

Report *to the* Community  
*on the*  
wellness initiative

With Every Heartbeat is Life  
W E H L

*by the*

Chester Housing Authority  
Chester, Pennsylvania

*01 October 2011 – 30 September 2013*

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## BACKGROUND

In the latter part of 2011, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) designated Chester Housing Authority one of several sites across the country to implement the health program “With Every Heartbeat is Life” (WEHL). A joint initiative of HUD and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (one of the 27 institutes and centers that make up the National Institutes of Health), WEHL was designed to address elevated cardiovascular health risk among the population living in the nation’s public and assisted housing.<sup>1</sup>

To support implementation of WEHL, Chester Housing Authority (CHA) was authorized to use \$300K of HOPE VI grant funding awarded in 1998 for the revitalization of the McCaffery Village development. Anticipating the development of a shopping complex with retail center and supermarket, the funds had been set aside to provide job training for CHA residents. Adverse economic conditions and local political resistance thwarted plans for the shopping complex, leaving the untapped HOPE VI funding for job training in danger of recapture. In June 2011, HUD approved use of the \$300K for the WEHL program in Chester, establishing CHA as the nation’s only funded WEHL site.

The CHA WEHL program kicked off in October 2011. Initial training of several CHA staff and residents took place in Bethesda, Maryland at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. Initial gatherings of residents to introduce WEHL to the CHA community began in the winter and consistently drew between 35 and 50 participants.



Chester Housing Authority residents attended regular WEHL activities in increasing numbers over the two-year period which concluded in September 2013. Overflow Zumba, kickboxing and boot camp workout classes were a centerpiece of the program.

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<sup>1</sup>Sharply elevated health risks among residents of public have been well documented. For instance, see Manjarrez *et al* at [www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/311489\\_HOPE\\_VI\\_Health.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/311489_HOPE_VI_Health.pdf).

## PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The Chester Housing Authority WEHL program was designed to focus sharply on reducing cardiovascular risk among residents, providing them activities, guidance, and support to improve their risk profiles and achieve healthy lives. The program had six key components:

- **Group fitness sessions** included walking, strength training, aerobics, and Zumba.
- **Independent fitness activities** participants were to undertake on their own to enhance lifestyle assimilation of exercise.
- **Nutrition and wellness workshops** covered a wide range of more formal educational sessions gathered under the banner Feed Your Brain.
- **Hands-on educational activities** included cooking groups/demos, weekly visits to local organic producer Hillside Farm, monthly group grocery store shopping trips, a Convenience Store Triage Module, and health seminars by local health provider Gateway.
- **Healthy food access** attempted to ensure provision of deeply discounted or no-cost fresh produce items and grains, often with an emphasis on introducing participants to non-traditional items.
- **WEHL Community Survey** gathered information from approximately 300 Chester Housing Authority residents at large (200 of whom comprised the final sample) about such topics as health status, fitness activity, food access, civic involvement, and housing satisfaction. The study establishes an important empirical data set on well-being among low-income residents in an urban setting. Selected findings are detailed later in this report.



Hands-on cooking demonstrations and healthy food prep education were important components of Chester Housing Authority's WEHL program. Thematic and practical consistency among the six components of the program was intended to increase the likelihood of sustainable health-promoting behavior change among WEHL participants.



Chester Housing Authority cultivated an intergenerational aspect to WEHL activities, to encourage health-promoting behaviors among residents across the lifespan. Here, WEHL Community Health Worker Rasheem Foster (pictured right) executes joint-safe strengthening exercises with WEHL participant Frances Stanley during one of several weekly group fitness sessions.



CHA linked its WEHL initiative to community gardening activities centered on land behind the Chester public housing development Ruth L. Bennett Homes. Supported by CHA staff, local institutions Swarthmore College and Widener University, and philanthropies including The Reinvestment Fund, the Bennett Gardens were the seasonal hub of youth and senior activities and provided access to fresh food for residents.

It was hypothesized that together the core WEHL health education and health-promoting activities would register in participant weight reduction, lowered blood pressure, and decreased waist circumference. Additional proposed impacts included improved attitudes and perceptions of well-being, increased civic engagement, and greater neighborhood satisfaction.

In WEHL, CHA was attempting articulation of a model program for modifying behavior to reduce cardiovascular vulnerability and improve health prospects among a low-income population with documented elevated risk. By the conclusion of the program's Spring Challenge in June 2013, 20 residents reportedly registered collective weight loss over 200 pounds. Reported total exercise time exceeded 2000 hours for 144 WEHL participants.

### LOOKING AHEAD: SIGNIFICANCE OF WEHL

Ultimately, as a model of sustained and meaningful resident engagement, the Chester Housing Authority WEHL program has realized substantial success. Having continually disseminated prevention-oriented health messages to hundreds of residents over the 24-month period, having linked the Chester community to the wider discussion about food access and food security, and having led individuals to achieve measurable improvements in their cardiovascular risk profiles will undoubtedly impact health prospects well into the future. The rich empirical findings of the WEHL Community Survey permit a valuable



By linking WEHL to its thriving community gardening initiative, Chester Housing Authority incorporated youth into the program while generating needed access to fresh produce for WEHL participants. The strategy also introduced a new and potentially very powerful constituency into the regional food security movement. The WEHL program has used the opportunity to provide grassroots advocacy training to CHA residents who have raised their voices in support of the organization's longtime goal to bring a supermarket to Chester.

comparison between the WEHL participants and their peers in Chester, as well as enabling comparative profiles with other communities. The connection with CHA community gardening efforts has broadened awareness of WEHL and its central principles in the Chester community.

WEHL has also positioned CHA to cultivate philanthropic relationships with regional and national funders, to explore revenue-generating entrepreneurial efforts in the community gardening and urban farming arena, and has enabled resident advocacy to complement CHA's efforts in pursuit of the shopping complex. In the final months of WEHL, CHA began pursuing private foundations, non-traditional donors, and new partnerships with non-profit organizations to support continuation of wellness activities and other potential enterprises.



Chester Housing Authority's rapidly expanding community gardening program is centered on land behind its renovated Ruth L. Bennett Homes development. WEHL participants quickly connected to the Bennett Gardens program, enriching it with education from the WEHL curriculum on dietary choices and food preparation. Incorporating the physical activity and mental refreshment of gardening into the WEHL program routines netted new recruits from the previously sedentary senior population. The new initiatives this linkage ignited are ongoing. For instance, Seniors in the Garden attracts ten to twelve seniors per week who walk to the Bennett Gardens, weed and harvest produce, and return to prepare a communal meal in the senior buildings Chester Gateway Apartments, Matopos Hills, Madison Apartments, and Edgemont Apartments. Pictured here are WEHL Community Health Workers Carmen Johnson (left) and Deborah Montgomery (right) with a new WEHL recruit (center) as they take a harvesting break under the Bennett Gardens pavilion recently constructed with support from The Reinvestment Fund.



