



# 'K-HIP' Kenosha Health Improvement Project

Coalition: 'K-HIP' | Local Agency: Racine Kenosha Community Action Agency | Kenosha, WI | Presented By: Tatjana Bicanin, Kenosha Health Improvement Project Facilitator



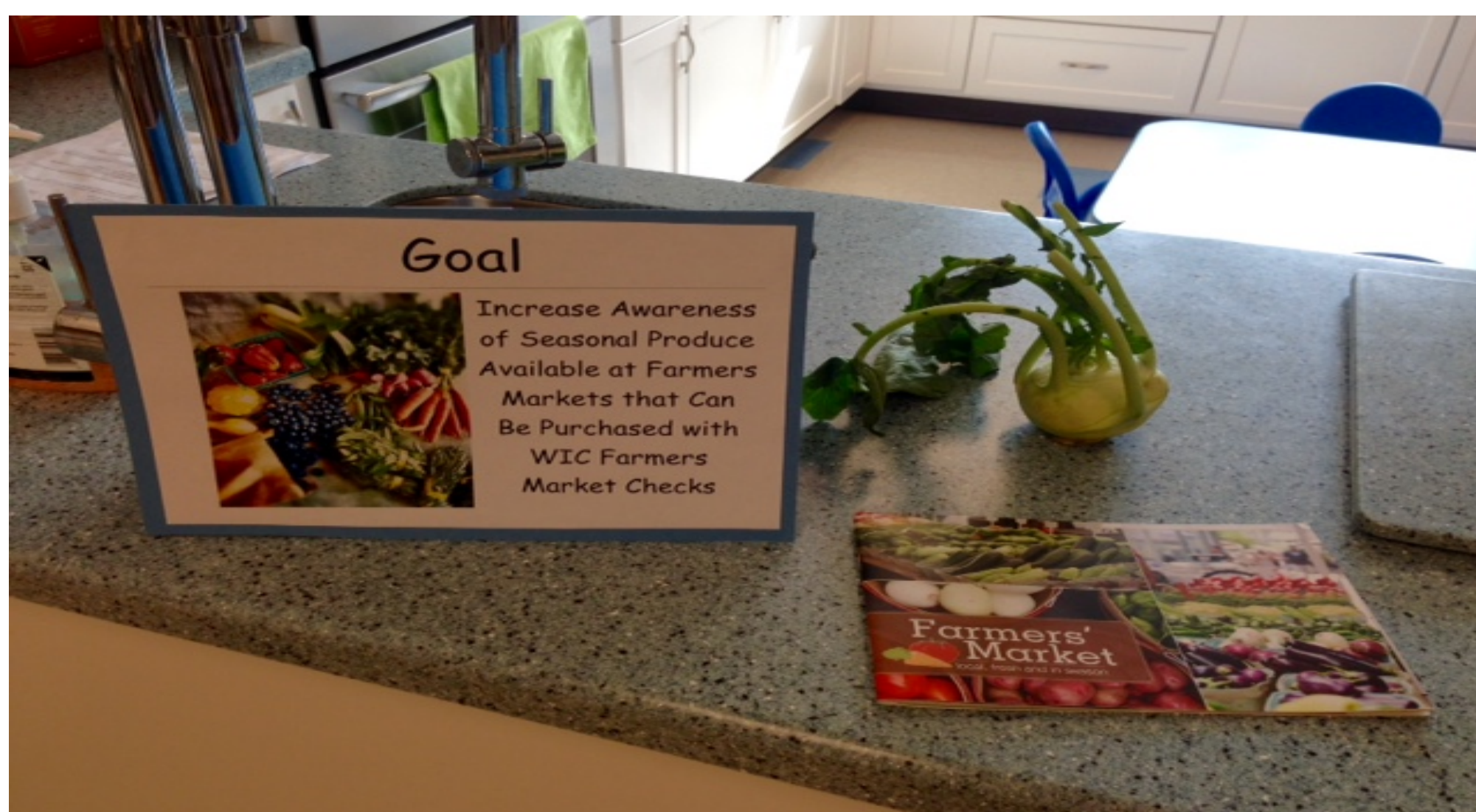
## INTRODUCTION

Located in the southeastern corner of Wisconsin, midway between Milwaukee and Chicago, Kenosha County has a total population of 167, 268. According to the US Census Bureau, 15% of the county population lives in poverty, including 29% of children. Approximately 24% of the Kenosha County population receives FoodShare (SNAP) benefits, including 43% of children under the age of 18. More than one in four county residents live in areas with low food access, and 12% are classified as food insecure.

