

# Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health

## Statewide Health Improvement Partnership

### Community-Based Healthy Living Initiatives

Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health's Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) offered individual community organizations up to \$3000 to promote healthy living. A total of \$54,500 was awarded to 22 organizations to implement changes in policies, systems and environments. These funds focused on healthy food access, active living and tobacco cessation. Successes of our partnerships and support include:

**Healthy Eating Initiatives** focus on an array of efforts to increase healthy eating access, reduce unhealthy beverage consumption and expand engagement to underrepresented communities. This includes food shelf improvements, urban agriculture expansion and improving industrial kitchens to serve healthier foods.

**American Indian Family Center (AIFC)** provides culturally - appropriate support for 650 American Indian Families annually. One AIFC program offers cooking classes and food demonstrations to teach people how to cook and eat healthy. SHIP funds were used to purchase kitchen items to use in healthy cooking classes and food demonstrations that will be used well into the future.

**Arts Us** is a youth-driven organization that mentors youth to teach other young people about food justice and nutrition topics. SHIP funding enabled them to host workshops about healthy eating, including growing healthy foods, specifically microgreens. Youth were provided greater access to healthy foods through these workshops. Approximately 250 youth benefited from this project.

**Catholic Charities** provides meals to people experiencing homelessness. The Saint Paul Catholic Charities site purchased commercial-grade juicers to improve nutritional value of the food service by processing fresh produce that otherwise would be wasted. They are now able to serve fresh juice to participants, as well as incorporate fresh juices into sauces, soups and other recipes, and feed guests who may have difficulty chewing or have other health issues.

**City Wide Resident Council** advocates for residents in Saint Paul Public Housing. SHIP funding was used to create a Rethink Your Drink Youth Champion team of five middle school aged youth to promote drinking water and reducing sugar sweetened beverages. After attending weekly meetings and receiving training the youth became peer educators. They hosted a basketball tournament, created posters to promote Rethink Your Drink at their community center, tabled at a Spring Fling event reaching over 150 people and created a social media educational video posted on the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation and Public Housing Agency's websites. Ultimately, this campaign created a social marketing effort to curb sugar sweetened beverage consumption.



## Healthy Eating Initiatives (continued)

**The Food Group** is in the process of transforming land into an organic gardening site that will be available to the community for farming in the City of Maplewood. SHIP funds were used to host community engagement sessions to gain feedback from farmers in the community to ensure that the project is meeting the needs of the community.

**Frogtown Farm** is one of the largest urban farms in the county and is in the heart of the Frogtown community in Saint Paul. SHIP funds supported cooking demonstrations and preserving techniques that taught residents how to use seasonal produce from the farm. Demonstrations took place at the weekly Feeding Frogtown food distribution site, which distributes free produce from the farm to the community. Additionally, SHIP funds supported translation of materials that improved access to information for non-English speakers. This effort reached approximately 800 Frogtown residents.

**Growing West Side** is a grassroots collaborative that seeks to create a strong, healthy and connected community through gardening and working for food justice. They provide food demonstrations and recipe sharing along with special events at the weekly farmers' market. SHIP funding was used to advertise the West Side Farmers Market in several languages in order to decrease language barriers to accessing fresh produce.

**Interfaith Action of Greater Saint Paul** is a trusted organization that hosts Family Education Diabetes Series (FEDS), a multi-disciplinary program. SHIP funds purchased a stove that was used in FEDS classes and other health education classes. Every summer, over 100 youth participate in their healthy cooking program which incorporates indigenous food and ingredients. All classes use a culturally responsive curriculum to teach American Indians in Saint Paul about healthy eating and food preparation.

**Keystone Community Services** used SHIP funds to add a stainless steel produce table, wall graphics, and a brochure rack to their Midway Food Shelf location in support of the Supershelf transformation. These additions improved the produce area by brightening the space, increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables and encouraging shoppers to choose healthier foods. About 4500 people experienced the improvements during the summer.

**Loaves & Fishes** serves free, healthy meals to those in need. Some of the ingredients for the meals come from community gardens. SHIP funding supported the purchase of gardening supplies, including a hand-washing sink and vegetable wash station at Frogtown community garden. They also hosted a community engagement event that taught community members basic garden maintenance including how to be successful with a new garden. About 350 pounds of produce was harvested, which contributed to approximately 1,400 farm-to-table meals to be served at their five Saint Paul dining sites.

**Minnesota State Horticultural Society (MSHS)** teaches community members about gardening, addresses food insecurity, promotes healthy eating, and encourages outdoor activity by providing mini-gardens in a box to residents in low income areas. The Garden-in-a-Box (GIAB) program works to reduce land use barriers by providing materials and equipment for small scale gardens, and



## Healthy Eating Initiatives (continued)

access to free gardening classes. With SHIP funding MSHS was able to provide GIAB to 33 new groups and 20 returning groups, for a total of 1558 people, mostly youth.

