



## Healthi Kids Staff Summary

January – June 2019

Hello Coalition Members,

The first half of 2019 has been focused on socializing our new whole child advocacy agenda with our partners and the community. We spent much of the winter and spring developing our new brand, website, and communications plan. With these new tools, staff have been hard at work getting the word out about our new identity and agenda, as we move from the planning phase, to the implementation phase of this work.

In addition to our planning efforts, Healthi Kids staff have been busy continuing to advocate and implement solutions to improve the health of kids. Below are the highlights of what we've been up to.

### **ENSURE EVERY CHILD IS HAPPY, HEALTHY AND SUPPORTED IN THE PLACES THEY LEARN:**

- **Advance policies in schools and early learning environments to improve quality nutrition, physical activity, and social-emotional learning**
  - Having successfully advocated for the RCSD wellness policy to include a requirement for inclusive physical activity, Healthi Kids partnered with Playworks in February for a training that focuses on recess and play in small spaces with an inclusion lens, and again in May for a Trauma Informed Care training presented by national trainers ChildLight Yoga. Led by Alicia Evans, these initiatives are professional development (PD) opportunities that are credit bearing with our partnership with RCSD. Alicia also created a toolkit that features inclusive physical activity and best practices for recess and play. This toolkit was distributed to participants that attended the Playworks training and to the 7 Greater Rochester Health Foundation schools. Additionally, trauma informed yoga participants received yoga mats and a training book that highlighted mental health, trauma, and yoga and how these themes work together in concert. These trainings combined had over 100 participants.
  - Healthi Kids continues to provide technical assistance with coordinating Curbside Market visits to schools, and provides vouchers that are distributed during these visits. Through our partnership with Eat Smart New York (ESNY), Healthi Kids continues to support coordination with the schools in order to provide nutrition education to students, staff, and families. Healthi Kids also continues to provide food pantry guidance and technical assistance when needed to community schools with pantries outfitted by Foodlink. Going forward, Healthi Kids plans to develop a healthy food systems toolkit for schools to include guidance around: food pantries, gardening and best practices for schools and families, healthy eating, and healthy food celebrations, as well as purchase supplies to outfit celebration carts for each of the DOH Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC) schools. We are also planning another Yoga 4 Classrooms training this summer for teachers and paraprofessionals.



- Alicia Evans and Healthi Kids have partnered with The WELL Campaign, an advocacy effort to improve student health and well-being in New York State. In March, they partnered with Assembly member Michael Benedetto and the American Heart Association to host a "School Wellness Policy Lunch & Learn." Initiated by leaders at the Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy, Teachers College Columbia University, the WELL Campaign is urging legislators to create a New York State model wellness policy that can be shared with schools, invest \$10 million to support target districts with wellness policy implementation and create an online hub to centralize district wellness policies and reports. More information can be found at <https://www.wellcampaign.org/>.
- Throughout the past 6 months we have been working with 9 schools in the Rochester City School District and the District's Wellness Task Force to brainstorm ways to communicate the changes to the district wide wellness policy. This will include attending wellness walk-throughs, sharing material and technical assistance to district staff and schools, the creation of an infographic that will go out to schools, administrators, and PTOs. In the next several months, we will continue to work with the Wellness Task Force to develop a communications plan for the 2019-2020 school year with clear objectives, and a timeline for implementation.
- Healthi Kids continued to work with the RCSD students and Food Service to improve the quality of meals served and the quantity eaten by students.
- **Ensuring access to enrichment activities**
  - As members of the Greater Rochester After School Alliance, and Co-Chairs of their advocacy committee – Healthi Kids received great news this spring. After a winter of reaching out to our elected officials in Albany, attending a lobby day, and sharing over 500 postcards on the importance of after school from children and families across the region, our voices have been heard! The Advantage After-School fund has increased their per student rate by 45%. This allows for programs to offer higher quality services to children and families across the state.
- **Promote opportunities for inclusive family and community engagement**
  - In Healthi Kids' continued efforts to increase advocacy skills and provide opportunities for City of Rochester residents, we partnered with community members to open their homes to host several dinner conversations with key leaders from Roc the Future. This provided an opportunity for parents to have direct access to influencers as parents and residents were able to share their concerns regarding parent engagement in the school setting.
  - Healthi Kids partnered with the Healthy Baby Network and Hillside to organize and host a fathers' conference on March 30<sup>th</sup>. The Fathers Conference was designed to help fathers better navigate the complex systems that prevent them from being the best fathers they can be. Going forward, Healthi Kids will be working in partnership with the RCSD Office of Parent Engagement and Tony Jordan to organize and deliver a city-wide Fathers Conference in August 2019. As we head in to the 2019-20 school year, Healthi Kids will also continue to work with the RCSD to organize fathers groups in schools.

