It’s been an exciting and swift moving five years for Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work & Play project, known as CHP.

This five year project was funded by the NYS Department of Health to fight obesity and type 2 diabetes in targeted areas of Ulster County. In Ulster County, 59.8% of adults and 33% of youth are considered obese or overweight. Obesity is a significant risk factor for many chronic diseases and conditions including type 2 diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Obesity is the second leading cause of death in NY State.

Through CHP, CCEUC coordinated the work of eight agencies and organizations, including CCEUC, to implement change in the community, thereby improving the health of Ulster County residents. (Read about our Partners & their impressive work, next page) CHP worked with each partner, developing a plan of action and providing support, to implement strategies that would increase access to healthy foods and physical activity through policy, systems, and environmental change.

Initiatives to increase access to healthy foods included: Community Gardens; Farmers Markets; a Healthy Neighborhood Store project, and in 2012, a Healthy Restaurant project. Initiatives to increase access to physical activity were: Complete Streets; Use Your Parks; Trail Improvements and Let’s Move.

Your Parks; Trail Improvements and Let’s Move. Initiatives to improve food and physical activity for youth included Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment in Child Care Centers (NAPSACC) and the Healthy Afterschool Program. Meeting monthly, CHP partners shared successes and challenges and brainstormed ways to achieve their goals.

As CHP winds down, the fight against obesity and chronic disease continues. We are pleased that our work in Ulster County continues at the mobile farmers’ market, at neighborhood stores offering healthy foods, with healthier foods and more physical activity implemented in after-school programs & child care centers, and that parks and trails’ improvements will be met with new and additional funding. The valuable groundwork established with Community Gardens and Complete Streets Advisory Committees will be sustained by dedicated volunteers. Thankfully, many of our initiatives will be sustained in the community through the work of the Live Well Kingston Coalition and the Healthy Ulster Coalition.

Thank you to the partners of Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work and Play, to our funder, the NYS Department of Health, to the community members who support efforts to improve the health of Ulster County residents, and many thanks to my CHP Staff!

Melinda Herzog
CHP Project Director
CCEUC Healthy Communities Issue Leader

Good for You! September 2015
Thanks to the YMCA, for their community garden farm project and Mobile Market, and to KayCee Wimbush for pedaling freshly picked produce to the underserved in Midtown Kingston.

Thank you to Kingston Land Trust and Rebecca Martin who pioneered the community Gardens Project, blazing the first part of the garden trail.

Thanks to Kingston Farmers Market, Lori Hylton, who launched a successful two year Midtown Kingston Farmers’ Market, introducing fresh produce into underserved areas, bringing fresh produce into three neighborhood stores.

Thanks to the Kingston Greenline project of Kingston Land Trust, led by Tim Weidemann, for his efforts in moving the Rail Trail project forward in the City of Kingston; one more giant step for folks to stay physically fit.

Thanks to the City of Kingston Parks and Recreation Dept. Steve Noble and Julie Noble, who initiated nature programs for Youth and Families at Forsyth Nature Center (FNC), launched a Parks & Rec website, added 18 park signs to the parks, produced the first color brochures in English and Spanish for the Parks Department, designed and installed a groundbreaking Audio Tour of parks at FNC.

Thanks to NAP SACC program who trained child care staff and worked with them to implement changes in snacking policies, reduced screen time and increased physical activity in 22 childcare settings, affecting 545 children.

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Thanks to the Healthy Neighborhood Store project, launching healthier food items in three neighborhood stores in underserved areas.

Thanks to Kristen Wilson of CCEUC, who worked to successfully pass Complete Streets policies in Saugerties, Ellenville and Wawarsing, establishing CS Advisory Councils.

Thanks to Maria Cecilia Deferrari of CCEUC for steering the Healthy Neighborhood Store project, launching healthier food items in three neighborhood stores in underserved areas.

Thanks to Ulster County DOH who got everyone moving with the energetic dance of Drew’s Energy from the Center for Creative Education, and to Community Heart Health Coalition of HealthAlliance’s Laurie Mozian for keeping folks moving in the next phase “Let’s Move a Little”, encouraging short bursts of exercise in classroom settings.

Thanks to Healthy Snack Food Guidelines, which promotes healthy eating by setting standards for snack foods in afterschool programs. These guidelines help ensure that children are receiving healthy snacks that promote a healthy lifestyle.

Thanks to The Ulster County Department of Health: Vin Martello, Stacy Kraft, and Allison Morris, for their development, placement, and promotion of the Healthy Snack Food Guidelines in Ulster County afterschool programs. 12 programs adopted and enforced this policy, positively affecting over 665 youth.

