

SHIP Implementation began in July 2009. In just over 1.5 years, Olmsted County partners have rallied around the vision of SHIP and have identified and implemented strategies to make Olmsted County a healthier place to live, work, learn, play and receive health care. Here are some of their stories.....

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GROWING TOGETHER.....

GARDENS SPROUT UP IN BYRON, EYOTA, STEWARTVILLE AND ROCHESTER

Five new community gardens were established in Olmsted County during 2010. Phil Lermon and Dennis Blank are two gardeners who loved the new 38-plot Community Garden in Byron. Both Dennis and Phil agreed the gardening experience was therapeutic as the Byron location is very peaceful and located close to a bubbling creek.

Dennis and his family benefitted from the garden by increasing their vegetable consumption. Dennis enjoyed involving his kids with the gardening experience by growing fun items like sunflowers and popcorn. Working side-by-side, Phil and Dennis along with some additional volunteers cared for 10 extra plots and the produce was donated to the local food shelf.



Nicky Askelson was warned by colleagues that tending a garden plot is a lot of work..... she jumped at the challenge and enjoyed every minute of it! Together, Nicky and her family tended one of the sixteen plots in Stewartville's Community Garden. Nicky stopped by the garden on her way home from work nearly every day to see what was ready to be picked and weeded. She enjoyed the time her family spent working together in their plot.

In Eyota, volunteers created a 12-plot community garden that included a patio area with benches, composting bins, and a water system. One gardener, Ruth Bartels, lives in the apartment adjacent to the garden. She enjoyed planting and eating a variety of vegetables. Ruth was trying to increase her vegetable consumption and having a garden plot of her own definitely helped!



In a fire station, those who work together, eat together! Captain Erik Propotnik wanted to change the way the fire fighters eat at Fire Station #2. So, he partnered with SHIP staff to create the Fire Station #2 Garden. Over 30 employees benefitted by eating a wide variety of vegetables from the garden. The garden offered the option to have fresh and home canned foods such as salsa and homemade pasta sauce to extend healthy eating into the winter months. Initially, Captain Propotnik received some resistance to removing the sod from the fire station yard to create a garden. Now, other firefighters are inquiring about how they can start a garden at their stations!



BUILDING COMMUNITIES TO SUPPORT ACTIVE LIVING.....

CITIZENS IN BYRON, EYOTA, AND STEWARTVILLE BECOME ENGAGED IN DESIGNING THEIR COMMUNITIES

In August, SHIP contracted with experts from Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) of Minnesota to facilitate workshops in the communities of Byron, Eyota and Stewartville. The workshops were intended to show the tangible benefits of a well-designed “walkable community”. The workshops highlighted ways in which local land use,



transportation decisions and policies affect walking habits, safe routes to school, personal health, overall physical activity and the vitality of the community. Walkable communities accommodate all types of transportation, including cars and transit, but focus on a safe and convenient environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. People-friendly accommodations might include such amenities as large sidewalks, gathering spots, benches, aesthetic landscape design, bike paths and traffic-calming roadways.



During the four-hour workshops, local participants had the opportunity to walk around their cities to experience first-hand both the amenities and barriers to being physically active in their communities. Following the walking audits, participants gathered around tables to identify opportunities to reduce barriers and enhance opportunities for walking in their communities – and build consensus on improving conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists. While Byron, Eyota and Stewartville are relatively comparable in size, each of the communities has unique opportunities and barriers for active living. While many solutions to the identified barriers were offered, it was also acknowledged that economic constraints

shadow the cities’ ability to solve the issues. BCBS facilitators emphasized in all communities the importance of positioning themselves as potential funding candidates by having sound plans and policies in place to support active living and safe routes to school.

Cheryl Roeder from Stewartville stated, “The Active Living Workshop gave us a chance to work with community members and hear how they feel about the safety in using our sidewalks, walking paths and streets. The City feels it’s important in making the healthy choice the easy choice and will be implementing policies that will put the focus on providing safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.” The cities of Byron and Stewartville passed Complete Streets Policies in October 2010.



One community member from Eyota has taken what she has learned from an active living workshop to heart. After recently losing her mother to heart disease, taking care of her health has become a personal quest. On the day of the workshop, she resolved to start walking to work.

ACTIVE LIVING....

