

**Healthy Foods, Healthy Lives Institute
Community-University Partnership Research Grants Awarded Fall 2012**

“Next Steps: a community-led solution to sustaining healthy behaviors in families addressing childhood obesity”

Amount Awarded: \$49,454

Timeframe: March 6, 2013 – March 5, 2014

Community PI: Auro Olivia Reyes, Natividad Contreras and Maria Galvan, Community Leaders, Taking Steps Together

University Co-PIs: John D. Anderson, MD, Assistant Professor, University of Minnesota Pediatrics Residency Pediatrician (Medical School), Hennepin County Medical Center Medical Director and Primary Investigator of Taking Steps Together Program

Chrisa Arcan, PhD, MRS, MBA, RD, Research Associate, Division of Epidemiology and Community Health (School of Public Health)

Co-Investigators: Rachel Newby, Program Coordinator, Taking Steps Together Program, HCMC, Department of Pediatrics (Medical School)

Maria Zavala, Community Organizer, The Family Partnership of Minnesota

Abstract: Limited data exist on effective maintenance programs for low income, multi-ethnic children and their families following an intensive obesity prevention intervention. *Taking Steps Together* (TST), a family-centered childhood obesity management program, has demonstrated positive results in dietary and physical activity behaviors. Following the TST course completion, several graduates have established themselves as community leaders and initiated grassroots efforts to promote sustained healthy behaviors. Stemming from these initiatives, the community leaders approached the TST research team and requested additional classes focusing on maintenance and long-term sustainability of a healthy lifestyle. As a result, the proposed project, *Next Steps*, was developed as a community-initiated program with the primary aim of establishing a formal parent leadership group and a self-sustaining network of community-based health maintenance programs. Using a wait-list control randomized design we will follow two cohorts of families that have graduated from the TST program. The intervention will include participation for four months in a variety of activities (cooking group, gardening group, physical activity group). Measurement will occur at 0, 2 and 4 months. The community leaders who will serve as Co-Principal Investigators will partner with University of Minnesota faculty to address maintenance in obesity management. Co-Investigators will include Dr. Chrisa Arcan, TST program staff and The Family Partnership. They will bring expertise in program evaluation and community organization and leadership. The program evaluation will include examining the feasibility and acceptability of the *Next Steps* programs for families following completion of TST. In addition, the effects of the maintenance program on knowledge/skills/resource utilization, key behaviors and body mass index will be assessed. This project will establish the leadership and infrastructure for ongoing community-led healthy activities and education. Evaluation of *Next Steps* will provide critical information for expansion regarding the feasibility, structure and effectiveness of the proposed health maintenance programs.

“Fresh Start Garden Project: A Community-Based Participatory Research Approach to an Intergenerational and Holistic Garden and Cooking Program in North Minneapolis”

Amount Awarded: \$49,994

Timeframe: January 1, 2013 – January 2, 2014

Community PI: Michelle Horovitz, JD, Executive Director, Appetite for Change

University PI: Tracy Bradfield, PhD, Research Associate, Center for Early Education and Development (College of Education and Human Development)

Abstract: The Fresh Start Garden (FSG) program is a community-led garden and cooking program for preschool-ages children, their adult care-givers and older youth in North Minneapolis. The project is a collaboration among Appetite for Change, Le Crèche Early Learning Center, WE WIN Institute, The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum's Urban youth Garden Program, and the University of Minnesota's (U of M) Center for Early Education and Development (CEED). The community-university partnership is at the heart of this community based participatory research (CBPR) project that will evaluate the benefit to families, older youth and the community of coming together to grow, cook and eat culturally relevant food in a supportive, hands-on learning environment. The design, implementation and evaluation of this 16-week gardening and cooking project will be led by the community. Shared governance between the U of M and community partners will be demonstrated at every stage of the project from evaluation design to program implementation. This symbiotic relationship will benefit both the community and university by creating a model for a CBPR approach to evaluate the program that will not only answer questions that are important to the community, but also set the stage to provide other research opportunities across disciplines. Strong relationships will be cultivated between the university and community, building trust and mutual respect, to lay the foundation for deeper exploration of the multiple issues that are raised by an innovative program like Fresh Start Garden.

