

# *Mapping the Movement for Healthy Food and Activity Environments in the United States*

## **ORGANIZATIONAL SNAPSHOTS**

This document was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and prepared by Prevention Institute

### **Principal authors:**

Linnea Ashley, MPH

Manal J. Aboelata, MPH

Juliet Sims, RD

Sarah Adler-McDonald

© January 2008

Prevention Institute is a nonprofit, national center dedicated to improving community health and well-being by building momentum for effective primary prevention. Primary prevention means taking action to build resilience and to prevent problems before they occur. The Institute's work is characterized by a strong commitment to community participation and promotion of equitable health outcomes among all social and economic groups. Since its founding in 1997, the organization has focused on injury and violence prevention, traffic safety, health disparities, nutrition and physical activity, and youth development. This, and other Prevention Institute documents, are available at no cost on our website.

221 Oak Street  
Oakland, CA 94607  
510.444.7738  
fax 510.663.1280

[www.preventioninstitute.org](http://www.preventioninstitute.org)

Prevention  
Institute  
Putting prevention  
at the center of community well-being

# Acknowledgements

Prevention Institute would like to thank each of the following individuals who gave generously of their time to provide us with the information, photos, and supporting materials that went into each organizational snapshot.

Chris Bedford  
President  
Center for Economic Security

Joe Schroeder  
Urban Organizer  
Community Farm Alliance

Rob Sadowsky  
Executive Director  
Chicagoland Bicycle Federation

Jen James  
Associate Director  
The Food Project of Boston

Jennifer Lopez  
Healthy Living Outreach Facilitator  
Get Moving Kern

Kathryn Lawler  
Consultant  
Lifelong Communities Initiative

Marnie Genre & Max Elliot  
New Orleans Food and Farm Network

Sally Flocks  
President, CEO, and Founder  
Pedestrians Educating Drivers on Safety

Berry Friesen  
Executive Director.  
Pennsylvania Hunger Action Center

Ramon Ramirez  
Executive Director  
Piñeros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste  
(Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United)

Tim Adams  
Executive Director  
Teton Valley Trails and Pathways

We would like to recognize Makani-Themba Nixon, Praxis Project and Kolu Zigbi, Noyes Foundation for their thoughtful reflections and guidance during the start-up phase. We would also like to thank key informants from Ypsilanti Health Coalition, One Less Car, Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, and Piedmont Environmental Council, who gave generously of their time to describe their policy advocacy and community organizing efforts.

Carol Chao, Janani Srikantharajah, Sam Davidson, and Jesse Appelman were the Prevention Institute staff responsible for many hours of interviewing, data collection, and data analysis. Without their efforts neither the *Map of the Movement* nor the *Organizational Snapshots* would have come to fruition. Thank you.

# Table of Contents

Overview . . . . .	1
1. Community Farm Alliance. . . . .	3
2. Get Moving Kern. . . . .	6
3. Chicagoland Bicycle Federation . . . . .	9
4. Pennsylvania Hunger Action Center . . . . .	11
5. <i>Piñeros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste</i> (Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United) . . . . .	13
6. Lifelong Communities Initiative. . . . .	15
7. The Food Project of Boston . . . . .	17
8. Teton Valley Trails and Pathways . . . . .	19
9. Center for Economic Security . . . . .	21
10. Pedestrians Educating Drivers on Safety . . . . .	23
11. New Orleans Food and Farm Network. . . . .	25

*This is one in a series of 11 organizational snapshots that represent examples of compelling policy advocacy, programmatic, and environmental change efforts designed to positively impact people’s lives and livelihoods. In these snapshots we hope that the reader will recognize interest and capacity among committed advocacy groups to apply their strategies, passion, and energy to improving opportunities for healthy eating and active living in their communities. The profiles were written and produced by Prevention Institute. Funding and guidance were provided by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.*

# Foreword

The organizational snapshots captured in the following pages present innovative efforts of 11 organizations advocating for improvements, predominantly in low-income neighborhoods and with African American and Latino residents. Each of the 11 community groups take on tough policy and environmental change issues like increasing access to healthy food, addressing safety concerns, and cultivating opportunities for walking and bicycling. In both rural settings and urban neighborhoods throughout the country, these snapshots paint a picture of pervasive challenges to healthy eating and active living and explore creative solutions to improve health and quality of life.

