This issue of The Alley Newspaper is largely dedicated to reflecting the voices and the activities over the past year of the Backyard Initiative. Each of 12 CHAT teams have contributed their own stories and photos.

KEY:
- Backyard Initiative = BYI
- Cultural Wellness Center = CWC
- CHAT= Community Health Action Team

Those articles with a Sunflower denote an official activity within the BYI.

ENJOY!

At the center of all of our work is our Definition of Health

Health is a state of physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. It is not only the absence of infirmity and disease.

Health is the state of balance, harmony, and connectedness within and between many systems – the body, the family, the community, the environment, and culture. It cannot be seen only in an individual context.

Health is an active state of being; people must be active participants to be healthy. It cannot be achieved by being passive.
Access to Health Care Services – Portico Healthnet

By Debra Holmgren, President, Portico Healthnet

Portico Healthnet’s mission is to increase the number of people in Minnesota with health care coverage. Toward that goal, Portico offers help with applications for government health programs like Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare, and offers an alternative Coverage program to eligible residents in the Twin Cities. Portico is a community-based nonprofit agency. Portico offers these services through generous contributions from hospital and health plan partners, as well as other funding sources in the community.

Allina and Portico have partnered to provide Portico’s health care coverage program to residents of the east metro area since 1998. Beginning in 2009, Allina increased its support so that Portico was able to offer the Coverage program to residents of the Backyard. The Coverage program is not insurance, but it does offer payment for primary and preventive medical services, as well as payment for outpatient mental health services and prescription medications. Eligibility is based on level of income as well as living in the Backyard area. The Coverage program has a small monthly participation fee which is also based on income, usually around $25 per month per household. Once enrolled in the program, Portico participants choose a primary care clinician where they can receive all of their non-emergency services, including immunizations, health screenings like mammograms, and appointments for any health issues, including illnesses like diabetes, asthma, and high blood pressure. Nearly 300 people from the Backyard have been enrolled in Portico’s Coverage program since the Backyard Initiative began. Please call Portico at 651-489-CARE (2273) for more information.

Part of Allina’s support to Portico is used to provide services of a Community Health Worker, Eva, who is available to residents of the Backyard area. She spends four days a week at the Family Resource Center located at Andersen School and will help anyone who is interested in applying for Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare. Eva knows a lot about these government programs, and will sit down with you to see if it looks like you are eligible, and then help you fill out an application and help you through the whole application process with Hennepin County or the state. Eva can also provide information about low cost medical and dental services, and about other resources in the community. Her services are free and you can visit her at Andersen School or call the Family Resource Center to reach her. Or you can call Portico direct for health-related resources and help with applications. Call 651-489-CARE (2273). Portico assisted over 2,800 people with successful health applications for Minnesota health care programs.

Looking for Affordable Health Care Coverage?

Portico Healthnet Can Help!

Thanks to support from the Allina Backyard Initiative, Portico Healthnet can:
· Help you apply for Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare
· Enroll you in Portico’s Primary and Preventive Health Care Program if eligible

Call us at 651-489-CARE for more information

The Backyard Initiative: What It Is and Why It Exists

The Backyard Initiative is a dynamic partnership between Allina Health and its neighbors to improve health and health care in the seven communities immediately surrounding Allina Commons, Abbott Northwestern Hospital and the Phillips Eye Institute. The Backyard Initiative supports efforts to strengthen community health by empowering residents to draw upon their own knowledge, skills, and cultural values to care for themselves, their families, and their neighbors.

Research shows that social conditions–including isolation and a lack of social support–have a profound impact on our health. By partnering the expertise and resources of health care institutions with the wisdom and experience of residents, The Backyard Initiative is exploring a new dimension to a health care system that will focus on promoting health in addition to treating sickness.

Beginning in 2008, Allina partnered with the Cultural Wellness Center, a community nonprofit organization in South Minneapolis, to facilitate the community engagement process. The Cultural Wellness Center has a long history of engaging community residents to improve health through self-study, surface- and producing knowledge, cross-cultural knowledge exchange, and relationship building. Early in the process, the CWC led a process that engaged residents in developing a definition of health, a definition that became the foundation for The Backyard Initiative.

The Alley Newspaper • July 2012
An assessment team was formed to create a picture of the current state of health and well-being of the residents in the Backyard, engage a broad network of residents in the process, and inform and plan the next steps for The Backyard Initiative. The assessment team included community residents, staff from Allina, the CWC, and Wilder Research. Through 21 Listening Circles and 677 face-to-face, walk-around interviews, three themes began to emerge:

**The Power of Interconnectedness.** Each dimension of health named in the community definition of health is dependent on the others; one dimension of health cannot be understood or addressed in isolation.

