructure on 4<sup>th</sup> Street generated several local media stories and social media posts and shares. The pop-up event lasted from Aug. 2-17, 2019, and was restored to its prior state in time for the downtown area to host a 7-kilometer race on Aug. 17.

After the pop-up event ended, a post-survey was distributed to residents and business owners in the area. Eighty-two percent of survey respondents indicated they felt safer walking in the area thanks to the addition of pedestrian crossing signs and string lighting in the alley. Sixty-one percent indicated that they were more likely to walk to a business in that area with the pedestrian improvements. The most popular improvement was the addition of lighting, with 87% of respondents indicating a positive response. The extended sidewalk and added ramps were also very well-received with 72% and 65% approval, respectively.

## What's Next

Just two weeks after the pop-up event ended, Mansfield City Council voted to fund the permanent installation of a midblock crossing on 4<sup>th</sup> Street, an investment of \$45,000 from the city's downtown improvement fund. The permanent crosswalk will be made up of bricks saved from the last brick roads removed in Mansfield, and will feature ADA compliant curb-cuts and a pedestrian crossing sign in the middle of the road. To continue the momentum, CHC and RCRPC are partnering to sustain this type of project by creating a lending library of supplies for future pop-up projects. These supplies will include items such as temporary seating and lighting and pedestrian crossing signs. Several area townships and municipalities have already responded with interest in this type of project, and CHC hopes to partner with RCRPC to make active transportation a reality in more parts of Richland County.

## Find Out More

CHC and RCRPC are looking for future locations to demonstrate increased safety and walkability. If you live or work in a neighborhood that would benefit from this type of project, consider joining the Creating Healthy Communities Coalition. If you are interested in healthy living or want to see safer pedestrian areas, consider getting involved and getting connected with our coalition or one of our partner organizations.



*"I am a frequent flyer of downtown activities and it's kind of crazy in that area to get across from the Municipal Parking lot to get to the north side of Fourth Street and the Brickyard. I think this is a very worthwhile project and will show the downtown area very quickly what can be done with these funds that benefit everyone."*

*— Jon Van Harlingen,  
city councilman*



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## Sandusky County Child Development Center Shows Support for Breastfeeding Families

### At a Glance

Sandusky County Public Health's (SCPH) Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program and Angie's Angels Child Development Center in Fremont are working to improve breastfeeding rates among employees and visitors by providing a supportive environment with policies that encourage continued breastfeeding after returning to work postpartum. The needs of the center were addressed through the establishment of lactation support guidelines and the creation of a comfortable, private lactation room.

### Public Health Challenge

Breastfeeding is one of the most highly effective preventive measures a mother can take to protect the health of her infant. It can address many short- and long-term health issues for both mother and baby. Infants who are breastfed

have reduced risks for conditions such as obesity and type 1 diabetes. Breastfeeding can also help lower a mother's risk of developing high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and different types of cancers.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends infants be fed breast milk exclusively for the first six months after birth. In Sandusky County, one in four mothers with children ages 0-5 years never breastfed their child; 31% only breastfed for three months or less. Mothers are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. labor force. Approximately 70% of employed mothers with children younger than 3 years old work full-time. One-third of these mothers return to work within three months after birth, and two-thirds return within six months. Though the federal Break Time for Nursing Mothers law requires employers covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

to provide basic accommodations for breastfeeding mothers at work, many mothers still lack the support they need.

### Approach

SCPH's CHC program partnered with Angie's Angels Child Development Center to increase lactation support for both visitors and employees. Prior to making improvements, a pre-assessment survey was conducted to better understand the lactation support needs at the center. Employees and visitors expressed the need for a comfortable, private lactation room; a place to store breastmilk; flexible milk expression breaks; breast pumps; and educational materials. CHC program staff and the executive director of Angie's Angels developed and carried out both policy and environmental improvement plans for breastfeeding support. This included developing and adopting Lactation Support Guidelines



and establishing a comfortable, private space designated for lactation. Following the changes made at the worksite, a follow-up evaluation was completed to determine if the identified needs were addressed and to measure the impact of these changes.

