

July 2009 - Issue #19

Local News

[Newsom's Fresh Idea: Mandates on Healthier Food](#) (7/10/09)

Newsom issued an executive directive he hopes will dramatically change how San Franciscans eat. For example, one mandate requires all city departments to conduct an audit of unused land, including empty lots, rooftops, windowsills and median strips, that could be turned into community gardens or farms that benefit residents. The audits must be conducted within six months.

[Oakland Struggles with High Obesity Rates](#) (7/09/09)

At a U.S. Department of Agriculture summit in Oakland, Calif., the question on the table was how to improve nutrition and access to healthy foods in lower-income communities. "It's a very real issue, said Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums "How do you get quality food that's healthy for people, that allows them to have healthy choices."

[Mayor Curtatone, Shape Up Somerville Celebrate Kickoff of Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Grant](#) (7/07/09)

Mayor Joe Curtatone, the Shape Up Somerville task force and program officers representing the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation gathered at a July 1 reception to celebrate Somerville's implementation of a four-year grant program intended to reverse the trend of childhood obesity by 2015 reported *Wicked Local Somerville*. "Taking a community-based environmental approach to dealing with childhood obesity has helped us change the way everyone in Somerville thinks about this problem."

[Mississippi City Motivated to Fight State's Obesity Trend](#) (7/03/09)

Mississippi's standing as the fattest state in the nation has drawn attention to progressive cities within the Magnolia State who aim to reverse that trend. The *Desoto Times Tribune* reports that Hernando Mayor Chip Johnson said his city has taken several steps to ensure that citizens have access to sidewalks and fitness and walking trails, among other active living initiatives.

[Farmers' Markets Create Community Connections](#) (7/01/09)

Cities looking for ways to unite neighbors, as well as attract tourists, have discovered that farmers' markets are an excellent promotional tool for local vendors and culture. According to *colorsnw.com*, there are 33 locations in King County, Wash., alone, with year-round markets in Ballard, Fremont, the University District, West Seattle and, of course, the internationally-recognized Pike Place Market in downtown Seattle.

[Enid, OK joins Fight Against Obesity](#) (7/1/09)

The Enid News and Eagle reports that a weight-loss campaign started in Oklahoma City by Mayor Mick Cornett has garnered national and even worldwide attention. An offshoot of the program will soon be coming to Enid. That Oklahoma City campaign has been expanded and developed in Tulsa and about 10 other communities across the nation, and next week Enid will launch its own weight-loss campaign, titled E-Lose It.

[Urban Farming Movement 'like a revolution'](#) (6/29/09)

On a plot of soil, nestled against the backdrop of skyscrapers in downtown Atlanta, Ga., a group of residents are turning a lack of access to fresh produce into a revival of old traditions and self-sufficiency. Fruits and vegetables are thriving in this community garden located in

an economically depressed area of the city known as Mechanicsville. But according to *CNN*, the garden serves an even greater purpose. The harvest helps feed some of the neediest members of the neighborhood.

[Mayor Hickenlooper Secures Donation to Open City Pools and Recreation Centers to Kids for Free](#) (6/26/09)

Denver youth who are 17 and younger will get free access to the city's recreation centers and their swimming pools this summer, thanks to a \$150,000 donation from a Kaiser Permanente foundation.

According to *The Denver Post*, the city waived fees last year but was unable to do so again this year until Kaiser Permanente offered the money. Last summer's free access to recreation centers and swimming pools saw a surge in attendance. There were 214,740 visits by youth to the centers and pools during last summer compared to 106,500 visits during the same time in 2007.

[Mayors Spice Things Up for a Worthy Cause](#) (6/17/09)

The three judges for the annual Mayors Healthy Cook-Off held at the Wegmans supermarket in Woodbridge, N.J., last week were surprised when presented with a dish of Cajun grilled alligator and dirty rice made by North Brunswick Mayor Francis "Mac" Womack. *The Sentinel* reports that Womack was one of four mayors from across the state who participated in the cook-off, including Woodbridge Mayor John E. McCormac, Scotch Plains Mayor Nancy M. Malool, and South Amboy Mayor John T. O'Leary. As part of the Mayors' Wellness Campaign's effort to promote healthier living and more active lifestyles, the mayors competed to see who could prepare the healthiest dish.

[With a Little Help, Greens Come to Lower-Income Neighborhoods](#) (6/16/09)

Until a clean and airy ShopRite opened a year ago in Parkside, a lower-income neighborhood in west Philadelphia, Christine Gilliard had to pay someone to drive her several miles to the closest supermarket so she could avoid a long bus ride. Now she can walk to the new 69,700-square-foot store as often as she likes. *The New York Times* reports that through the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative, the grocer who opened the ShopRite store received a \$1-million grant and \$7 million in federal New Markets tax credits.