**Ralph Reeder Food Shelf** recently changed locations. SHIP funds supported environmental changes at the new location to create a fresh new atmosphere that promotes healthy eating. Ralph Reeder created bright signs and posters depicting healthy foods, and added bins, baskets and racks to display fresh fruits and vegetables to make the healthy choice more attractive. Over 800 people use the food shelf monthly, and will continue to experience the benefits from this effort.

**Urban Roots** used SHIP funding to provide access to fresh produce in the Dayton's Bluff Community by creating a new partnership between a corner store and community garden. By purchasing a refrigerated display case for the corner store, the corner store is now able to sell fresh, local produce from the adjacent community garden. Additionally, Urban Roots developed marketing materials to encourage healthy food purchases and consumption to increase knowledge and demand for the produce. Approximately 500 people have already been impacted by the project, and this will only continue to increase as more food is grown and purchased in the community.

**Women's Advocates** is a shelter for women and children escaping domestic violence. SHIP funds were used to purchase two commercial-grade blenders to serve smoothies to all who reside at the shelter, as a way to increase the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables served to residents. They also created a healthy food policy to ensure that fresh-produce smoothies will be included weekly in menus to sustain the consumption of fruits and vegetables. The shelter typically provides housing for 50 women and children daily.

**White Bear Area Emergency Food Shelf** moved their Weekly Bonus Distribution Day from Friday to Saturday, in order to accommodate more customers and increase access to healthy foods. SHIP funds supported this through communication, signage and equipment needed to make this switch. After this schedule change in 2018, they saw an increase in 28% of customers compared to 2017. The Weekly Bonus Distribution Day is open to anyone with a self-identified need for food regardless of geographical boundaries.

**Alternative Transportation Initiatives** help encourage walking and bicycling to promote active living, including expanding safety enhancements, infrastructure and community engagement in underrepresented communities.

**Cycles for Change** works to build a diverse and empowered community of bicyclists, and to support people to gain access, skills, and confidence in cycling. They provide Slow Rolls, which are fun, safe, and inclusive bike rides for people of all ages and skill levels. The Slow Roll highlights the vibrant community by bringing people together to have community bike rides, hosted



## Alternative Transportation Initiatives (continued)

in various locations throughout the city. SHIP funding was used to support community engagement efforts following the rides, including focus group discussion and bike safety skill-building activities.

**District 10 Como Community Council** oversees the Como Pathways project in Como Regional Park. The project is led by a community work group. SHIP funding supported GIS work for a way-finding project and contributed to the production of a community survey to gather input about improvements to the walking and riding paths. They received input from over 570 community members. The project goal is to make Como Regional Park more accessible to pedestrians and cyclists, and easier to navigate.

**District 12 Saint Anthony Park Community Council** used SHIP funding to host a “Stop for Me” event to improve pedestrian safety. The event was hosted near a public housing site in order to increase awareness and slow traffic. To continue their efforts, the Council plans to suggest improvements based on the feedback they received from their events to the City of Saint Paul.

**Move Minnesota** evolved out of the merger of Transit for Livable Communities and Saint Paul Smart Trips, to build a diverse, influential movement for transit, bicycling, walking and sharing options. They used SHIP funding to hire youth interns to engage with East Side residents regarding transportation options and barriers. Over 30 peers met to talk to youth in an effort to reach under-represented communities and gain input about transit and other key needs in the community. Several themes included transportation barriers around the lack of knowledge on how to navigate the bus maps, parental perceived concerns around safety (such as limited lighting and unsafe pedestrian crossing), and long travel times to their destinations. The results of these engagement activities will influence the system and policy changes Move Minnesota will support this next year.

**North Dale Recreation Center** provides a variety of fitness classes. There was a demand for classes tailored to senior citizens, allowing them to maintain physical activity as they age. SHIP funds were used to purchase new exercise equipment for the Senior Fitness Class that will be used for many years in the future.

**Sejong Academy** is a Korean Immersion Charter School in Saint Paul. With SHIP funding, 145 students were able to learn Walk!Bike!Fun!, a pedestrian and bicycle safety curriculum. Most of the students are low income and English learners who have never received road safety classes. They learned new and crucial information from the program in order to bike and walk safely in the community.

**Union Park District Council 13** used SHIP funding to host three pop-up bike clinics. They provided bicycles tune-ups, demonstrated bicycle safety skills and gave away bicycles to 60 people, half of whom were 5th graders. This effort helped create a sense of community support within the bicycling community.