TAKING IT PERSONALLY

“It took me a couple months to finally get organized with a backpack, umbrella and raincoat to carry with me. After I started walking, I discovered I needed more supportive shoes and with the changing seasons, more weather-wise coats. My daily walk takes about 30 minutes. I walk 5 minutes to my first job (part time) at Dover-Eyota Schools’ district office, then midmorning, I walk another 10 minutes across town to Eyota City Hall for my full time job. At the end of the day, I meander back through town to my house.”



“I feel better, I’ve lost 5 pounds and I am addicted to walking. It has also made me more aware of the problems in our city’s sidewalk and trails systems. Not only is it helping me personally, it is making me a better advocate for creating a healthier environment in my town to help others.”

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PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN CHILDCARE.....

UP SEVEN POLICIES FROM ZERO!

In June 2010, SHIP offered mini-grants to licensed childcare centers and preschool programs in Olmsted County. The mini-grants focused on assisting childcare centers in adopting a physical activity policy that adheres to the national best practice recommendations. These recommendations included objectives that address the amount of

active time per day (120 minutes), the play environment (equipment and space), staff behavior (staff joins children in play), physical activity support (visual cues for activity such as posters), and training (staff and parent training on physical activity).

The ultimate goal for childcare centers was to adopt and implement a physical activity policy that addressed best practices. To-date, seven childcare centers have adopted a physical activity policy reaching 759 children in childcare in Olmsted County. The work isn't done yet, SHIP aims to reach at least 50% of all children in childcare by July of 2011.



At Kids Come 1st in Rochester kids really do come first! The three area childcare centers applied for and received funding through SHIP to implement physical activity policies and practices. Kari Olivares of Kids Come 1st North says "this [SHIP] grant has made us aware that we needed to create a policy that makes it clear what our goals for physical play are."

AT AREA CHILDCARE CENTERS.....

KIDS HEALTH REALLY DOES COME 1ST!

The directors at the childcare centers have successfully implemented a physical activity policy at the three sites. Their policies affect over 150 preschool children, 50 staff, and 150 parents. Michelle Strain of Kids Come 1st SW says "including more activity in a child's day creates an exciting environment for a child and makes them want to get up and move." Not only has the policy affected the children, but also staff and parents. Staff members have been more engaged in activities with the children and have noted less discipline issues." In addition, Strain says she has received many parent compliments.



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STUDENTS LOVE EATING LOCALLY GROWN PRODUCE.....

FARM TO SCHOOL SUCCESS IN THE DOVER/EYOTA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Heartwarming comments from the students included “My mom grew this!” and “My grandfather and I pick for this farmer!” which showed the pride that students felt in eating local foods. Students give the Farm to School program an enthusiastic “thumbs up”!



The Dover-Eyota school district enlisted local growers to provide fruits, vegetables, bison and free range turkey for their students in the 2009-2010 school year. The items were well received by students, many tasting squash, bison and ground turkey for the first time. All 1,100 students in the school district had the opportunity to try the local products through the reimbursable meal program.

SHIP sponsored a three-day Chef School workshop for Student Nutrition Services staff in early 2010. The objective was to increase the capacity of schools to offer healthier food in ways that appeal to students. Participants learned the benefits of serving whole foods, fresh local produce, serving more legumes, beans and meatless dishes, and reducing additives by using fresh herbs and seasonings. Attendees said they learned quick and easy ways to prepare fruits and veggies and new creative ways of preparing food. “I tasted food dishes I’ve never had before (artichoke pasta!)” “Using fresh fruits and vegetables and cooking them right makes a huge difference in whether kids will eat them.”

CHEF SCHOOL GIVES SCHOOL LUNCHES A NEW FLAVOR.....

STUDENT NUTRITION SERVICES STAFF LEARN NEW METHODS OF INCORPORATING HEALTHIER FOOD INTO SCHOOL LUNCHES!

As a result of the workshop, participants planned the following changes within their school lunch programs:

- More local produce was incorporated into school lunches and staff has experimented with a wider range of fruit and vegetable recipes.
- More meatless options were added and students have been encouraged to try new menu items.
- Spices have been added to make the food smell and taste more appealing.



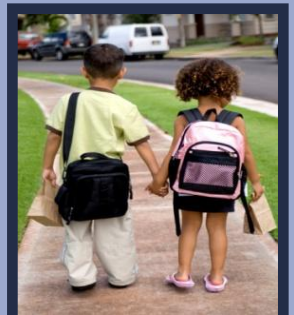
ON THE ROAD TO.....