Thanks to Dave Gilmour of Gilmour Planning LLC, for the preparation of the Kingston Master Rec Plan as well as his work successfully advocating for Complete Streets (CS) policies in 3 municipalities which paved the way for CS Policies to be adopted by all three.

Thanks to Laurie Mozian, Community Heart Health Coalition of Health Alliance of the Hudson Valley, and to Laurie Rankin and Marge Gagnon, liaisons to the NAP SACC program who trained child care staff and worked with them to implement changes in snacking policies, reduced screen time and increased physical activity in 22 childcare settings, affecting 545 children.

A Big Grateful Shout Out to our illustrious project partners who climbed on the CHP train and rode with us all the way, accomplishing their objectives with gusto and enthusiasm.

Creating Healthy Places = Healthy Leaps in Ulster County

Partners and Players: Who Did all the Great Work?
Community Outreach

COMPLETE STREETS  COMMUNITY GARDENS  HEALTHY AFTER SCHOOL SNACKS  USE YOUR PARKS  NAPSACC  HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOOD STORES  FARMERS' MARKETS

Walk
May 5th at Noon
Saluting the 5th Annual Healthy Ulster County Week
May 3 - May 10th 2015

Good for You!  September 2015
Healthy Eating Improvements in Ulster County

Improvements to accessibility and availability of healthier foods in underserved neighborhoods, including neighborhood stores; the creation of community gardens; the adoption of policy changes, with regard to healthier food and snacks served to youth, in child care centers and afterschool programs.
Healthy Activity Improvements in Ulster County

Let's Move! Public space gatherings for individuals & families dance and exercise.

Let's Move Gatherings 2012:
- Dietz Stadium
- Make a Difference Day
- Wawarsing Cares Day
- Mac Fitness
- Saugerties Performing Art Factory
- Wawarsing Cares About Teens Day
- Ulster County Fair

Let's Move on Broadway

Let's Move a Little
- MHA group meetings
- BOCES
- GED & ESL classes

Use your Parks
- Rack Cards produced
- Basketball hoops and court re-lining
- Park vehicles wrapped
- Sound & Story installed

2011
- Complete Streets Resolutions passed: Ellenville 2012
  Village of Ellenville 2014
  Town of Wawarsing 2014
  Village of Saugerties 2014
  Town of Saugerties 2015

2012
- Use your Parks: Signage at 18 Parks
- 2 New Trails forged
- Website Launch
- Playground slides

2013
- Use your Parks: Naturalists Passport Program
  - 2012
  - 2013
  - 2014
  - 2015
- HASS (Healthy After School Snacks)
  Physical Activity Component implemented
  - 2013
  - 2014
  - 2015

2014
- Use your Parks
  - Funded: 8 park benches;
  - 10 bicycle racks;
  - 13 bikes and helmets;
  - bicycle trailer.

2015
- NAP SACC
  - Physical activity increased in child care programs
  - 2011-2015
- The Greenline Trail Signage
- Trail Counters installed

Increasing access to places and spaces where individuals and families can walk, bike or play in a safe and healthy environment, such as: open park spaces, Complete Streets and walking trails.
My Mother's First Cola

When I looked at a white paper a colleague passed around this week, it stated that a staggering 59.6% of adults in Ulster County are obese or overweight. It also pointed out that "If we don't solve this problem, one third of all children born in 2000 or later will suffer from diabetes at some point in their lives." What if one third of our children developed cancer of the digestive system?

Why is diabetes shrugged off so easily? I want to share a personal account about diabetes and obesity. It's actually an account of a culture in flux and how it impacted my family. I remember my mother describing her first soda. She described the wonderful, dizzying sensation of how this exotic, cold, fizzy liquid had tickled as it went down her throat. It was luxurious. It was to be savored. My mother was typical of the wave of immigrants moving to NYC in the 1950's. She was raised on a farm in the central mountains of Puerto Rico. She made wonderful traditional dishes: stews, soups, rice, beans, seasoned with traditional condiments. I remember the smoky wet charcoal smell from the times when we visited the family farm. I'm not sure when a farm was considered a plantation, but the main crop was sugar cane. We lived there for a while too. I spent many peaceful hours in the mango grove and avoided the lemon trees because the bees made their hives there.

But I was fascinated by the kitchen. It was the center of the universe. There was a flurry of hands chopping, mixing, grinding, kneading. The commotion, laughter and singing from my aunts and cousins made cooking joyful. There was a profusion of fresh fruit from the trees and vegetables from the land. There were eggs, avocados, plantains, bananas and breadfruit available every day. Root vegetables were boiled, chickens were slaughtered, milk was brought in, warm and thick. These women, who lined up to make pasteles, a time consuming process, were connected to each other and to this food, and to this farm. This farm was what gave us life. It connected us to it all, the good and the bad, like the plantains that were fried, then pressed flat, dipped in a garlic sauce...and fried again.