**The Power of Relationships.** Relationships impact the determinants of health. People know that they need exercise and healthy food, plenty of rest and occasional check-ups to be healthy, but their relationships are crucial to whether they consistently act on that knowledge. Developing healthy relationships between community residents and health care providers is a powerful factor for improving community health outcomes.

**“It’s meant a lot of work but it’s not like labor. We are building and learning and in some cases challenging ourselves beyond our limits and I think that’s the kind of work the entire society needs to be doing so I thank you for that.”**

**“Being in the Backyard Initiative has meant taking my first steps as a community organizer. A lot of networking opportunities…have happened for the first time for me here.”**

**“I made some decisions from reflecting on health in community. I made the decision to be less busy so I can be more available to support my community like the Anchor Families do. You can’t help someone who’s in crisis if you’re always busy.”**

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**New Midtown Corridor Transit study**

Metro Transit’s Midtown Corridor Alternatives Analysis (AA) will look at enhanced bus, bus rapid transit, streetcar, and light rail transit for the Midtown Greenway and Lake Street.

A recent workshop concluded that Greenway Streetcars could unite and enhance the Lake Street-Greenway corridor done with innovative features. The Analysis kick-off date-July 30th- starts a 12-18 month timeline. MGC believes a Greenway Streetcar would be good for the Greenway, neighborhoods, the corridor, and our city. Hopefully, this AA will be the first step towards getting it built!

**Phillips West Neighborhood Upcoming Events:**

**July 5th (Thursday) 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.**

**Phillips West Monthly Community Meeting!**

Join your neighbors and other Community Partners for updates from local government, business partners, residents, and police. This event will take place at the Center for Changing Lives in the Centrum Room located on the 1st floor (2400 Park Avenue). Free parking is available in the rear off Oakland Avenue. Free Pizza & Beverages will be provided!

**August 7th (Tuesday) 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.**

**Phillips West Neighborhood 16th Annual National Night Out Celebration!**

Please join dozens of Community Partners & Residents for the biggest National Night Out Celebration in Minneapolis! Event will be held along 27th Street between Columbus and Portland Avenues! A variety of free picnic food including carnival specialties! There will also be a variety of entertainment including a Mariachi Band, Salsa Dancers, Clowns, Puppet show, facepainting, fish pond, children’s games, McGruff the Crime Dog, a rapping contest hosted by Mad Dads and a giant inflated slide! Information on Community Resources will be available! If you would like an information table or would like to get involved contact Crystal at 612-879-5383 or email pwno2005@yahoo.com

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**By soren Jensen, ex. Dir. of miDtown greenway coalition**

Metro Transit’s Midtown Corridor Alternatives Analysis (AA) will look at enhanced bus, bus rapid transit, streetcar, and light rail transit for the Midtown Greenway and Lake Street. A recent workshop concluded that Greenway Streetcars could unite and enhance the Lake Street-Greenway corridor done with innovative features. The Analysis kick-off date-July 30th- starts a 12-18 month timeline. MGC believes a Greenway Streetcar would be good for the Greenway, neighborhoods, the corridor, and our city. Hopefully, this AA will be the first step towards getting it built!
Circle of Healing CHAT

The Circle of Healing Practitioners CHAT is a collaborative of Backyard practitioners which includes complementary healers, elders, representatives from different cultural traditions, conventional health professionals and community care givers. Members of this CHAT come together as practitioners interested in creating a more formalized network of people operating in a Community Care-Giving system around Backyard residents. This will be done by providing a better information and support for healing and reflection about the message of_dis-ease. This network serves both the Backyard community receiving care and the healing practitioner community in the Backyard.

The vision behind the Circle of Healing Practitioners CHAT is grounded in cultural health practices and ways of knowing that honor the reciprocal and holistic nature of healing. In order to meet the health needs of the people living in the Backyard, this CHAT aims to empower health practitioners and community members and to connect the community care giving system to the conventional health care system in a more formal and integrative way.

One way the CHAT plans to accomplish the task of establishing a Community Care-Giving system is by holding a series of dialogues about the Integral Framework and its relation to all healing systems. The Integral Framework will serve as a starting point for conversation about how people can practice what they know in a way that is complementary to what other people know. This series of discussions will eventually become part of an official training and certification process for practitioners from various healing modalities and professions who want to adopt a more holistic and community based approach to their practice and so become a part of the care giving system facilitated by this CHAT. The project's vision is not based in creating a static system but focuses on building a process-oriented model that will continue to evolve and grow. The network will create a model of partnering between health care and community practitioners.

