

COMMUNITY AT THE CORE:

The Backyard Initiative Evaluation Findings 2018





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Executive Summary



BACKGROUND

The Backyard Initiative (BYI) is a partnership between residents of South Minneapolis and Allina Health. The Cultural Wellness Center, as lead agency, is the organizer and facilitator of this partnership. The goal of the BYI is to improve the health of residents living in the seven neighborhoods of the area called the Backyard. (See map on page 6.) The BYI improves community health through the work of Community Health Action Teams (CHATs), which are formed and operated by residents in the Backyard.

An evaluation conducted in 2016 showed that the Backyard Initiative activities were increasing four health indicators:

- Social support: The many kinds of support that a community member receives from and gives to other community members.
- Social cohesion: The sense of community and belonging.
- Health education: The degree to which community members have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic information and services needed to make appropriate decisions regarding their health.
- Health empowerment: The ability and motivation to take care of oneself—to attain the knowledge, skill, and confidence to do what it takes to get healthy and/or stay healthy.

This evaluation report describes the findings from the evaluation conducted from 2017-2018 and arose from an interest in better understanding the essential elements of the Backyard Initiative: What is it about the Backyard Initiative that produces these health indicators? Backyard residents, Cultural Wellness Center staff, and Allina Health staff carried out the evaluation. Community members were involved in every step of the evaluation process, including the planning, implementation, analysis, and interpretation.

The evaluation focused on answering three questions:

1. What about the CHAT model keeps people engaged?
2. What about the CHAT model helps people build social networks?
3. What about the CHAT model supports people to take care of themselves?

Interviews were conducted with 31 community members who participated in the health-related activities of seven CHATs, and two listening circles were held with 18 Backyard participants. By exploring these questions with Backyard residents who participate in one or more of these CHATs, this evaluation helped us to learn how the Backyard Initiative contributes to improved health outcomes.

Executive Summary (cont.)

FINDINGS

The results of the 2018 BYI evaluation reveal some important considerations for an effective community health improvement effort. Participants in the evaluation named five elements that BYI activities provide that enable these participants to engage, to build systems of support, and to better take care of their health.

BYI activities provide opportunities for people to:

-  **1. Connect with others. This includes:**
 - specific people who inspire them and keep them engaged
 - sharing stories and having conversation
 - making connections with and gaining understanding about people they wouldn't normally meet
 - valuing the diversity of people as well as common values
 - feeling a sense of belonging, support, and increased trust
 - learning from role models
 - feeling a sense of empowerment and ownership
 - bridging power/institutions with community.
-  **2. Learn together. This includes:**
 - learning useful information
 - having increased awareness about their health and health issues
 - developing new skills, including leadership skills
 - developing a positive vision and new opportunities with others
 - being motivated to make changes
 - growing each other's self-esteem
 - keeping each other accountable.
-  **3. See results. This includes:**
 - getting healthier
 - seeing their life and other lives improve
 - doing more to improve their health; having the support to make better choices
 - feeling a sense of empowerment and trust.
-  **4. Gather in a positive environment. This includes spaces with:**
 - positive energy
 - people modeling health and healthy behaviors
 - community support
 - food shared.
-  **5. Give back. This includes:**
 - giving back to their community
 - having an outlet for their passion and commitment
 - serving their self-interest—giving to others is good for the giver
 - taking action.

CONCLUSION

These results demonstrate the power of community in improving community health. Our large health care institutions are focused on supporting the health of individuals and are not equipped to build community. In the Backyard Initiative, community members demonstrated that not only can they build on the resources within the community to increase indicators of health, but for people to stay engaged in health activities and make healthy changes, they need to meet together, learn together, and contribute.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, the BYI offers the following recommendations for consideration to members of the Backyard community, leaders of future BYI activities, Allina Health and other health organizations, and government, non-profits, and social service agencies wanting to tap into the power of community to improve health.

- When planning and implementing any program for improving health, consider how these essential elements might impact both the way you engage with community members and how to maximize the impact of your strategies. Integrate building community and community engagement into your goals. Whatever the strategy, support people to contribute to their community and connect with each other. Support people to take care of their own and each other's health.
- Build the capacity of institutions and communities through activities that build on the resources within the community, connect community members together, and connect community members to institutions.
- Engage in your own health maintenance and improvement.