Healthful harvests from Chester Housing Authority's Bennett Gardens are noteworthy for their abundance and loveliness. Participants' fascination with growth cycles, new varieties and colors of vegetables, and the full flavor of fresh-from-the-garden produce tangibly enriched WEHL's dietary curriculum. The WEHL program also benefitted from the Bennett Gardens' partnerships with local institutions of higher education, area farms, and regional philanthropies as staff, technical guidance, and supplemental funding seemed to move seamlessly across the two initiatives.



## IMPLICATIONS OF SELECTED FINDINGS OF THE WEHL COMMUNITY SURVEY

As a part of WEHL, CHA undertook to produce an empirical data set on the health and well-being of its broader resident population. The WEHL Community Survey gathered data via extensive one-on-one interviews with CHA residents living in Chester public



Early in 2013, Chester Housing Authority's WEHL program expanded resident recruitment, utilizing nuanced branding and diverse offerings. Under the phonetic moniker "Anūme," the group exercise component of WEHL invoked notions of internal renovation and individual empowerment. Outings such as this power walk through Philadelphia's museum district emphasized the role of physical fitness in expressing personal agency and expanding participants' horizons.

housing developments in Autumn 2012 and early 2013. The survey included information about general physiological and mental health status; physical activity levels and exercise behaviors; eating habits and access to fresh produce; social integration and isolation; digital technology access; neighborhood satisfaction and needs; safety; and civic engagement. The final sample is based on data from almost 200 individual residents.

The high incidence of health issues in the study population affirms findings from other studies about elevated health risk and poor health outcomes among public housing residents. However, access to primary health services is exceptional, perhaps contradicting perceptions of public housing residents as a source of disproportionate pressure upon hospital emergency rooms and public health dollars.

Very low access to dental care is of great concern, given the established association between poor oral health and cardiometabolic conditions.

At 51 percent, the rate of hypertension in the survey population exceeds national rates even for the highest-risk groups. In the U.S., the rate of high blood pressure among



African American women is 45.7 percent, and for African American men is 43 percent. Given that 1 in 5 Americans is unaware of having the condition, it is not unreasonable to speculate that actual Chester figures could be higher yet.



WEHL program activities took place in several different locations during the week, maximizing the program's exposure and convenience for residents. Here, Chester Housing Authority Executive Director Steve Fischer (pictured standing) leads a group stretching class for WEHL participants at the Booker T. Washington Community Center.

The rate of reported diabetes among survey participants is more than double the national rate. Twenty-eight percent of the survey group report having been told by a health practitioner that they have diabetes. The U.S. rate among non-Hispanic Blacks is 12.6 percent. Given that the condition is undiagnosed among an estimated 2.25 percent of the population nationally, we can expect that, like hypertension, diabetes may be even more prevalent among Chester Housing Authority residents than the survey indicates. Also, as more than one-quarter of Americans are classified as prediabetic, we might anticipate sharp increases in diabetes on the horizon for Chester residents.

At 50 percent, the rate of smoking in the study population exceeds that of similar populations, and poses an urgent concern.

While only one-third of study participants felt some degree of loneliness, two-thirds indicated that they would like to meet new people. A large majority expressed interest in developing a hobby or learning a new skill. Over half would like to get out more frequently. These findings suggest a population receptive to new programs and activities that build social networks. Findings suggest that most survey participants socialize in supportive dyads, being more likely to have met up with one friend or family member in the preceding 30 days than to have gone out with a group. Almost three-quarters of survey participants had asked a friend or family member for a ride in the previous 30 days.



The Chester Housing Authority WEHL initiative achieved broad awareness in the City of Chester of the program and its principles of health promotion and prevention. Establishing a social network among WEHL participants and a visible identity supported recruitment and retention during the program and may sustain activity as the organization seeks additional funding to continue wellness programming. In this regard, the two-year implementation may be regarded as an important kick-off to a longer-term effort to improve the health risk profile of Chester Housing Authority residents and members of the surrounding community.

Most study participants—nearly 70 percent—report that transportation is not a problem for them.

The sense of safety among study participants generally is high within their housing units, but diminishes significantly concerning the buildings and grounds immediately surrounding their housing units. The most significant concerns about safety in and immediately around housing units were reported by survey participants living in Ruth L. Bennett Homes and William Penn Homes. Only one-third of survey participants across all housing developments report feeling safe in their neighborhoods. The findings suggest there is potential for public safety initiatives involving residents.

Civic engagement is quite high among the study population, with 95 percent registered to vote in their current district of residence, and nearly 90 percent reporting having voted in an official election in the previous year. While at around 60 percent, participation in civic meetings is perhaps higher than in other communities, it could be enhanced among CHA residents.

A large majority of all study participants have cell phones, but less than one-third have smart phones. Well below half report having computers in their homes. Though free broadband is available in several of the housing developments, the figures suggest that

the rather limited personal access to the Internet among public housing residents in Chester is attributable to lack of individual equipment.

Perhaps in contradiction to the perception of Chester as a food desert, over two-thirds of study participants said it is easy for them to buy fresh fruits and vegetables. However, consumption of fresh produce leaves much to be desired, with only 40 percent of study participants reporting daily consumption.





Residents of Chester Housing Authority senior developments Edgemont Apartments, Madison Apartments, Matopos Hills, and Chester Gateway Apartments have participated actively in the WEHL offshoot initiative, Seniors in the Garden. Arguably, transformative civic engagement has resulted from their involvement in the garden program. These seniors recently staged polite sit-ins at the adjacent Deshong Park which has been closed for years. Defying bureaucratic requests by the city that they apply and pay for permits to enter the park, seniors walked across the street from their housing complexes to picnic and relax outdoors in the late summer and fall of 2013. The group, dubbed the Deshong Park Seniors, has won the support of the Chester Mayor John Linder (pictured in the distance on the left walking with the crowd) who has renewed commitments to renovate and make the park accessible. Here, city residents parade on 28 September to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Deshong Park. Edgemont Apartments is directly behind them.