If you are a health care practitioner and would like to learn more or get involved in the Circle of Healing CHAT, please call the Cultural Wellness Center at 612-721-5745.

Circle of Healing CHAT Members: Farhiya Khalif, Antuney Apolinario, Akhmiri Sekhr

The Alley wants to thank everyone who contributed time, talents, and dollars for making this issue possible. A special thanks also to Erik Thomasen (What’s up at Franklin Library), Sune Moller (Crossword Puzzle), Howard Mcgudder II (Movie Corner), and Peter Mohlman (Raise Your Voice) for having written contributions ready as always in hopes of having room in this issue. At the “eleventh hour” it resulted that their spaces were needed for this special edition. We thank them for their gracious understanding and encourage their readers to enjoy their return in the August Alley.

Stories from Our BackYard

“Stories from Our BackYard” tells stories here. Our name is The Alley. We need your stories. There are thousands of stories waiting to be told from 45,000 residents in 15,000 households of kids getting good grades, friendly gestures between strangers, stories of incredible hope and good humor.

There is one such story in this issue of The Alley marked by the icon above. Tell us your story or a whole versus just where I live and have learned more about the different people who make up the community.

Running Wolf Exercise/Excuse alike

BY JEAN MOORE

My name is Jeanne and I hate to exercise. I am 71 years old and overweight and diabetic. Being a diabetic, of course, puts me at a higher risk for kidney and cardiovascular problems. My mother and father both died of heart-related disease. So did one of my grandmothers and one of my great-grandfathers.

But I let myself get to the age of being an older without learning how to take care of myself, even with all those there are. Well, I know how in my head but not my gut. Then a series of good-luck events happened to me. First, I ran into a neighbor, Jake, at a meeting and saw him without a coat on for the first time in months and he’d shrunk! By half! He had lost 100 pounds. He gave me a ride home and I said what did you do and he explained his diet to me (the eats less-who knew? But he had some very useful information on how to accomplish that) and mentioned his support group. I asked, very casually, if I might go to his support group. Well, he’d see. And he did and I started attending as a non-A-PiD and later a P-A-PiD. I had family members and friends and a medical provider who certainly wanted to see me lose weight and be healthy and not die. Not yet. But A-PiD are diabetics, many of them older, like me, and they struggle with weight and diet and blood sugar control just like I do. They knew what to say to me and I was

“made some decisions from thinking on health in community. I made the decision to be less busy so I can be more available to support my community like the Anchor

Families do. You can’t help someone who’s in crisis if you’re always busy.”

“This is a very important program to me because we are each listened to and we get to share whatever we want to share about what the issue is.”

“For me the greatest benefit has been hearing the ideas that people have shared. They’re wonderful to put together in various ways.”

“I have learned a lot more about the community as a whole versus just where I live and have learned more about the different people who make up the community.”

Allina Health: The Center for Health Care Research & Innovation researches new ways to help Minnesotans access affordable health coverage and care.

Cultural Wellness Center: is a non-profit community-based organization dedicated to developing cultural approaches for positively impacting health and health care, economic development, and community building.

Hope Community: A Phillips community development organization committed to deep community engagement. Hope Community led the process of engaging non-profit organizations in the Backyard.

Portico HealthNet: A nonprofit health and human services organization that helps uninsured Minnesotans access affordable health care and coverage.

"The Backyard Initiative is an example of Allina Health’s commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve. What makes the Backyard Initiative unique is that it is both community centered and community driven, which means that people who live in the community and are most impacted by the initiative determine the work that needs to be done." - Ellise Zuehlke

Director Community Benefit & Engagement • Allina Health
A-Pod CHAT: Advancing Opportunities through a Partnership of Diabetics

When A Partnership Of Diabetics (A-POD) was first designed and implemented, our goal was simply to create a community-based program for advancing the skills of persons with diabetes to become better self-managers of their condition. We started with POD-Teeners, a daily workshop to introduce our strategies to participants and then sponsored weekly Meet-ups where participants could share the “mile-markers” on their journey toward better health and wellness. Meet-ups became and are still the key ingredient in A-POD’s program because it’s the time that participants can actually share their progress or problems with others with similar challenges.

Meet-ups are more than a “support group” because we also track participant’s numbers to demonstrate that with the additional focus on diabetes learning and new, better tools to manage our conditions, we improve! In a third party evaluation conducted by a graduate student from the University of Minnesota’s School of Public Health we found that more than 90% of our participants have improved, using the same statewide criteria used by all Minnesota clinics and hospitals. A-POD has surpassed any other institution’s success rate by more than 25 percentage points, yet running a fraction of the cost that other programs require.