SAFER ROUTES TO SCHOOL

limit when children are present around the Middle School. I will not let my elementary school kids cross [the county road] alone. I may consider it if there were crossing guards there EVERY day.”

As a result, each community received a comprehensive Safe Routes to School Plan which is being used to implement speed reduction efforts and improve crossing guard coverage.

SHIP collaborated with contracted consultants to solicit local data related to walking and biking to school. Evaluation included parent concerns, barriers to walking and biking to and safety during arrival and dismissal at elementary schools in greater Olmsted County. Some parental feedback included comments such as “School crossings are a huge challenge. Regular commuters do not stop and aren’t obeying the 20 mph speed



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ROCHESTER COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES LEADS BY EXAMPLE.....

THE 14TH COLLEGE CAMPUS IN MINNESOTA TO ADOPT TOBACCO FREE CAMPUS POLICY

In January of 2010 Rochester Community and Technical College (RCTC) joined 13 other post-secondary schools in Minnesota and 176 other post-secondary schools in the country who implemented a tobacco-free policy. The decision to adopt the tobacco policy came after much work by the college's tobacco-free task force.

The task force, developed in 2009, was a group of volunteers who explored the possibility of going tobacco-free. They conducted a survey, drafted policies, and held forums with students, faculty and staff. On September 30th, 2009 their hard work was commended and the policy was adopted.

The RCTC Tobacco-Free Task Force partnered with SHIP to help communicate about the tobacco-free campus policy. Flyers, posters, signs and other promotional materials were crafted at RCTC to prepare for the change on campus. RCTC celebrated the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout in November 2009 to promote the tobacco-free policy and to help connect students and employees to cessation resources.



In May of 2010, representatives from 13 area businesses attended the SHIP-sponsored Freedom from Smoking (FFS) training. Participants gained knowledge and received resources and training to teach a tobacco cessation program in their worksite. FFS is a cessation program taught by the American Lung Association that has been proven to be effective in helping people quit smoking.

FREEDOM FROM SMOKING..... TOBACCO CESSATION IN THE WORKPLACE

During the fall of 2010, Hy-Vee North employees had the opportunity to participate in a seven week Freedom From Smoking cessation class to help them quit smoking. Seven employees quit smoking and have remained quit since the October 2010.



Ability Building Center (ABC) put together mini-quit kits with cessation information, gum, and hard candy to assist smokers in quitting. ABC also offered the Freedom from Smoking cessation class beginning the first week of December.

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of lost productivity for worksites therefore helping employees quit using tobacco is one of the most cost-effective benefits employers can offer employees.

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SERIOUS BUSINESS.....

CUSTOM ALARM ADOPTS TOBACCO FREE GROUNDS POLICY AND INCENTIVIZES EMPLOYEES TO QUIT USING TOBACCO

Custom Alarm has long been recognized as a business that invests in their employees and takes wellness seriously. Recently, Custom Alarm employees noticed something new about their workplace environment...no tobacco. As of January 1, 2011, tobacco use is no longer allowed on their property by employees, contractors, vendors and visitors.

Custom Alarm was one of the first companies in Rochester to eliminate smoking indoors so it made sense that they chose to adopt a comprehensive tobacco-free policy. However, Custom Alarm CEO, Leigh Johnson, and his management team did not make this decision lightly. Custom Alarm worked with SHIP staff to engage employees in the process of adopting the tobacco-free campus through a focus group, wellness meetings, e-mail communications, print communications, cessation promotion, and signage. Ultimately, the reason they chose to adopt the policy was to provide a clean, healthy, productive and safe environment for all.

At Custom Alarm, employees have always been offered a cash incentive to quit smoking and stay quit for six months. This year with the implementation of their tobacco-free grounds policy on they are doubling their cash incentive, giving employees an even greater reason to quit smoking.



Successful implementation of healthy worksite nutrition initiatives requires clear communication and team work between a worksite wellness committee, management, employees, the person who handles the facility contracts and the contractors. SHIP staff has assisted 9 businesses with improving their nutritional environments and policies through a variety of strategies impacting approximately 2,860 employees.

NUTRITION IN THE WORKSITE.....