## Results

The Lactation Support Guidelines, which cover the company's ongoing support for providing milk expression breaks, education, storage, comfort, and privacy, are now incorporated into the agency's orientation materials for new employees. This set of guidelines also covers expectations of staff when it comes to taking breaks, storing milk, and utilizing the shared lactation space. In addition to these policy changes, employees and visitors of the center now have access to a private space designated specifically for lactation.

Results from the follow-up survey showed that the improvements are almost completely supported (94.5%) by visitors and employees. Within just a few weeks after the lactation support changes became available, one-third of visitors expressed they had already utilized the lactation support services. One visitor specifically mentioned, "I am able to use this space when dropping off and picking up my baby, and I couldn't be happier." Other visitors and employees were excited to learn about the available resources within the community that they were unaware existed prior to the initiative.

## What's Next

This initiative had a greater impact on the community than anticipated. It has allowed Angie's Angels to educate mothers and fathers about the benefits of breastfeeding exclusively for the first six months after birth. Angie's Angels has provided the community with an example of how other companies can offer lactation support to their

employees, regardless of the limited number of resources or space available. The CHC program at SCPH will continue encouraging other worksites to develop similar programs, by offering lactation support resources and addressing any technical assistance needs.

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*"Breastfeeding is a wonderful gift to give your baby the nutrients they need. We are so appreciative and proud to be able to give our breastfeeding mothers a private space to spend time with their child."*

— Angie's Angels Child Development Center Employee

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## Find Out More

You can support breastfeeding in the workplace by:

- Allowing flexible scheduling to support milk expression during work.
- Providing a designated private space for women to breastfeed or express milk.
- Giving mothers options for returning to work, such as teleworking, part-time work, or extended maternity leave.
- Encouraging communication between supervisors and employees so that appropriate accommodations can be made to satisfy the needs of both the employee and the company.



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# Stark County

## Musical Instruments Provide Opportunities for Physical Activity

### At a Glance

Thanks to a collaborative effort between the Stark County Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program, Habitat for Humanity, and multiple community partners, new equipment was added to the Lighthouse Ministries play area in Southeast Canton. The new equipment provides individuals with additional opportunities to engage in physical activity and interact with one another. Life-size musical equipment was added to the play space as a more holistic offering of experiences for children of all ages in the community. The improvements offer more opportunities for children and families in the Southeast Canton area to spend time together while getting additional physical activity.

### Public Health Challenge

Obesity and Healthy Lifestyles is one of the four priority focus areas identified by community members and stakeholders in the Stark County Community Health Assessment (CHA). Participating in regular physical activity plays a major role in preventing obesity and promoting healthy lifestyles. According to the 2019 CHA, 27% of residents are physically inactive. Overweight and obesity rates are also a concern in Stark County, with 33% of adults and 13% of children falling into either category. Childhood obesity is complex; the extra pounds can lead to health problems like diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, poor self-esteem, and depression. Children of families who are physically active together are more likely to stay active

on their own as well. Lighthouse Ministries and the adjacent church were looking for ways to provide children and families in the community with more opportunities to utilize their shared play space. Connecting with Habitat for Humanity of East Central Ohio and other community partners allowed the Stark County CHC program to improve the existing play space and encourage physical activity for all.

### Approach

Habitat for Humanity East Central Ohio defined Southeast Canton as a focus community in their renewal project goals. This project seeks to strengthen the whole neighborhood from the inside out by improving community safety and pride, increasing property values, creating



distinct areas of beautification, and developing engaged and active residents. Through the Southeast Canton renewal project, funding was dedicated to the Lighthouse Ministries play space improvement project. Habitat for Humanity and CHC formed a subcommittee with Lighthouse Ministries, First Mennonite Church, the library, and the local neighborhood association to identify needed improvements and leverage funding for the purchase and installation of equipment. Funds were solicited from Habitat for Humanity, the CHC program, Community Development Block Grant funds, and in-kind donations. Lighthouse Ministries spoke with children in their program for ideas about what should be incorporated in the space and provided suggestions to the subcommittee. The decision was made to install life-size musical equipment, which would provide other opportunities for activity and interaction, and improve the existing equipment in the space.

