

GUIDE *to* HEALTH 2012

RECOGNITION GRANT REPORT



Kansas Health Foundation



Each year, the Kansas Health Foundation's Recognition Grants program helps support nearly 100 nonprofit groups, organizations and agencies as they strive to meet the health-related needs of their communities and constituents.

The Recognition Grants program gives us the opportunity to provide direct support to the grassroots organizations doing innovative and meaningful work around the state.

This Recognition Grants report is our annual tribute to the previous year's grant recipients. Since 2008, we've used this publication as a way to shine a light on the outstanding work of these organizations. To highlight a sampling of the grantees who received funding in 2012, this report is designed to give you an all-access pass, via a guidebook tour, to eight different programs making a difference and changing lives. We believe these stories provide a snapshot of the impact that can be made on the lives of Kansans when the dedicated, selfless staff members and volunteers of nonprofit organizations commit to a particular project.

From programs meant to lift people out of poverty to programs designed to instill a passion for reading in young children, these stories are representative of the innovative ways organizations all over Kansas are working to improve health in their communities.

Now it's time to sit back and enjoy your tour through Kansas with this "Guide to Health." To see more of the photos from this year's highlighted grantees, please visit www.kansashealth.org/media/images.

GRANT APPLICATION INFORMATION

If you know a nonprofit organization looking for funding for a health-related project, partnership or initiative, the Kansas Health Foundation invites them to learn more about our Recognition Grants program.

Please visit www.kansashealth.org/grantmaking/recognitiongrants to find out complete program guidelines, criteria and deadlines. Interested organizations can also read more about past grant recipients and find the program's online application.



**OUR FIRST STOP IS IN WESTERN KANSAS,
WHERE A COMMUNITY PROGRAM IS
EMPOWERING FAMILIES TO MAKE CHANGES.**

*G*ood evening! So great to see you!”

“Welcome! It’s nice to have you here!”

“Hey there! We haven’t seen you in a while!”

Friendly faces greet each family who walks into the First United Methodist Church in Garden City.

“Have a seat. Grab a sandwich,” Pastor David Bell tells everyone. They are gathered here for Circles of Hope, a project that addresses poverty in Garden City. The project pairs adults who are living in poverty, or Circle Leaders, with volunteers from the middle class, or Allies, to help them set goals and make plans to change their situations.

“We target families who are saying, ‘I’m not satisfied where I am. I’m ready to make a change,’” says Bell. A \$9,600 grant from the Kansas Health Foundation helped pay for supplies and an educational stipend for the project.

HIGHLIGHT

“WE BOUGHT A HOUSE!”

As the adults and children fill their plates and sit down together for dinner, they catch up with each other on the past couple of weeks. One woman is excited to share the news about her latest purchase.

“We bought a house!” she says. “We pulled up the sale history, and made an offer. We got it for \$9,000 less than the listing price!”

"Sounds like you really did your research," another woman says, "and got a great deal. Good job."

According to Bell, this is just the kind of goal Circles of Hope has for the Circle Leaders.

"The middle class has a set of rules about money, like how to get a home loan, that people living in poverty may have no clue about," he says. "We want to give them the chance to learn those rules."



After dinner, the children move to the playroom while the adults go upstairs to meet in smaller groups. They start each meeting by sharing their "new and good" for the week – something that has made them happy.

"My new and good is that I passed all my pretests for the GED," one woman says, "and will probably test out next week."

The whole group applauds her good news.

After the new and goods, the Circle Leaders meet with their Allies to discuss the progress they've made on their goals. The Allies guide them through challenges they may be facing, such as health insurance or student loans.

"I don't know how to fill out this form," says one Circle Leader. "I don't know which parts apply to me."

"Let me take a look," her Ally says.

They sit with their heads together, while conversation continues around them, walking through the several-page form.



HIGHLIGHT

"WE JUST WANT TO ENABLE PEOPLE TO MAKE POSITIVE CHANGES."

This side-by-side work is the model of the Circles of Hope project – building confidence and ownership in people who want something more for themselves.