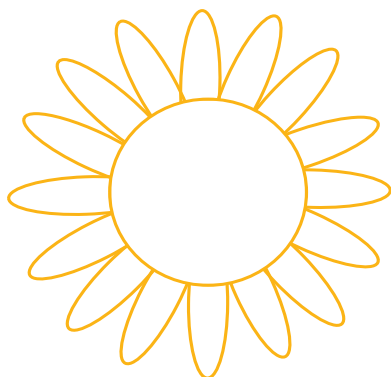
Background: The Backyard Initiative



The Backyard Initiative (BYI) is a dynamic partnership between Allina Health and the Backyard community to improve the health of residents of the Backyard. The area defined as “the Backyard” encompasses the approximately one square mile area surrounding the Allina Commons, Abbott Northwestern Hospital and Phillips Eye Institute in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Neighborhoods in the Backyard include East Phillips, Midtown Phillips, Ventura Village, Phillips West, Central, Powderhorn Park, and Corcoran. (See map below.)

The BYI began with Allina Health engaging in many conversations with community stakeholders in May of 2008. In December of 2008, Allina Health consulted with the Cultural Wellness Center (CWC), a community institution and nonprofit organization based in Minneapolis, to design and facilitate the community engagement process. Community members named the CWC as the organization to establish a partnership between themselves and Allina Health and become the lead agency. As lead agency, the CWC works for both partners (Backyard residents and Allina Health), facilitating, organizing and consulting with both partners to support them to function as equals. The CWC is the glue that has held the partnership together since the beginning.

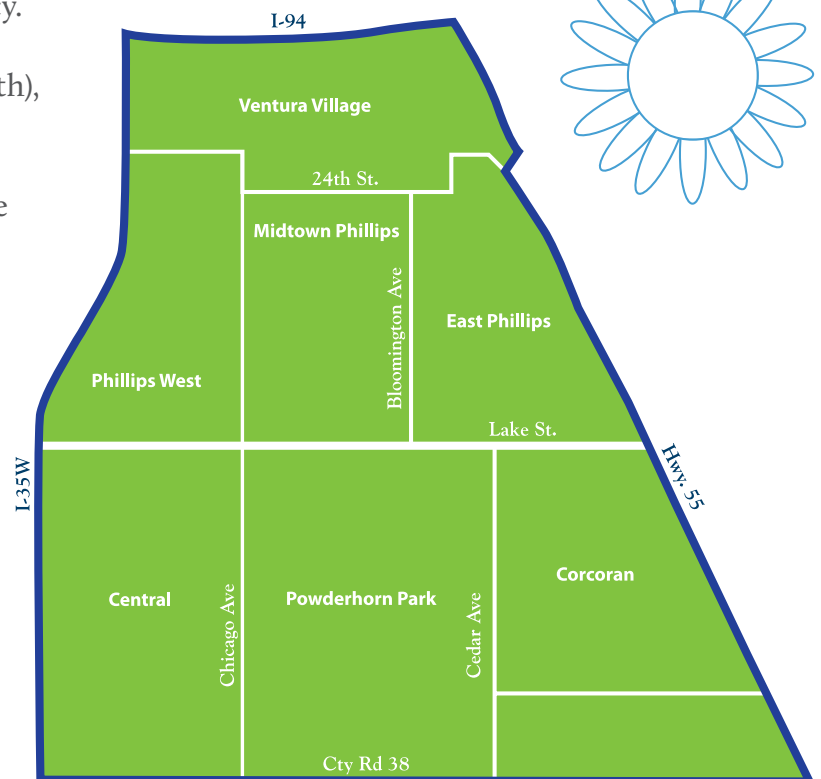
Early in the process, the CWC and Backyard residents developed the BYI Definition of Health. This definition of health became foundational to the Initiative work.



BYI Definition of Health

- Health is a state of physical, mental, social, and spiritual wellbeing. Health is not only the absence of infirmity and disease.
- Health is a state of balance, harmony, and connectedness within and among many systems—the body, the family, the community, the environment, and culture. Health cannot be seen only in an individual context.
- Health is an active state of being; people must be active participants to be healthy. Health cannot be achieved by being passive.