DONUTS AND COOKIES ARE NO LONGER MEETING STAPLES AT LOCAL BUSINESSES



Some businesses such as Ability Building Center, Cardinal of Minnesota, Child Care Resource and Referral, Eastwood Bank and Wing House have made environmental changes related to the food that is offered on-site such as providing on-your-honor healthy vending, providing better nutritional information of current food in vending machines, or incorporating an on-site garden for employees and clients. Other businesses such as Custom Alarm, Eastwood Bank, Olmsted County, Schmidt Printing, and Workforce Development Inc., have been drafting and adding nutrition policies to their wellness/personnel policies. Key components of these policies state that healthy options must be provided for all company-sponsored functions that serve food and/or vending machines must provide a certain percentage of healthy options.

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WELLNESS WORKS FOR ALL BUSINESSES.....

SE MN BUSINESSES ARE ENGAGED
THROUGH WELLNESS CONFERENCE

On October 5, 2010 Olmsted County and the Southeast Minnesota SHIP grantees collaborated to sponsor a Worksite Wellness Conference for the regional business community. The conference featured two keynote speakers including Dr. Ed Creagan of Mayo Clinic and Father Nick Mezacappa of Calgary Episcopal Church. Participants raved about the keynotes saying their presentations were “very thought provoking” and “very engaging.” One participant said “I am still talking about the two keynote speakers and their effectiveness, both were very motivational.”

In addition twelve breakout sessions provided topics ranging from “Worksite Wellness 101” to “Creating a Culture of Health.” The conference was geared toward businesses at varying levels of worksite wellness stages. The workshop concluded with a Wellness Expo consisting of 55 wellness exhibitors offering health promotion services, interactive displays, health screening tools, and healthy food samples. Overall, the event was a huge success

One participant said this conference was “one of the most worthwhile conferences I have ever attended.” “It was a great day and I met like-minded people and was able to gather ideas to be more effective and create a higher awareness of worksite wellness for the staff I support as a manager in my area! Additionally, as an employee myself, I learned lots of tips to promote personal wellness that I can incorporate so I am more effective as an employee as well!”



During the fall of 2009, SHIP staff and local business leaders met to establish the Well-Workplace Award. The award recognizes employers who have invested in and are excelling at worksite wellness. Businesses were measured based on their demonstration of the following standard criteria: Leadership Support, Variety of Wellness Offerings, Outcomes Measurements, Policies, Communications and Marketing. The Well-Workplace Award included three levels of recognition; Bronze, Silver, and Gold.

WELL-WORKPLACE AWARD.....

LOCAL BUSINESSES ARE RECOGNIZED FOR
EXCELLENCE IN WORKSITE WELLNESS
INITIATIVES



The award application was released in February 2010 and businesses were recognized in June 2010. Three businesses were awarded Well-Workplace Awards and one business received an honorable mention in front of their peers at a celebratory breakfast sponsored by the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce. Award recipients included:

- Custom Alarm (Gold Award)
- Olmsted County (Silver Award)
- Schmidt Printing (Bronze Award)
- Wing House (Honorable Mention)

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2-1-1.....

A HEALTH AND WELLNESS REFERRAL
SYSTEM IS LAUNCHED!

The 2-1-1 Health & Wellness Line (H&WL) is up and running – and what an awesome resource this will be for everyone in Olmsted County,” said April Sutor from United Way, “it could not have launched so quickly without the incredible support from SHIP.” United Way’s 2-1-1 was initially established as a one-stop-shop to connect people in need to appropriate resources. SHIP and the Community Healthcare

Access Collaborative (CHAC) realized a common goal which H&WL has addressed: expand 2-1-1 to include comprehensive healthcare access and wellness information to connect people with resources to meet health goals. “Do you know how much time this saves?” exclaimed a nurse care manager, impressed that 2-1-1 has pertinent info such a program type, location, duration, cost, language, cultural perspective and more. “With this resource I will be able to quickly connect the right patient to the right resource at the right time!”

Although developed as a SHIP pilot in Olmsted County, April Sutor explained that “the structure has been built so that counties and regions across the state can list their resources on the 2-1-1 database and have a H&WL for their communities as well”. A SHIP grantee in the Twin Cities was impressed with how quickly 2-1-1 responded and they are looking at getting 2-1-1 up and running in their community too.”



OLMSTED COUNTY IS ONE OF 87 COUNTIES
IN THE STATE OF MINNESOTA
WORKING TO CREATE HEALTHIER PLACES TO
LIVE, LEARN, PLAY AND RECEIVE HEALTH CARE.

SIMILAR STORIES ARE OCCURRING ACROSS THE STATE.

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