



HEALTH EQUITY ZONE (HEZ)

PROVIDENCE – CITYWIDE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OFFICE, CITY OF PROVIDENCE



A Citywide collaboration to improve nutrition, enhance healthy food policies, increase safety in parks and recreation centers, and improve environmental health.

Health Equity Zones are geographical areas designed to achieve health equity by eliminating health disparities using place-based (where you live) strategies to promote healthy communities. Healthy communities are places where people live, work, play, and learn. These are neighborhoods consisting of social and physical environments that support healthy choices and safe living.

STORY SPOTLIGHT: SILVIA ADAMES



Silvia Adames

Last year, Silvia Adames was, in her own words, “really big” and had trouble walking. Both she and her mother were diagnosed with diabetes and high blood pressure. When her mother heard of the free **Adult Aerobic Exercise** classes being offered through the City of Providence Health Equity Zone, she encouraged Silvia to attend, saying “If you go, I will go!” They have been attending classes every week for about year.

“I started for my health and have loved it from the first day! I feel so good! I can walk better and I have more strength.”
-Silvia Adames

She values the positivity and encouragement of Terris Gonsalves, the class instructor, and is delighted to report that she has dropped from a size 22 to a size 16.

BACKGROUND INFO

The Providence Citywide HEZ focuses on:

- Improving community health around the city’s recreation centers;
- Improving nutrition;
- Developing community gardens;
- Offering the **Providence Summer Food Service Program**;
- Developing healthy food policies for public facilities;
- Increasing access to physical fitness programs for adults and youth in public places;
- Conducting activities to increase health and safety in parks and recreation centers;
- Offering diabetes prevention and self-management programs;
- Improving environmental health by implementing green infrastructure projects.



TIMELINE OF EVENTS:



SPOTLIGHT PROGRAM: RECYCLE-A-BIKE PEDAL POWER



Recycle-a-Bike's Pedal Power program teaches Providence children the benefits of cycling and trains the next generation of Providence cyclists. In 2016, the program taught essential bike riding and safety skills to 65 children. At the end of the sessions, every student who participated passed the **Safe Cycling Test**, and nine children who had never ridden a bike before had become confident cyclists. One of the greatest successes is getting kids "hooked" on physical exercise through biking. Every time the class meets students want more, often asking, "**can we do one more lap, please?**" Students are eager to participate and have fun while building a habit of healthy exercise.

WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WE ARE GOING

The City of Providence Health Equity Zone enables the City's Healthy Communities Office to work with a wide variety of partners in making sure that our community is active and healthy. Together, we are developing a vision for Providence's neighborhoods that includes resources to enable youth and adults to make healthy life decisions. The HEZ collaborative is building partnerships between youth-led organizations, City departments, community-based nonprofits and health systems to increase opportunities for exercise, good nutrition, health education, and connection with health services. We are excited that the relationships our organizations are building with each other are making a real difference in the lives of Providence residents.

"It's inspiring to see Providence residents coming together to learn about and access healthy food, exercise in our parks and public spaces, get out on bikes and teach each other about living healthy lives. Our collaborative is working together to create so many options for healthy living in Providence's neighborhoods."

-Rachel Newman Greene



Rachel Newman Greene

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Shared public health strategic priorities working with partners statewide.

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- Addressing the social and environmental determinants of health
- Eliminating the disparities of health and promote health equity
- Ensuring access to quality health services including vulnerable populations.

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