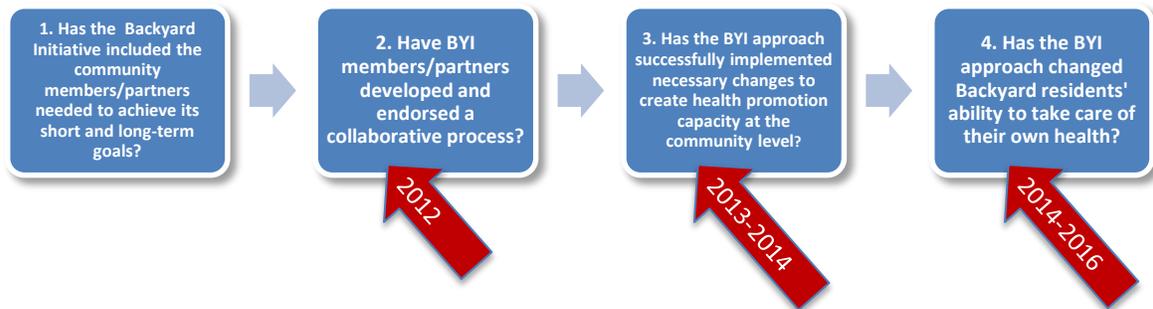


**Evaluation Year-End Report
Submitted by Anu Sharma
December 29, 2015**

Evaluation Design



Evaluation Findings

The Leadership Study – “Boxes 1 and 2” (2012)

The Leadership Study assessed the extent to which the foundation of the Backyard Initiative was strong. Did we have the right people and the right process? After conducting interviews with 30 Commission members and CHAT leaders, we concluded that the foundation was strong, that the right people were involved and the right process was being used. Room for Growth issues included, but were not limited to, concern about delays in getting to action because of the large numbers of people involved and assuring everyone the opportunity to be heard.

The CHAT Capacity Study – “Box 3” (2013—2014)

The CHAT Capacity Study assessed the extent to which the Backyard approach, through the CHATs, demonstrated the community’s capacity to impact health. We assessed the capacity of eight CHATs that were in existence in 2013 and re-assessed their capacity in 2014. We concluded that all the CHATs increased their capacity over the course of this year (2013 – 2014). In particular, they were strongest on having a clear and consistent strategy and membership management (across eight implementation criteria) and impact criteria of social cohesion and social support (across four impact criteria). Room for Growth issues include, but were not limited to, paid versus unpaid work, various types of CHAT structures, funding, and accountability.

Resident Health Benefits – “Box 4”

The Resident Health Benefits study (Box 4 in the evaluation design) asked: “*Has the BYI approach changed Backyard residents’ ability to take care of their own health?*” To answer this question, the evaluation team sought to interview up to 32 participants from the eight CHATs that were part of the CHAT Capacity Study (Box 3). We interviewed 12 participants from seven CHATs, which resulted in a “Themes and Stories” document. “Participant” was defined as “someone who is not a CHAT member but has participated in the CHAT’s activities, identified by CHAT leaders.” These interviews were conducted between December, 2014 and June, 2015.

Below are a few illustrative quotes from Backyard residents who reported that their health had been impacted by CHAT activities.

I’ve changed the way I eat. Everything about the way I eat has changed. I lost ten pounds by myself right away after they told me I was pre-diabetic. Now I come to the fitness center downstairs 3-4 times a week and exercise. I have so much energy and feel so positive. My children have changed the way they eat, too. I have eight children, and they have to eat the way I eat. I don’t take any drugs because I took care of my diabetes while it was still pre-diabetes. (A-POD)

My stress levels were so high. Their guidance, and Bisharo’s taking that extra initiative to help me register [for the University]. I can’t say I was depressed at the time, but I was really stressed out. (Somali Women’s Health)

I quit smoking over the past year. (Out in the Backyard)

Yes, I have seen changes. No more eczema on my hands. My hands are not broken out anymore. The Clorox would irritate my breath, my eyes. Now it doesn’t happen anymore. (Latina Environmental Health)

Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the CHAT Capacity Study (Box 3) and Resident Health Benefits study (Box 4):

- Impact on health seems to be greater on individuals and/or families if the CHAT holds *regular events*.
- Impact on health seems to be greater on individuals and/or families if these persons *attend* these regular events *on a regular basis*.
- Impact on health seems to be enhanced if the CHAT’s activities are geared not only toward social support and social cohesion, but *also include health education and health empowerment*.

Goals for 2016

After the data were presented and reviewed by the Assessment Team, Commission, and Community Resource Body (CRB), members concluded that the evaluation process needed to be more fully integrated into the Backyard Initiative in order to fully answer the evaluation question of the impact of the Backyard Initiative on Backyard residents. The evaluation plan for 2016 ties evaluation to the day-to-day activities of the Backyard through the creation of an Evaluation Team and is designed to show that BYI activities increase social support/cohesion, health education, and health empowerment in the Backyard and answer the evaluation question of “Box 4,” i.e., demonstrate impact of the Backyard Initiative at the individual level.