In late 2011, A-POD began a Somali elder women’s initiative that meets each Tuesday afternoon. This group also has been demonstrating considerable improvements in their numbers despite the fact that they do not speak English or read or write any language. Using only oral methods of communicating has provided a sufficient basis for improvement.

This suggests that a key ingredient of chronic disease management should involve face-to-face sessions that give each person time to listen, respond, act and review one’s personal strategies. The fact that we provide an English lesson in each Meet-up has surely promoted added interest and enabled joyful participation while helping maintain weekly attendance.

On the last day of May, A-POD took over the operation of a month-long breakfast that had operated for the past eight years by the Native American Community Clinic (NACC). With Running Wolf Fitness Center now housed at the Phillips Community Center (2523 Eleventh Avenue South, Minneapolis) along with A-POD’s offices, it was a reasonable idea to move the monthly healthy-eating diabetic breakfast from the Minneapolis American Indian Center to the Phillips Community Center’s dining room. The partnership developed with NACC continues with this breakfast. More than fifty people attended the first one and more are expected as the word gets out.

In the future, funding permitting, we hope to add a Spanish-speaking diabetic breakfast to the lunch and a Somali supper supporting diabetes in their culture. In the short term, we are also exploring with the Waste House, a multilingual translation system to enable all people to come together regardless of language, but we also hope to do a more extensive effort within each cultural group as well.

A-POD is very grateful for initial and secondary funding by Allina Health for the past two years. This year, A-POD was also funded in part by Novo Nordisk, a Danish manufacturer of insulin. Pending further funding, A-POD will expand to encompass additional opportunities as they arise and develop effective activities to meet the challenges that diabetics present.

CHAT Team Members: Robert and Sharon Albee, Lanya Frisbee, Diane Greve, Tim Hopkins, Jake Jacob, Doug Limon, Anita Martinez, Jeanne Moore, Pamela North, Pat Paul, Mary Rhatigan, Margaret Sylte, Bob Rick, Deb Johnson Tate, Bridget Tierney, Shirley Heyer, Patricia Van Ert, and Rita Johnson.
A community seems like an odd place to be talking about building a healthy community since it’s where most of us will wind up when our health ultimately and inevitably fails. But cemeteries are about more than our physical selves; they are about the legacy that we leave to others and that others have given to us. They are about stories; they are about community.

Nation Builders. Minneapolis Pioneers and Soldiers Memorial Cemetery is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It is a place of national, not just local, significance. Part of the designation recognizes the cemetery’s architectural features, but another part, perhaps the most important part, recognizes the role that the people who are buried here in the Phillips community played in both our local and national history. They are not people whose names are household words, yet they are recognized as nation builders.

...who is worth remembering and who is not…”

Howard Mansfield (“In the Memory House”) asks important questions about which people we tell us that our community has served.

Everyone has a story and those homes of working class people. Many of these immigrants were the people who worked, and all too often, became here to escape poverty and political oppression to build a better future for their children. Many of these immigrants were the people who worked, and all too often, died, in flourmills, lumber mills and railroad yards. It tells the story of thousands of children who died from drink- ing or coming into contact with contaminated water or who died because vaccinations for communicable diseases didn’t exist.

Ordinary people doing extraordinary things. It tells the story of ordinary people doing extraordinary things: mothers who died rescuing their children from fires and friends who died trying to save their drowning friends. It tells the story of neighbors helping neighbors in times of crisis and need. It tells why one community and its people represent a nation.

We and our stories matter. In the Backyard Initiative’s 2009 Listening Circles Report, the need for a sense of community and interconnectedness and the power of relationships were recurring themes. It’s important for us to know that we and our stories matter. We can choose who we want to remember and why and make them part of our community’s history. Tell your stories. Write them down. Pass them on. Make your story part of our history and make our community a force to be reckoned with. It’s the healthy thing to do.

Tales from Pioneers & Soldiers Cemetery
SUE HUNTER WEB 93* in a Series

The evaluation team also completed a review of several hundred articles in the Minneapolis Tribune about stories; they are about community.

“...I’ve lived in the Phillips community for a little over 20 years and this is the first time we can really say we’re a community.”

“…Connecting in the Backyard…”

“…Connecting in the Backyard…”

“…Connecting in the Backyard…”

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Evaluation & Learning
Understanding and sharing our results is a critical component of the BIYI. The BIYI created an evaluation team that consists of contracted evaluators, the CWC and an evaluation community fellow team to provide objective evaluation for the Backyard’s resident engagement activities. The Evaluation team worked with the Community’s Commission to develop a strength-based approach to monitoring and evaluating CHAT health promotion projects. The majority of the work has focused on helping residents develop their own tools for collecting information and understanding their work. A year-end template was developed in conjunction with the Assessment Team and Commission to allow CHATs to report their progress and challenges.