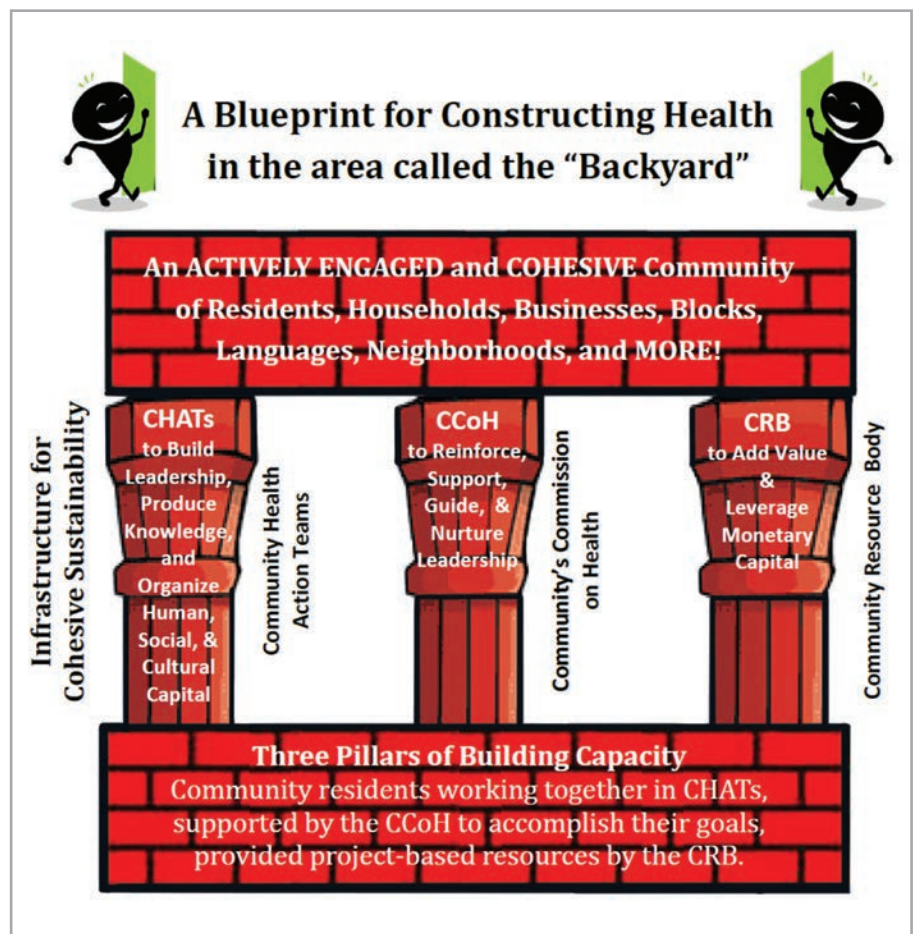
BYI Neighborhoods



The resident-led BYI improves health by improving social support, social cohesion, health education, and health empowerment. This is primarily done through the work of Community Health Action Teams (CHATs), which were formed and are operated by Backyard residents. These health improvement teams are organized around a specific issue that community members understand to be an important determinant of health (e.g. economic insecurity, access to healthy food, exercise, toxic cleaning products, isolation, or cultural preservation).

The Cultural Wellness Center’s approach to creating an equal partnership included designing an infrastructure with three “pillars” for sharing authority and governance. CHATs are a pillar in the BYI’s infrastructure along with two other pillars: the Community Commission on Health and the Community Resource Body. Together, these three pillars allow for the BYI partnership to have cohesive sustainability so that its work of constructing health in the Backyard will continue on into the future indefinitely. The Community Commission on Health, made up of committed Backyard

residents and representatives from key organizational partners, authorizes CHAT funding and is responsible for listening to the people in the community about their health concerns, keeping in touch with the pulse of the community, and naming the BYI priorities. The Community Resource Body (CRB)—made up of resident Commission members and invited leaders from public health, health care, and community development—leverages social, cultural, and financial capital to strengthen the BYI. The Commissioner of the Minneapolis Health Department has an active role on both bodies.



The BYI improves health by improving social support, social cohesion, health education, and health empowerment. This is primarily done through the work of Community Health Action Teams (CHATs), which are formed and operated by Backyard residents.

The Backyard Initiative 2018 Evaluation



The process of this evaluation continues the story of community members taking ownership of the evaluation as a process for valuing, revealing and articulating the work of the Backyard Initiative. The BYI Assessment Team, first established in 2009 to carry out a community assessment and including CHAT members and CWC and Allina Health staff, has guided an evaluation process and plan every year since. (See Appendix A for more information on the history of evaluation of the Backyard Initiative.)

Community members and Cultural Wellness Center (CWC) and Allina Health staff collected the information described in this report to demonstrate the power of community to support and improve its own health. In the spirit of collaboration, representatives of these three groups took part in every step of the evaluation together.