Overall, Kenosha County ranked 64 of 72 counties in Wisconsin in the 2016 County Health Rankings, and ranked last for physical environment indicators. Based on these data and findings from the Kenosha County Community Health Survey conducted by Aurora Health Care in 2014, prevalent health concerns include chronic diseases, specifically: obesity, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, diabetes, and asthma. Premature death, low birth weight, and lack of primary care physicians are also concerns.

The Racine/Kenosha Community Action Agency (RKCAA) provides the WIC program in Kenosha County, with a main office located in the City of Kenosha and a satellite office in the Village of Bristol, which is in the geographic center of the county. Kenosha WIC has an average monthly participation of 3,944 people – of these, 8% are pregnant women, 5% breastfeeding women; 8% are post-partum women; 24% are infants; and 55% are children. Prevalent health and nutritional risks for the Kenosha WIC participants are: obesity; inadequate diet; and tobacco issues, including maternal smoking and exposure to smoking environments. Nearly one in three WIC children between the ages of 2 and 5 are classified as overweight or obese. Prior to becoming pregnant, 60% of WIC women are overweight or obese, and after giving birth, that percentage increases to 80%.

Despite these issues, Kenosha County is a vibrant community, with strong community ties dedicated to building a Culture of Health. RKCAA has a long history of actively working on food security issues in collaboration with other nonprofit organizations, government agencies, faith-based communities, and educational institutions. This project aligned closely with the needs and strengths of the community, and reinforced the value of working together by sharing a common vision: to reduce and prevent chronic disease by improving access to healthy food environments and improve access to prevention and disease management services.



## PROJECT OVERVIEW

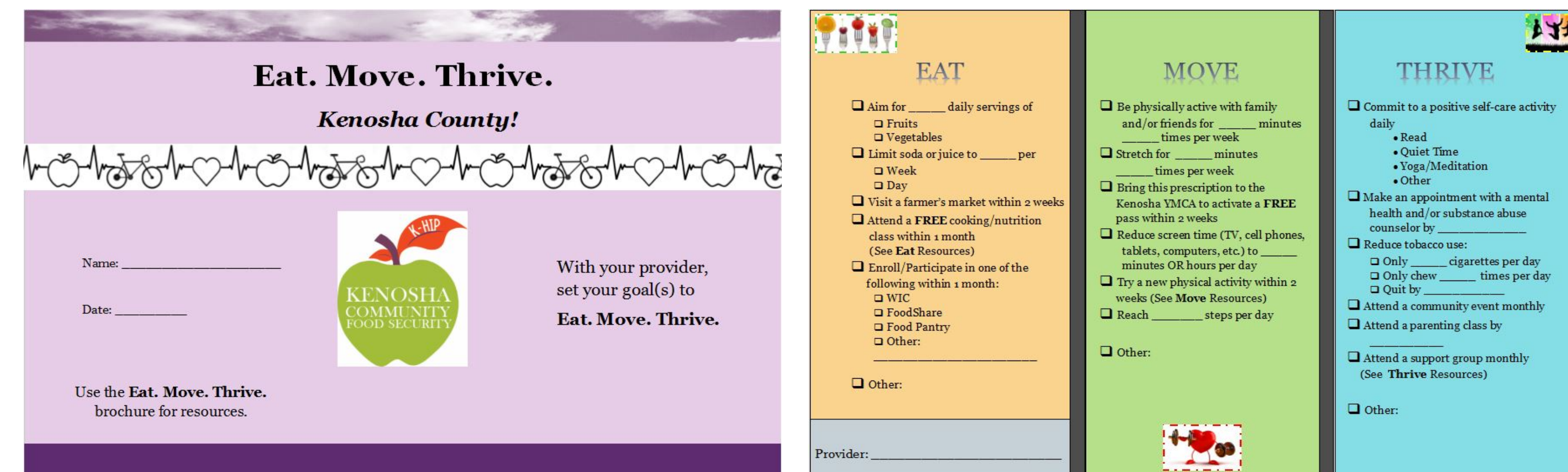
Exciting things are happening in Kenosha Wisconsin as a result of the Community Partnerships for Healthy Mothers and Children (CPHMC) grant. Grocery stores are developing promotional materials that encourage healthy food choices. Farmers are providing suggestions on ways to increase the foot traffic at long-standing community markets with lively signage and evening hours. Representatives from physician offices, the Health Department, UW-Extension, Racine Kenosha Community Action Agency – WIC, and the YMCA are abuzz developing a non-pharmaceutical prescription pad "Eat. Move. Thrive." to improve the health of Kenosha residents. K-HIP, the Kenosha Health Improvement Project has taken the lead on coordinating the activities, which will bring about Policy, System and/or Environmental changes and ultimately make the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice.