## Results

Volunteers from local organizations and churches gathered at Lighthouse Ministries in mid-September to install the play space improvements and dedicate the improved space. Volunteers worked together to build and install benches and new basketball hoops, repaint lines on the basketball court, and build and install life-size musical equipment including two flower gongs, a set of rainbow sambas, and a large rainbow xylophone. Volunteers also helped to clean and beautify the space with mulch, flowers, and general maintenance. Signage and lighting in the area were updated as well, to encourage community member

use of the space outside of traditional hours. An additional sign was added to the play space recognizing the hard work of the donors, volunteers, and community organizations involved in the process of making this play space a reality.

## What's Next

Through CHC, we are continuing to connect with community organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and Lighthouse Ministries looking to make improvements to the environment in their community. This project contributes a considerable asset to the community and will provide families with a safe space to interact and exercise in their own neighborhood. We plan to continue to work with Habitat for Humanity and other community organizations to generate change and work toward a healthier, safer community.

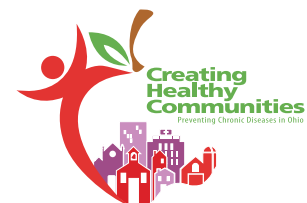
## Find Out More

Live Well Stark County is a coalition of community leaders working together to make Stark County healthier by promoting policies, systems, and environmental changes that support wellness. This coalition coordinates and supports the CHC program in Stark County. The coalition is committed to making healthy eating and exercise the norm and reducing the incidence of chronic disease resulting from poor nutrition, inactive lifestyles, and tobacco use. The coalition website, [www.livewellstarkcounty.com](http://www.livewellstarkcounty.com), has information about how to get involved with the coalition and how residents can bring similar projects to their neighborhoods.



***"Installing the pieces of outdoor musical equipment by our basketball court has allowed students in our after-school program to interact with non-sports related equipment for physical activity and their enjoyment. This provides a more holistic offering of experiences for our children existing beyond sports!"***

***—Darin Nissley, executive director, Lighthouse Ministries***



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## Summit County

### Rolling With Summit Bike Share

#### At a Glance

In the City of Akron, revitalization efforts have brought bike lanes and streetscape enhancements along main corridors. To encourage utilization of the improved infrastructure and increase access to active transportation options in a community where resources are limited, the Summit County Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program coordinated with community partners to establish the Summit Bike Share in the Buchtel neighborhood. Launching in 2018 at the Maple Valley Branch Library, the program expanded in 2019 with the addition of an adaptive adult trike. Now more community members have the ability to be active and enjoy this free community asset.

#### Public Health Challenge

Due to a history of resource depletion, as a result of redlining, racial segregation, and other factors, the Buchtel neighborhood is an area with a high concentration of poverty with more than 30% of households living below the poverty level. Poverty, compounded by other factors including reduced access to education, has been linked to lower levels of physical activity.<sup>1</sup> This is reflected in the Buchtel community, where only one in five residents meet physical activity guidelines.<sup>2</sup> Those living with a disability experience even more barriers, resulting in substantially lower rates of physical activity when compared with populations that do not have a disability.<sup>3</sup> Physical inactivity contributes to overweight and obesity, conditions that increase the risk of chronic disease development.

Transportation limitations also exist for Buchtel residents with household vehicle ownership rates below the city average. For low-income households that do own a vehicle, costs of maintaining a car can require a significant portion of the household budget, at an average of nearly \$700 a month.<sup>4</sup> Given the challenges, it is vital that the community's built environment support opportunities for active transportation.

#### Approach

The Summit County CHC program partnered with the Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition and Akron-Summit Public Library to implement and expand the Summit Bike Share at the Maple Valley Branch Library in the Buchtel neighborhood. The program allows individuals to borrow a bike and helmet for up to three hours, or longer



if pre-arranged, at 11 locations across Akron. Each location has two to five bikes available for use. In 2019, partners collaborated with Summit County Developmental Disabilities Board to select an adaptive bike for the program so that individuals with balance or mobility issues are able to safely enjoy a bike ride. In May, a Better Block event helped to highlight the program and availability of the adaptive bike. During the event, experimental rides through the How We Roll program were available to help increase attendees' comfort with riding on the road.

