



THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OFFICE

JULY 2012 - JUNE 2013 ANNUAL REPORT





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A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR⁴

October 2013

Dear Mayor Taveras, Providence City Councilors, and residents of the City of Providence,

I am pleased to present the first annual report of the Providence Healthy Communities Office.

Where people live, work, learn and play profoundly influence their health, well-being and behaviors. People living in environments where nutritious food and opportunities for physical activity are available and affordable are less likely to be obese and acquire chronic diseases related to obesity. People in smoke-free environments are less likely to suffer from tobacco-related illnesses. Youth who are living in environments where healthy positive behaviors and choices are the norm, and harmful substances are not available, are less likely to use drugs and alcohol. These are some of the reasons that Mayor Angel Taveras signed an executive order in August 2012 establishing a Healthy Communities Office.

The executive order required that the office issue an annual report at the end of each city fiscal year on the previous year's work. This is a great opportunity to take stock of all the work we have done since the office was formally established in August 2012, and it also helps us to plan strategically where we are going in the future as we continue to seek a healthier city for all residents through policy, environmental, programmatic and infrastructural change.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or any of our staff with questions you may have about our work, or with any suggested ways we can work together for a healthier city.

Sincerely,

Peter Asen, M.S., A.P.S.

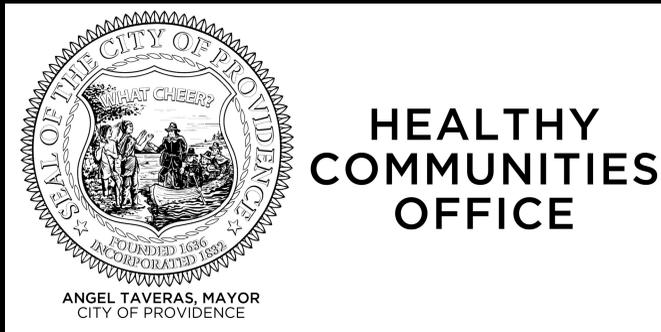
A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MAYOR'S SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION COUNCIL AND THE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OFFICE



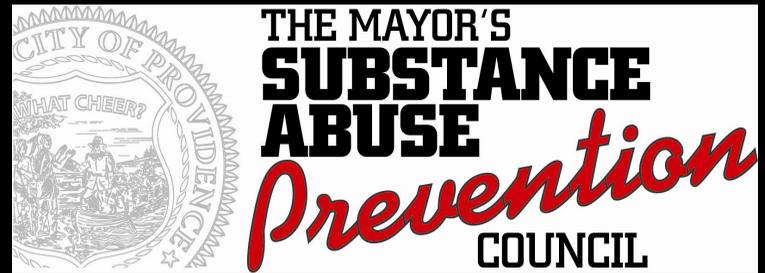
In August of 2012, Mayor Angel Taveras signed an executive order expanding the Mayor's Substance Abuse Prevention Council (MSAPC) to create a new Healthy Communities Office (HCO) to serve as a platform for Healthy Community policy, systems change, community coordination and financing.

The Mayor's Substance Abuse Prevention Council (MSAPC) had been operating as an effective coalition since 1987. The MSAPC is now one program within the Healthy Communities Office, and remains the lead drug and alcohol prevention voice and policy making body for the City of Providence.

In January 2013, the HCO also convened a new Healthy Communities Advisory Council made up of more than two dozen stakeholders from around the city to provide input and support to the city's healthy eating, active living, and other public health initiatives. The work of the HCAC and MSAPC are coordinated and connected through a single Healthy Communities Office staff.



6



MAYOR ANGEL TAVERAS' VISION FOR THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE IS TO CREATE A HEALTHY AND VIBRANT CITY:

- ◆ with an abundance of opportunities for walking, biking, sports and exercise
- ◆ where residents in every neighborhood, even those without traditional supermarkets, have access to fresh and affordable fruits and vegetables
- ◆ filled with community and school gardens, access to farm-based produce, eggs and meats and opportunities for urban agriculture
- ◆ with schools that serve healthy and nutritious meals, and children have ample opportunity for physical activity and access to recreational programs
- ◆ where alcohol and tobacco are not available to youth in stores, where youth make positive healthy choices and parents are knowledgeable and involved
- ◆ where children, youth and residents feel safe and have full access to neighborhood parks, fields and walking paths

FUNDING— CURRENT GRANTS

During Fiscal Year 2013 we wrapped up our Communities Putting Prevention to Work grant through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and also had funding from three other ongoing state and federal grants. Less than 20 percent of the office's budget comes from the City of Providence general fund. Our current grants are listed and described below :

Drug Free Communities (DFC)

Since the passage of the DFC Act in 1997, the DFC program has funded nearly 2,000 coalitions and currently mobilizes nearly 9,000 community volunteers across the country. The Drug Free Communities Support Program (DFC) provides funding to community-based coalitions that organize to prevent youth substance use. The philosophy behind the DFC program is that local drug problems require local solutions. Providence will be funded through September 2014, and we receive \$125,000 per federal fiscal year from DFC. The program is administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Rhode Island Substance Abuse Prevention Act (RISAPA)

In 1987, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed RISAPA—RI General Laws 16-21.2—to promote comprehensive prevention programming at the community level. Funding for RISAPA is provided through an annual legislative appropriation administered by the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals. Thirty-five municipal task forces, covering all of the state's 39 cities and towns, engage in local needs assessments; and planning, implementation, and evaluation of strategies, policies, and programs to produce long-term reductions in substance use and abuse. We received \$90,000 in FY2013 but due to a cut in the state budget are slated to receive only \$69,653 in FY2014.