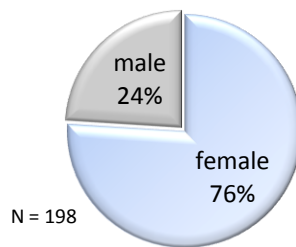


## RESULTS OF THE WEHL COMMUNITY SURVEY

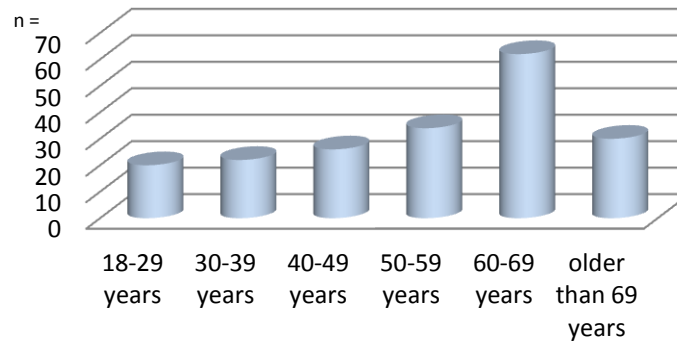
### *Demographics*

Seventy-six percent of the respondents were female, while 24 percent were male.

GENDER OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS



AGE OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS



Sixty-two percent of the respondents completed high school, while 25 percent indicated that they went to college. Of those who indicated that they went to college (n=39), 62 percent indicated that they received a degree.

Seventy-seven percent of the respondents indicated that they were never married, were separated or were divorced.

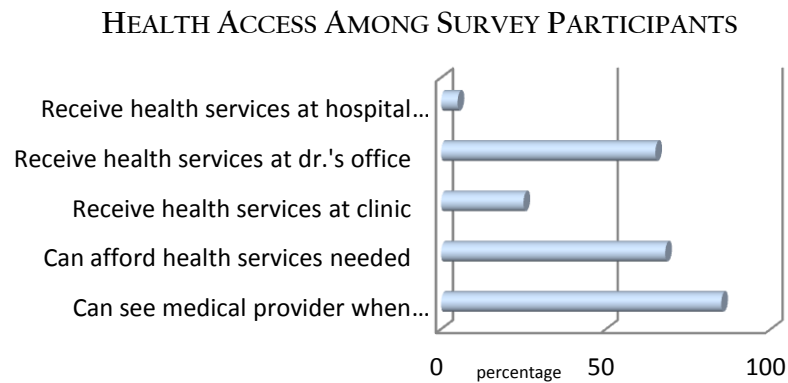
### *General Health and Health Behaviors*

Although 50 percent of the respondents indicated that their health was good or excellent, and approximately one-third indicated that their health was fair, 67 percent of the respondents indicated that they had health issues.

Eighty-five percent of the respondents indicated that they could see a medical provider whenever they wanted to see one.

Sixty-eight percent of the respondents indicated that they could afford the health services they needed.

Twenty-five percent of the respondents indicated that they go to a clinic for their health care, while 65 percent of the respondents indicated that they go to a doctor's office for their health care. Five percent of the respondents indicated that they go to the hospital for health care.



Almost 60 percent of the respondents indicated that they had not seen a dentist in the previous 12 months.

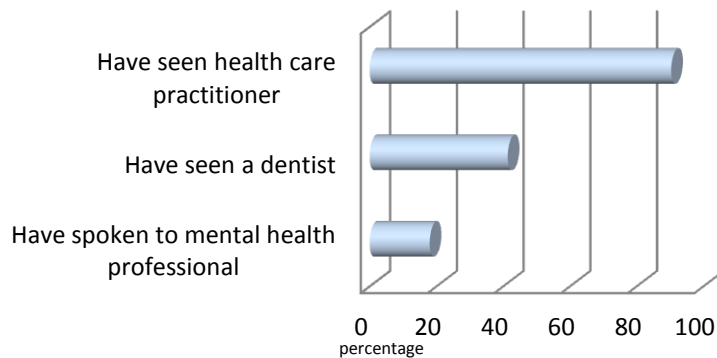
Over 90 percent of the respondents indicated that they spoke to a health care practitioner during the previous 12 months.

Survey participants were asked whether they had ever been told by a health practitioner that they have any of a range of named conditions. Within the survey group, the rate of serious health conditions is significant. Of the persons surveyed, the following percentages reported health conditions:

- Hypertension - 51 percent
- Diabetes - 28 percent
- Weight problem - 25 percent
- Depression - 24 percent
- Heart condition - 23 percent

Sixty percent of the respondents indicated that their physical mobility was good or excellent.

### HEALTH SERVICES USE AMONG SURVEY PARTICIPANTS WITHIN PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS



About 50 percent of the respondents indicated that they smoke and of those respondents 99 percent indicated that they smoke cigarettes. Respondents indicated that they smoke 10 cigarettes a day on average.

### SMOKING AMONG SURVEY PARTICIPANTS



Among all age groups, it appears that respondents between the ages of 30 and 49 were most likely to smoke. Seventy percent of these respondents indicated that they smoke. About half of the respondents between 51 and 69 indicated that they smoke.

Sixty-two percent of the respondents indicated that they do not drink alcoholic beverages. However, 63 percent of those who indicated that they drink do so about one or two days per week, and this consists of an average of three drinks on the days they drink.

#### *Psychological Health*

Overall, 82 percent of the respondents indicated that they had not spoken to a mental health professional in the past 12 months.

Sixty-five percent of the respondents indicated that in the past 30 days there were few times that they felt so sad that they could not be cheered up.

Sixty-five percent of the respondents indicated that there were few times that they felt nervous.

About half of the respondents indicated that they did not or rarely felt fidgety.

Seventy-nine percent of the respondents indicated that they did not feel discouraged or rarely felt discouraged.

Although about 50 percent of the respondents felt it was not or rarely an effort to do things, approximately 27 percent of the respondents did say that sometimes it was an effort to do things.

Eighty percent of the respondents indicated that none of the time or a little of the time they felt worthless.

Finally, 74 percent of the respondents indicated that the emotions above did not affect their life activities.

### *Social Activities*

Sixty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that they would like to meet new people. Three-quarters of the respondents indicated that they would like to have a hobby or learn a new skill.

Almost 71 percent of the respondents indicated that they are not lonely.

Fifty-five percent of the respondents indicated that they had gone out with one friend or family member for a social activity during the previous 30 days. However, 59 percent of the respondents indicated that they had rarely gone out in a group for social activities. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents indicated that they visited neighbors outside their housing unit.

Forty-three percent of the respondents indicated that they attended religious services within the previous 30 days.

Fifty-four percent of the respondents indicated that they would like to spend more time outside their housing unit.