The evaluation team also completed a review of several hundred articles in the fields of community building and mobilization for health promotion. The review demonstrated that the BIYI is unique among national health improvement projects because in the BIYI, the needs assessment, planning and action are generated by the community so that the community is the agent, rather than the target of change. The findings of the review and the foundation year activities have led to the development of a very comprehensive and ambitious evaluation plan for 2012 that will assess how well the partnership idea between Allina and the community is working, the progress of empowering residents to build capacity for health promotion, and the impact of the effort of creating positive health benefits for residents.

in the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre

August 13-17
9 a.m.–3 p.m.
Ages 6 to 11

CULTURE CAMP

SPEND ONE DAY AT EACH CULTURAL ORGANIZATION:
Children’s Theatre Company
Highpoint Center for Printmaking
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Register through Minnesota Center for Book Arts by calling 612-215-2520 or online at www.mnbookarts.org.

Local Stipend Volunteer Position
Serve as a Local Stipend Volunteer at those needing companion-
ship & errand assist, 55+, commit min 15hrs/wk to earn stipend, driving and working independently. Reimbursement for time & travel.

Contact Gory 651.310.9447

Hennepin County History Museum

Stone columns being built in 1928.
The Dakota Language CHAT

The Dakota Language Revitalization CHAT continues to fulfill its commitment to the well being of the Dakota peoples through spiritual, cultural, language and educational ways of life that are integral to the Dakota nation.

At the beginning of the 20th century, there were more than seven thousand speakers of the Dakota language located in over 24 different reservations, reserves, home-based communities in Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan, Canada. All of these who called their homeland Mni-wiconi “shining lakes” and what is now called by settler society as the state of Minnesota, were all descendants of the original Dakota who inhabited this area since time immemorial.

The tragic consequences of the Dakota wars of 1862 lead to the Diaspora of the Dakota nation from their original homeland. Subsequent to the events of 1862 and the creation of the reservation system; the governments of Canada and the United States in acted policies and laws to, at times, forcibly remove Dakota children from their homes to federal and church run schools called: residential schools (Canada) or boarding schools (U.S.). The use of the Dakota language was forbidden by strict punishment and even death. By the 1950’s three generations of Dakota peoples had grown up the boarding and residential school system. Due to the systematic oppression inflicted on the Dakota, many were reluctant to teach their children the Dakota language (in which lies the spiritual foundation of the Dakota ways of life) in fear of reprisal from the Government(s).

As a result the Dakota language is on the verge of extinction in their own homeland. The tragic history and historical trauma of these events has lead to a diaspora of health issues that include diabetes, obesity, early death, alcoholism, drug use, heart disease and broken families.

As one of Minnesota’s indigenous languages, Dakota is an important asset to Minnesota and the world’s linguistic resources. The complexity and unique aspects of the Dakota language provides important worldview and concepts that can enrich all Minnesotans. With this noted, there is even more pressing need to revitalize the Dakota language. Specifically for the purposes of this project, revitalizing the Dakota language is of the utmost importance to turning around the currently bleak outlook for the achievement of young Native American living in Minneapolis. Reclaiming the Dakota language is a cornerstone for Native American Dakota’s to reconnect to culture, educational achievement and positive self image, which in and of itself, is an important indicator of academic, economic, and full success for self, family and community.

The Dakota Language CHAT is involved in various activities that will help to revitalize the language and culture of the Dakota people. One of our most recent activities is the Dakota Language CHAT member upon seeing the documentary “Dakota 38” by a Dakota Language CHAT member upon seeing the documentary “Dakota 38”

MOVING TOWARDS FORGIVENESS: Reflections by a Dakota Language CHAT member upon seeing the documentary “Dakota 38”

As a part of the Dakota Language CHAT, we were inclined to show our fellow CHAT members a piece of history that no longer exists. Our showing was very powerful as well as emotional for all that were present for the showing of the documentary Dakota “38” plus 2. I especially want to give thanks to the CHAT members who were present to see a piece of history long over due in our daily discussions involving Indigenous peoples everywhere.

Our event became an intro into a realm of forgiveness! The depiction in the movie was intense as well as moving as we see euro-centric humans as well as indigenous humans come together in a scene not exactly familiar! Tears were undeniable, a new appreciation began to fill the room as the movie was the showing of the documentary “Dakota 38” produced by Spirit Feather Productions. The film grew out of a dream in 2005 of Jim Miller, a spiritual leader and Vietnam Veteran from South Dakota. Jim’s dream is rooted in his people’s nightmare of the largest mass execution ever conducted by the United States government.