Centers for Health Equity and Wellness (CHEW)

In January 2013, The Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) awarded \$100,000 grants to eight community organizations serving low-income neighborhoods in Providence, Pawtucket and Central Falls, including the Healthy Communities Office. These grants are made through federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) funds. The CHEW grant may be renewed for up to two additional years through December 2015. The HCO's grant is focused on multiple interventions aimed at increasing healthy food access and consumption in the city.

HEALTHY EATING

LOTS OF HOPE—URBAN AGRICULTURE

Publication: The Providence Journal; Date: Jan 16, 2013; Section: Rhode Island; Page: A-4

PROVIDENCE

Lots of Hope for urban farming

City, land trust and foundation envision greening of vacant spaces, boosting 'air quality, public health and local property values'

By ALISHA A. PINA
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Providence officials are working with the Southside Community Land Trust and Rhode Island Foundation to transform vacant, city-owned land into urban farms.

The initiative, Lots of Hope, allows city residents to "access low-cost, underutilized public land from the city along with technical assistance and hands-on support from Southside Community Land Trust," according to Tuesday's news release from the city.

"Providence has a vital environmental community committed to helping make the city more sustainable," Mayor Angel Taveras said. "Together, we are moving forward to transform Providence into one of the greenest cities in the nation."

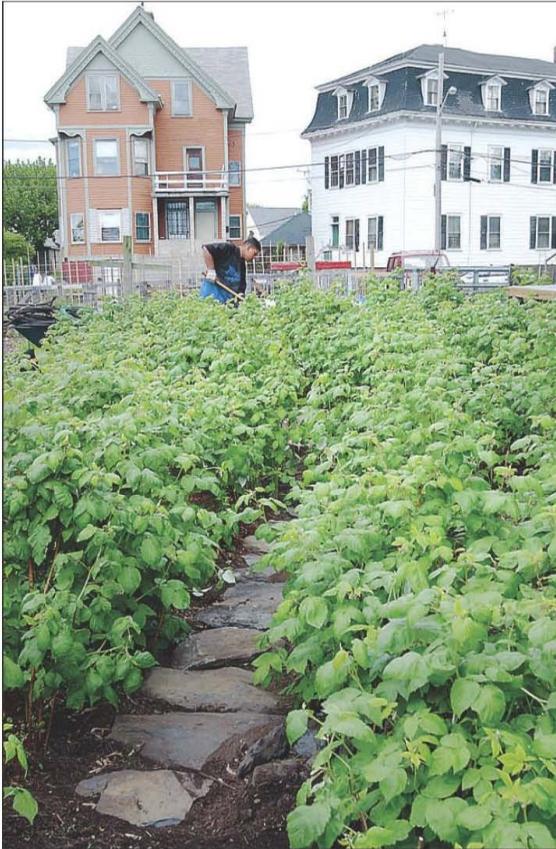
The program is financed by a \$50,000 grant from Local Sustainability Matching Fund, of Florida, which gave money this year to Providence and five other cities across America to catalyze partnerships between governments and local foundations.

A matching \$50,000 grant from the Rhode Island Foundation gives Lots of Hope \$100,000 with which to work.

The city is working with the land trust to identify land that can become urban gardens. With City Council approval, Providence will enter into long-term, low-cost leases with the land trust. The trust will then sublease it to residents and community organizations for farming.

A fund adviser for the Kenedda Fund, one of several groups that make up the Florida-based organization, says the initiatives in the six cities will "create new models for how to live sustainably." Continued Diane Ives, "We are eager to see the impact of this work at the local level, and how it gets replicated in other urban settings around the country."

Lots of Hope is designed to "improve access to locally grown fresh produce in neighborhoods at risk of becoming 'food deserts' due to insufficient access to conventional grocery stores," the news release states. It will "expand Providence's portfolio of green, open space and contribute to improvements in air quality, public health and local property values," according to the release.



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / SANDOR BODO

Under the Lots of Hope initiative, underutilized city-owned land can be leased long term and at low cost to be used for urban farming. City Farm, above, is a 3/4-acre farm in South Providence.



"Fresh, affordable and locally grown food is good for Providence families, our communities and our economy."

Margaret DeVos
Southside Community Land Trust

The program will also introduce a residential composting program for families to reduce solid waste and create a local source of high-quality compost.