### **ADVANCE EQUITABLE COMMUNITIES FOR ALL KIDS TO GROW AND THRIVE:**

- **Advance changes to the built environment to ensure every family has healthy supportive infrastructure in their neighborhoods**



- This spring, Healthi Kids successfully advocated for off-street bike lanes on East Main Street, between Culver and Goodman. The City was considering alternatives for a road diet along East Main Street, and Healthi Kids worked with neighborhood residents to support the selection of the most kid-friendly, walkable, and bikable design. Going forward Healthi Kids will continue to work with a broad coalition of stakeholders to promote complete streets and traffic safety by continuing the [drive2Bbetter](#) campaign and engaging a second neighborhood in a Complete Streets Makeover.
- In May, Healthi Kids teamed back up with Reconnect Rochester, the City of Rochester, Stantec, the Beechwood Neighborhood Association, and others for the re-inauguration of our first Complete Streets Makeover at Parsells Avenue and Greeley St. The City of Rochester installed new speed cushions while neighbors worked together to refresh the boulevard mural and reinstall the rubber curbs and bollards. Over 100 people turned out to celebrate with music, food, airbrush tattoos, a spoken word performance, and even a special guest appearance by Pikachu! To see the entire process behind the initial makeover, check out this [short film](#) that was shown at The Little Theater as part of ReConnect Rochester's Street Films series.
- **Expand opportunities for healthy food and food education in homes and neighborhoods.**
  - Healthi Kids has been working to promote urban agriculture and its many benefits – from increased access to healthy food to neighborhood beautification and social-connectedness. Working with the Urban Agriculture Working Group, we successfully advocated for an improved community garden permitting process that will allow established city gardens to obtain extended-term permits. These multi-year permits will provide greater confidence for the gardeners and encourage them to make long-term investments in their gardens and neighborhoods. To promote more grassroots policy advocacy, Healthi Kids led an Advocacy 101 workshop at this year's regional Urban Agriculture Conference.
  - Healthi Kids continued work around access to healthy food, providing encouragement, technical assistance, marketing materials, and equipment to more corner/convenience stores in the City of Rochester. At New City Café, located at Parsells and Greeley, we supported an expansion of their healthy options by purchasing prep and refrigerated display units. New City Café now stocks a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables at affordable prices. Going forward, Healthi Kids will be looking to expand work that supports policies and programs that transform our food system, from healthy retail to urban agriculture.
  - As a key component of our Creating Healthy Schools and Communities work, Healthi Kids continues to support staff wellness through our worksite wellness efforts. With a focus on youth serving organizations, we continue working collaboratively with the City of Rochester's Department of Recreation and Youth Services to develop healthy policies across the department as well as individual R-Centers. Avenue D and Thomas P. Ryan R-Centers chose to purchase physical activity equipment for staff, as well as kitchen equipment to support making healthier food for staff while utilizing produce from R-Center gardens. Avenue D now has an indoor and outdoor walking trail mapped out for employees to use, while Ryan has implemented a healthy meeting and role modeling policy. Foodlink continues to fine tune their plans for the many worksite wellness initiatives they are planning. In March, during National Nutrition Month, they rolled out several things to all staff including monthly nutrition demos for employees put on by the nutrition



