

**Harford County Local Health Improvement Process - Obesity Task Force**  
**Healthy Harford - Community Engagement Workgroup**  
**Thursday, March 13, 2014, 8:30am**  
**Harford Community College, Edgewood Hall**

**Attendance:** Bari Klein, Kathy Kraft, Vickie Johnson, Meg Deem, Rob Reier, Kathy Burley, Janet Gleisner, Martha Valentine, Mike Castrignano, Molly Mraz, Mallory McClosky, Russ Moy, Laura Natali, Elizabeth Driskoll, Mary Beth Stapleton, Robin Stokes-Smith, Rebecca Hartwig, Marlena McKenna.

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**Healthy Community Planning Board (HCPB)** members were confirmed at the County Council meeting earlier this month. The HCPB is a County Executive appointed Board that brings forth public health issues, as well as acts as an advisory council to the County Council on issues affecting public health. The Board is a diverse representation of various segments of the community. First meeting- end of April. A Board Chairperson has not yet been appointed.

**Interdepartmental Built Environment Group** has been formed to address infrastructure improvements to create a more pedestrian and bike friendly community. The group is a result of recommendations from 1) the Obesity Task Force to create and implement bike and pedestrian plans, and 2) a mandate from the County Bike and Pedestrian Plan that requires an interdepartmental group to advise implementation of the plan. The group mandate is to: create implementation priorities, bring in funds, and support the Street Smart program.

The group met for the first time last week to create a list of project priorities and is in the process of drafting a Safe Routes To School grant application that will benefit Southampton Middle School (add missing sidewalks) and Emmorton Elementary (create and support a walking/biking culture and conduct a walkability/bikability needs assessment with members of the school community). The group is also looking into additional grant opportunities for FY 2014/15. An early priority is addressing the safety of bus transit stops throughout the community.

The **Street Smart program** was also discussed at this meeting. This Street Smart program is an education program for pedestrians/drivers/cyclists to help them learn to safely interact on the road. The program targets high pedestrian incident areas in the community and focuses on canvassing the street to raise awareness. This 2014 media campaign comes out of Johns Hopkins. Most communities focus on injury prevention. Harford County is unique in that we focus on street safety from a public health prospective and engage law enforcement. The Harford locations for the Street Teams this year should be published by the end of April.

**Physician Collaboration** – The focus of this project is an outreach effort to educate Physicians on the importance of talking to their patients about obesity. We are organizing a presentation dinner in partnership with the UM Upper Chesapeake that will outline current statistics to frame childhood obesity issues in local terms. The event will include a presentation from Dr. Peter Gaskins, a University of Maryland Pediatric Cardiologist. Dr. Gaskin’s work has included partnering with the Abingdon Y to study childhood obesity. (update: the presentation will take place May 7<sup>th</sup> at Upper Chesapeake Medical Center). Unfortunately due to space limitations, this event will be limited only to physicians.

**Get Healthy Harford** – For last year’s community engagement project, Healthy Harford partnered with the Harford County Public Libraries to promote Get Healthy Harford. The libraries did an amazing job setting up the web portal and implementing the program through their many branches. We also want to thank the Department of Community Services for their partnership through the Senior Centers. We would like to keep

the program alive and will have to discuss with Mary Hastler how we can continue to utilize the web portal they designed for future programs.

**Healthy Ripkin Day** – For this year’s community engagement project we have partnered with Ripkin Stadium for their Aberdeen Ironbirds Healthy Challenge. Ripkin representatives initially pitched this program as a weight loss challenge, but after discussions we were able to move the focus towards healthy living and lifestyle changes. The media launch will begin on April 7<sup>th</sup>, and the event kickoff is scheduled for May 17<sup>th</sup> at Ironfest. Healthy Challenge events will take place at all home games during the season. Participants sign up at the games and engage in screenings and other healthy programs. A winner will be randomly chosen from all participants in September. Ripkin has also included Upper Chesapeake and the Arena Club as partners in the event.

We did broach the topic of healthy food options at the stadium and they mentioned that some vendors do offer healthy options. In particular, there is one vendor that sells only local food products and produce.

**Website** – the new website is in its final stages and should be launching soon. Stand out features will be the new blog, advertising, and the ability for people to post their own items to the calendar. Users will need to become members before doing so, but membership is free and is just an accountability step. The purpose of the blog is to promote a diverse community voice. Anyone can submit a blog and we encourage everyone and anyone to draft something for submission. The topics are loose and up to the writer’s discretion. Right now our policy is to just correct for language and grammar and to leave the writer’s voice alone. This is a process, and open to adjustments as we see how things progress.

**E-newsletter** – In our quest to better engage with the community we will be starting an e-newsletter in Q2 of this year. The topics have been drafted and it should be going out soon.

**Healthy Harford Day** – (slide show). This year’s event will be on **September 27<sup>th</sup>** and will take place on the site of the old Health Department, 119 Hays St., Bel Air. We will still partner with the Farmers’ Market in that we will promote buying and eating local, but being down the road we will have more flexibility on what we can offer at our event, including more food and nutrition related options.

Martha and Bari attended the B’More Healthy event at the Baltimore Convention Center at the beginning of March. Bari presented a slideshow of highlights to demonstrate ideas that we could potentially integrate into our own event. Take-a-ways included:

- lots of energy through music and movement
- a diversity of screenings
- booths set up to engage attendees and guide traffic
- lots of giveaways
- different stages targeting different groups (exercisers, children, etc)
- posters listing events at each stage
- demonstration areas (cooking, sports)
- multiple sponsors

At the end of the meeting there were a number of **Calls to Actions** including:

1. Social media – FB, blogs- friend us on facebook and engage in our social media.
2. Promote the new website and its features such as the interactive calendar and blogs
3. Line up sponsors for HHD

#### 4. Help generate Buzz for Healthy Harford