It's a bittersweet memory remembering how we ate as I was growing up. Mother's love was doled out through the sweet food she once prepared started to become too cumbersome.

The processed foods were cheap. In came the canned beans followed by the canned soups. Condiments took too long to prepare daily, so the MSG packets and ready made sofrito took out most of the prep time. Then longer hours at work and my father's illness meant even more of our food came from cans and packages. I don't think my mother ever made the connection that this food was hurting all of us.

She and two of my three sisters developed type 2 diabetes. One died from complications due to this disease. The severity of this epidemic became clear when I read a mind-boggling article in the New York Times about how diabetes was running rampant in East Harlem. The article outlined a lack of education, poverty, cultural issues, obesity, poor food choices and little availability of fresh fruit and vegetables and unprocessed, fresh foods. The article brought back a flood of images. The free summer camp lunch: a can of soda and a bologna sandwich on white bread. I remembered how the mortar and pestle migrated to the back of the counter, replaced by an electric can opener.

What does this have to do with Ulster County?

Although we are not the epicenter of this epidemic, our stats are appalling. We have a moral obligation to turn this around. My colleagues and I are working on an awareness campaign. It's a multi-faceted project, but the goal is quite simple. We're trying to help protect our children from being the first generation to be less healthy than their parents. Ulster County has urban and rural communities. Both need access to fresh wholesome food. So let's support our local farmers and their farm stands. Let's eat local. Let's start more farmers' markets, family gardens, community gardens. Let's figure out how to get fresh foods to everyone's kitchen, schools, food pantries and soup kitchens.

Let's turn off the computer and television, go outside, meet each other, and learn to grow, cook and sustain each other.

Let's celebrate as we cook, eat.

This article, written by Alma Rodriguez, is reprinted here as it originally appeared on our website, Creating Healthy Places Ulster, in October 2012.
Spreading the Word

33 Letters to the Editor and Opinion Pieces for Local and Regional newspapers
(Blog linked to Kingston Daily Freeman Online)

76 In Person Visits with Legislators, Municipal Leaders, and School Officials.

116 Media Coverage - Radio Interviews and Spots: WKNY; WAMC; YNN; KCR; Albany Time Warner Cable News.

Good for You!

first appeared in your Mailbox (or your inbox) in December 2011 as a 4 page quarterly, and continued in that format in 2012 and 2013.

In 2014 GFY! blossomed into a monthly one sheet newsletter, allowing for a more timely treatment of updates, initiatives, health related information.

GFY! was distributed between mailings at community events, healthy neighborhood stores, County Legislative meetings, and conferences and workshops, and annually at the Ulster County Fair.

GFY! is available at our Education Center at 232 Plaza Road in Kingston.

GFY! is estimated to have reached over 8 thousand people. It makes us happy that we've been able to spread the “healthy” word to so many individuals and families and share our progress and achievements.

It was fun researching and writing it, and we hope it was fun for you to read.

Special Thanks to our writer and editor Fern Suess.

Good for You!

Facebook: Launched in 2012, our highest reach was 1060, occurring when we promoted the Big Apple Crunch; average daily reach is 325. Approximately 2,200 posts have appeared. The people being reached stats present one intriguing aspect: In addition to local & regional reach, CHP has a few special fans: 2 people in France, 1 in Sweden, and 1 in the Philippines. Thanks for Liking us! And don’t forget Move it Monday & Walking Wednesday!
HEALTHY ACTIVITIES

CREATING HEALTHY PLACES TO LIVE, WORK & PLAY TARGET GOALS

- Plans for Complete Streets Policies and sustainable advisory councils
- Recreation and Open Space Plan
- Greater Access to area Parks and Trails and Park Programs
- Trail Signage

- Healthier Snacks in After School Programs
- NAPSACC Policy adoption in Childcare Centers
- Increase the Number of Community Gardens
- Greater Availability of Healthier Foods in underserved areas
- Greater Availability of Healthier Menu Items in privately owned restaurants

Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work & Play has been funded by the New York State Department of Health.

The Staff of Creating Healthy Places extends heartfelt appreciation to the New York State Department of Health for awarding CCEUC this five year grant, thereby creating an opportunity to forge meaningful improvements in the health and well-being of the targeted area communities. The goal of the work plans outlined throughout the five year period, reflected the intent of significant changes to policy systems and environment, as well as an increase in community awareness; comprehensive and worthwhile endeavors. We thank NYSDOH for the continuous support and guidance extended to CHP staff and partners throughout the process.

“Health is Wealth” Emerson