educators, employee challenges, and a wellness newsletter. Next they have plans to do an outdoor walking trail, purchase kitchen and physical activity equipment, and roll out a healthy meeting policy. We also began worksite wellness efforts in schools this year and plans are underway with School 53. Lastly, Common Ground Health has reinvigorated their worksite wellness efforts and has become designated a breastfeeding friendly business by the Rochester Regional Breastfeeding Coalition, as well as implemented a healthy meeting practice & procedures guide. We now have a partnership with the Good Food Collective, which allows staff to have local, healthy food delivered to our office on a weekly basis. As we move in to the 5<sup>th</sup> and final year of our DOH CHSC grant we'll be focused on completing post-assessment surveys at each of the worksites we've partnered with over the last few years.

- The Summer Meals Partnership of Rochester (SMPR) completed its sustainability planning and analyzed data from Summer 2018. In 2018, a total of 338, 247 meals were served to kids in the City of Rochester ages 2-18. The SMPR was invited to give a webinar via Hunger Solutions to share best practices and successes to a statewide audience. The partnership is now gearing up for Summer 2019 with the Summer Meals Fest planned for June 8th, and meal service beginning on June 26th.

### **PROMOTE THE POWER OF PLAY FOR EVERY CHILD IN EVERY PLACE:**

- **Promote playful neighborhoods**

- We are continuing to work with the City of Rochester's Department of Recreation and Youth Services to adopt a play streets policy and permit that will allow residents across the city to create and duplicate play streets efforts.
- Healthi Kids will coordinate the fourth annual PlayROCs Your Neighborhood on July 13<sup>th</sup> this summer. This coordinated day of play will have 50 locations throughout the city supported by dozens of organizations, neighborhood groups, libraries, and churches passionate about spreading the message on the importance of play in neighborhoods.

- **Safeguard play as a cornerstone of school learning**

- Building off of our advocacy agenda to support play-based curriculum throughout the Rochester City School District, we've partnered with the ROC the Future Developmentally Appropriate Practice Strategy Team. This spring, we held our first Play Symposium at The Strong Museum of Play that brought together over 88 educators, play champions and administrators to learn more about how we can incorporate play based learning into the classroom.

- **Invest in safe, accessible infrastructure that supports every child's right to play**

- We're thrilled to share that the majority of our recommendations have been included in the City of Rochester's comprehensive plan! We'll continue to advocate for the adoption of Rochester 2034 through the end of this calendar year, which will include submitting comments by the end of June. After revisions have been added, the plan will go to the Planning Commission and then to City Council for adoption. There will be ample opportunity to continue to influence the plan as we move forward.
- Throughout the winter we've continued to work with the City of Rochester's Department of Recreation and Youth Services to implement their 10 Minute Walk to Park planning grant. This has included creating a survey, convening a Community Advisory Team, and developing



recommendations to support park activation and safety. This spring we'll be piloting play libraries, the getting kids in nature challenge, and supporting colorful crosswalks at several pilot parks.