"We're not trying to tell people what to do," says Bell. "We just want to enable people to make positive changes."



POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Personal attention and support can reduce poverty.
- Setting specific, attainable goals leads to more success.
- The entire community benefits when a family improves their situation.



**STAYING IN WESTERN KANSAS AND
MOVING NORTHEAST TO HAYS,
WE DISCOVER A SUPPORT SYSTEM
FOR FIRST-TIME MOMS AND DADS.**

Being a first-time parent can be a daunting experience. Many new parents come home full of questions about how to take care of the newest members of their families. In Hays, Healthy Start helps arm new moms and dads with the answers they need to begin the long career of parenting.

Elaine Rupp has been the Healthy Start Home Visitor in Ellis County for more than 15 years. She makes over 350 visits a year, teaching skills and providing information and resources to expecting or new parents. A \$3,500 grant from the Kansas Health Foundation helped fund travel, supplies and equipment for the program.

"We provide safety items, like cabinet latches, to new parents," says Rupp. "We also teach them what to do if their child gets sick, and how to respond to that."

Rupp has made herself a sort of one-stop shop for information about local resources, nutrition, development and safety.

HIGHLIGHT

"IF I DON'T HAVE AN ANSWER, I WILL FIND IT FOR THEM."

"I always tell the mothers if I don't have an answer, I will find it for them," says Rupp.

Today, she is visiting Jocelyn and her 4-week-old daughter, Abilene. Rupp discusses Abilene's progress as well as Jocelyn's adjustment to being a mother.



"So, how does she like spending time on her tummy?" Rupp asks.

"She doesn't love it," says Jocelyn.

Rupp reassures her that's normal. "Lots of babies are reluctant, but it's so important for development and strengthening her neck. Maybe try getting down there with her, let her see your face to make it interesting."

HIGHLIGHT

"I LAID HER ON HER FAVORITE BLANKET AND SHE SEEMED SO RELAXED."

As they continue their conversation, Rupp listens to Jocelyn's concerns and relates her own stories of motherhood, empathizing with the new mom and all the surprises that come with the job.

"How is the massage going? Have you tried it?" Rupp asks. She had trained Jocelyn in infant massage before Abilene was born. Infant massage helps parents learn to comfort their babies while also building attachment.

"Yesterday we had some time and I think she really liked it," Jocelyn says. "I laid her on her favorite blanket and she seemed so relaxed. It was really cool!"

Rupp reinforces the decisions Jocelyn has made for Abilene.

HIGHLIGHT

"IT'S ALL ABOUT HELPING PARENTS SETTLE IN."

"You have done a terrific job," she says. "I know it's not easy the first four weeks."

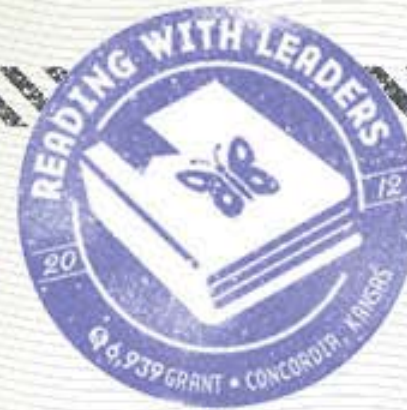
During the visit, it is clear that Rupp enjoys her role in helping new parents. And Jocelyn feels comfortable in her role as a new mother, knowing she's got someone on her side who will help if the road gets bumpy.

"It's all about helping parents settle in," says Rupp.



POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Many first-time parents are unaware of available resources.
- Prenatal education helps build confidence in new parents.
- The Healthy Start program has been proven to increase positive birth outcomes in the communities it serves.



**IN NORTHERN KANSAS, COMMUNITY
LEADERS ARE HELPING CHILDREN
GROW A LOVE FOR READING.**

Alexander may have had a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day, but for more than 40 Concordia children, the second Friday in March was a great day to settle in and listen to two area leaders share a fun – and funny – storybook.