"Fresh, affordable and locally grown food is good for Providence families, our communities and our economy," said Margaret DeVos, executive director of the land trust. "Lots of Hope demonstrates Southside Community Land Trust's 30-year commitment to healthy lifestyles, high quality of life and environmental sustainability in neighborhoods across the city."

The mayor's administration says information about how interested residents can get involved with Lots of Hope will be announced this spring.

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(401) 277-7465
Twitter@AlishaPina

A new initiative, called 'Lots of Hope', is transforming city-owned vacant lots into urban farms. Through funding by the Rhode Island Foundation, the Local Sustainability Matching Fund and the RI Department of Health, The Healthy Communities Office is identifying open space throughout Providence that have the potential to function as productive urban farms. We are working with the City Council to enter into long-term leases of these lots to our partner Southside Community Land Trust (SCLT) at a low-cost, with SCLT subleasing them to community members and organizations for farming in turn.

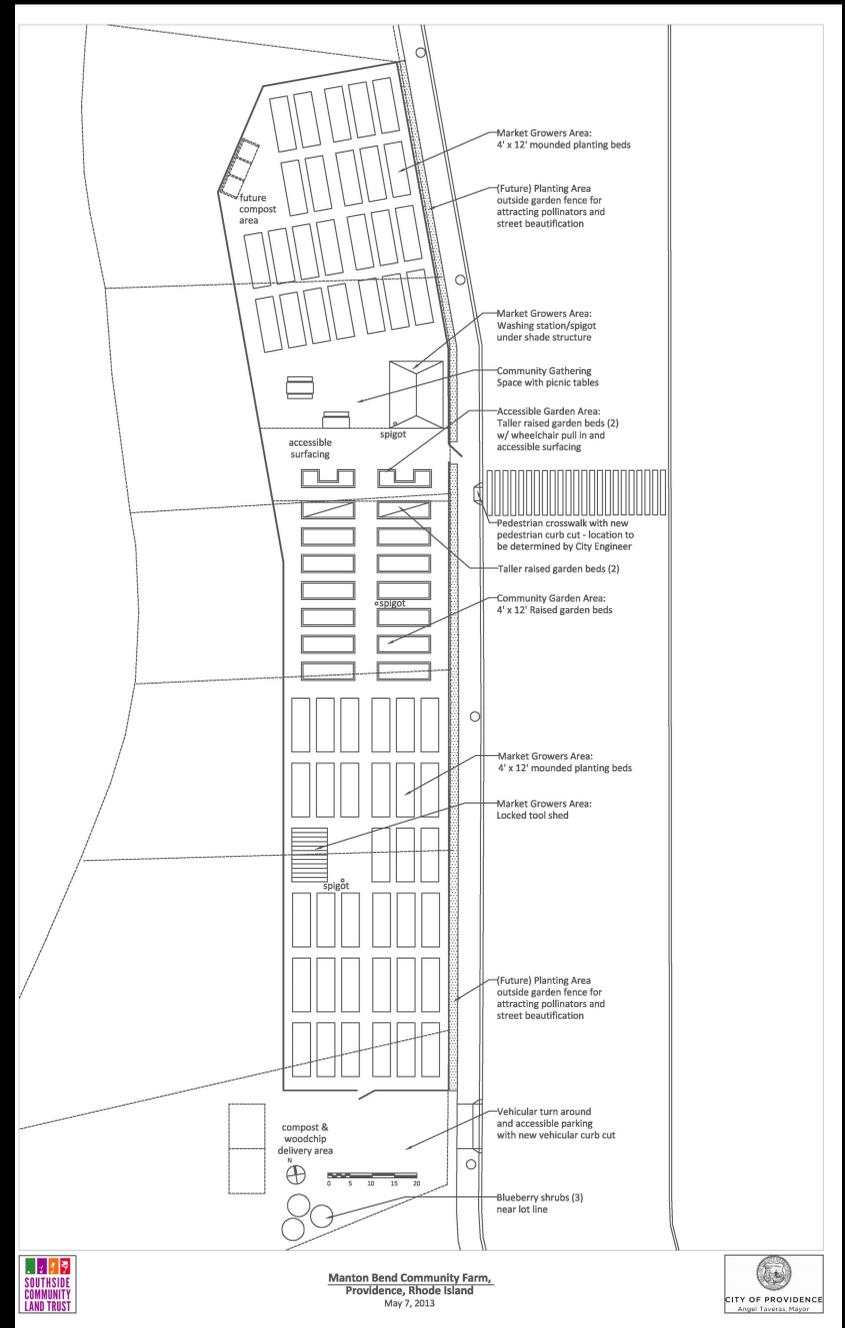
Lots of Hope also includes a neighborhood pilot compost program which in FY2014 is working with three local neighborhood organizations on local compost programs.



MANTON BEND COMMUNITY FARM

The First Lots of Hope Farm, with construction beginning in June 2013.