## ACTIVITIES

- Conducted a thorough community needs assessment
- Agreed on interventions for healthy foods environments
- Collaborated with the physician offices, the Health Department, UW-Extension, Racine Kenosha Community Action Agency – WIC, and the YMCA in piloting the non-pharmaceutical prescription pad "Eat. Move. Thrive." and resource brochure
- Collaborated with the local grocery stores to feature produce pick of the month and recipes
- Collaborated with UW-Extension Food Wise and local grocery stores to facilitate monthly Cooking Matters at the Store tours
- Hosted a Community Open House to learn more about how WIC supports families in leading healthy lives.
- Enrolled new farmers to accept WIC FMNP checks
- Hosted a Children's Farmer Market Scavenger Hunt at one of the local markets (50 children participated in event)
- Promoted the Double Bucks Program & WIC FMNP checks to WIC families
- Highlighted coalition activities on social media and community partner newsletter

## LESSONS LEARNED

- The value of building and strengthening relationships is key in ensuring all of the objectives are met and that the Policy, System and/or Environmental interventions are sustainable.
- Participation in the work teams is critical, as the bulk of the work takes place in these settings. In between meetings, it is important to keep communication open through e-mails, conference calls and one-on-one meetings.
- It is also important to engage a broad array of community voices through building awareness of the project efforts and information sharing among the different agencies.



K-HIP members created the design and content for "Eat. Move. Thrive." non-pharmaceutical prescription pad.

## BEST PRACTICES

- Collaboration with local community agencies is essential for ensuring long-term success and sustainability
- Establish work teams to assist with the specific tasks and activities
- Celebrate successes with the coalition and work team members.
- Participate in community activities such as a local health fairs, community summits and new partnerships.

## OUTCOMES

- A significant early success of the project had been an increase in farmers who accept WIC FMNP checks. K-HIP led this effort by educating farmers about WIC and building relationships with them.
- Local grocery stores created new promotional strategies by incorporating a vegetable of the month floor signage and distribution of healthy WIC approved food recipes.
- As a result of this initiative, Cooking Matters at the Store tours are coordinated monthly with the local grocery stores.
- Addressed food insecurity by increasing awareness on food access in the community by promoting the local farmer markets and Double Bucks incentive program.
- Developed a non-pharmaceutical prescription tool, "Eat. Move. Thrive." to reduce and prevent chronic disease.

## NEXT STEPS

Moving forward, Racine/Kenosha Community Action Agency will continue to foster partnerships and work towards improving access to healthy foods in the community. The work teams will continue to function as they work on their specific tasks and activities. K-HIP members will determine future projects and funding sources to support the work.