## Results

As a result of Summit County CHC collaboration, the bike share program throughout the Greater Akron area, including the Buchtel neighborhood, has provided residents and visitors with a new and accessible option for physical activity. From May to October, more than 400 rides took place, and demographic data showed diverse ridership by age, race, and gender. According to post-ride surveys, the majority of riders reported that they borrowed a bike specifically for exercise, while many others shared that they were borrowing a bike for commuting purposes. Importantly, these results suggest that the program provided an opportunity for physical activity and expanded transportation options for borrowers. CHC is hopeful the program usage will continue to expand, with 85% of borrowers reporting that they are extremely likely to use to program again.

## What's Next

Ongoing planning has occurred between bike share partners to ensure continued program sustainability and accessibility. As a result of this successful collaboration, the group has approached

additional partners to leverage funding for new and replacement bikes over the next several years to allow for increased program longevity. This strategic funding plan, along with enhanced promotional efforts in 2020, will help to foster sustainability and connectivity of the bike share program in Summit County. Additionally, continued installation of improved streetscapes in Akron, including bike lanes, will increase the popularity of biking and community demand of the program for years to come.

## Find Out More

- Visit [summitshare.org](http://summitshare.org) to find a Summit Bike Share location near you.
- Get comfortable with riding on the road by signing-up for a How We Roll ride near you by visiting [yaybikes.com](http://yaybikes.com).
- Support initiatives like this, and make a difference in your community, by joining the Summit County CHC coalition.

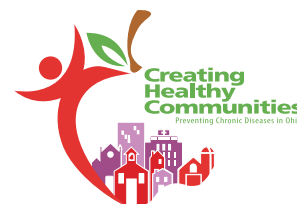
## Resources:

1. United States Census Bureau. American Fact Finder. 2010 Census.
2. United States Census Bureau. American Fact Finder. 2016 American Community Survey.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR). <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6318a5.htm>
4. Ohio United Way. Alice Report. <http://ouw.org/alice/>



*"The bike share program has been a great service for our community. Library customers use the bikes to enjoy quality time with their families as well as for more practical reasons such as going to job interviews."*

*—Tonya Wright,  
Maple Valley Branch Library*



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# Trumbull County

## Improved Parks Rejuvenate the Community

### At a Glance

The Trumbull County Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Coalition and Trumbull County Combined Health District (TCCHD) partnered with Community Concerned Citizens II (CCCII), Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership (TNP) and the City of Warren to improve Quinby Park's playground. The playground renovations included removing broken equipment, adding new equipment, adding a safe border and surface, and making the playground area inclusive of all abilities to play and interact. By improving Quinby Park, roughly 2,750 children and residents will benefit from the new playground equipment and have the opportunity to be physically active.

### Public Health Challenge

Chronic disease is one of three major health concerns for Trumbull County residents identified by the 2019 Trumbull County Community Health Assessment (CHA). Participating in regular physical activity plays an important role in preventing obesity and chronic disease. According to the Trumbull County CHA, residents reported that a challenge in Warren is the lack of physical activity infrastructure that includes safe, accessible parks and recreational spaces for their children. Forty percent of adults in Warren reported that having more available parks would encourage their families to be more physically active. Additionally, three public meetings were held with residents and children to receive input on park improvements. The majority of children asked for fixed or

new playground equipment to play on, while parents and residents asked for a nice, safe place for their children to play and be physically active. Looking for a way to provide more opportunities for children and families to be physically active, community partners set out to improve and repair Quinby Park over a two-year span.

### Approach

Over the past decade, Quinby Park went from a beautiful park to an abandoned one with broken equipment. CCCII, a group of residents, became the shepherds of the park and managed small projects over the years to improve the park and make it a better place for everyone in the community to enjoy. The Trumbull County CHC Coalition



began partnering with CCCII, hosting pop-up farmers' markets in 2017 to provide access to healthy foods on the southwest side of Warren. Through the collaboration it became apparent that the park needed to be repaired and improved to provide an opportunity for children to be physically active. The CHC Coalition applied for funding in 2018 and 2019 to complete the repairs in a phased-in approach. Through funding from the William Swanston Charitable Foundation, partners were able to drastically improve the playground equipment in the park

## Results

Many organizations, including the City of Warren, and neighborhood residents stepped up to help fund and promote the improved playground area. The improved Quinby Park brought the attention of the community back to the park. The ribbon cutting ceremony was a success with many stakeholders, elected officials, and residents in attendance to celebrate the future of Quinby Park. New improvements included new playground equipment such as a climbing apparatus, shade covers, slides, rope to climb, monkey bars, a merry-go-round, and boards with gadgets and puzzles for the children. The rejuvenated Quinby Park is becoming the beautiful park it used to be as well as the center of the neighborhood again.