- 6 contiguous lots, almost 24,000 sq ft.
- 57 market grower mounded beds (4x12')
- 12 community raised beds (4x12')
- 2 taller raised beds (4x12')
- 2 taller raised beds with wheelchair pull-in
- Market grower washing station
- Community gathering space with picnic tables
- Market grower tool shed
- Future compost area



SUMMER MEALS PARTICIPATION

This past year, we worked with the Department of Parks and Recreation to pursue new strategies to promote and expand participation in the federally funded summer meals program. The Summer Meals Program helps to ensure that low-income children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. Free meals, that meet Federal nutrition guidelines, are provided to all children 18 years old and under.



For the coming year, we have received a grant from the National League of Cities to plan and implement strategies to expand both summer and after school meals.

USDA
United States Department of Agriculture

Summer Food Rocks!

Find Sites Serving Summer Meals

Call 2-1-1
to find help getting food
for your family

CITY OF PROVIDENCE
Rhode Island
211
Get Connected. Get Answers.

USDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

CLICK HERE TO SUPPORT RINPR

\$15000 \$30000 \$45000

Health Care 2:45 PM TUE MAY 7, 2013

USDA to Help RI Feed Low-Income Kids This Summer

By [KRISTIN GOURLAY](#) @PEOPLEKRISTINGOURLAY

Rhode Island is getting a boost from the US Department of Agriculture to help attract more kids in need to its summer food program. The USDA's goal is to increase participation by 10 percent.

Listen 0:52

USDA helping Rhode Island feed more low-income kids during the summer

The nationwide Summer Food Service Program provides free meals to low-income kids when school is not in session. It's a continuation of the free and reduced price lunch program for kids who might depend on those meals during the school year to keep from going hungry. About 50,000 kids in Rhode Island receive free or reduced price meals during school, but



HEALTHY SCHOOLS

USDA HEALTHIER US SCHOOLS CHALLENGE AWARDS 2013

The Healthier US School Challenge is a voluntary certification initiative established in 2004 to recognize those schools participating in the National School Lunch Program that have created healthier school environments through promotion of nutrition and physical activity. In February, USDA Food and Nutrition Service Regional Administrator James Arena-DaRosa awarded 17 Providence elementary schools with a Bronze healthier schools designation.



PPSD WELLNESS COMMITTEE & WELLNESS POLICY



Throughout the 2012-13 school year, HCO staff worked with a range of partners on the School Wellness Committee to promote ways to increase integration of healthy living into our schools. This included leading a team from the Wellness Committee to participate in a Wellness Collaborative led by the RI Department of Education over the Winter and Spring to review and redraft the district's wellness policy. In the coming year the revisions will be presented to the full School Board for their approval, and the HCO plans to help with implementation efforts.



PPSD FARM TO SCHOOL & SCHOOL GARDENS

May 2013:
Mary E.
Fogarty School/
Community
Garden Build-out



Grow your own Food

at the new

Mary E. Fogarty School/Community Garden!

Garden plots are available for community members for a small annual fee. The garden is part of the Providence Community Growers Network & is made possible through a grant from the Providence Children's Initiative, a program of Family Service of Rhode Island.

Come to the Community Build!

Show your support for your school & your community. Bring a hammer and drill if you have one and help build the raised beds for the garden. Lunch & snacks will be provided.

Saturday, May 4th 2013

(Rain Date: Sunday May 5th)

Two shifts: 10 am-1 pm & 1pm - 4pm

Call Abby at (401) 639-4724 or email fogartygarden@gmail.com to sign up for a garden plot or to get more information.



Providence Children's Initiative



April 2013:
PPSD
submits its first
ever USDA
Farm to School
Grant proposal



ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

BIKE TO WORK DAY— MAY 17, 2013

BURNSIDE PARK



With spring in the air, the City of Providence and the RI Bicycle Coalition celebrated Bike to Work Day on Friday, May 17th as part of National Bike Month. Mayor Taveras urged everyone to bike to work or try cycling for fun, fitness or transportation.

2013 BIKE TO WORK DAY
DIA DE IR AL TRABAJO EN BICICLETA



Friday/Viernes, 5/17
Burnside Park
7-10 am

Raffle, free food & more!
iRifa, comida gratis & más!



CYCLOVÍA PROVIDENCE 2013

Ciclovia (n) also *ciclovia*, *cyclovia* (or also open streets in English-speaking countries): a car-free event that opens Providence streets to people so that they can walk, skate, run, bicycle, exercise and socialize. The events are free, open to the public and fun for people of all ages. Two events were held on Broad Street during FY2013 (September 2012 and June 2013) with two more held in other neighborhoods later in summer 2013



On Bike to Work Day, Mayor Taveras Announces Expanded 2013 'Providence Cyclovia' Schedule

Friday, May 17, 2013



City to hold three Cyclovias this summer.

Speaking at this morning's Bike to Work Day community celebration, Mayor Angel Taveras announced the city will host an expanded schedule of Providence Cyclovia events this summer.