Jim and his wife traveled from South Dakota to be present for the film’s viewing at the American Indian Center in Minneapolis. Also present was a film’s writer and director, Jim Claremont opened the evening with a prayer and a traditional song.

CHAT Members include: Ashley Agard, Wayne Long Crow, Sheldon Noel

...Connecting in the Backyard...Connecting in the Backyard...Connecting in the Backyard...
OUT in the Backyard CHAT

The OUT in the Backyard CHAT is focusing their work and activities on the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (GLBTQ) communities to reduce isolation, create community and foster connections in order to improve the health of individuals in our neighborhoods.

Some of the activities that we have worked on in the last year to put our goals and ideals into action include:

- Worked with the community and a website designer to begin the process of building an informational and interactive website that will provide resources and educational information. It will also be accessible to all outside the GLBTQ community so that we can increase awareness and build connections between our various communities.
- Sponsored several community forums to get information for the website and share resources, which included topics like: services for LGBT youth and end of life issues and the need for healthcare directives.
- Sponsored Booth at the annual GLBTQ Pride festival in Loring Park to promote OUT in the Backyard and to recruit community members to the CHAT.
- Community screening/discussion of the documentary Billy & Mandy, a film that tells one student’s ordeal with anti-gay bullying. Bullying is an issue that impacts many different communities, and the film helped generate dialogue among CHATs. This event took place at the Cultural Wellness Center.
- Since obesity, diabetes, heart disease, depression, and stress are such big health issues not only for GLBTQ folks but for all residents in the Back Yard, we began a series of exercise classes that would be free and accessible to all. First, we started with a 6 or 8-week Kettlebell class. We have continued using an exercise class format as a way to improve the health of all in the Back Yard by offering Zumba, a very popular exercise movement class. These classes are offered every Monday night from 6:30 to 7:30 pm in Powderhorn Park with ZUMBA instructor, Bernice Arias, leading the sessions.

Join us and be “out” in the park having fun and building community spirit. Open to everyone, not just GLBTQ folks.

An important current focus of our CHAT is working with the organization Minnesota United for All Families to defeat the amendment that would limit the freedom for GLBTQ people to marry. It is very personal to us in this CHAT that people vote "no" to the Anti-Marriage Amendment in November to protect the rights of all families. Contact Janet Dahlem, jdahlem@stkate.edu to join us in organizing around the effort to defeat this amendment that will hurt our community.

CHAT Members include: Mili Dutta, Jen Dolan, April Posner, Marta Knutson, Diane Long, and Janet Dahlem.

FREE Classes! Come out and ZUMBA Monday nights to the end of Aug 6:30 to 7:30 pm Join the OUT in the Backyard CHAT at the NW corner of Powderhorn Park at 11th Ave. to keep it moving!! ALL ARE WELCOME!

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Latin/o Environmental Health Begins at Home CHAT

Portraits of Latino/o Environmental Health

This project organizes Latino families to learn about environmental health and how they can contribute to creating a healthier environment for their families and community. The first stage of this effort is to teach Latinas how to make healthy products to clean the home and organize ways to implement what they have learned and support each other to maintain a healthy environment.

Our vision is to improve the health of the Latino residents and community by creating a healthier indoor environment for their families and create momentum in the community between Latino families, and Latino families, build community by creating a healthy home audit and trained household cleaners and how to do environmental justice movement.

Rebirthing Community CHAT

Our vision is to encourage families to join the Communities of Light Co-op and attend self-sufficiency and solvency by producing and selling solar lanterns, solar generators and other products and services the co-op member identifies.

CHAT Members include: Dee Henry Williams, Edgar Young III Bey, Jim Cook, Khadijch Roielpke, Jimmy Johnson, and Debra Michelle.

For more info see the above flyer.

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8AM to 3PM Sun.
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Block Party July 14
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The Alley Newspaper is a Member of

Communication strategies are designed to promote the story and the lessons of the BYI. Multiple vehicles including: print and on-line media, participation in community events, conference and classroom presentations and word-of-mouth are utilized to reach a variety of audiences.

Community strategies are designed to encourage residents to tell their stories from their geographic and cultural perspectives through monthly articles in The Alley Newspaper, a community based newspaper in Phillips and participation at neighborhood meetings and events. Residents and staff also participated in the first ever Midtown Global Market Jazz Festival held in July, 2011.