“Healthy Choices Campaign: Implementing Healthy Menu Options for Traditional Mexican Food Consumed in Minneapolis and St. Paul Restaurants”

Amount Awarded: \$50,000

Timeframe: January 1, 2013 – January 2, 2014

Community PI: Julieta Parra, Business Training Leader, Latino Economic Development Center (LEDC)

University PI: Kendra Kauppi, PhD, Research Associate, Department of Food Science & Nutrition (CFANS)

Co-Investigators: Marla Reicks, PhD, RD, Professor Extension Nutritionist, Department of Food Science & Nutrition (CFANS)

Claudia Diez, Food Safety Training Coordinator, Department of Food Science & Nutrition (CFANS)

Abstract: The frequency of Hispanics eating away from home is increasing. Popular traditional menu items served at most Hispanic restaurants include high-fat options and white rice-based items. Poor dietary choices contribute to risk of diabetes and obesity in the Hispanic community. As part of a community-focused intervention, this project will investigate the development of healthier menu options based on traditionally-prepared Hispanic foods served at select Mexican restaurants in the Minneapolis and St. Paul metropolitan area and assess consumer acceptance compared to non-modified versions. Collaborating restaurants will partner with University of Minnesota and Latino Economic Development Center members to evaluate, reformulate and sustain healthful menu options. Modified menu options will be tested for liking and acceptance compared to traditionally prepared, non-modified options at restaurants as well as highly attended Hispanic festivals. Healthy alternatives will be promoted by educating Spanish speaking food service workers with respect to preparation and service of healthful reformulated menu options and by encouraging acceptance of healthier menu items through a marketing campaign. Given the high prevalence of eating away from home by this community and related implications for health, the modification of restaurant menu options presents an ideal opportunity to impact health. This project has a high likelihood for success based on the strong interest, cooperation and expertise of our University, community and restaurant partners and is likely to have a sustained positive influence on the growing Hispanic population at high risk for obesity and diabetes. This proposal builds on previous commitments, accomplishments and trust developed by our team within the Hispanic food service community for more than five years.

“Stress Reduction Through Healthy Lifestyles in the Kwanzaa Northside Community”

Amount Awarded: \$50,000, Year-two award

Timeframe: January 2013 – January 2014

Community PI: Kevin L. Gilliam II, MD, Family Physician, NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center, Representing Kwanzaa Community Church

University PI: Jennifer A. Linde, PhD, Assistant Professor, Epidemiology & Community Health (School of Public Health)

Abstract: In partnership with the University of Minnesota and funded by the Healthy Foods, Healthy Lives Institute, Kwanzaa Community Church launched a new program, “Body and Soul,” which focused on food, nutrition and health. The project featured culturally sensitive and appropriate methods to create a sustainable program, using “real-world circumstances” that supported church members in their efforts to increase healthy behaviors, to attempt to decrease obesity and associated risk factors that are heightened in African-American communities. This project resulted in a program that was integrated with the church and its community resources, was developed and delivered by its members, was well-received by participants, and sustainable in the long-term. Kwanzaa and their University of Minnesota partner will leverage success from this initial phase of the project by shifting focus to stress, another critical issue of importance to African-American communities. The current proposal will expand the original project beyond the Kwanzaa congregation to include key stakeholders in the community, will focus on management of stress by healthy lifestyle changes, and will include children and adults in its activities. Activities will focus on mindfulness-based education, peer counseling to promote lifestyle changes, and inclusion of local community partners in stress management programs. Outcomes to be measured include changes in perceived stress, health-promoting behavior changes, program participation, and qualitative feedback on program offerings. Results have the potential to contribute to the long-term health and well-being of the Kwanzaa community and its neighboring partners.

“Harvesting Healthier Food II: Advancing a Singular Program of Safe Food Handling Practices for Immigrant Farmers”

Amount Awarded: \$50,000, Year-two award

Timeframe: January 1, 2013 – January 2, 2014

Community PI: Hli Xyooj, Staff Attorney JD, MBA, Farmers’ Legal Action Group, Inc. (FLAG)

University PI: Michele Schermann RN, MS, Agricultural Health and Safety Research Fellow, Bioproducts & Biosystems Engineering Department (CFANS and CSE)

Co-Investigator: Annalisa Hultberg, MS, Research Fellow, Bioproducts & Biosystems Engineering Department (CFANS and CSE)

Abstract: This community-university collaboration requests \$50,000 from the University of Minnesota Healthy Food, Healthy Lives (HFHL) Institute’s Community-University Partnership Grant Program to build the capabilities of the collaboration to advance the now-established on-farm safe food handling practices program for increasingly prominent immigrant farmers in the Twin Cities region. These farmers, by the hundreds, have created one of the healthiest additions to our region’s diet, growing and selling fresh fruits, vegetables, roots, herbs, and traditional crops at markets across the region. Over the last year, this community-university collaboration used education and information to introduce safe food handling practices that are helping to make the farmers’ operations be safer, and creating opportunities for them to reach broader commercial markets. This next step, with the guidance of a farmer advisory panel (which contains both new and previously trained farmers), will draw on a year’s worth of experience and relationship- building to move farmers closer to Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)—and prepare one of the region’s first Hmong American farmers for GAP certification—through a sustainable training program that will introduce and institutionalize safe food handling and recordkeeping practices for Hmong American farmers in

the Twin Cities metro region. This work, which is unduplicated anywhere in our region, will include both introductory and more advanced rounds of workshops and work with individuals implementing safe production and handling practices.
