

## **Healthy Harford – Community Engagement Committee Meeting**

November 14, 2013 – Harford Community College, Edgewood Hall

In attendance: Kathy Kraft, Russ Moy, Mary Hastler, Jane Howe, Mallory McCloskey, Molly Mraz, Laura McIntosh, Rebecca Hartwig, Janet Gleisner, Alexandra Walker, Alan Doran, Andrea Pomilla, Rob Reier, Gale Sauer, Martha Valentine, Shanna Jay, Robin Stokes-Smith, Bari Klein, Elizabeth Driskoll.

---

The intent of the meeting was to briefly review 2013 and brainstorm for 2014. Bari presented a written report on Healthy Harford Day 2013 and once again thanked everyone in the room for their amazing contribution to the event. With 1,000 attendees, and 45 participating vendors, it was the most successful HHD event yet.

The results of the GET HEALTHY Harford (GHH) program were also presented. This 8 week program, launched in August through a partnership with the Harford County Public Library (HCPL) and Harford County Senior Centers, was designed to get people thinking about making healthy lifestyle changes for which they would receive a free car window cling and t-shirt. The HCPL designed a web portal that was hosted on their site where people could join the program on-line, paper entries were also available. Over 500 electronic entries were submitted through the library website portal, and approximately 100 additional written entries were collected at the Senior Centers. Participants were invited to bring their completed check list from the GHH program to Healthy Harford Day and be entered into a gift basket drawing. The winner was Emma McDermott and her picture was posted on our Facebook page. The gift basket was generously donated by David's Natural Market.

Progress with the Healthy Communities Planning Board (HCPB) was discussed. The vote to create the HCPB passed County Council and the legislation outlines which groups in the community will have a representative; these include: an appointee from the Board of Education, the Hospital Board, and the Community College Board, as well as representatives of the food and beverage industry, sports industry, recreation industry, and others. All recommendations will be submitted to the County Executive who will have final approval. It is hoped that the HCPB will begin meeting in early 2014.

To assist in planning for 2014, the remainder of the meeting was spent in workgroup sessions answering and discussing two key questions. For purposes of the minutes, the responses of the groups were summarized into key themes.

- 1. What helped us to be so successful with Healthy Harford Day and GET HEALTHY Harford? What are the factors that contributed to our success and we should continue to build upon in 2014?**

### **Healthy Harford Day**

- Consider change in date to early September
- Set the date for next year now and start to get the word out; communicate earlier
- Focus on other areas of the County
- Explore opportunities with other farmers' markets and area leaders
- Consider classes to encourage involvement
- Reach out to smaller groups and gyms
- Provide volunteer orientation and provide information before the event
- Try to resolve physical layout issues earlier
- Need a better sound system

- Make sure vendors have enough giveaways and they are something of value

#### **Healthy Harford Partnerships / Promotion**

- Reach out to community businesses
- Connect with health groups
- Engage in more outreach with Senior Centers
- Work with grocery stores
- Partner with Board of Education
- Continue to partner with libraries
- Consider more adult events i.e. runs and walks
- Host other events throughout the year to keep Healthy Harford visible and pull in a wider audience
- Provide PR along with the announcement of the Healthy Community Planning Board
- Provide speakers for Clubs such as the Rotary
- Promote at visitor centers and chambers across the County
- Consider billboards and banners placed around the County
- More promotion for Get Healthy Harford program – better timing with program launch
- Continue to develop Healthy Harford calendar on website
- Advertise in Harford County Connections newsletter
- Get on HC tourism calendar
- Connect with Recreation Councils and promote Healthy Harford in real estate packets
- Partner to work on APG south Bike to Work Day Rally
- Partner more on Community Gardens

#### **2. What are some of the challenges that we have had (2013) or could have (2014) that we need to watch out for and/or overcome as we move forward?**

- Need a controlled growth plan
- Funds for marketing and advertising (may want to consider a fundraising committee)
- Creating an effective marketing plan
- Developing effective communication channels and problem solving strategies
- Getting more people involved

**Healthy Physicians:** Kathy and Dr. Hartwig discussed the Healthy Physician program and that Dr. Moy and a local pediatric cardiologist Dr. Gaskin would be presenting to a group of local physicians at some time in the near future. The original date was set for October, but was moved due to Dr. Gaskin's scheduling conflicts.

**Healthy Restaurants:** This will remain on the agenda in 2014.

#### **Wrap up discussion:**

Mary observed that there is a mini baby boomlet taking place in the community and that we should take new parents into consideration in our future planning.

Dr. Reier brought up the point of group burnout and the same people always doing the majority of the work, as he has seen in many other organizations. He suggested that we keep our eye on always integrating new people into our group. He also mentioned that the Bel Air Downtown Alliance has done

away with the idea of membership as it is tedious to manage and that sponsorship is a much more financial savvy way to bring in funds. He suggested that we meet with Scott Walker to discuss.

The meeting ended with a discussion of guidance regarding who would be an appropriate sponsor, what is our message, and what should we be emphasizing.

Dr. Reier also emphasized that exercise is important, but diet is critical, that our present system of care is reactive, not proactive, and that our emphasis should be on health – where weight loss is a by-product. These sentiments strongly support our existing message. He also mentioned that there is no official certification for Life Coaches and concurred with our message that we do not endorse meal replacements but instead support the idea of healthy whole foods.

There was then a brief discussion on the work of the Community Transformation Grant and the work it has accomplished in the schools. Mallory and Laura will make a presentation on the work they have done through this program at our next meeting. Dr. Moy has always advocated for champions at institutions in order to get work up and going, and then the next stage is to institutionalize that work so that it can be perpetuated. This is something that is on-going with the schools though the work of the CTG and Healthy Harford and will be added to our school wellness page on our website.

Lastly it was reported that WSI won the contract for redesigning our website. We are looking for input from the group as to what they would like to see there, and how they would like it presented. Jane and Shanna will assist in designing the Community Garden page.