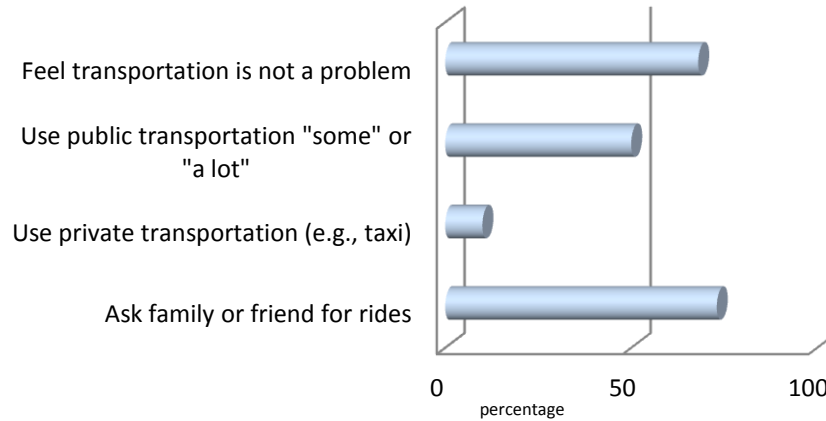
### *Transportation*

Sixty-eight percent of the respondents indicated that transportation was not a problem for them. Approximately half of the respondents indicated that they use public transportation some or a lot. Almost 90 percent of the respondents indicated that they do not use private



transportation which would require them to pay. About 73 percent of the respondents indicated that they asked for a ride from a friend or family member.

TRANSPORTATION AMONG SURVEY PARTICIPANTS



### *Safety*

About 75 percent of the respondents indicated that they feel safe in their houses, while 56 percent of the respondents indicated that they feel safe in their building. Only about one-third indicated that they feel safe in their neighborhood.

More than one quarter of the residents of Ruth Bennett Homes (28 percent), and William Penn Homes (27percent) indicated that they do not feel safe in their homes.

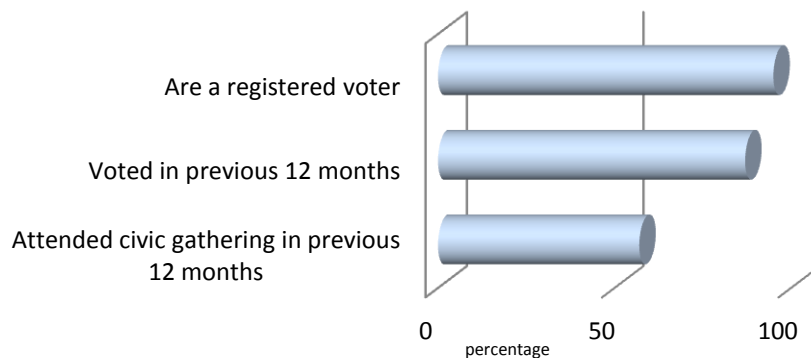
At least one-third of the residents of Ruth Bennett Homes (44 percent), and William Penn (47 percent) indicated that they do not feel safe in their building or on the grounds immediately surrounding their housing unit.

At least 40 percent of the residents in Edgemont (43percent), Ruth Bennett Homes (60 percent), and William Penn (55 percent) indicated that they do not feel safe in their neighborhood.

### *Civic Engagement*

Ninety-five percent of the respondents indicated that they are registered to vote. Eighty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that within the previous 12 months they voted in an election, and 57 percent indicated having attended at least one civic gathering within the previous 12 months.

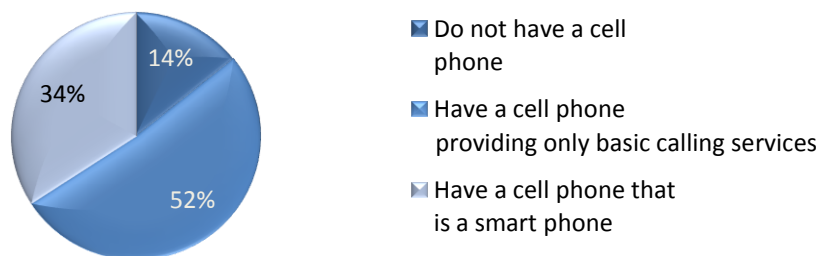
**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AMONG SURVEY PARTICIPANTS**  
SELECTED INDICATORS



*Cell Phone and Internet*

Eighty-six percent of the respondents indicated they have a cell phone, though only a third of the respondents indicated that they have a smart phone.

**CELL PHONE PENETRATION AMONG SURVEY PARTICIPANTS**

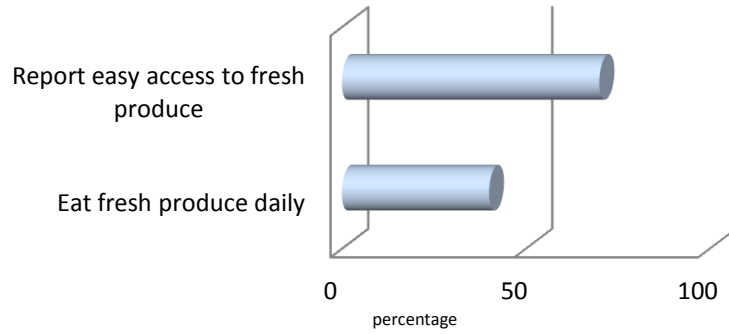


About 42 percent of the respondents indicated that they had a computer at home, and of those who had a computer almost 75 percent indicated that they could access the Internet. Of those who can access the Internet, 62 percent indicated that they use the Internet to access email, and 79 percent indicated that they use the Internet to access other resources.

*Produce*

Seventy-percent of the respondents indicated that it was easy for them to buy fruits and vegetables. Forty percent of the respondents indicated that they ate vegetables and fruits daily, and 40 percent indicated that they ate vegetables and fruits weekly.

FRESH PRODUCE AMONG SURVEY  
PARTICIPANTS: ACCESS AND CONSUMPTION



*Physical Activity*

While 51 percent of the respondents indicated that they walk around most of the day; 34 percent indicated that they sit around most of the day. Ninety percent of those who responded (n=110) indicated that they engaged in vigorous exercise daily or weekly.

## WEHL PROGRAM EVALUATOR'S RECOMMENDATIONS: AN EXCERPT

New Equity Partners, Inc. (headquartered in Miami, Florida), as evaluator for the Chester Housing Authority WEHL program, recognizes the potential significance of the organization's role in health and wellness promotion among low-income people.

A 24 August 2013 New York Times article describing various indicia of change since Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom 50 years ago cited the dramatic improvement over five decades in housing quality and availability. It noted that the progress in housing has benefitted nearly every demographic group, narrowing the gap between blacks and whites. Fifty years ago, 45 percent of blacks in America lived in substandard housing—a figure which fell to about 5 percent in 2011. For whites, the percentage in substandard housing 50 years ago was about 15 percent. It was about 4 percent in 2011. The figures indicate that many, many more people are housed in decent facilities today than 50 years ago.

Public housing authorities are an important part of the progress in decent housing, and Chester Housing Authority has been the agent of change in its local area. CHA's effect on the housing stock in the City of Chester is very apparent, with the entire public housing inventory having been razed and rebuilt or rehabilitated during the organization's receivership. Its scope of impact extends beyond the city limits of Chester into the region and resonates at the national level.