Reading with Leaders, a program organized by the Sisters of St. Joseph at Concordia's Neighbor to Neighbor women's center, hosts children ages 3 to 5 for story time each month. The program invites local adults, from mechanics to doctors to firefighters, to read aloud to dozens of children.

Today, Sister Marcia Allen, president of the Sisters of St. Joseph, and Dr. Paul Nelson, a retired pediatrician, take turns reading "Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day," a story by Judith Viorst. The kids anxiously await the repetitive parts of the story, ready for their cue.

HIGHLIGHT

"YOU CAN GO TO AUSTRALIA IF YOU HAVE A BAD DAY."

Sister Marcia begins the line, "I could tell it was going to be a ..."

"Terrible! Horrible! No good! Very bad day!" all 40 children shout in unison.

"I think I'll move to Australia," Sister Marcia reads.

One boy raises his hand. "I live in Australia," he says.

"You live in Concordia," another boy corrects him, "but you can go to Australia if you have a bad day."

As the kids continue learning about Alexander's terrible day, their parents sit downstairs and visit over coffee. Sister Marcia and Dr. Nelson take time with each page to point out interesting pictures, and ask the children questions about what they're reading.

"Can you see Alexander's invisible castle?" Dr. Nelson asks.

"No, it's invisible," the children laugh.

After each Reading with Leaders session, the children receive their own hardcover copy of the book with a picture of the day's featured readers. A \$6,939 grant from the Kansas Health Foundation helped purchase the books and provide each child with a healthy snack.

According to Sister Pat McLennon, Reading with Leaders is a popular event for area kids.

"We sometimes have more than 50 kids upstairs for story time. They come from around here and even from Belleville," she said.

It's no surprise that the program is a hit. With each story, children are building their reading comprehension as well as their personal libraries. And when



POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Reading to children builds communication skills.
- Asking questions during a story can help foster critical thinking.
- Reading is a great stress reliever for all ages.



they take home their very own copy of the book, the children have the opportunity to relive the fun of Reading with Leaders anytime they want.

When the story is over and the children file out, Sister Marcia asks them, "Well, have you had a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day today?"

A giggling chorus answers, "No way!"

HIGHLIGHT

"WE SOMETIMES HAVE MORE THAN 50 KIDS UPSTAIRS FOR STORY TIME."





MOVING DOWN TO CENTRAL KANSAS, BUHLER CHILDREN HAVE A NEW REASON TO GET OUT AND PLAY.

All men on board! All men on board!" a little girl shouts to her friends on the ground.

"Here we come! Man the ship!" the boys say as they scramble up the ladders.

Their ship is actually the newest addition to Wheatland Park, a community playground in Buhler. It was installed as part of the Buhler Children Get Moving project. A \$25,000 grant from the Kansas Health Foundation helped purchase equipment for the project.

"Get on board. I'm your captain," the girl says.

"But I want to be the captain," one of the boys tells her.

"OK," she says, climbing down from her post at the top of the slide.
"Then I'm a ninja."

HIGHLIGHT

"PEOPLE AROUND HERE WERE EXCITED."

Janet Burr, development coordinator for the city, says the old playground was in disrepair, and kids used to go primarily to play in the sand around it. She says the new playground was a direct request from the community.

"If kids wanted to play, they didn't have anywhere else to go," she says. "The current playground has increased the opportunity for children to be active and participate in fun physical activity."

The community was very involved in the project from the beginning. The city posted two designs on its Facebook page and allowed residents to choose their favorite. They also tracked the progress on Facebook so everyone could see how the construction was going.

"We had kids gathered around every day, watching it being built," Burr says. "People around here were excited."

In fact, the community was so excited that they helped build the new playground. A combination of city workers and community volunteers assembled the equipment.

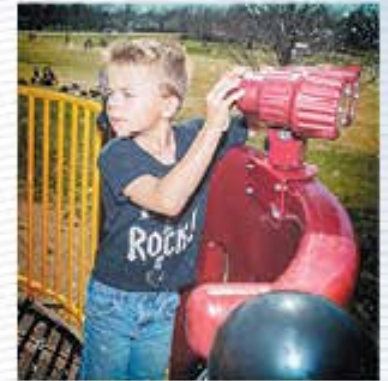
"It went really quickly," Burr says.

