

# we PLAN

## FOR ACTION

*An Opportunity to Improve your Community*

**Cook County  
Department of Public Health  
Cook County Health and Hospitals System**



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### *Vision Statement*

*The public health system will ensure the conditions people need collectively to be healthy in communities of suburban Cook County. To succeed in this task people and organizations that make up the public health system will work and plan together.*

## GROWING POWER'S ERIKA ALLEN HIGHLIGHTS URBAN FARMING

Erika Allen of Growing Power, Inc. presented a vision of sustainability, equity, justice and food security at the March 4 quarterly meeting of the Cook County Department of Public Health's wePLAN For Action community health improvement process. Ms. Allen heads the Chicago office of Growing Power. She described several accomplishments of Growing Power including urban youth development programs, distribution of affordable food baskets to people in the metro Milwaukee and Chicago areas, and urban farming producing food year



**Erika Allen describes Growing Power's work with youth, urban gardens, food basket production, and food systems**

round. Growing Power is an example of work that helps to change a system in order to promote health— through a focus on the food production system, benefits are expected in employment, youth development,

food quality, food distribution, and community development. Ms. Allen also serves on the Illinois General Assembly's Local and Organic Food and Farm Task Force. In a report to the Illinois legislature the

**See Allen p. 3**

## CCDPH AWARDED ACHIEVE FUNDING

The Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) was recently awarded a grant to participate in the 2009 Action Communities for Health, Innovation, and EnVironmental Change (ACHIEVE). The grant will

prevent chronic diseases through a locally collaborative approach. CCDPH is joining one of 43 newly funded sites from around the country. This initiative is funded by the Division of Adult and Community Health, National Center

for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and is part of a broader Healthy Communities collaborative with CDC, YMCA of the USA

**See ACHIEVE p.3**

## WEPLAN TASK FORCE UPDATES

The WePlan for Action welcomes and needs participation from all suburban Cook County residents. Only a diverse group of people working together can create the changes required at the individual, neighborhood, and institutional levels to tackle complex health problems.

*Is the healthy food recommended by experts unaffordable? Does the US Department of Agriculture have an accurate understanding of the cost of a healthy diet? A study published in April in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition of low-income California women suggests that the answers are Yes.... and No. Many US families cannot afford nutrient-rich diets.*

*Download the complete article by Marilyn S. Townsend (Am J Clin Nutr 2009;89:1220-6) from the wePLAN Basecamp collaborative webpage. Download a conversation with Dr. Townsend by going to: <http://www.nutrition.org/media/publications/podcasts/Townsendfinal.mp3>*

### Access to Care

The ATC Taskforce is working on Goal #2: *To research, identify and compile issues, barriers and opportunities experienced by patient navigators in the process of accessing primary care especially for the uninsured.*

By working with the patient navigators, the ATC Taskforce hopes :

- To improve access to care for the un/underinsured
- To identify the barriers and best practices in patient navigation
- To realize cost savings associated with improved patient navigation programs

Patient navigators will have a heightened sense of awareness that they are not alone in the challenge of aiding the uninsured and underinsured. Additionally patient navigators will be better prepared to aid pa-

### Violence Prevention

The Task Force remains focused on achieving its short term goals. They meet every three weeks and communicate through email and phone when not meeting face to face. Members redesigned the resource guide to focus more on programs that have specific violence prevention characteristics for youth and families. They continue to seek current information to add to the

tients in navigating the safety net systems by expanding their knowledge of community health resources.

ATC Task Force participants continue to share information on new resources, changes in policy, new grant opportunities, and other opportunities for integration.

resource guide and will be distributing the guide by the end of summer 2009. Members were invited to participate in the Cook County Department of Public Health Office of Violence Prevention Coordination's violence prevention community meetings held throughout suburban Cook County. Future efforts for the Task Force include completion of a brochure that will help market the task force and invite participation from other suburban organizations. Members are invited to participate in the Youth on Youth Violence Training on May 13, 2009 at the Oak Park Library. The training, for all health care and human service providers, is sponsored and conducted by the Departments of Trauma and Emergency Medicine at John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook County.

If you would like to attend future task force meetings, please contact Monique Brunson at 708-492-2142.

### Chronic Disease Prevention

The goals of the task force are to identify policies that it supports on the state, federal and local level. Policies should prevent diabetes, a wePLAN health priority. 'Best' policies and practices will be highlighted after a review process.

The goals of the Task Force are going to be significantly boosted by the new ACHIEVE grant awarded to CCDPH. The Task Force will merge with ACHIEVE. ACHIEVE aims to prevent chronic disease, including diabetes, throughout suburban Cook County through collaboration with multiple partners. ACHIEVE is sponsored by the US Centers For Disease Control and Prevention. As a result of participating in ACHIEVE, according to the CDC, "communities will have greater capacity to develop and implement policy, systems, and environmental changes and to collaborate with a broad cross-section of partners, which will help build and sustain healthy communities." In addition to diabetes, ACHIEVE focuses on heart disease, stroke, cancer and arthritis.

**ACHIEVE cont. from p. 1**

(YMCA), National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD), and National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA).

The purpose of ACHIEVE is to build healthier communities by promoting policy, systems, and environmental change strategies that focus on physical activity, nutrition, tobacco cessation, obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. ACHIEVE is an innovative strategy that brings together all sectors of a community to spur sustainable changes that are integral to preventing or reducing the burden of chronic diseases such as increased access to and use of attractive and safe locations for engaging in physical activity; revised school food contracts that include more fruits and vegetables and whole grain foods; and requirements for sidewalks and crossing signals in neighborhoods to make them more pedestrian-friendly.

For more information on ACHIEVE's philosophy and framework or a complete listing of all funded communities, please visit the ACHIEVE website at [www.achievecommunities.org](http://www.achievecommunities.org).

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Task Force made specific recommendations for development of a food system that will promote local food production for economic development. Growing Power was founded by Ms. Allen's father Will Allen, who recently was awarded the 'Genius' award by the MacArthur Foundation. Erika described how the youth corps of Growing Power Chicago helps develop character by participating in harvesting and marketing of food they have grown, and group discussions. "We talk about real issues that kids face in urban communities" that are food deserts, she said. Some of the students in her groups developed slogans highlighting their work of increasing access to fresh vegetables such as, 'Greatest Veggies Of All Thyme,' and 'Turnip The Volume On Veggies.' Youth Entrepreneur Interns are involved with composting and beekeeping, marketing, and urban farming.

The Growing Power model of sales of their fresh, locally grown produce reduces cost barriers by charging a more affordable price for three levels of food 'baskets,' delivered to collection points that have at least ten orders. Deliveries throughout the Chicago area are on a weekly basis. Quest card and WIC are accepted. The 'Regular Basket' feeds a family of four for a week. The 'Senior Basket' is senior friendly, and the 'Organic Basket' feeds four and supports the Rainbow Farmer's Coop and other organic growers. More information about the work of Growing Power is available at [www.growingpower.org](http://www.growingpower.org). The report of the 32-member Task Force "Local Food, Farms & Jobs: Growing the Illinois Economy" and proposed 2009 legislation can be found at [www.foodfarmsjobs.org](http://www.foodfarmsjobs.org).