These 11 snapshots are part of a broader effort entitled, *Mapping the Movement for Healthy Eating and Activity Environments in the United States: A Snapshot of the Field* funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. In December 2006, Prevention Institute embarked on a national search for coalitions and organizations advocating for change in communities of color and in low-income neighborhoods. Our scan of the field involved interviews with numerous key informants which resulted in semi-structured interviews with representatives of 312 organizations. The scan

included groups working on nutrition and physical activity advocacy and related issues like food security, sustainable agriculture, and the built environment, as well as groups advocating to limit unhealthy exposures (e.g., tobacco, alcohol, and environmental toxins) and to expand human rights (e.g., labor and housing rights groups).

Of the more than 300 groups interviewed, the 11 organizations profiled in this document represent examples of compelling policy advocacy, programmatic, and environmental change efforts designed to positively impact people's lives and livelihoods. In these snapshots we hope that the reader will recognize interest and capacity among committed advocacy groups to apply their strategies, passion, and energy to improving opportunities for healthy eating and active living in their communities.

Our hope is that these organizational snapshots can be used to offer advocates, policy makers, funders, and community residents with examples of how the inertia of active, engaged organizations and residents can transform communities—make them healthier—through changes to policies, environments, and social norms.

## OVERVIEW

# Mapping the Movement for Healthy Food and Activity Environments in the United States: Organizational Snapshots

The organizational snapshots include a description of the organizational setting, overview of their policy advocacy and environmental change efforts, discussion of significant challenges to the work, and “quick facts” about each organization.

The “quick facts” box in the upper right-hand corner of the first page of each snapshot draws data from the Mapping Database and provides the organization’s location, policy jurisdiction (local, state or federal), policy orientation (engaged in policy, poised to do more policy work, education orientation); approach (environmental/ institutional or services/programs); strong equity focus; issue areas; policy domains; and website address.

- 1. Community Farm Alliance:** With a membership base of over 2,000, CFA spearheads policies to support family farming in rural Kentucky and creates access to healthy fresh fruits and vegetables among urban, West Louisville’s primarily African American residents through a blend of programs and policies.
- 2. Get Moving Kern and Greenfield Walking Group:** A parent-led walking group serves as the resident task force to the *Get Moving Kern* coalition and is reversing barriers to healthy eating and safe walking in their rural, predominantly Latino community of Kern County, California.
- 3. Chicagoland Bicycle Federation:** In Chicago and the surrounding region, this membership-driven organization works on Complete Streets policies, local bikeways, safe routes to school, and public events to rally for streets that will accommodate bicyclists safely on their way to school and across the city.
- 4. Pennsylvania Hunger Action Center:** This statewide advocacy center works at the nexus of nutrition, hunger, and poverty as it coordinates a network of nutrition activists and professionals to advocate for statewide legislation to improve school nutrition, increase participation in the Food Stamp Program, and increase the minimum wage.
- 5. Piñeros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United):** In the rural town of Woodburn, Oregon with a more than 50% Latino population, the farmworkers union has developed a strong organizing and advocacy history on labor and housing issues. Now, through its 5,700+ members, the farmworkers, spouses, and children are also addressing healthy food access and physical activity to help local residents eat better and move more.
- 6. Lifelong Communities Initiative:** This program of the Atlanta Regional Commission pays special attention to the needs of seniors as it works to improve community design and support city-wide ordinances to support better walking and transportation alternatives and healthy housing for seniors.
- 7. The Food Project of Boston:** Cultivating fruits and vegetables in an urban garden and on a suburban farm leased from the city at minimal cost, youth work with *The Food Project* and participate in community-supported agriculture that brings healthy produce to low-income residents throughout Boston.

8. ***Teton Valley Trails and Pathways:*** Looking to find a balance between responsible development, land conservation, and a physical activity friendly environment, advocates and residents of this rural, sparsely populated city work together to advance local and regional policies that will guide development for years to come.
9. ***Center for Economic Security:*** Working intensively in the low-income city of Muskegon, Michigan, this relatively new organization is galvanizing support for a local, sustainable food system and hopes to get a statewide initiative on the 2010 ballot that will declare healthy, sustainable food as a right for every Michigan resident.
10. ***Pedestrians Educating Drivers on Safety:*** With a primary goal of increasing pedestrian safety throughout the Atlanta region, this organization has won policy victories and manages an innovative web-based system that allows residents to report barriers to safe walking directly to the appropriate city or county agency.
11. ***New Orleans Food and Farm Network:*** Hurricane Katrina was a recent memory when food scarcity became a frightening reality for many residents who already lacked easy access to healthy foods before the disaster. A food mapping effort started out as a short-term response to residents' need to get access to soup kitchens, grocery stores, or food pantries and now has become a tool for understanding—and filling—gaps in access to healthy foods and community gardens.