Since it was built, the playground has been a hub of activity. Because it is surrounded by soccer fields, a swimming pool and baseball diamonds, there is never a shortage of children ready to play.

"This is our main park," says Burr. "When this place gets hopping with kids, it's really neat to see."

Even the kids seem to think so. One boy, after climbing up, down, around and through the entire playground set, looks back at his friends with a smile.

"I bet this thing lasts forever," he says, "and it never breaks."



HIGHLIGHT

"I BET THIS THING LASTS FOREVER."



POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Children who play outside are more creative in their play and show better concentration.
- Just 60 minutes of daily unstructured free play can benefit children's physical and mental health.
- Children who live close to parks are likely to be more physically active, decreasing the risk of obesity.



ALL ACROSS THE STATE, DOCTORS, COACHES, ATHLETES AND PARENTS ARE BENEFITTING FROM A SINGLE RESOURCE TO HELP MANAGE HEAD INJURIES.

We have 100 billion neurons to protect. We're all going to hit our heads, but sports put us in the unique position of taking more hits."

Dr. Bart Grelinger, a Wichita neurologist, knows firsthand the importance of concussion awareness.

"I see kids who get damaged by concussions and it affects the rest of their lives," he says.

HIGHLIGHT

"WE WANT TO KEEP KIDS SAFE."

Dr. Grelinger is a member of the Kansas Sports Concussion Partnership (KSCP), a group of professionals from across the state who have an interest in concussion awareness. The professionals include surgeons, physicians, nurses, psychologists and members of the Kansas State High School Activities Association.

Another member of KSCP, Dr. Jennifer Koontz of Newton Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine, has seen children as young as fourth grade impacted by concussions and post-concussive syndrome.

"It can cause difficulty with school and sleep," she says, "and lead to chronic headaches, depression and anxiety."

Dr. Koontz believes the best approach to preventing these symptoms is identification, monitoring and proper treatment of concussions.

"We want to keep kids safe," says Dr. Grelinger. "With all the information available, we knew physicians would need help educating themselves about concussions without roaming all over the Internet."

The KSCP created a website, KansasConcussion.org, to offer coaches, parents, athletes and physicians one place to get the most up-to-date research and information about concussion prevention and management. A \$24,500 grant from the Kansas Health Foundation helped pay for expansion and promotion of the website.

"Now we're able to put the latest information directly into the hands of athletes, coaches and parents," says Jon Rosell, executive director of the Medical Society of Sedgwick County and KSCP member.

"We also want to make sure that physicians as far away as Plainville have the same access to reliable information as a physician at the KU School of Medicine," he says. "Because we all have the same desire to protect patients."

The grant also helped pay for printing of a tool kit with scorecards that allow coaches and athletic trainers to assess potential concussion symptoms right away. It also contains information for parents and athletes to help them decide what to do following an injury.

"Out on the field, you need information immediately," says Dr. Grelinger. "It's a way to educate those who need to be educated before they go in and see a professional."

The KSCP's main goal is to make sports safer for student athletes, and to make sure that everyone with an interest is educated on the latest concussion information.

"We love sports and being active," says Dr. Grelinger, "we just want to make sure we're being smart and careful with the future of our society."



HIGHLIGHT

"IT'S A WAY TO EDUCATE THOSE WHO NEED TO BE EDUCATED."



POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The site had 2,642 visits in the first five months of 2013.
- Concussions are the most common form of head injury in athletes.
- Kansas law requires a medical doctor's release before an athlete can return to practice and play.



PIGS BECOME A HANDS-ON LESSON FOR STUDENTS IN SUMNER AND HARPER COUNTIES.

Pig lungs may be a surprising educational tool, but for the Healthy Choices program, they're a vital part of the curriculum. Kids get to see the differences between a healthy lung and a smoker's lung. And for Sumner County and Harper County fifth graders, the effects are in plain sight.