Chester Housing Authority and other housing authorities across the U.S. could have similar influence on the health of residents of public and assisted housing, if similar vision and initiative were applied. CHA has made initial strides in this direction by its implementation of WEHL. Concrete recommendations for CHA include:

- Continue pursuit of alternative funding sources for wellness programming.
- Continue to focus sharply on measurable outcomes in subsequent wellness programming.
- Enhance the role of program participants in data collection and other outcomes measurement. In addition to providing the information necessary to fulfill documentation requirements of program initiatives, residents have a responsibility to act as informed advocates for their own needs and those of the community.
- Connect to a range of wellness-related movements such as anti-smoking, food security, oral health promotion, and diabetes and obesity reduction.
- Continue leveraging community gardening and urban farming efforts.
- Continue pursuit of health-related workforce options for CHA residents, such as community health worker and patient navigator positions associated with Affordable Care Act implementation.

The WEHL program should be regarded as a solid initial step in the Chester Housing Authority's long-term wellness agenda. The organization's commitment to improving health outcomes is clear. The leadership and staff have a visionary appreciation of CHA's unique potential to impact local health policy, promote prevention, and instill active living principles.



The decision by Chester Housing Authority leadership to develop and carry out the WEHL Community Survey was astute and forward-looking. The empirical data set establishes a profile of the CHA resident population which can serve as a baseline for comparison, a spotlight for the area, a descriptive statement of needs, and a call to action. Policy and program decisions in a range of areas—from urban planning to public health to civic participation—may benefit from the specific insight CHA’s WEHL survey has generated. The findings make a broader academic contribution as well, expanding information available to researchers and policy-makers about residents of low-income communities.

As a local change agent, Chester Housing Authority models a pivotal role for public housing authorities in addressing persistent health disparities. It is a role that public housing authorities are perhaps best situated to fulfill, given their proximity and access to very-high-risk populations.

**APPENDIX A**

SAMPLE: CHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY WEHL PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

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## Welcome to The 2013 Spring Challenge

We are glad you have made the decision to join us for what is sure to be an exciting and fulfilling journey into exercise, fitness and overall good health! The Spring Challenge is an opportunity for you to reach new health and fitness goals with a supportive group of people who live and work right in your community.

The Chester Housing Authority is pleased that you have decided to join this effort. Our team of health advocates - Community Health Workers - will do all that we can to ensure your time is well spent.

### **What is the challenge?**

We challenge you to work out a minimum of 150 minutes each week for a total of 12 weeks. We know it is easier said than done so we will be with you every step of the way. **We will help you keep track of your weight, your waist size and your blood pressure each week** and we will recommend many ways to get at least 150 minutes of quality exercise each week. You can do it!

### **How?**

Each week The Spring Challenge staff will host at least four (4) group exercise opportunities. These opportunities include Zumba, kick boxing and walking. Each of our group exercise sessions is about 60 minutes. If you attend three out of four sessions, you will reach 180 minutes in three days alone. But why stop there?

Whether your goal is to lose 10 pounds, five inches or stabilize your blood pressure, the more you exercise the better you will feel and the closer you will come to your goal.

**What if you can't make it three times to a group session?** That's easy. You will be assigned to a group that is led by a Community Health Worker (CHW). This health advocate will give you many recommendations about how you can continue to stay on track even when you can't make three sessions each week. Our team has exercise videos and other small exercise sessions planned so you can stay on track and meet your goals.

Just because you have been assigned to one team doesn't mean you can work out with another team. Exercise is exercise. As the shoe company says "just do it." All of our teams welcome you to be a part of whatever we are doing.

**Do you work out alone sometimes?** Great! Let us know what exercise you are doing in your own time and we will include your effort in your weekly report. It's that simple.

**Do you have a work schedule that changes?** No problem. You're not the only one. Give your CHW a call and we'll plan something special for you.

**It's more than just exercise.**

Working to get healthy means exercise and eating right. Many of us are tempted to eat things that taste good, but are no good for our bodies. And sometimes it's difficult when everyone around us is "super sizing" and we're eating carrots. If you are going to rise to the challenge, you must fight the urge to eat empty calories and dangerous foods.

**Remember: you are what you eat!**



**You get out what you put in - and even more!**

We are not trying to bribe you at the Spring Challenge, but we do like giving people rewards for their effort! Three out of four weeks of every month, we will offer you a gift to keep you motivated and working toward your goal of optimal health. We will reward you with T-shirts, gym bags, water bottles and more. If you are a CHA resident you are eligible for some gift cards and even a \$100 completion award!

No doubt, the real reward is your good health. Nothing - and we mean NOTHING - is more important than good health.

**Take home quizzes**

Twice each week, we will provide you with take home quizzes. Each quiz focuses on a different aspect of fitness and nutrition. Take the quiz home, complete it and return it to your team leader. Who knows: maybe you'll get rewarded...

**A standard week**

Below is a grid that shows a standard week in The 2013 Spring Challenge. Sometimes the time and place will change but remember: in most cases, we can tailor your week to fit your health goals. Don't give in and don't give up. You can do it!

If you have any questions or concerns, you can always call Ulysses "Butch" Slaughter at his office number 610-876-5561 ext 131 or on his cell phone 267.318.0117.

Now let's get started!

**The Basic Spring Challenge Schedule**

Monday (Wm Penn)	Tuesday (Wm Penn)	Wednesday (Wm Penn)	Thursday (Wm Penn)	Sunday (TBD)
Walking 4PM		Walking 4PM		
KickBox\Plyo 6PM	Zumba 6PM	Boot Camp 6PM	Zumba 6PM	

**APPENDIX B**  
SAMPLE: REPORTS OF WEHL PARTICIPANTS' BLOOD PRESSURE READINGS

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TO: Ulysses Slaughter  
 From: Joyce Rasin, PhD, RN, Widener University School of Nursing  
 Re: May 28, 2013

The following are the results of the 22 blood pressures I took at Edgemont on May 28, 2013.

ID# 28-May Blood pressure is typically recorded as two numbers, like this:

61 146/72 117 mm Hg  
 62 123/74 76  
 63 161/86 7

Read as "117 over 76 millimeters of mercury"

64 160/79  
 65 150/89  
 66 125/80  
 67 111/68  
 68 151/67  
 69 149/67  
 70 139/76  
 71 180/105  
 72 130/82  
 73 124/84  
 74 143/67  
 75 160/85  
 76 122/80  
 77 155/83  
 78 152/72  
 79 106/68  
 80 151/86  
 81 151/68  
 82 135/84

Blood pressure should normally be less than 120/80 mm g (less than 120 systolic AND less than 80 diastolic) for an adult age 20 or over.