[Palestine WIC office Educating Children and Adults about Nutrition](#) (6/15/09)

The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) office in Palestine, Texas, has taken an interesting approach to educating children and adults about proper nutrition. For the second consecutive year, *The Palestine Herald* reports, office employees have planted an "inspiration garden" to help teach nutrition classes.

[YouTube: U.S. Department of Agriculture Promotes School Gardens For Healthy Food](#) (6/12/09)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack helped plant a fruit and vegetable garden at a Washington, D.C. public school to provide healthy food to the students.

[Winner of the Desert Fitness Challenge Announced](#) (6/11/09)

Palm Springs and the Palm Springs Unified School District claimed victory in the first "Desert Fitness Challenge." The friendly competition against Coachella and the Coachella Valley Unified School District challenged students and the community to be physically active for at least 30 minutes a day, three days a week. *The Desert Sun* reports that in keeping with the wager made in April, Coachella Mayor Eduardo Garcia gave out boxes filled with fresh Medjool dates to city employees, school district representatives and students as their prize.

[Customers Prove There's a Market for Fresh Produce](#) (6/10/09)

New York City has approved 1,000 new mobile food carts for neighborhoods in the five boroughs that have long been isolated from traditional supermarkets, grocery stores and farmers' markets offering fresh produce at reasonable prices. "There is an epidemic of obesity and diabetes among those who are poor," said Linda Gibbs, the deputy mayor for health and human services. So far, 200 Green Carts, as they are officially called, are now on the streets, according to the *New York Times*.

[In Dorchester, An Oasis of Health](#) (6/10/09)

Codman Square in Dorchester has multiple fast food outlets and a bunch of corner stores stocked with sweets, juices, and prepackaged goods. But there is not one supermarket. So when residents in this low-income community learned that a farmers market was returning for a second summer, *The Boston Globe* reports that they jumped at the chance to get crisp carrots, plump oranges, and fresh collard greens.

[Mayor Kicks Off Exercise Program](#) (6/09/09)

Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett helped kick off a new exercise program called Total Fitness Camp reports *KSBI News*. The Total Fitness Camp helps educate kids about exercise and nutrition. This is the inaugural year for the program. If it is successful, Cornett is hopeful that the city will be able to expand the program.

[Massachusetts: Researchers Say Overweight Fire, Ambulance Recruits Disconcerting](#) (6/08/09)

More than 75 percent of emergency responder candidates for fire and ambulance services in Massachusetts are either overweight or obese. Researchers said the findings, reported in *Risk and Insurance*, raise concerns about the health and safety issues these candidates may face. The study, published in *Obesity*, was conducted by Boston University School of Medicine, Boston Medical Center, Harvard University and the Cambridge Health Alliance.

New [Mayor Motivates City to Establish Healthy Nutrition, Wellness Goals](#) (6/01/09)

Julián Castro's new job as mayor gives him a unique opportunity to help make San Antonio a healthier city. *SA Life* reports that Castro is setting some ambitious wellness and nutrition goals for himself, for his young family, and for everyone else in the city. "I'd like to undertake a healthy city initiative to encourage people to lead a healthier lifestyle," Castro said. "We need to create a different culture in San Antonio".

[Walkers Benefit from New Sidewalks](#) (6/01/09)

More and more people can be seen walking safely along Spartanburg Highway now that the city of Hendersonville has completed its sidewalk project along the road, reports the *Times News*. City Manager Bo Ferguson said the opening of this sidewalk that runs along Spartanburg Highway from South Main Street to Shepherd Street marks the completion of a major project called for in the city's pedestrian plan, which was adopted in March 2007.

National News

[The Obamas' First Harvest](#) (7/06/09)

It was harvest time for the first wave of crops from the local vegetable garden, so the kids who had helped plant it a few months earlier came back to visit recently. Working with a few professional supervisors under the eye of their host, they pulled up a big bounty: 73 pounds of lettuce, 12 pounds of peas and one cucumber. And then they all went inside to cook, before returning to the garden to eat. That wouldn't have been particularly newsworthy, *salon.com* reports, except that it all happened at the White House, and the host for the harvest lunch was Michelle Obama.