As the lungs are wheeled out for the students to see, it's clear which is healthy and which is not.

"The pig smoked?" one boy asks right away.

"One pack a day for 10 years," says Cindy Foster, health instructor for the Kansas Learning Center for Health. When the kids look at her, wide-eyed, she continues, "OK, pigs can't smoke. But this lung was treated to look like he smoked."

This is how Healthy Choices begins. Healthy Choices is a session put on by the Learning Center as part of Progressive Agriculture Safety Day. The program not only teaches children about the dangers of tobacco, but also demonstrates the consequences with visuals and hands-on activities. A \$500 grant from the Kansas Health Foundation paid for the sessions.

HIGHLIGHT

"HE CAN'T BREATHE WITH JUST HALF A LUNG."

As Foster inflates the lungs, the students comment on the differences.

"That black one's not blowing up," says a girl.

"That's because it's full of tar," another girl tells her.

"He can't breathe with just half a lung," a boy comments.

Brenda Sooter, executive director of the Learning Center, says the program began 20 years ago, and has long been a favorite to teach.

"When we show them real damage from tobacco, the kids are really affected," she said.

Sometimes the parents are just as affected. Sooter relates a story of a father who was present during the lung demonstration whose knees went weak before he made it out the door.

"He told me that he was a smoker," she said, "and when we brought out the lungs it made him sick."

Sooter and Foster hope that, by seeing such graphic demonstrations of the harmful dangers of tobacco, the kids (and maybe their parents) will be moved to avoid any tobacco use.

Foster continues to illustrate the differences in the lungs, showing where a cancerous tumor has grown in the smoker's lung and how much more inflated the healthy lung can get.



HIGHLIGHT

**"WHEN WE SHOW THEM REAL DAMAGE FROM TOBACCO,
THE KIDS ARE REALLY AFFECTED."**

"Your lungs will eventually clean themselves out," she tells the students. "But for every year you smoke, it takes another year for your lungs to heal."

"All of our lungs are pink like this one, right?" one girl asks.

As Foster nods, the message seems to sink in with all the fifth graders.

"Good," says a boy. "I want to keep them pink."



POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Children in rural communities are more likely to use tobacco.
- Comprehensive tobacco education can reduce the likelihood of tobacco use in children.
- Hands-on education programs help children retain information.



TOUR

7/8



**IN THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF
OUR STATE, THE LATINO COMMUNITY
IS WORKING TO PROMOTE
HEALTHY LIFESTYLES IN
WYANDOTTE COUNTY.**

Early on a Saturday morning, 10 people sit around a conference table at El Centro, a community organization in Kansas City. They discuss their goals, and the programs and services they offer to help meet them. One word is repeated throughout their conversation, and you don't have to be fluent in Spanish to understand it: "importante."

Indeed, the work done at El Centro is important for the Latino community in Wyandotte County. In particular, the Promotores Health Outreach program encourages healthy lifestyles in the community and directs citizens to healthy opportunities. Promotores de salud, or health promoters, are members of the Latino community who are trained to bridge the gap between their peers and the resources available to them.

"My Promotores are always at health fairs, at the consulate, anywhere there will be Latinos," says Cielo Fernandez, project coordinator. A \$25,000 grant from the Kansas Health Foundation helped pay for personnel and supplies for the program.

HIGHLIGHT

"WE ARE A BRIDGE BETWEEN AVAILABLE SERVICES AND THE COMMUNITY."

"This is a very organic movement," Fernandez says. "The Promotores are coming from the community to educate the community."

The volunteers go through training at El Centro to learn about the health resources available. They hear presentations from health experts, such as nurses, and then create their own materials and tools to spread the message.

"The model of this program is how you share with your family," says Fernandez. "So I ask them, 'How do you want to take this information to the people?'"

The Promotores Health Outreach is in its fifth year in Kansas City. Fernandez says each year the program chooses a main focus. For example, one year they worked primarily on smoking cessation.

