

Healthy Ulster Council Meeting Notes

239 Golden Hill Office Building, Kingston, NY 12401

June 9, 2016

Present: Nicci Cagan, From the Ground Up; Debra Dewan, RVGA; Maria Elena Ferrer Harrington, IFH; Marge Gagnon, Rose Woman's Care Center; Melinda Herzog, CCEUC; Stacy Kraft, UCDOH; Vin Martello, UCDOH; Diane Mueller, UC Office for the Aging; Jennifer Patterson, CCEUC; Christine Pepitone, OFA; Tom Polk, YMCA; Jamal Sander, CCEUC; Danielle Schuka, AHA. Katie Sheehan-Lopez, CCEUC; Fern Suess, CCEUC; Amy Wen, American Cancer Society; Kristen Wilson, City of Kingston;

Melinda Herzog opened the meeting, introducing herself in her new role as Healthy Ulster Council Coordinator. She asked attendees around the tables to introduce themselves and share one new healthy habit or thing that they are doing for themselves. Responses ranged from increased bicycling and outdoor activities, to planting vegetables.

Nicci Cagan, Director of "From the Ground Up", a curriculum-based wellness initiative centered around the garden and committed to nutrition, better food in schools, environmental awareness, sustainability and community, told the group about the beginnings of the initiative and the work that is being done today. An initiative that began with a school garden at Marbletown Elementary School has expanded to include a greenhouse, kitchen lab and an increasingly broader interest in all the aspects of good nutrition for schoolchildren. "If you can connect your food from the ground up, you can raise a healthy child." Cagan noted that she learned at a recent Farm to Cafeteria Conference that the words *food dessert* are no longer being used – "anyone can grow some of their own food" though they may live in an *underserved* area. Cagan stressed the importance of taste testing in schools and emphasized that the quality of nutrition in a school environment is paramount. For those present who strive to make progress in the areas of school nutrition, Cagan suggested they look into the Wellness Policy – "every school has one." That's a good place to start. Some resources that Nicci mentioned: Salad bar grants available; <http://thefarmbridge.com/>, a co-packing facility; <http://www.chefannfoundation.org/> for small grants.

Physical Activity Break: Attendees participated in a brief stretching break, led by Jamal Sanders of CCEUC.

Tom Polk, certified bike ride leader, is a 15 year board member at the YMCA of Ulster County and initiated the program Bike It! At the YMCA. Tom presented a slide show, and talked about the many bike-related venues and programs now active in the City of Kingston. The Bike It! Program takes place in the Spring and Fall and is targeted to youth 10-14 years of age. There is a registration fee but some scholarships are available. The youth are instructed in bike maintenance and safety and helmets are available. Tom also runs an afterschool bike club at the Everette Hodge Youth center, for youth 9-11 and at Bailey School. Upcoming in the summer will be the YMCA Bike Week for mountain bikers which will take place at the YMCA trails in Shokan, NY; that is for youth 12-15 years old. Tom talked about future plans he would like to see happen, such as a community bike shop and bike education in school curriculums.

Melinda shared that the last fifteen minutes of future meetings will be devoted to reports from the three work groups: *Healthy Eating; Active Living and Family & Social Support.*

Kristen Wilson reported on the vision of her group, *Family & Social Support*, which is to get health care and healthy activities incorporated into everyone's lives. At their last meeting, the group discussed creating a database by municipality or perhaps by neighborhood. They have discussed the benefits of having health advocates/ambassadors within communities and the best way of recruiting them. There would need to be a training program designed for them; they would like to find an intern to work on that and also an existing

model for this plan. Vin Martello said his department will have a summer intern that could possibly work on that.

Vin Martello talked about a group called Healthify that is working on getting the word out about changes being made to Medicaid in the Hudson Valley. It will not be available to the public. He also mentioned the department of health will be on WBPM radio on the first Sunday of each month – time tbd, on a Healthy Ulster program, gathering and dispensing various health related information from those in the health field.

The meeting adjourned at 4pm.