Blood pressure Category*	Systolic mm Hg		Diastolic mm Hg	# of participants
Normal	Less than 120	and	Less than 80	2 (9%)
Prehypertension	120 - 139	or	80 - 89	7 (32%)
High Blood Pressure Stage 1	140 - 159	or	90 - 99	9 (41%)
High Blood Pressure Stage 2	160 or higher	or	100 or higher	4 (18%)
Hypertensive Crisis	>180	or	>110	0

Discussed medication compliance and use of low sodium foods.

\*Categories defined by The American Heart Association

A single high reading does not necessarily mean a person has high blood pressure.

Anyone who had an elevated blood pressure was instructed to stop exercising and rest if they experienced, chest pain, weakness, dizziness or lightheadedness, pressure or pain in chest, neck, arm jaw or shoulder or any other symptom that caused concern. If symptoms did not go away, instructed to seek emergency treatment.

[http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/AboutHighBloodPressure/Understanding-Blood-Pressure-Readings\\_UCM\\_301764\\_Article.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/AboutHighBloodPressure/Understanding-Blood-Pressure-Readings_UCM_301764_Article.jsp)

TO: Ulysses Slaughter  
 From: Joyce Rasin, PhD, RN, Widener University School of Nursing

The following are the results of the blood pressures I took at Booker T Washington on June 18, 2013.

ID#	6/18/2013	Blood pressure is typically recorded as two numbers, like this:
2	149/88	<u>117</u> mm Hg
5	150/81	76
14	107/89	7
8	125/72	
11	131/71	Read as "117 over 76 millimeters of mercury
3	143/82	
15	142/87	Blood pressure should normally be less than 120/80 mm g (less than 120 systolic AND less than 80 diastolic) for an adult age 20 or over .
16	128/85	
17	145/103	
18	133/97	Blood pressure rises with each heartbeat and falls when your heart relaxes between beats.
19	143/87	
20	131/74	BP can change from minute to minute with changes in posture, exercise, stress or sleep

Fifty percent of the participants had blood pressure done on May 21.

Blood pressure Category*	Systolic mm Hg		Diastolic mm Hg	# of participants
Normal	Less than 120	and	Less than 80	0
Prehypertension	120 - 139	or	80 - 89	5 (42%)
High Blood Pressure Stage 1	140 - 159	or	90 - 99	6 (50%)
High Blood Pressure Stage 2	160 or higher	or	100 or higher	1 (8%)
Hypertensive Crisis	>180	or	>110	0

Discussed medication compliance and use of low sodium foods.

\*Categories defined by The American Heart Association

A single high reading does not necessarily mean a person has high blood pressure.

Anyone who had an elevated blood pressure was instructed to stop exercising and rest if they experienced, chest pain, weakness, dizziness or lightheadedness, pressure or pain in chest, neck, arm jaw or shoulder or any other symptom that caused concern. If symptoms did not go away, instructed to seek emergency treatment.

[http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/AboutHighBloodPressure/Understanding-Blood-Pressure-Readings\\_UCM\\_301764\\_Article.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/AboutHighBloodPressure/Understanding-Blood-Pressure-Readings_UCM_301764_Article.jsp)

**APPENDIX C**  
SAMPLE: WEHL PARTICIPANT ACTIVITY REPORTS

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## Participant S----- W-----

Week of 8/5/2013- 8/8/2013  
The ANUME 2013 Summer Challenge

### Group fitness

Dance with Amanda Johnson @BTW	8/5/2013 (2 units)
Kickboxing with Butch @BTW	8/6/2013 (2 units)
Kickboxing with Butch @BTW	
Zumba & Insanity @BTW	8/8/2013 (2 units)

### Feed Your Brain

Nutrition & Lifestyle Habits  
Women's Circle/Fathers Are Talking discussion

### Hands-on WEHLness

Gateway Health Ins Event  
Healthy Cooking Class

### Monthly requirements (check if met)

Group grocery shopping  
Cooking demonstration

### WEHL Modules (check if completed)

Date (mm/dd/yy)

Convenience Store Triage  
Food Labels 101  
Avoiding injury

### Independent Fitness

6 units

## Participant Z----- W-----

Week of: April 22nd- April 25th 2013

### ANUME- 2013 Spring Challenge

#### Group fitness

Kick Boxing Exercise Class @ Wm Penn	4/22/2013
Zumba @ Wm Penn	4/23/2013
Boot Camp Exercise @ Wm Penn	4/24/2013
Zumba @ Wm Penn	4/25/2013
Total WEHL Exercise Units for the week	8

#### Independent fitness

Total WEHL Exercise Units for the week

#### Feed Your Brain

Session attended

#### Hands-on WEHLness

Gateway Health Ins Event  
Healthy Cooking Class

#### Monthly requirements (check if met)

Group grocery shopping  
Cooking demonstration

#### WEHL Modules (check if completed)    Date (mm/dd/yy)

Convenience Store Triage  
Food Labels 101  
Avoiding injury



## Participant T---- F-----

March 25, 2013

<b>Group fitness</b>		Mins	
<i>Kick Boxing Exercise Class @ Wm Penn</i>	3/25/2013	60	2
Zumba @ Wm Penn	3/26/2013	60	2
Boot Camp Exercise @ Wm Penn	3/27/2013	60	2
Zumba @ Wm Penn	3/28/2013	60	2
Total WEHL Exercise Units for the week			
<b>Independent fitness</b>			
<i>Aqua Therapy</i>	3/25/2013	120	4
Aqua Therapy	3/26/2013	120	4
Aqua Therapy	3/27/2013	120	4
Aqua Therapy	3/28/2013	120	4
Total WEHL Exercise Units for the week			
<b>Feed Your Brain</b>			
<i>Session attended</i>	Date (mm/dd/yy)		
<b>Hands-on WEHLness</b>			
<i>Gateway Health Ins Event</i>	3/27/2013	60	2
Healthy Cooking Class	3/27/2013	60	2
Monthly requirements (check if met)		✓	
Group grocery shopping	Date (mm/dd/yy)		
Cooking demonstration	Date (mm/dd/yy)		
WEHL Modules (check if completed)	Date (mm/dd/yy)	✓	
Convenience Store Triage			
Food Labels 101			
Avoiding injury			

**APPENDIX D**

SAMPLE: WEHL ACTIVITY UPDATE CORRESPONDENCE

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From: Ulysses Slaughter <ulyssesbutchslaughter@gmail.com>  
To: April Young (ayoung@newequitypartners.org)  
Cc: Steven Fischer <sfischer@chesterha.org>; Lyna Saad (lyna@rhgcommunities.com)  
Subject: Fwd: Summer Challenge- Week 1 & Week 2

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✉ Message



ANUME Summer  
Challenge- Week 1--



ANUME Summer

(Challenge- Week 2-- )

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April:

Attached please find the first two weeks of activity for the 2013 Summer Challenge. Also below find a brief narrative on our work that might be included in your reporting.