Our website, www.allinahealth.org/backyard, was revampd in 2011. National communications included a presentation at the national Association for Community Health Improvement conference. An article on the Backyard titled “Being Active in Your Community is a Cornerstone of Good Health!” was published on the Institute for Comprehensive Community Development Website by national LISC.

The BYI Communications CHAT is proud to be the conduit helping to get the many voices, images, and wisdom on to these pages. We hope you will be as inspired by the work reflected on these pages as we were. Alley Communications, Inc. is the fiscal agent of the Communications CHAT. For more info: call Susan Gust, Coordinator, 612-414-6623.
**Anchor Family CHAT**

**Do you need anything?**

Through the Backyard Initiative Assessment process, it became apparent that families in the BVI communities are experiencing isolation and lack of resources to sustain the health and well-being of their families. It is quite apparent that this has a direct connection to the state of turmoil and destructive behavior our youth are exhibiting. Families are feeling less and less connected to one another and to the spiritual, cultural and social resources in the community that are necessary to sustain their families. These resources include someone to talk to when things get tough, wisdom from elders and those who have survived. They also include someone to lean on when their own internal resources become limited. There is a clear need to rebuild the web of relationships that will mend the fragmentation that families are experiencing. It is also necessary to restore the family bond with our youth to increase their sense of belonging and interconnectedness. This action can shift the emphasis and public perception of our youth and reinforce their positive behaviors. Immigrant youth are coming, I’m not wanting to be here in your presence.”

**PROJECT S.E.L.F. (Save, Educate, Liberate, Free) CHAT**

Recent Project S.E.L.F. founder, Amged Yusuf, with youth at the Ice Cream Social.

Recent Project S.E.L.F. Annual Ice Cream Social and Free Henna Decoration

Project S.E.L.F. (SAVE EDUCATE LIBERATE FREE) is an Immigrant Health CHAT group that established a program called “Nomadic Expressions” which aims to assist youth, elders and families in healthy living and artistic expressions through poetry, open micro-phone performances, information workshops and community dialogue.

The face of immigrant youth in our society has been negative as there is often more emphasis on those engaged in negative behaviors. Immigrant youth in our community are misguided and confused by conflicting messages between mainstream society and their original cultural ways. Communication across generations is strained and challenging. Youth are not responsive to guidance from elders and are conflicted by peer pressure.

Our CHAT works to solve this problem by improving the health of the people living in the BVI through Nomadic Expressions, especially elders and youth. These activities help to bridge the gap between the older and younger community members to encourage healthy relationships through various artistic mediums. Nomadic Expressions host community engagement and dialogue activities, cultural celebrations and creative workshops where youth and elders can share their stories including Open Mic Shop and traditional Under the Tree storytelling. The storytelling sessions (Sheeko Sheeko) occur twice a month. Project S.E.L.F. CHAT was founded by Amged Yusuf, a poet and Spoken Word artist.

There are many activities which the Project S.E.L.F. CHAT has helped to coordinate over the past year. One of the most recent ones occurred on Saturday evening, June 23 when women and children gathered on a beautiful summer’s evening for an annual Ice Cream Social, free henna and to socialize while their children played. For more information, visit project-SELF@facebook.com.

**CHAT Members include:** Fatima Mohamud, Muski Abdulle, Amged Yusuf, Sahra Ismail, Jama Mohamed, Fowzia Mohamed, Maryan Ali, Fowziin Mohamud, Hiba Abdulkadir, Ahmed Ali, Mohamed Mohamud, Shukri Mirre

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*project SELF* 2012
Women’s Health Support Group CHAT: Somali American Community

Our Guri Nabad (meaning: Peace House) CHAT, part of the Somali American Community nonprofit organization, is comprised of community leaders and individuals whose families are impacted by incidences of childhood asthma. We address the causes of these chronic conditions and offer tools to assist our families in coping with and managing these conditions. Part of our effort helps to identify community resources that can help our families successfully address issues surrounding asthma in our Somali community.

Many parents are ashamed, afraid or unwilling to address the issues surrounding their children’s health conditions. This is especially true for parents with asthmatic children who fear that their children will be unable to participate in healthy physical activities. With language and cultural barriers that many people feel they have, they are less aware or less effective in reaching out to available resources and are sometimes afraid to ask for help. With our CHAT Team, we create a venue in which people can come together, speak about their health issues and together seek the resources most appropriate for addressing our children’s asthma. Through our mosques, media, and personal word-of-mouth, we reach out to other families with similar conditions and situations.

