

LHIC Healthy Weight Work Group Meeting
4.23.15 – 8:30 a.m.
Minutes

Members present:

Shawni Paraska, Columbia Association
Liz Clark, Healthy Howard, co-chair
Maria Carunungan, HC Health Department
Mary Ann Barry, Transition Howard County
Kelly McMillan, Howard Community College
Barbara Wasserman, Community member
Will Dunmore, HC Recreation and Parks

Phyllis Smelkinson, Healthy Howard
Andrew Monjan, Transition Howard County
Wauseca Briscoe, Community member, co-chair
Arleen Tate, Delta Sigma Theta
Christine Lothen-Kline, Health Promotion on Call
Cindi Miller, HCGH
Bob Giromini, We Promote Health

Also present:

Evan Lutz, Hungry Harvest
Tilahun Belay, HCC student

Iram Chano, HCC student
Jeananne Sciabarra, LHIC Director

Introductions:

- Liz opened the meeting at 8:35. Group members and guests introduced themselves.

Special Guest Presentation:

- Evan Lutz presented about his company, Hungry Harvest, which gleans and sells fresh produce that would otherwise be wasted. Six billion pounds of produce are wasted annually in this country. Almost 40% is discarded because of imperfections. In addition, 50 million people in the country are food insecure because of a lack of access and/or a lack of resources to purchase food.

Hungry Harvest obtains produce that is left in fields or rejected because of imperfections and sells bags of this produce directly to consumers. For every bag sold, another is donated to a nonprofit serving individuals and families lacking access to fresh foods. In addition, the program is creating jobs and partnering with a homeless shelter in Montgomery County to employ homeless individuals. Hungry Harvest also conducts free “farmers markets” to distribute produce in areas where there is food insecurity. Eighty percent of the food is grown within 200 miles. Approximately 20% to 30% of the food is organically grown, and most of the rest comes from smaller farms that tend to use fewer chemicals.

There are approximately 5 to 8 different types of produce in the bag each week. The company offers three sizes, priced at \$15, \$25, and \$35. Deliveries are made to homes on Sundays and to people who sign up through businesses on Mondays. Home deliveries will be expanding to Saturdays soon. An email with a list of ingredients and recipes is sent on Saturdays. A minimum of 15 participants is required to establish delivery to a new zip code.

Hungry Harvest has applications pending to accept WIC and food stamps. Maria will send Evan information about accepting farmers’ market coupons.

Opportunities for partnerships: The work group can help spread the word about this program, identify businesses, neighborhoods, or faith-based entities that may want to learn more, and identify nonprofits to receive donations. Evan passed out his business cards, and LHIC staff will send his contact information to the rest of the group.

Approval of Minutes:

- Members approved the minutes from the March 26 meeting and re-approved the minutes from February 26, which had been revised to correct a few minor errors.

Action Groups Reports

- *Farmers Markets*

- Maria distributed data on WIC farmers' market coupon redemption rates throughout the state. In Howard County in 2014, 53.7% of coupons were redeemed. The lowest redemption rate in 2014 was 23.4% in Cecil County and the highest was 70.2% in Talbot County. The group suggested reaching out to Talbot County to find out why they have such a high redemption rate.

Liz and Monica attended the Farmers' Market Board meeting on April 2 and presented data on the WIC farmers' market checks and the number of employees in the Ascend One building. The board expressed interest and will be voting soon. If approved, the market would have one farm represented each Monday, with times coordinated with WIC appointments. Also, they would like a representative from WIC at the market to answer questions and share recipes. The group is also still working to get permission for a market in the parking lot of the building.

- *Sugar Sweetened Beverages*

- Phyllis reported that the group is working to spread information about the Better Choices Coalition and its toolkit to reduce consumption of SSBs. They are distributing information through the Healthiest Maryland Businesses newsletters. The group would also like to present at the next full LHIC meeting. Phyllis will follow up with Jeananne about getting on the agenda.

- *Promote Healthy Foods*

- Kelly and Mary Ann reported on efforts to establish partnerships. Mary Ann reported that the Howard County Conservancy is interested in promoting their physical activity and gardening programs. The Master Gardeners program of the University of Maryland Extension has a catalog of presentations, including Grow It, Eat It.

Andy reported on the Healthy Food Fest tentatively scheduled for November 7 at Howard Community College. There will be speakers on healthy eating and tables with educational information and, hopefully, healthy food tastings.

- *Physical Activity*

- Wauseca reported that the action group is meeting with the East Columbia Library on April 28th. Bob reminded the group to join Get Active Howard County.

- *Walkable/Bikeable Community Advocacy*

- Shawni told the group about the upcoming bicycle and pedestrian count to be held May 23 through May 30. The deadline to volunteer is May 8. Information was included in the April 22 Digest. Cindi reported that there were 3 participants at the last North Laurel walking program. They are reaching out to families through Bollman Bridge and Gorman Crossing elementary schools to boost attendance. Jeananne mentioned that the county is seeking feedback, at www.walkhoward.org, about where improvements need to be made for better pedestrian access. Liz reminded the group about Horizon Foundation's upcoming Open Streets event on June 13.

- *Resource List*
 - Liz reported that the group, along with Healthy Howard's Community Care Team, is working on the first version of the resource list, which will include resources for residents with hypertension, diabetes and pre-diabetes. This is being done under a Million Hearts grant and will be completed by the end of June.
- *Sleep*
 - Andy reported on the activities of the group: they arranged a lunch and learn presentation by Dr. Michael Twery, the Director of the National Center for Sleep Disorders Research at NIH, for the Health Department and Healthy Howard on March 23; they provided links to information about the relationship between sleep, weight and overall health to Get Active Howard County; and, Andy will be doing a presentation about sleep and distributing sleep journals at the Get Active Howard County Healthy Happy Hour on Saturday, April 25. Liz noted that Dr. Twery is interested in presenting to other organizations/businesses as well.

Join.Me Follow Up

Liz reported that Alvaro had researched Join.Me as an alternative to the Free Conference Call service that the action groups are currently using. Liz distributed the information Alvaro had found and noted that we need to do additional research on similar services that Healthy Howard and the Health Department may already have before proceeding. Alvaro will follow up on this before the next meeting.

Announcements

Liz announced that WomenFest is being held this Saturday, April 25, from 10:00 to 3:00.

Next meeting will be Thursday, May 28, 2015.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jeananne Sciabarra
LHIC Director