Thank you.

Ulysses "Butch" Slaughter

The 2013 CHA Anume Summer Challenge started June 17, 2013. Returning were many residents who completed the 2013 Spring Challenge along with many new participants. All activities were shifted from The William Penn Community Center to the Booker T. Washington Center in Chatham Village. This move was designed to stimulate new participation from the host community and hopefully retain participants from the previous session.

As an enrollment measure, all participants completed new hold harmless forms and new participation forms. Most participants took advantage of the blood pressure screenings conducted at Booker T. Washington on June 18, 2013 by Widener nurse practitioner Dr. Joyce Raison.

The first two weeks of the Summer Challenge included six days of exercise and two days of nutrition and lifestyle workshops guided by Ulysses "Butch" Slaughter and CHWs Deborah Montgomery, Tara Fontaine and Rasheem Foster. Project assistant Candace Montgomery also assisted these workshops.

The first nutritional session included a healthy meal consisting of water and chicken Caesar salads. The second nutritional session included no food but focused on healthy eating habits. A week-long challenge was developed by the group of 16 participants. Participants accepted the following seven-day challenge:

Drink one (1) gallon of water each day for seven days  
Eat at least one (1) apple, orange or grapefruit each day  
Eat one salad as a meal each day without store-bought salad dressing  
Do 50 situps or knees lifts each day  
Read a new book with at list 250 pages with seven days  
Stretch 30 minutes each day - 15 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes in the evening  
Participants also agreed NOT to consume any soda or potato chips for the seven days

On Wednesday July 3, the group will talk about challenges from the previous week.

On Friday June 29, 2013, CHW Tara Fontaine held her third Women's Circle. Nineteen women attend the discussion focused on remaining safe from various forms of abuse.

**APPENDIX E**  
MEDIA COVERAGE OF CHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY WEHL PROGRAM

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## ***From homes to health***

*The Chester Housing Authority (CHA) kicked-off its 2013 Spring Fitness Challenge on Monday at the William Penn Homes. The challenge is a 12-week initiative conducted at CHA community centers. Residents are being challenged to exercise at least 150 minutes per week for three months and can earn rewards for meeting program goals.*

*"Adequate and affordable shelter is key for families to better their lives," said CHA Executive Director **Steven Fischer**, "(but people) must tend to their personal health to feel better about themselves and, as a result, become better family and community members."*

*The Spring Challenge is conducted Mondays through Thursdays with some Sunday walks scheduled. The general public may attend.*





# Chester Housing Authority links home happiness to health and well-being

By Desire Grover  
dgrover@chesterspirit.com

The Chester Housing Authority (CHA) wants residents to become "heart healthy" and has developed a fitness project to help increase and maintain their health. "I believe it's important for us to remain as healthy as possible in the environment we live in," said Lauren Daniels, certified fitness instructor. "Some of us don't have the means or the opportunity to leave our community and go to a gym. So our goal is to bring fitness to where you are."

Last Monday, residents gathered at the William Penn Homes Community Center to participate in the first session of the 2013 Spring Challenge, a 12-week initiative conducted at CHA community centers. Residents are being challenged to exercise at least 150 minutes per week for three months and can earn rewards for meeting program goals.

"(CHA's) baseline goal is to make sure people have affordable adequate housing," said Ulysses "Butch" Slaughter, CHA special projects manager. "But the housing authority recognizes that unless people are healthy, housing them isn't going to work. They have to be healthy as well."

Upbeat music played

in the background as participants stretched at Slaughter's direction.

"We have team 'Divas and Dudes,'" announced Slaughter, laughing with some of the members who proudly posed at the acknowledgement of their team. "Divas come before Dudes," he said.

The other two teams were "The Motivators" and "Bonnie and Clyde." Members laughed at the light hearted antics put on by one another as they tried out new exercises.

Slaughter and his daughter, Jordan, led the group through a series of cardio exercises modeled after Muay Thai, a combat martial art from Thailand that uses fists, elbows, knees, shins and foot strikes along with various clinching techniques. The Muay Thai techniques were modified for cardio, much like an aerobics kickboxing class.

"Martial arts is unlike any other sport in my opinion," said Slaughter to the class, "You have to do things with your body in martial arts that you just don't have to do in other sports."

The "Challenge" will continue through the last week of May. Workout sessions are free to CHA residents and include Zumba, kickboxing, walking, line-dancing and other aerobic activities.

Nutrition

cooking classes and some gardening activities are also part of it.

"Adequate and affordable shelter is the key component for families to better their lives," said CHA Executive Director Steven Fischer. "Individuals though, must tend to their personal health to feel better about themselves and, as a result, become better family and community members. The goal of our health initiative is to provide motivation in supportive group settings. We are so pleased that it has taken off the way it has."

The Spring Challenge is conducted Mondays through Thursdays with some Sunday walks scheduled. The general public is invited to attend. Space is limited except for the group walks.

"I see this becoming bigger. We're reaching more people," praised Iris Ellis, supervisor of the Chester Health Workers.

CHA is Chester's largest affordable housing provider and administers and manages approximately 2,600 units. CHA operates four family developments and two senior citizen high-rises, serving approximately 1,000 families. The CHA also assists another 1,500 families through the administration of its Housing Choice Voucher Program.



Ulysses "Butch" Slaughter (above left, below right) teaches residents to throw rapid elbow strikes and punches as a part of their aerobics routines.



**APPENDIX F**  
SELECTED CHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY MATERIALS FOR CULTIVATING WEHL PARTNERSHIPS

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**The Chester Housing Authority Community Health Initiative** is a resident-centered, community development project designed to support healthy lifestyles through regular, diversified group exercise sessions, nutrition workshops, health alerts and weekly evaluations.

Development of The Community Health Initiative (CHI) was influenced in large part by the national health model called With Every Heartbeat is Life. Known to many as The WEHL Program, this initiative advocates optimal health for individuals, their families and the communities where they reside.

An emerging national model in its own right, The Community Health Initiative integrates relevant components of the WEHL program into a rapidly-developing local model that is comprehensively tailored to serve the unique needs of residents of the Chester Housing Authority.

The Community Health Initiative project staff includes five CHA residents who attend regular professional development workshops and project planning sessions. To ensure maximum benefit from their involvement, this CHA resident staff - designated as Community Health Workers - assists with program development, program management and also participates in all exercise activities. Above and beyond serving as verbal advocates of strong health, the Community Health Workers model good health through physical participation in all exercise sessions.