HIGHLIGHT

"OUR GOAL IS TO CELEBRATE HEALTHY FAMILIES."



"The quitline went crazy," she says. "They went from zero calls to 200 calls."

This year they have expanded the program to include younger members of the community. The youth Promotores are trained in health information and youth leadership, and work to encourage change in their peers through informal sessions. They also act as examples to their families and their neighborhoods.

"We are a bridge between available services and the community," says Fernandez. "And we have big, adult bridges, but we also need little bridges."

One of the ways the program encourages health is through weekly exercise classes. Fernandez explains that it's sometimes difficult to encourage physical activity.

"The attitude is that they had no choice but to walk before they came here," she says. "Now they think, 'I have a vehicle, why should I walk anywhere?'"

The same perception challenges are involved in eating decisions.

"They remember digging their own gardens before," says Fernandez, "and now they want the convenience of something easier."

The Promotores try to encourage healthier eating by meeting with the community in local grocery stores. They point out healthy options and how simple it can be to prepare healthy meals.

Fernandez is proud of the impact the Promotores Health Outreach program has had in Wyandotte County.

"Our goal is to celebrate healthy families," she says, "and the Promotores are a key part of this community."



POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The people best suited to serve a specific community are actual members of the community.
- Strong relationships are key to helping others.
- By increasing access to resources, the Promotores are dramatically improving the health of the community.



**OUR FINAL STOP IS IN THE SOUTHEAST
CORNER OF KANSAS, AT A PARK
DESIGNED TO GET PEOPLE
OUTSIDE AND MOVING.**

*H*ey, Dad," a boy shouts as he tosses a Frisbee, "catch!"

His father turns and effortlessly snags the disc. They are practicing for a round of disc golf at Schlanger Park in Pittsburg. Last fall, Schlanger Park became home to a new 18-hole disc golf course. A \$10,000 grant from the Kansas Health Foundation helped purchase equipment and supplies.

The boy's father is no stranger to the sport. He is Kevin Elrod, president of the PITT Disc Golf Club.

"Whatever we can do to promote the sport, that's what we'll do," he says. "And this course has already gotten a lot of positive feedback from the community and from other disc golf clubs."

Indeed, the course is busy. Children and adults tee off, tossing discs through the air.

HIGHLIGHT

**"THIS COURSE GETS ADULTS OUT AND BEING HEALTHY,
AND GETS FAMILIES WALKING."**

"I'm gonna make that one, just watch," one girl says. When her disc veers off course, she shouts, "watch out!"

"Try aiming for the hole," a boy tells her.

Kim Vogel, director of parks and recreation for Pittsburg, says that the course is part of a bigger plan to restore the park and encourage families to use it for fun physical activity.



"This course gets adults out and being healthy, and gets families walking," she says. "It's also great to drive traffic to the park and show people what we have here."

Pittsburg also has a 9-hole disc golf course, but the popularity of the sport required something bigger. And it is bigger – a single, 18-hole game requires a player to walk more than a mile to complete the course.

HIGHLIGHT

"WE'RE WORKING TO BRING THIS PARK BACK TO LIFE."

"The other course is played continuously," says Vogel. "We wanted to offer another option."

A late fall completion didn't stop players from enjoying the course. The PITT Disc Golf Club even held its fifth annual Ice Bowl there in February.

"The disc golfers come out and play for charity," Elrod says. "This was our first year at this course."

The Ice Bowl was a success, raising hundreds of dollars and collecting over a hundred cans of food.

"We had some ice on the ground that day, so it was a little slick," says Elrod. "But our motto is, 'No wimps and no whiners.'"

It's hard to imagine ice on the ground now, with the sun shining and families playing together.

"We're working to bring this park back to life," says Vogel.

As lively as the park is this afternoon, the work seems to be paying off.



POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Disc golf is a great low-impact exercise for all ages.
- Any form of outdoor activity can boost physical and mental health.
- Disc golf tournaments can help bring a community together.



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