## TETON VALLEY TRAILS & PATHWAYS

# Physical activity and environmental stewardship galvanize rural community

Just west of the Grand Tetons, Teton Valley, Idaho is a rural community of nearly 7,000 people and a rural economy based on ranching and agriculture. It is covered in snow for a large part of the year; so in addition to snowshoeing and skiing, bicycling and walking are favorite activities among residents and visitors. Like many rural communities, Teton Valley faces increasing pressure to develop agricultural, farm, and natural lands to accommodate a growing population. In response, residents and advocates are advancing policy solutions to help preserve their natural resources while creating an environment that supports physical activity.

*Teton Valley Trails and Pathways* (TVTAP) represents 500 active, dues-paying residents working to shape the valley so that it will continue to support physical activity opportunities. TVTAP members are concerned that without policy controls, new development efforts could encroach on natural resources and wipe out op-



CLEAN TRAILS ENCOURAGE USE

### QUICK FACTS

**LOCATION** . . . . Driggs, ID

**POLICY JURISDICTION**

Local  State  Federal

**POLICY ORIENTATION**

Policy  Poised  Education

**APPROACH**

Environmental/Institutional  Services/Programs

**ISSUE AREAS.** . . Physical Activity

**POLICY DOMAINS**

Bikeability/Walkability  
 Land Use/Planning/Zoning

**WEBSITE** . . . . . [www.tvtap.org](http://www.tvtap.org)

portunities for residents to get physically active. The Valley is experiencing an influx of young families and visitors who create a demand for recreational facilities such as bike paths and bike lanes, so TVTAP recognizes a need to balance development concerns with environmental, economic, and social norms that have shaped the Valley for so long.

TVTAP first came together out of an effort to add a bike lane to a busy highway in the Valley. Reminiscing on their initial success, Executive Director Tim Adams, says, “It all started with a small group of people realizing they could really make a difference.” Now, TVTAP has expanded its work, taking on activity-friendly land use in and around the valley. The organization enlists community residents in advocacy by inviting residents to provide public comment on new development plans as they come up for review and



VOLUNTEER CREWS CREATE A TRAIL

members consistently attend City Council meetings when new land use ordinances are being discussed. TVTAP also has an active Board that helps to facilitate community dialogue and action.

Through their advocacy efforts, TVTAP members have learned to seize opportunities by infusing their voices into regional planning and development processes. They have found that bringing trails and pathways into planning discussions early on is critical. It is much easier to develop correctly the first time than to undo developments that have not considered the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians.

One of TVTAP's most significant accomplishments was spearheading the passage of multiple city ordinances to *require* that all new development projects integrate with existing pathways or trail systems. Building on that work, they are now working to make the city ordinance a countywide mandate so that new developments throughout the county will support physical activity. TVTAP members have also set their sights on a regional, multi-state pathway that circumnavigates Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. Toward this end, TVTAP has forged an alliance with Friends of Pathways based in Jackson, Wyoming. If successful, the two agencies and others will have to build an effective collaboration between three states and multiple governmental jurisdictions within those states. While Adams suspects that completion of the loop is still 10 to 20 years down the road, TVTAP is

committed to creating physical changes that allow people to engage in physical activity while enjoying and protecting the natural wonders available to them.

Although land use planning is long-term work, Adams admits that TVTAP members also have a keen eye toward the political climate and the need to take advantage of political cycles. For the last couple of years, TVTAP attributes some of its successes to effective working relationships with local elected and appointed officials and now find a number of government officials receptive to change. If the future ushers in new leadership less friendly to TVTAP's mission, then Adams believes they will continue to "educate community and political leaders, promote their cause, and gather support for the mission" but in the meantime, Adams says without hesitation, "We're gonna pack as much into this time while we have support, while we have folks in government positions that support us."



INTRODUCING TRAILS TO THE NEXT GENERATION