Community Health Workers partner in teams of two as "coaches" of four to six program participants. CHWs help with recruiting and orientation of prospective participants. Once fully enrolled, participants are assigned to CHW teams that serve as their primary points of contact for all program matters.

CHWs report directly to the program coordinator.

### **Seasonal Health and Fitness Challenges**

The Community Health Initiative offers four, 12-week, seasonal engagements each year. The Spring engagement - called The Spring Challenge - begins March 2013 and runs through May 2013. The Summer Challenge begins June 2013 and runs through August 2013.

### **Justification of method**

The United States Surgeon General and physicians from internationally renowned Mayo Clinic both recommend that adults "get at least 150 minutes a week of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes a week of vigorous aerobic activity." This exercise can take many forms - from walking and dancing to gardening and swimming.

In accordance with the stated national recommendations, The Community Health Initiative has designated every half hour of moderate activity as one unit of exercise. One hour of moderate exercise is designated as two (2) units of exercise.

The staff of Community Health Initiative challenges all participants to attend 75% (3 out of 4) of the group exercise engagements and report two additional individual units each week.

The Community Health Initiative will provide up to 300 minutes of group exercise opportunities each week for its residents. Additionally, our program will manage an exercise "lending library" complete with DVDs, pedometers, and jump ropes to encourage individual, at-home exercise routines.

### **Fitness Factors**

The Community Health Initiative monitors three "fitness factors" to measure individual progress and vitality. Blood pressure, weight and waist lines are measured once per week for each participant and logged in individual portfolios. These individual portfolios are stored in private folders and secured in locked file cabinets.

As often as necessary, Community Health Workers will counsel their team members individually and collectively concerning health goals for each week. In the interest of providing as much peer support as possible, our staff encourages program participants to attend as many large group exercise sessions as possible. However, to increase chances that participants will meet the 150-minute exercise minimum, our program staff schedules team sessions led by team coaches. One way or another, we are determined to make sure everyone does at least the minimum.

### **Nutritional guidance**

To compliment the program's exercise offerings, weekly nutrition guidance is provided to residents as well. Cooking classes, recipe cards and food preparation manuals are made available to our participants each week. To help participants retain basic nutritional information, our staff disseminates take-home quizzes twice each week. Most quizzes are designed with materials compiled in The WEHL educational manual.

Following is the current exercise offering for our participants.

**The WEHL Promotional Walk** is organized twice each week at two of three housing sites. Designed to spread the word about evening exercise offerings, the WEHL Promotional Walk is a 30-minute stroll through housing communities and adjacent neighborhoods. This activity counts for one (1) unit of exercise.

**The WEHL Walk** is a brisk one-hour stroll along Chester waterfront. Participants are encouraged to vary their paces, incorporate arm movements and periodically pause for muscle stretching activities. The one-hour WEHL walk covers a mile in distance and counts for two (2) units of exercise. This activity is offered twice per week on Monday and Wednesday afternoon.

**Zumba** is a one-hour aerobic dance class with ranges in intensity from low impact to moderate impact. Zumba incorporates modern dance moves with yoga, stretching and calisthenics to provide a total body experience. Conducted by a certified Zumba

instructor, this class is appropriate for ages 9 through 90. The one-hour engagement counts for two (2) units of exercise. This activity is offered twice a week.

**Kick-Box** class is a one-hour low-level martial arts class that engages participants in very basic techniques of martial arts. Techniques from of Muay Thai, Tae Kwon Do and Karate are integrated with traditional boxing movements to provide a well-rounded, total body engagement. Kicks, punches, leg lifts, elbow strikes and marching make up a very challenging activity. This offering is available as an alternative to Zumba and counts for two (2) units of exercise.

**Stretching** sessions are 20 minutes following one of the strenuous WEHL workouts. The technique centers on a six-foot piece of rope. (The 20-cent investment delivers valuable returns for a lifetime!) Participants learn to stretch out tired muscles so they will feel better the next day and will be motivated to work out again. Ropes are provided to all participants to keep for use with or without an instructor. (Good for use in front of televisions at home...)

# Chester Housing Authority

## CHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY WEHL PROGRAM SUMMARY SEASONAL CHALLENGE *Sponsorship Initiative*



With its series of seasonal challenges, the most recent of which was Summer Challenge 2013, the Chester Housing Authority has turned lives around. Public housing residents have lost weight, have learned to select and prepare fresh vegetables and fruits, have established a rigorous exercise schedule, and most importantly have greatly improved their health risk profile.

The Chester Housing Authority (CHA) WEHL<sup>1</sup> program focuses sharply on reducing cardiovascular risk among residents, providing them activities, guidance, and support to improve their risk profiles and achieve healthy lives. There are six key components of the program:

- **Group fitness sessions** include walking, strength training, aerobics, and Zumba.
- **Independent fitness activities** participants undertake on their own to enhance lifestyle assimilation of exercise.
- **Nutrition and wellness workshops** cover a wide range of more formal educational sessions gathered under the banner Feed Your Brain.
- **Hands-on educational activities** include cooking groups/demos, weekly visits to local organic producer Hillside Farm, monthly group grocery store shopping trips, our Convenience Store Triage Module, and Gateway health seminars.
- **Healthy food access** ensures provision of deeply discounted or no-cost fresh produce items and grains, often with an emphasis on introducing participants to non-traditional items.
- **WEHL Community Survey** has gathered information from approximately 300 Chester Housing Authority residents at large about such topics as health status, fitness activity, food access, civic involvement, and housing satisfaction. The study has established an important empirical data set on well-being among low-income residents in an urban setting.

To expand support and awareness of the good work of the Chester Housing Authority WEHL program, CHA is seeking sponsors for the seasonal challenges. Regional and local philanthropies and businesses will have a highly visible association with a program that is making a measurable difference in the lives of low-income people and their families.

In addition to promoting better health, the WEHL program imparts critical job skills to residents. WEHL participants are trained to apply the health knowledge and outreach skills they acquire to emerging needs in the Chester community and surrounding areas. For instance, CHA WEHL alumni stand at the ready to disseminate information about the Affordable Care Act and to support its implementation. Upon completing the program, they have the experience and networks to communicate the provisions of the federal Affordable Care Act. They are a cadre of trained and motivated outreach workers who can enroll low-income residents into the program and support its prevention-focused core messages.

The CHA WEHL program works in tandem with other CHA initiatives such as the Bennett Community Garden and Farmers' Market to promote healthy, active living and food security in the Chester community and beyond.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT STEVE FISCHER, CHA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, [sfischer@chesterha.org](mailto:sfischer@chesterha.org).

<sup>1</sup> WEHL is an acronym for "With Every Heartbeat is Life," a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the NIH's National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute designed to address elevated cardiovascular health risk among the population living in the nation's public housing.