"Cyclovia Providence will provide an opportunity for residents from every corner of the city to come together, exercise, have fun and enjoy all that Providence has to offer," said Mayor Taveras.

Cyclovia is an international phenomenon that reportedly began in Bogotá, Colombia and has spread to cities across the globe, including New York City, Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Miami and Cambridge, MA.

Project for Public Spaces, a nonprofit planning organization, has described Cyclovia as a large-scale community building exercise that facilitates social interaction and activity between people of all ages, incomes, occupations, religions and races.

The City held its first Cyclovia in September 2012 on Broad Street. The 2013 Cyclovias will be expanded to the following dates and locations:

- Sunday, June 30 - Broad St. in Elmwood (between Thurbers Ave. and Prairie Ave.)
- Sunday, July 28 - Valley St. in Olneyville (between San Souci Dr. and Atwells Ave.)
- Saturday, September 14 - Hope St. in the East Side (between Lippitt Park and Rochambeau Ave.)

Sunday/Domingo
9/9/2012
CYCLOVÍA
providence

PLAYFUL PROVIDENCE

The City of Providence was honored in 2012 and again in 2013 as a “Playful City USA” by KaBOOM!, a national non-profit dedicated to saving play for America’s children.

The national program honors cities and towns that make play a priority and use innovative programs to get children active, playing and healthy. The first Playful Providence Weekend was held in September 2012 this was expanded to a summer long celebration for 2013.



Pop-Up PLAY Day!

Explore a Pop-Up Adventure Playground to kick off Playful Providence 2013 – a citywide celebration of play!

Saturday, May 11 • 12 - 5 PM
at India Point Park in Providence

A Pop-Up Adventure Playground is a free public celebration of open-ended, child-directed play featuring an abundance of “loose parts” like sticks and branches, cardboard boxes, fabric and other interesting materials. Build forts, design structures, invent imaginative playthings and more!

The second annual Playful Providence is a 5-month citywide celebration of play commemorating Providence’s status as a Playful City, a recognition that honors cities and towns that make play a priority.

Speaking program with Mayor Angel Taveras at 3:30 PM

For more information, visit providenceparks.org.

Presented by

PROVIDENCE PARKS
CITY OF PROVIDENCE
ANGEL TAVERAS, MAYOR

PROVIDENCE Children's museum

POP-UP ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND

Department of Parks and Recreation | Department of Art, Culture & Tourism | Healthy Communities Office | Office of Sustainability

In collaboration with Mental Health Association of Rhode Island, Friends of India Point Park and other partners. Media Sponsor **Kidinfo**

UNDERAGE ALCOHOL USE
PREVENTION

TIPS TRAINING— SUNDAY, MAY 5TH, 2013

The HCO hosted a free TiPs Training for all liquor store owners, managers, and employees. The goal of the training was to giving those who sell alcohol the tools and knowledge to prevent sales to youth and intoxicated individuals.

Thirty-two employees, managers and owners from 18 liquors stores attended the TiPs Training, a great showing, as off-premise stores are not required by law to attend this training.

FREE TIPS TRAINING

The City of Providence will be offering to all owners and staff of Providence's Class A Liquor Stores a **FREE TIPS** Responsible Beverage Service Training.

The Class will provide a Certification Good For 3 Years

Sunday, May 5th
8:30am to 11:30 a.m.

Club Juan Pablo Duarte
100 Niagara St Providence, RI 02907

Pre-register by April 19th by calling Obed Papp at 401.421.7740 x505 or emailing opapp@providenceri.com.



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OFFICE



Under 30?



Show Us Your ID.

“Join us as part of the solution to underage drinking in our community.”

Become a TiPs Certified Vendor



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OFFICE



TOWN HALL MEETING ON UNDERAGE DRINKING

“Crush Teen Drinking Before It Crushes Our Teens”

Thursday, May 16th, 2013

Hosted by MSAPC/HCO, in partnership with MADD and New Dimension Church, The Town Hall Meeting on Underage Drinking was held to allow leaders in the fields of substance abuse prevention, law enforcement, substance use treatment, medicine, and K-9 education, to share their knowledge and answer questions from and to discuss solutions with community members.



UNDERAGE ALCOHOL USE PREVENTION



The Town Hall Meeting on Underage Drinking allowed community leaders and experts discuss the issues while parents and community members voiced their opinions and asked tough questions regarding underage alcohol consumption.



Panelists (Right) From Left to Right:

Jim Gillen, *Anchor Recovery Community Center*;
Adrian Ramos, *Student*; Barbara Allen, *Student Assistance Counselor*;
Patrolman Scott Zambarano, *Providence Police Department*;
Dr. Otis Warren, *Emergency Room Physician, Lifespan*.

The moderator (pictured top right) was MADD board member Victor Ramos.