## What's Next

Through the park improvements, many partners and the city have strengthened the relationship with neighborhood residents. Future programming will be implemented to

encourage children to play at the park with the new equipment. Additionally, park improvements have led to other grant opportunities to renovate the shelter house, which now has new restrooms and a kitchen, as well as to improve the green space and pond. The improvements in the park confirm to the community that the City of Warren and organizations are investing in the neighborhood.

## Find Out More

You can help increase access to opportunities for physical activity in your community by volunteering in local parks and planning committees. By donating your time, you are helping improve your community. Through your input and work with local parks and trail groups, you can help create an environment that supports and encourages regular physical activity. Contact the Trumbull County Creating Healthy Communities Coordinator at Trumbull County Combined Health District to learn more.

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*"CCCII is very appreciative of the collaboration with CHC for contributions to Quinby Park and efforts to improve and beautify the park in 2019 for our children and continue to work together in the future."*

*— Danny Houston,  
community resident*

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# Union County

## Working Towards Accessibility in Rural Parks: The Richwood Park Pedestrian Dock

### At a Glance

Efforts of the local trail coalition, Union County Health Department (UCHD) Creating Healthy Communities program, and the Village of Richwood have resulted in a fully accessible pedestrian dock at Richwood Park. Since its completion, residents and visitors alike have given positive feedback, and the park has seen an increase in attendance. This addition is part of a greater effort to increase opportunities for physical activity, recreation, and accessibility within the county's more rural parks.

### Public Health Challenge

Union County, like many communities across the United States, has seen a steady uptick in resident obesity, lack of physical activity, and risk factors associated with heart disease and shortened lifespans. Data from the 2018 Union County Health Assessment shows 38% of adults are considered obese and 29% overweight, while one in seven adults did not participate in any physical activity within the previous week. Only 53% of youth participated in at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day on five or more days in the previous week. Another area of concern is a lack of access to opportunities for physical activity, particularly in the more rural parts of the county. Additionally, amenities

for physical activity and recreation for those with disabilities is sparse in the more rural parts of the county. This must be addressed to create equitable opportunities for all residents.

### Approach

Through partnerships with a local coalition, the Village of Richwood, and the Union County Board of Developmental Disabilities, the UCHD Creating Healthy Communities program was able to secure funding and build an ADA compliant, accessible pedestrian dock to improve access to physical activity opportunities and recreation in the village. The dock's purpose is to help people of all abilities gain better access to the lake for various healthy activities. Since its completion, the



coalition, Village of Richwood, and Creating Healthy Communities program are looking to add an accessible canoe/kayak launch, as well as other new and accessible park amenities.

## Results

Park attendance increased by 78% during and after the dock's implementation; however, due to the timing of the dock installation, the village and its partners have yet to collect data on its use. With the high amount of positive feedback about the new dock on social media, there is a strong sentiment that it's making a positive difference at the park. This new dock has also served as a catalyst for future improvements that center around increasing accessibility and universality for visitors and residents, so that people of all abilities have equitable access to opportunities for physical activity and recreation.

## What's Next

The UCHD Creating Healthy Communities program, the village, coalition members, and other partnering organizations continue to build upon the success of the new dock through the proposal of future park projects that bring physical activity and accessibility to the forefront. The group's next initiative is to add a canoe/kayak launch, as well as new accessible playground equipment. There is also a continued effort by the trail coalition to expand membership and help create a sense of ownership of the park by residents through park activities, cleanups, family events, and other programs.

## Find Out More

You can help increase access to opportunities for physical activity and enhance accessibility in your community by volunteering in local parks and planning committees. By donating your time, you are helping improve your community. Through your input and work with parks and trail groups, you can also help create an environment that supports and encourages regular physical activity and accessibility.