An evaluation conducted in 2016 showed that the Backyard Initiative activities were increasing four health indicators:

- **Social support:** The many kinds of support that a community member receives from and gives to other community members.
- **Social cohesion:** The sense of community and belonging.
- **Health education:** The degree to which community members have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic information and services needed to make appropriate decisions regarding their health.
- **Health empowerment:** The ability and motivation to take care of oneself—to attain the knowledge, skill, and confidence to do what it takes to get healthy and/or stay healthy.

In discussions about what next to evaluate, planners expressed interest in better understanding the essential elements of the Backyard Initiative: What is it about the Backyard Initiative that makes it work? How do the Backyard activities lead to improved health outcomes?

Three overarching evaluation questions were chosen to better understand this question of "how":

1. What about the CHAT model keeps people engaged?
2. What about the CHAT model helps people build social networks?
3. What about the CHAT model supports people to take care of themselves?

The answers to these questions were collected by conducting interviews and listening circles with BYI participants and leaders.



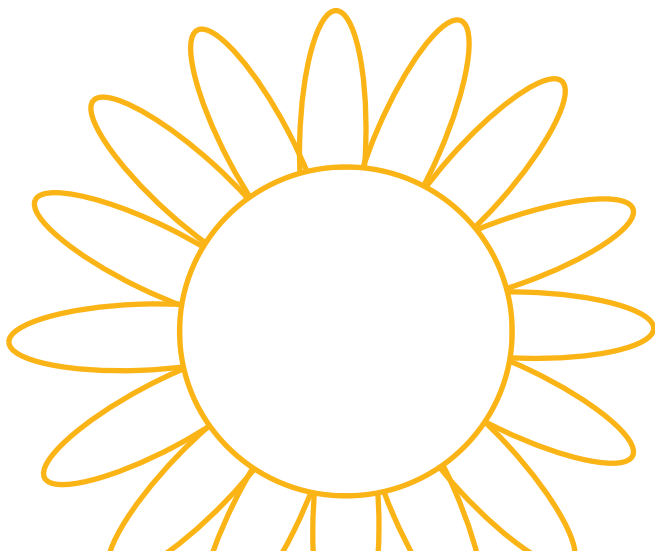
The BYI Assessment Team approved the evaluation goals and design, and a subgroup of members (the Evaluation Team) was created to carry out the evaluation goals. The Evaluation Team designed the interview questions and appointed an Interview and Analysis Team, made up of three members of the TEENS CHAT, an Allina Health staff member, and an evaluator, to conduct the interviews and listening circles and analyze the data. The Evaluation Team met monthly to direct the process, interpret the results, and develop the recommendations. The CWC recruited CHAT leaders for the evaluation team, facilitated meetings, and supported the implementation, analysis, and interpretation of the interviews and listening circles. Community members were involved in every step of the evaluation and all decisions were made collectively.

The Interview and Analysis Team conducted interviews from August-December 2017 with 31 community members and CHAT leaders who had participated in activities offered by the following seven CHATs. (See Appendix B for more information on the activities of each CHAT.) Each CHAT had 3-4 people represented.

- Anchor Families
- Growing the Backyard
- Latino Environmental Health Begins at Home (LEHBAH)
- Out in the Backyard
- Project S.E.L.F. (Save, Educate, Liberate, and Free)
- Rebirthing Community: Communities of Light
- TEENS Project

In addition, the interviewers asked questions of three Cultural Wellness Center staff and four members of the CRB, one of whom is also a member of the Communications CHAT. Two listening circles were also held, one in November of 2017 and composed of 12 participants from the TEENS CHAT, and the other in February of 2018 and composed of six participants from three CHATs. In the listening circles, participants were asked to answer three questions. (See Appendix C for the list of interview questions and questions for the listening circles.)

The Interview and Analysis Team conducted a qualitative analysis of the data from both the listening circles and the interviews and drew out the major themes and their subthemes from the responses to the three overarching questions.





The results of the 2018 BYI evaluation reveal some important elements for a community health improvement effort. Participants in the evaluation named five elements or conditions that BYI activities provide that enable them to engage, to build systems of support, and to better take care of their health.

BYI activities provide opportunities for people to:

1. Connect with others.
2. Learn together.
3. See results.
4. Gather in a positive environment.
5. Give back.

THEMES FROM INTERVIEWS AND LISTENING CIRCLES

1. Connect with others

The activities of the Backyard provide time and space for people to interact with each other in meaningful and healthy ways. People share stories, knowledge and resources, and make strong connections with each other. The activities bring people out of isolation, and the facilitation creates opportunities for people to talk about their experiences and what matters to them. To answer the question, “What or who keeps you involved/engaged?”, the top answer was other people, particularly CHAT leaders and CWC staff. Interviewees indicated that personal contact, in person or by phone, was the best way to invite people to participate.