[American Academy of Pediatrics Writes a Prescription](#) (6/11/09)

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) broke new ground in this month's issue of *Pediatrics* when it issued its first policy recommendation calling for changes in how cities and

communities are designed to address the exploding epidemic of unfit and overweight children. "While much of the obesity discussion has centered on food, the Academy found that children cannot access safe places where they can be active," explains Dr. Richard Jackson, a consultant on the AAP policy statement and chair of the UCLA Department of Environment Health Sciences. The AAP's policy statement can be downloaded at: <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;123/6/1591>.

Reports and Studies

[Effects of Childhood Obesity on Hospital Care and Costs, 1999–2005](#)

The number of hospitalizations of kids and teens ages 2 to 19 with a primary or secondary diagnosis of obesity nearly doubled between 1999 and 2005, climbing from 21,743 to 42,429, according to a study recently published online in *Health Affairs*.

[F as in Fat: How Obesity Policies Are Failing in America, 2009](#) PDF

This report produced by Trust for America's Health finds that in the past year, adult obesity rates grew in 23 states and did not decrease in a single state. Two-thirds of adults are overweight or obese, and the number of obese adults now exceeds 25 percent in nearly two-thirds of states.

[Access to Affordable and Nutritious Food: Measuring and Understanding Food Deserts and Their Consequences](#) PDF

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service released a report on food deserts that summarizes findings of a national-level assessment of the extent, characteristics and causes of food deserts, the consequences for local populations, lessons learned from related federal programs and a discussion of policy options for alleviating their effects. The section on [policy options](#) is particularly relevant, as is the [economics of supermarket and grocery store locations](#) section.

[Walking and Biking to School, Physical Activity and Health Outcomes](#) PDF

This research brief from Active Living Research, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, reviews research on the effects of walking or biking to school on children's physical activity and health outcomes. The brief also looks at factors affecting active transport to school, such as improved sidewalk systems and neighborhood characteristics.

[Local School Wellness Policies: How Are Schools Implementing the Congressional Mandate?](#)

PDF

This Robert Wood Johnson Foundation research brief summarizes results of the preliminary evidence on the implementation of local school wellness policies and presents data in three key areas: quality, evaluation and funding of the policies; nutrition standards and nutrition education requirements; and physical activity requirements.

[How Does Your Garden Grow? Brownfields Redevelopment and Local Agriculture](#) PDF

Brownfields are properties that are vacant or abandoned due to concerns about real or perceived contamination of the property. Using funds from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), states, tribes and communities can assess sites and clean brownfields, creating safe spaces where people can grow their own food or buy locally-grown food. This EPA document provides links to resources for brownfields cleanup and redevelopment into gardens and markets.

[How Active Are Teens during Their Out-of-School Time? The View from Chicago](#) PDF

This issue brief explores levels of physical activity among high school students in Chicago Public Schools, including participation in sports, informal exercise and other activities. The Chapin Hall study suggests young people living in poorer neighborhoods and those reporting fewer safe places to hang out are less likely to be physically active. For many of these teens, physical activity may be circumscribed by the need to avoid potentially dangerous places

Tools You Can Use

[Action Strategies Toolkit](#)

Leadership for Healthy Communities' comprehensive Action Strategies Toolkit represent a collection of current best approaches that childhood obesity policy experts, policy-makers and representatives from policy-maker organizations have evaluated and selected as levers to improve children's health and reduce childhood obesity. Each section includes targeted strategies, stakeholders, policy and program options, guidance on how to start programs, resources that can help inform the process and examples of how other states and localities have achieved progress. The U.S. Conference of Mayors and 10 other major policy-maker organizations that represent state, local and school district decision makers signed a leadership compact urging members to adopt policies designed to reduce childhood obesity rates, and to focus efforts on our most vulnerable children.

[Supporting Healthy Communities Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009](#)

To highlight funds in the economic recovery act that can be used to increase opportunities for physical activity and access to healthy foods, Leadership for Healthy Communities, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, created a policy brief entitled *Supporting Healthy Communities Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*. All of the recommendations in the policy brief are supported by research and accompanied by examples of how similar funds have been used to achieve healthy eating and active living objectives. Also on the organization's Web site is a chart highlighting available funds and their recommendations, a sample op-ed that can be customized and submitted to local newspapers, a sample PowerPoint presentation, and a short video public service announcement describing why supporting healthy communities is important.

[Legal Tools to Create Joint Use Agreements](#)

Many communities lack safe, adequate places for children and their families to exercise and play. Schools might have a variety of recreational facilities—gymnasiums, playgrounds, fields, courts, tracks—but many districts close their property to the public after school hours because of concerns about costs, vandalism, security, maintenance and liability in the event of injury. The good news is that city, county and town governments can partner with school districts through joint use agreements to address these concerns. A joint use agreement is a formal agreement between two separate government entities—often a school district and a city or county—setting forth the terms and conditions for the shared use of public property. The National Policy and Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN) has prepared legal tools to assist communities in forming joint use agreements.