- This winter, the play walk planning committee has continued to meet to develop the plans for the "corridor of play". Members conducted a series of community engagement activities, and facilitated a workshop at the Teen Center of Central Library for teens to actually design the walk. The "Community Changemakers" were able to attend The Strong Museum of Play and work with their head curator, as well as Shawn Dunwoody (local artist), and Sue Steele (local landscape architect) to develop their ideas. With plans in place, we're ready to move forward with implementation this summer. Our team has also applied for additional funding from Kaboom to enhance the walk.
- Healthi Kids was able to showcase a little of what's coming for the Play Walk on May 11<sup>th</sup> at Play the Riverway. The team worked together with a great team of community members and organizations to bring play to our downtown for the event. Court St. was temporarily closed to traffic and opened up for an afternoon of on-street play that included a pop-up skate park, pickleball court, sensory sensitive activities, a climbing wall, hand-pedal bikes, giant games, and much more!
- Working with our play champions and members of our coalition, this year the PlayROCs advocacy committee subgroup developed a comprehensive advocacy strategy for the next 6 months to raise awareness of the power of play in neighborhoods. The team narrowed down their messages, and set tactics to raise awareness on the importance of play, and developed a plan for action. As we look to the adoption of Rochester 2034, we need to start thinking about our next policy agenda for PlayROCs. In the late winter we will be pulling together a workgroup to help think through a strategy here.
- As a result of our work around our play campaign, we have been invited to speak at this year's International Placemaking Week hosted by the Project for Public Spaces. In October we'll share more.

### **EXPAND ACCESS TO SERVICES THAT BUILD HEALTHY MINDS AND HEALTHY FAMILIES:**

- **Support policies advancing infant and early childhood mental health services**

- Healthi Kids has continued to grow its advocacy and leadership in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH), with particular focus on building our local IECMH-trained workforce. Two members of the Healthi Kids team have now completed the Society for the Protection and Care of Children's 10-week infant mental health training, and we have been actively involved in the Early Childhood Development Initiative's efforts to expand reflective supervision opportunities (a key component of IECMH services) for child-serving professionals throughout Rochester. To help build awareness of the importance of IECMH in primary care, we presented to the Regional Patient-Centered Medical Home Collaborative in January, and have written articles for both the Monroe County Medical Society's patient-focused and provider-focused spring publications. In April, our team hosted the New York State Association for Infant Mental Health's annual membership meeting for the Rochester area, bringing together local partners in IECMH and connecting with other members across the state via videoconferencing.



- **Eliminate barriers to accessing high quality early intervention services for all children**
  - Healthi Kids has continued to work with our partners locally and across the state to address the significant shortages of available developmental services, such as speech-language and occupational therapies, for children birth to five. We have been helping to lead ROC the Future's Workforce Development Committee's efforts to advocate for creation of speech-language pathology assistant licensure in New York State, and have partnered in successful efforts to increase reimbursement rates for early intervention (EI) statewide, and Preschool Special Education (PSE) providers locally (though there is still much more work to be done).
  - Healthi Kids continued to participate in All Kids Thrive, a group that came together to design a model system for kids birth to age 8 with the aim of ensuring all kids are developmentally on track. The group has been working to map out the current system for kids along that continuum and has advocated for funding to support its recommendations.
  - Throughout the next several months, Healthi Kids will continue our work with state and local partners to build awareness and advocate for solutions that will help increase access to important developmental services for children and their families. In June we will be meeting with regional public health directors to share our work and explore opportunities for collaboration to improve access to IECMH and EI/PSE services. In July, we are very excited to attend a day-long event in Albany looking at the intersection of two of Healthi Kids' focus areas, Infant Mental Health and Play!

#### **GENERAL UPDATES:**

- Healthi Kids welcomed new staff member, Joe Di Fiore, as Youth and Family Engagement Specialist. Joe hit the ground running lending his expertise on several projects including Play the Riverway, complete streets and the development of candidate questionnaires for local races.
- Healthi Kids has a new look. With a new agenda and focus, it was time to update our brand. In May, Healthi Kids launched its new logo, brand and [website](#) with the help of McDougall Communications, Antithesis Advertising and CMS Max. The new site allows us to communicate effectively with our stakeholders and share opportunities to take action more easily. Along with the new brand and online presence, Healthi Kids has put together a new communications plan and will be hiring a communications specialist this summer to help move the plan forward.

Over the next six months we look forward to continuing the work we've started as well as beginning work in some exciting new areas. More to come at today's meeting.

Best,

Dina Faticone, Director