Participants described:

Specific people who inspire them and keep them engaged

- Before I heard [about the Backyard Initiative], I was homeless. [A CHAT leader] let me know there’s an alternative route—a way of health, a way of looking at life.
- A personal invitation means you care, have something to share, you’ll be there, they won’t be by themselves. If they think that, they’ll be less likely to come. It penetrates, lowers their defenses.
- The Zumba lady... changed my entire outlook on LGBT. Now I can understand.
- Youth need more elders in their lives.



Anchor Family CHAT’s backyard barbecue.



neighbors giving rides to the grocery store
housekeepers making non-toxic cleaners
neighborhood group exercise
neighbors growing community gardens
business owners and youth promoting sugar-free drinks
spoken word with youth, story-telling by elders
community-led workshops on energy self-sufficiencies

Some of the activities in the
Backyard Initiative

GATHER IN A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT ✨ **SEE RESULTS**
CONNECT WITH OTHERS
LEARN TOGETHER ✨ **GIVE BACK**

**Five elements that contribute to
community health**

Findings (cont.)

1. Connect with others (cont.)

Sharing stories and having conversations

- People in my building tend to keep to themselves and they enjoy coming out of their shell. There's a sense of relief. They start talking about their families. They let it loose. It's pent up by being alone.
- People start telling about their lives. As an elder, I can say: Let's talk about what to do about that. Sometimes we don't get a lot of gardening done because we're talking.
- ...[T]he opportunity to tell stories. I feel I get to know people in ways that are not just functional. Interaction is critical.

Making connections with and gaining understanding about people they wouldn't normally meet

- You get to meet different people—network. It got me completely out of my comfort zone with people I would never be with. It changed my lifestyle.
- Having interactions that leave you feeling good with people you usually don't have interactions with—it has a ripple effect in the world. It breaks the stereotype.

Valuing the diversity of people as well as common values

- The people, the diversity, the incredible mix of people I would never see outside of there. There's a celebratory environment. I live with depression, especially in winter. The people bring energy, cool interaction.
- It's a relief to participate in the group discussions and [with] people who share my cultural values.



Rebirthing Community CHAT's Amen Corner where community members speak their minds at an open mic.



Youth from the TEENS CHAT promote sugar-free drinks in the Rethink Your Drink campaign.

Feeling a sense of belonging, support, and increased trust

- People become more outgoing, more trustworthy of each other...People talking about their grandkids, they feel more comfortable. We go around the circle and introduce a new person. People can't stop talking.
- There are people that support me if I ever fall, people to back me up, give me energy.
- Support, having expectations of me, people believing in me, trusting me, a sense of belonging.

Learning from role models

- I see [a CHAT leader] as a role model...watching someone else be confident. It's a peer-to-peer leadership development model. Connecting with people, building camaraderie. It's inspired me to do the same.



Rebirthing Community CHAT's solar lantern workshop.



Feeling a sense of empowerment and ownership

- We do icebreakers; people share their experiences. Elders offer their wisdom. People of different cultures learn from each other. We provide questions every time. We ask different people to facilitate. There's a sense of equality and ownership.

Bridging power/institutions with community

- I see that there is an openness, a willingness in the community to confront power, to share what they are doing, what they want, in a way that feels more balanced, feels more comfortable, authentic. I don't always see that—people hold back—I'm not going to share. When relationships are not there, the exchange isn't deep.

Findings (cont.)

2. Learn together

Participants in BYI activities described the importance of having opportunities to gain useful knowledge and share their knowledge with others. Many people talked about not just learning what benefits them personally, but also gaining skills and knowledge that contribute to the community—that help them to help others.

Participants described:

Learning useful information

- The knowing that I can better myself. I keep coming away with knowledge.
- It's a challenge, making us grow a lot as people. Everything is positive. You don't hear nonsense.
- It keeps my knowledge at the forefront. I need to be not taking things for granted. We're learning how to take care of ourselves in the broader sense. I'm asking questions and delving into things—this is taught in all the activities.

Having increased awareness about their health and health issues

- To create awareness about health, politics, the food desert, police brutality—it creates an atmosphere of awareness.
- [I'm seeing people] become more aware of what's going on with them. [They're] not afraid or ashamed to ask for help.