[Jointuse.org](#)

To assist city and school officials in better understanding joint use opportunities, a new Web site has been launched by the California Joint Use Task Force. Jointuse.org explores the possibilities, debunks the myths, and offers concrete examples of how communities have successfully opened up public facilities to respond to the needs of communities.

[Walkability Checklist](#)

The Partnership for a Walkable America (PWA) is a national coalition working to improve the conditions for walking in America and to increase the number of Americans who walk regularly. This checklist can be used to assess how walkable a neighborhood is.

[Mayors' Guide to Fighting Childhood Obesity](#)

The *Mayors' Guide to Fighting Childhood Obesity* provides suggested action steps that mayors and other local government leaders can take to address the childhood obesity epidemic in their communities. The action steps included are in three areas: the community food environment, the physical environment and the school and out-of-school environment.

[Promising District Practices](#)

The National School Board Association's School Health Programs Department is pleased to announce a new Web-based resource, Promising District Practices. This new Web site shares success stories related to district-level school health policies and practices.

[Obesity GPS: A Guide for Policy and Program Solutions](#)

The Obesity GPS, developed by the STOP Obesity Alliance at The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, is a set of multi-layered questions that decision makers can apply in the development or evaluation of the most common types of obesity-prevention proposals: specific health interventions, policies aimed at health care professionals or research initiatives. The Obesity GPS is divided into four main sections that highlight the important questions that decision makers should consider related to overweight and obesity in our nation.

[Planning for Healthy Places with Health Impact Assessments](#)

This is a 'how to' guide for conducting health impact assessments (HIAs), developed by the American Planning Association and the National Association of County & City Health Officials and sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This online course explains the value of conducting a HIA and the steps involved in doing so. Throughout the course, examples of health impact assessments are highlighted and discussed.

[Preventing Childhood Obesity: A School Health Policy Guide](#) PDF

This guide published by the **National Association of State Boards of Education** offers the latest policy updates and recommendations about how to promote physical education and activity and healthy eating policies in schools.

Funding Resources

[National Gardening Association Invites Applications for 2009 Hooked on Hydroponics Education Grants](#)

The program will provide 36 schools with equipment and learning materials for hydroponics projects that involve at least fifteen children between the ages of 6 and 18 during the 2010 school year. Applicants must verify that their facility can accommodate the equipment for their program's age group provided through the award packages..

Deadline: September 18, 2009

[Youth Garden Grants](#)

The National Gardening Association (NGA) has announced that Home Depot is returning as the Youth Garden Grants sponsor for 2010. NGA annually awards Youth Garden Grants to schools

and community organizations with child-centered garden programs across the United States. Schools, youth groups, community centers, camps, clubs, treatment facilities, and intergenerational groups throughout the United States are eligible to apply. Applicants must plan to garden with at least 15 children between the ages of 3 and 18 years.

Deadline: November 2, 2009

[Funding Sources for Healthy Food Retail](#)

This Web site is a clearinghouse for funding opportunities related to developing food retail outlets. Funding sources, which are categorized by eligibility, source and type of assistance for easy searching, include several available to local governments.

[Jenny's Heroes Community Grant Program](#)

Talk show host and philanthropist Jenny Jones has announced that she will donate an additional \$1 million to continue her community grant program. Jenny's Heroes provides grants of up to \$25,000 each to fund projects that promise long-term community benefits.

Deadline: Open

[Bikes Belong Offers Funding for Bicycle Advocacy and Facilities](#)

U.S. nonprofits and public agencies working to put "more people on bicycles more often" will be awarded grants of up to \$10,000 for facilities and advocacy projects.

Deadline: Quarterly

[Regional Community Health Grants Program Targets Obesity and Health Literacy](#)

Through its Regional Community Health Grants Program, the [Aetna Foundation](#) will award grants in support of philanthropic initiatives focused on fighting obesity and increasing health literacy in selected communities across the United States. The obesity proposal category seeks to fund community-based health education, prevention, and early detection efforts aimed at fighting obesity.

Deadline: Varies by Location

This E-Newsletter is distributed monthly via email to members of USCM's Mayors' Healthy Cities Campaign and others by request. Funding for the newsletter has been provided by Leadership for Healthy Communities--a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. To submit a question, comment, or local best practice or to subscribe or unsubscribe, please contact pcarter@usmayors.org.