To date, we have conducted asthma management trainings and assisted 17 children and their families. Families attend 10 asthma management sessions which occur 1-2 times a month. Since asthma is something that affects the entire family even though it may be experienced by just one person in the family, we believe it is very important for the entire family to become educated about asthma and to understand what it is, the triggers, how episodes can be prevented and generally how to live more comfortably with this disease. By working with the entire family, our efforts have reached and impacted many more people.

Families involved with us do not just attend the support groups and receive asthma management training. We also accompany them to their child’s school, day care center or health care provider to support them and help them and others to make the link between their child and the proper management of their child’s asthma. It is important that our work also be conducted in a culturally appropriate manner.

The Somali American Community as an organization which helps Somali people in South Minneapolis with issues such as; immigration, becoming American citizens, health education, etc. Watch for a future article about the organization in The Alley Newspaper. For more information, please contact Mahamed Cali at calmahamed@gmail.com.

CHAT Members include: Abdi Hussein, Fatma Hassan, Hasdan Abdlale, Shirwa A.Alibii, Ubah Keypaan, and Mahamed Cali
Meet the Backyard Initiative staff from Allina Health!

Ruth Hampton Olkon, Lovel Trahan, and Dimpho Orionzi are the team here to support the Backyard Initiative staff from Allina Health!

Name: Ruth Hampton Olkon
Hometown: Minneapolis, MN
Heritage: Jewish
Family: Husband, three kids, one sister, one brother-in-law, one niece, parents, in-laws, and close friends

Name: Lovel Trahan
Hometown: Lafayette, LA
Heritage: Cajun and Creole
Family: Two parents, one brother, three grandparents, six aunts, three uncles, seven cousins, and one partner

Name: Dimpho Orionzi
Hometown: St. Cloud, MN
Heritage: Lugbara, tribe in Northwestern Uganda
Family/Siblings: Two parents, two sisters, one brother, two grandparents, and many, many aunts, uncles and cousins

Ruth brought you to the Backyard Initiative? I wanted to learn about genuine community engagement because I believe communities are an important stakeholder and often get left out of critical conversations.

What is your role with the project? To build capacity in the project and to make the Backyard more important than it is today.

How long have you been with the project? One year

What is your favorite restaurant in the Backyard? Maria’s Cafe

“Connecting in the Backyard…”

“What Rebirthing Community and the BYI has brought to me is the opportunity to engage people and communities that I would have never otherwise been able to from all walks of life, socio-economic backgrounds, etc. It’s an opportunity for us to be a part of something good.”

“For me the greatest benefit has been communicating with people that normally you just see and walk by in the community. Just being a help—seeing things in your community and helping—that’s a benefit to me.”

“The May Day Parade began as a festive way to unify neighbors felt that side of Lake Street from 35W to Hiawatha. The Backyard Initiative carries that vision forward with year-long activities and work.”

Growing the Backyard CHAT - 25 families and growing!

In the last two years, Growing the Backyard Initiative has assisted 25 families to establish gardens and grow their own food. This CHAT empowers Backyard residents to produce their own healthy foods, increase connections to the local food system, and to increase each family’s understanding about how the food system works. Families participating in the project will actively take responsibility for creating and maintaining a series of gardens throughout the Backyard. These activities will also increase a sense of belonging and community for each family. The CHAT members help to provide supplies and connections to gardening resources and the local food system.

The work of this CHAT team ties into overarching goals that were identified by the Assessment process conducted in 2009 by Backyard Initiative. Two specific points that related to the work of this CHAT include:

- Families expressed a lack of access to affordable healthy food for their family
- 97% of Backyard assessment participants felt that affordable locally grown fruits and vegetables were very important

Families have developed a dependency on grocers to provide access to food rather than being able to produce some amount of food on their own. Some families have expressed a reluctance to begin gardening because they have limited knowledge and resources. Others have expressed the belief that their cultural foods cannot grow in Minnesota. Residents may not feel comfortable navigating the existing food system because the system is complex, exclusive and although it may take into consideration cultural differences, it does a poor job of connecting to people of different cultures. Furthermore, promotion of over-processed foods has created a disconnect from the ability and know-how to prepare and store fresh food.

Many of the existing organizations in the backyard have programs that target children, youth and adults, but the work of this CHAT focuses on the entire family.

The Growing the Backyard Initiative feels that people growing food, preparing food, and becoming an active participant in the local food system is integral in preserving and sustaining family life.

CHAT Members include: Hashep Seka, David Boehnke, Deeg Abdi, Shea Peeples, Peter Noble, Lita Beach, Kurt Blomberg, Collie Gradrick, Louann Replogle and Sainab Sahal,

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Quotes from Commissioners are random

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