Developing new skills, including leadership skills

- Learning a new skill makes [people] feel empowered. It gives people connections to people who know something they want to learn. The circle of influence helps us to improve our lives.



Latino Environmental Health CHAT promoting non-toxic cleaners.

Developing a positive vision and new opportunities with others

- We're able to create opportunities for friends, connecting them to opportunities. Informing them, helping them. Building a vision together where we don't have to worry about being broke or homeless because of these opportunities.



Participants at Powderhorn Park in Out in the Backyard CHAT's Zumba class.

Being motivated to make changes

- People being really inspired, motivated, and uplifted and coming outside of themselves in the activity. I see people feeling more comfortable, visibly learning from each other—the kinds of things I would like to see continue and keep me motivated.

Growing each other's self-esteem

- Discussing ideas, meeting people. Ideas lead into self-empowerment, lead to opening your mind to what's available in

the community. We're building up people's self-esteem—what you can do that you couldn't do before. Ideas just come, and we build on each other. It makes me think, I can do this.

- People have to build their own capacity to build others. We need to be reminded of things we know.

Keeping each other accountable

- Telling people how to be healthy helps keep me healthy.

Findings (cont.)

3. See results

People talked about how seeing their health and aspects of their lives improve motivated them to continue to participate. People were also motivated and energized to see others improve and achieve their goals.

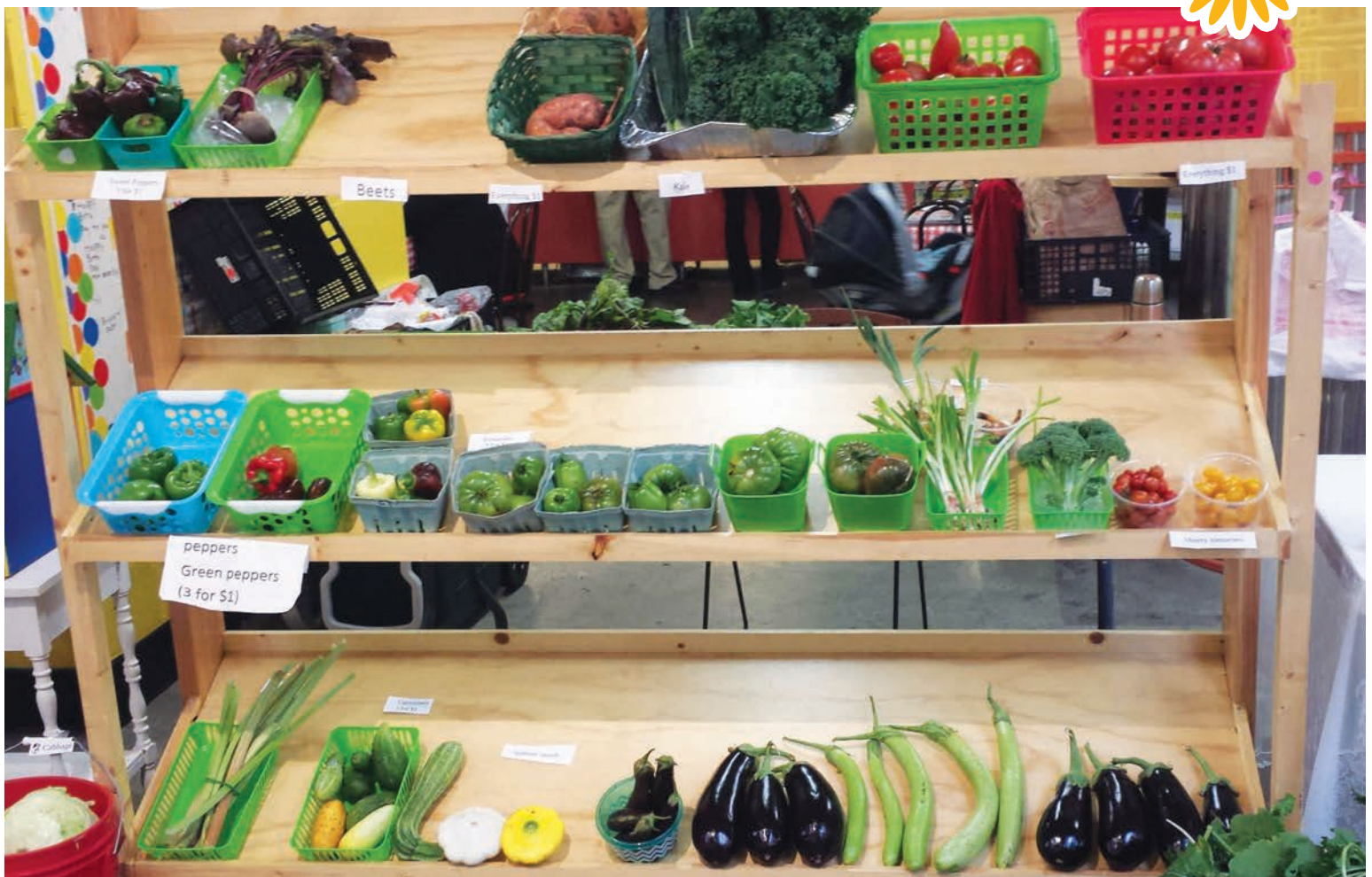
Participants described:

Getting healthier

- It has saved my health and my spirit. I was a couch potato. My health degenerated and I was very sick in 2014 with bronchitis.... I went to Zumba and started

with just arm movements, sitting on a bench. Then I did it for 10 min., then 20 min.—it was months before I could do it for the full hour. Now I can do it 3-4 times a week. It has literally saved my life.

- I have seen a huge change in my health. I gained my personal wellness and happiness. I lowered my cholesterol and blood pressure. In 2 and ½ years I lost 42 pounds.
- Every time I learn something, I'm eating more healthy.



Produce grown by Growing the Backyard CHAT on sale at the Midtown Global Market.

Seeing their life and other lives improve

- Gives you the opportunities you didn't have before.
- I see [the activities] giving practical help to people—things that Western society is not good at.
- It inspired me to get out and socialize. It expanded my social circle.

Doing more to improve their health; having the support to make better choices

- Good results they can see—when they use the [non-toxic cleaning] products, they see it's a better result.
- The Backyard has prime opportunities to change your life. The way you develop [your] life—eating habits to workout habits. It's natural.
- A group of kids [was] fighting...looking for each other to start a fight. We completely switched the agenda to talk about what these groups were about, to make it a teaching moment. Make the elephant in the room the topic...Everyone shook hands before they left. Sometimes we just heal each other.

Feeling a sense of empowerment and trust

- The knowing that I can better myself. I keep coming away with knowledge.
- Most of all I see more trust among one another.



A Dinner and Dialog on Diabetes (Triple Ds) event hosted by the BYI Resource Center in the Midtown Global Market.

4. Gather in a positive environment

Participants described the importance of the environment that they walked into at events and activities as crucial to their engagement, the building of their social network, and the support to take better care of themselves. What was important to people was not so much the physical space as the emotional impact of the space.

Findings (cont.)



Out in the Backyard CHAT'S yoga class.

Characteristics described included:

Positive energy

- The dance and the music move your energy and spirit. Doing it with others—if I was doing it to a tape in my living room, I wouldn't last 10 minutes.

People modeling health and healthy behaviors

- You get to see community engaging. It opens my eyes to see there are people doing different things in the world instead of being overwhelmed by all the bad things in the world. It's not superficial. I like that everyone's welcome.
- Have space/opportunity to celebrate whatever and whoever people are. Seeing power as being unleashed. Encouragement—you know how to take care of yourself and seeing others do that. Seeing and feeling that energy. Talking about a common vision. Being what you know and sharing it; no one judging you.

Community support

- Be able to constantly have spaces where I can look at myself in the context of community. Forces you to take account of yourself. Self-study is an invisible part of what we do.
- To be able to go at my own pace—I don't have to live up to expectations or standards. But it's still mentally engaging. This kind of space is very hard to find in an exercise context. Most facilities make you feel like you're not good enough the way you are. You have to lose weight, to get flexible, or be more fit. This is fun, there's no underlying shaming.

Food shared

- Food, good cooking. Hard conversations become easier.

Other words people used to describe the space were:

Inclusive, welcoming, safe, fun, good facilitation, no judgment, happy, diverse, comfortable, supportive, sense of belonging, trusting.



Project SELF engaging youth.

5. Give back

The opportunity to serve and support others—to give back to the community—was significant in engaging community members. People talked about having passion for and commitment to the work of improving the community and people’s lives.

Giving back to the community

- I’m able to give back to the community that helped me when I was in a hard spot. Helping other people in those situations.
- To serve people to maintain their health; doing something important.
- People want to be part of creating something new that may hold promise for supporting community health. The philosophy is very community driven and owned. Community knowledge and resources are central to the process. The antithesis is the expert-driven approach. It’s a counter-measure.