TOBACCO USE PREVENTION

FLAVORED AND DISCOUNTED TOBACCO BAN

In January 2012, Mayor Taveras signed the ordinances banning the sale of tobacco products and store discounts aimed at children. The tobacco industry sued in February to prevent the laws from taking effect. In December 2012, U.S. District Court Chief Judge Mary Lisi denied the plaintiffs' request to enjoin the laws and granted summary judgment for the City, dismissing the case. The City began enforcement of the ordinances on January 3, 2013. The ordinances were again upheld by the US First Circuit Court of Appeals in the Fall of 2013.

Before the decision, the Healthy Communities Office led education of vendors about the new ordinances, and did a new round of education about the ordinances once the decision was handed down. From January to June 2013, Providence Police officers issued 15 citations to stores for violations of these two ordinances.

Throughout the year, we also continued to coordinate opportunities for free smoking cessation classes and nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products for uninsured and underinsured residents, in collaboration with Providence Housing Authority and Tri-Town Community Action.



DIRECTOR PRESENTS TOBACCO WORK AROUND THE STATE AND COUNTRY

Providence's Law Protecting Children Against Flavored Tobacco Garners Attention at Florida Conference



Providence's new tobacco sales policies, as well as our other efforts to reduce youth tobacco use and exposure through media campaigns, school and housing policies and smoking cessation services have attracted attention from around the country.

In July 2012, HCO Director Peter Asen went to Orlando, FL to speak to a gathering of adult organizers and youth activists from Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) programs across Florida. The conference was organized by Tobacco Free Florida and the Florida Department of Health.

Asen highlighted data from Providence showing that more high school students are smoking cigars and cigarillos and chewing tobacco, which are marketed in many fruit and candy flavors, even as youth cigarette smoking has declined. A federal law passed in 2009 banned the sale of flavored cigarettes aside from menthol but did not limit the use of flavors in other tobacco products. In Florida, the community of South Miami in 2012 banned the sale of flavored chewing tobacco and Miami-Dade County was considering a ban on all flavored tobacco products.

Asen has also presented to statewide tobacco control advocates through the RI Tobacco Control Program's quarterly meeting, as well as to southern Rhode Island residents at a forum sponsored by the Chariho Substance Abuse Task Force.

RALLY FOR A HEALTHIER CITY

We celebrated the City's successes and ongoing commitment to tobacco prevention at the Rally for a Healthier City on Monday, August 20, 2012 at Burnside Park (in Kennedy Plaza) in downtown Providence. The Rally was a success with over 150 people in attendance. Mayor Taveras, Providence City Council leaders, RI Department of Health Director Dr. Michael Fine, national tobacco prevention leader Danny McGoldrick from the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, and Providence residents of all ages from across the city came celebrate our efforts to build a city free from the harmful effects of tobacco.



PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS PREVENTION PRESENTATIONS

Classical High School

10/26/2012

Jorge Alvarez High School

11/16/2012

Providence Career and Technical Academy

2/27/2013

Mount Pleasant High School

3/20/2013

E³ Academy

3/27/2013

Nathan Bishop Middle School

5/2/2013

Nathanael Greene Middle School

3/13/2013

Gilbert Stuart Middle School

3/7/2013

Roger Williams Middle School

4/30/2013

MIDDLE SCHOOL ALCOHOL AND MARIJUANA ABUSE PREVENTION



In conjunction with the Rhode Island National Guard, the Healthy Communities Office hosted marijuana and alcohol use prevention presentations.

The presentations featured Sgt. Camilo Batista of the National Guard and Chris Creech of the Healthy Communities Office. The speakers discussed basics about what Marijuana is and does, while addressing myths and answering questions.

Students then discuss the dangers of alcohol use and impaired driving. Students have the ability to impact the decisions older sibling and parents make, and the decisions they will make in the future. Students gain firsthand knowledge of how dangerous it is to drink and drive after using the National Guards “Drunk Driving Simulator Carts.”

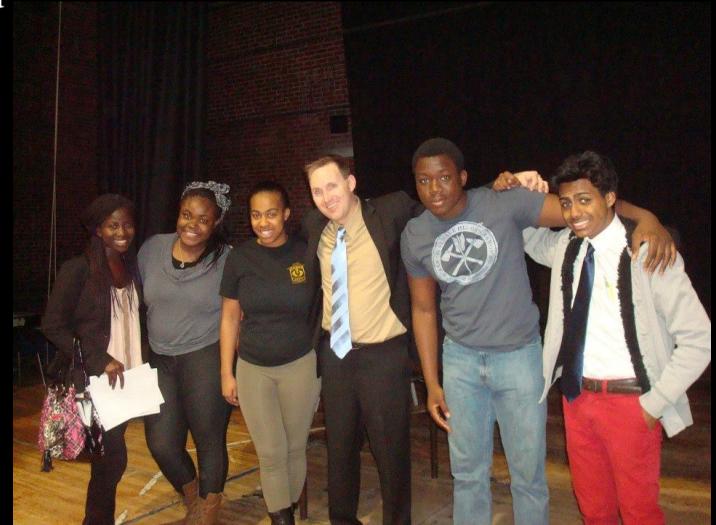


The Middle School Prevention Presentation inspired students to think for themselves and to ask questions. Empowering students and giving them the knowledge and tools to succeed is the goal of the Healthy Communities Office.