Contact the Union County Health Department Creating Healthy Communities coordinator to learn more.

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*"It's great to see the new pedestrian dock at the Richwood Park! The Village, Health Department, and Richwood Trailblazers have done a great job bringing fun and accessible infrastructure for residents and visitors to enjoy."*

— Shawwna Sue Jordan

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## Washington County Creating a Destination Food Pantry

### At a Glance

A food pantry can be a place you want to be! In collaboration with the Washington County Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Coalition, the Pack & Go Store opened at Marietta Middle School to create a stigma-free space where students facing food insecurity can pick up much-needed food for the weekends, or students staying after school for extracurricular activities can find healthy snacks to refuel for round two of their day. An onsite gardening club, Go Grow @ the Pack & Go, and various workshops offered throughout the school year increased the excitement in and around the store/food pantry, making it a place to be rather than avoid.

### Public Health Challenge

Students enrolled in middle school in Marietta have a poverty rate of 36.4%.<sup>1</sup> Poverty results in a high number

of students facing food insecurity. In elementary school, students in need receive a backpack filled with shelf-stable food on Fridays. Food sent home is meant to duplicate the meals students would usually receive in school and typically includes two breakfast options, two lunch options, and two snacks. When at all possible, the food is kid-friendly to prepare. Backpacks are then returned to the schools on Mondays, allowing the cycle to repeat. Traditional backpack programs are not as effective in middle school and high school environments. Tweens and teens are very self-aware; they do not want to stand out and they do not want to walk into a food pantry at their school. However, ignoring food insecurity is detrimental. A poor, restricted diet can result in many health issues, including stunted physical growth, stunted mental growth, and chronic anxiety. Excessive absences, short attention spans, and a general

inability to concentrate in school can be a result of food insecurity.

### Approach

To ensure that middle school students have consistent access to nutritious food, CHC worked in partnership with GoPacks and many groups in the community to create the Pack & Go Store. It is an all-inclusive store and food pantry designed to remove the stigma and generate positive interaction. The store uses a cashless POS system, creating equality. All students are offered the same food choices and punch in codes on a keypad so that all students check out in the same manner. The food offerings are grouped into smaller bundles, instead of large "weekend" bags. This allows the weekly menus to work for students who need a healthy snack before their afterschool sports practice or club meeting, as well as for those who need food to sustain



them over the weekends. The store regularly hosts classes and workshops for all students, generating excitement and exposing students to healthy choices. One is the Go Grow @ the Pack & Go, a gardening club that grows produce in the store.

## Results

With hydroponics, industrial grow lights, a large selection of tempting food bundles, and a calendar full of engaging workshops, the Pack & Go Store is becoming a place students are not only comfortable visiting, but one where they learn and have fun. During the first three months of the store's opening, more than 200 bundles of healthy food were distributed to middle school students. Each month since opening, the number of students participating in the program has increased. Enrollment in the all-inclusive Go Grow @ the Pack & Go Gardening Club is at full capacity for all three consecutive sessions of its first year.

## What's Next

The Pack and Go Store will continue to build student trust and provide healthy food to all students in need. Additional inclusive workshops, classes, and demonstrations that complement the healthy habits and lifestyle choices that the Pack & Go Store supports will be added to the program. To achieve this growth, GoPacks will bring on additional partners within the community. Marketing will continue to

ensure that all students find the space welcoming. In addition, research is in process to secure new sources of food to expand the bundle selections for even greater variety.

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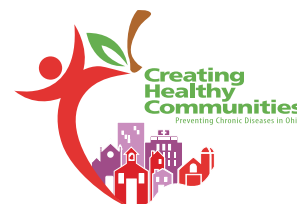
***"The middle school years are the years when youth are trying to find themselves and how they fit into the world. If we help them as much as we can with food insecurities, this will be one less thing for the kids to worry about ... and one less way these kids feel 'left out' of the social norms."***

— Emily Diehl, Marietta City Schools teacher

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## Find Out More

Collaboration and inclusion are essential to healthy communities. Join the Washington County Creating Healthy Communities Coalition to find out how you or your group can strengthen our community.



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