HIGH SCHOOL BINGE DRINKING PREVENTION PRESENTATION

Underage binge drinking among High School students was the main issue that the Healthy Communities Office looked to impact in the 2012-13 school year. PPSD students were introduced to Scott Maloney, a motivational speaker and alcohol abuse prevention advocate. Through the speaking presentations, Scott was able to teach Providence High School students about the dangers of binge drinking.

Scott told his story of how one night of drinking changed the rest of his life. Falling from the roof of his 3-story dorm, Scott entered into a coma and was forced to fight for his life. Scott's story shocked and inspired Providence students to make positive, healthy choices.



MIDDLE SCHOOL OUTREACH TOTALS

NATHAN BISHOP-50

NATHANAEL GREENE- 35

GILBERT STUART- 35

ROGER WILLIAMS-35

TOTAL STUDENTS
REACHED-155

HIGH SCHOOL OUTREACH TOTALS

CLASSICAL-600

ALVAREZ-500

PCTA-200

MT. PLEASANT-340

E CUBED -100

TOTAL STUDENTS
REACHED-1740

PRESCRIPTION DRUG
ABUSE PREVENTION

PRESS CONFERENCE TO ANNOUNCE PRESCRIPTION TAKE BACK DAYS



In September 2012, Mayor Angel Taveras and Attorney General Peter Kilmartin announced that Providence and communities around the state would be hosting a Prescription Take Back Day on September 29th, 2012.



Providence Residents and state and local law enforcement officials attended the Press Conference. Event partner Walgreens was also present at the event (Regional Director Ralph Seavey is pictured with Mayor Taveras at top left).



PRESCRIPTION TAKE BACK DAY

Saturday, September 29th, 2012

The event consisted of two collection sites at Walgreens stores-- one at the Public Safety Complex and one at the Mayor's Seniors Day at the Park. 18 community partners participated in a health and resource fair at the Elmwood Avenue Walgreens location.

Over 700 community members participated and disposed of 124 pounds of Prescription Drugs.



PRESCRIPTION TAKE BACK DAY

Saturday, April 27th, 2013

Our 3rd Prescription Drug Take Back Day, in April 2013, was a great success. We collected 166 pounds of prescription drugs in Providence, the most of any community around the state, and also helped make this the most successful statewide take back day yet, with over 2,300 pounds collected.

The event included a resource fair which was supported by 30 community partners who provided the those in attendance with information about their programs and how to prevent prescription drug abuse.



PRESCRIPTION TAKE BACK BIN

Since April of 2012, the Healthy Communities Office has collected 479 pounds of prescription drugs. Prescription Take Back Events not only allow us to remove prescription drugs from our community, they also allow us to educate the community about the dangers of prescription drug abuse.



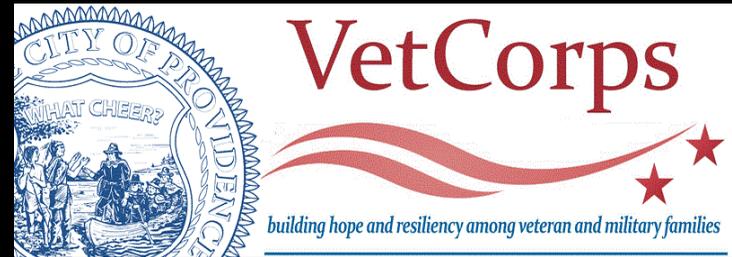
Another vehicle for sustainable change and education is our newly installed Prescription Take Back Bin. The City of Providence has installed a MedReturn Drug Take-Back Bin on the first floor of the Providence Public Safety Complex, providing a safe, secure method for residents to dispose of unused and expired prescription drugs.

"While many residents have participated in the City's biannual drug take-back days, everyone will now have a disposal option that is available throughout the year," said Mayor Angel Taveras in announcing the bin.

Many people are unaware that unused and expired medicines that remain in home medicine cabinets can be susceptible to misuse and abuse. Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, and can be taken from the home medicine cabinet.

CADCA VETCORPS PROGRAM— YEAR ONE

Beginning in late January, 2013, the Healthy Communities Office joined VetCorps, a national program developed by the National Guard Bureau's Prevention Treatment and Outreach Program, the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) and the Corporation for National and Community Service.



CITY IN SMALL STATE TARGETS BIG PROBLEMS WITH VETCORPS INITIATIVE

Providence, R.I. coalition and its newly-formed VetCorps project know their data. Yet, they approach these numbers by treating the needs of the unique individuals in the community. Individuals who have returned home from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and need help accessing jobs and healthcare services.

The number of homeless people in Rhode Island surged by more than 10 percent last year, according to statistics released in April that reflect the state's economy and a social safety net that advocates say is stretched to the breaking point. Homeless veterans and children saw the largest increases in the numbers, which were compiled by the state's Homeless Management Information System and released at a Statehouse event. The number of veterans who faced homelessness increased 23 percent to about 300 last year.

Advocates say the increases in homelessness are attributable to Rhode

Island's continued economic struggles and a lack of affordable housing. In addition to this, Rhode Island's unemployment rate for February was 9.4 percent, one of the highest rates in the nation. Approximately 22 percent of the city population lives below the poverty line.

No job leads to no housing which lead to a gamut of unhealthy and risky behavior such as substance abuse, said Peter Asen, Director of Mayor Angel Taveras' newly-established Healthy Communities Office. The office expanded on the existing work of the Mayor's Substance Abuse Prevention Council to coordinate a wider range of policy and service initiatives to promote public health in the city. The office is focused on tobacco and substance abuse prevention as well as healthy eating and active living.

CADCA's VetCorps project, then, became a perfect fit for Providence, allowing them to effectively address substance abuse

and quality of life issues with veterans and their families by connecting all these agencies that provide services to veterans, said Obed Papp, Drug Free Communities Coordinator.

Asen said, "Health challenges are connected to each other. If you impact one, maybe you can address all the other issues."

The largest portion of military personnel who reside in Rhode Island serve with the Reserve or the National Guard, Asen said.

These groups of military personnel live in civilian communities rather than on military bases and may have limited access to support services and resources designed to help military families.

"We just thought [CADCA VetCorps] was a way for us to be able to connect to this other community of people," Asen said.

So far, their planning and work have paid off.

Service Saturday held in March brought the coalition together with the CCRI Student Veteran Organization and Rhode Island Campus Compact to clean up and beautify a veteran housing area. In conjunction with the Rhode Island National Guard, the coalition hosts regular marijuana, alcohol and other drug prevention presentations at Providence public middle schools. The coalition also held a Veteran Community Prescription Drug Take-Back Day April 27 to not only collect expired and unused medications, but also to raise Rx abuse awareness in the veteran community.

To put people, especially veterans, back to work, Mayor Taveras and the nearby city of Cranston's mayor, Allan Fung, announced a new partnership to target unemployment, with Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston. One of the partnership's first projects is a job fair. The MSAPC VetCorps Project and the City hosted the Mayors' Veteran and Military Family Job Fair on April 26 which also featured a roundtable discussion and employment services.

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VETCORPS INITIATIVE

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"The MSAPC VetCorps Project headed up the employment services fair with the intention of creating sustainable change in the lives of unemployed or underemployed veterans and their families, and also to target homelessness," said VetCorps member Christopher Creech.

Asen, Papp and Creech agreed that participating in the VetCorps project has empowered the MSAPC to connect to a larger segment of their community, bridging gaps for veterans' services and to the veterans, themselves.

"A lot of it is about creating those peer-to-peer connections," Creech added.

The coalition has been able to engage civilian organizations and services as well as their local National Guard, VA Medical Center, State VA Services, and Veteran Member Organizations. They are also planning to increase their capacity when another city in Providence County, Woonsocket, soon cultivates their own VetCorps program.

VetCorps is a project launched by CADCA in partnership with the National Guard Bureau's Prevention, Treatment and Outreach (PTO) Program with funding assistance from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). CADCA is recruiting AmeriCorps and VISTA members, and placing them in one of CADCA's community coalitions located throughout the country to provide support to Veterans and Military Families (VMF) with a special emphasis on serving the needs of National Guard and Reserve VMF.

Learn more about CADCA's VetCorps project at www.cadca.org/VetCorps. ■



The Coalition's VetCorps staff partnered with the CCRI Student Veteran Organization and Rhode Island Campus Compact to clean up and beautify a veteran housing area.

VetCorps is focused on preventing and reducing substance abuse among Veterans and military families by connecting them to supportive services and civic engagement opportunities. The Providence VetCorps Project has a special emphasis on serving the needs of National Guard and Reserve Veterans and Military Families. This Spring, the Providence VetCorps Project was featured in the national CADCA newsletter. (at left).



OSDRI HOMELESS VETERAN HOUSING BEAUTIFICATION

On March 23rd, Providence VetCorps together with RI Campus Compact and the RI Student Veterans Organization hosted a cleanup and shed building project at Operation Stand Down RI. Volunteers assisted with service projects directly benefiting Veterans and their families. Activities include building sheds for Veteran Housing, painting, outdoor landscaping, and beautification.



MAYORS' VETERAN AND MILITARY FAMILY ROUNDTABLE AND JOB FAIR



Providence Mayor Angel Taveras, Cranston Mayor Allan W. Fung and U.S. Senator Jack Reed hosted a Military and Veterans Job Fair at the Rhode Island Convention Center on April 26th, 2013, drawing over 90 local employers and 200 military members, Veterans and their families.

Prior to the Job Fair, Mayor Taveras, Mayor Fung and Senator Reed held a roundtable discussion on current and former military member employment, which featured local and national employment and military experts. An audience of more than 150 local business and education leaders, as well as elected officials, were in attendance.



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John Benoit—Fiscal Coordinator



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