Having an outlet for passion and commitment

- My passion for the people [keeps me engaged]. My belief in what is being done. My passion allows me to keep on giving. The more I give, the more I receive.
- It’s provided by people who have a passion and love for people. Everybody wants to make learning and self-improvement fun.
- I’m passionate about this work—helping the community, male and female, other Africans, other cultures...

Serving their self-interest—giving to others is good for the giver

- ...Seeing how it’s better for people makes me feel I’m doing some good.
- It’s beneficial for me to give to others.

Taking action

- I meet young people who are mad and help them cool down.
- If you love your kids, you’ve got to do something.



Growing in the Backyard CHAT participants tending vegetables in a community garden.



Youth from the TEENS CHAT selling local produce.

Conclusion



This evaluation was concluded in the tenth year of the Backyard Initiative. It was the dedication to the vision held by the BYI partners that enabled this evaluation to yield these results.

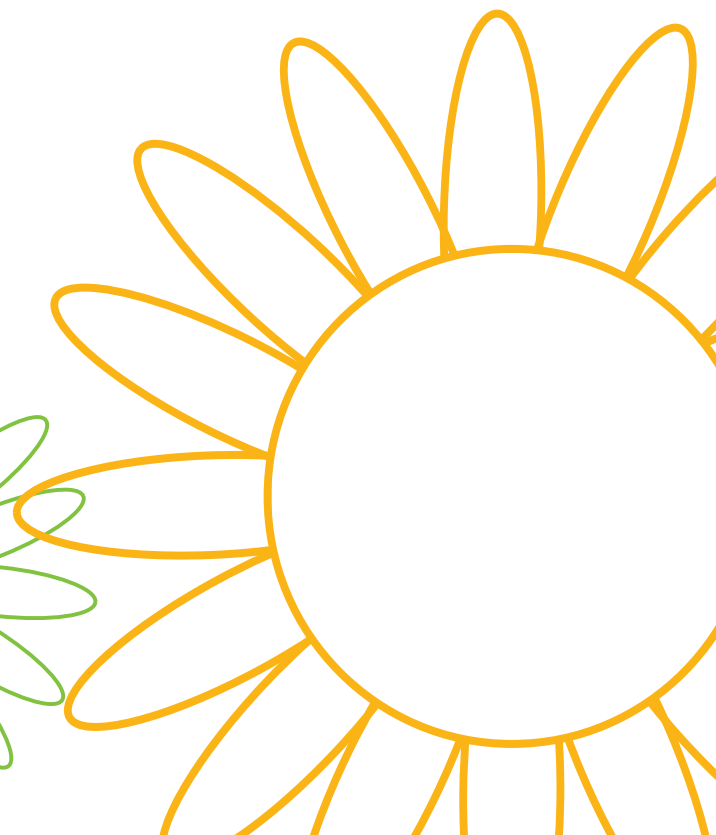
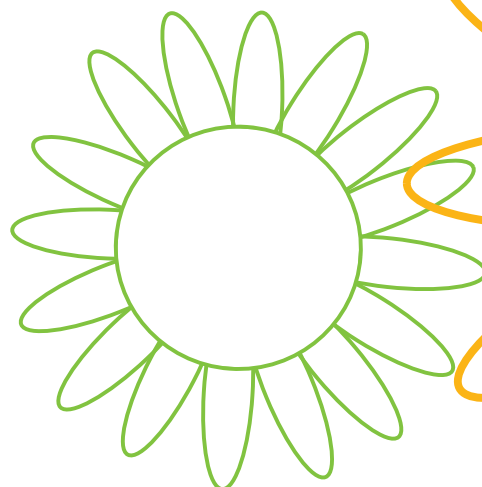
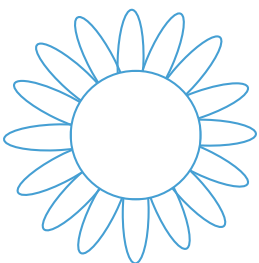
The evaluation highlights the need to understand that the ways an activity is structured and led are as important as the content of the activity. Providing opportunities for participants to be active, not passive, is as important as the activity itself. It is not just any kind of community activity that achieves the results that the Backyard Initiative has accomplished, but activities that share these elements: providing opportunities for people to connect with each other, learn together, see results, gather in a positive environment, and give back. It is not just what the facilitators/leaders of the activity do, but what they model and the principles that they hold. It is not just what is offered in the activity but what the people give each other. Any organization wanting to engage community members in health promotion activities can benefit from what the Backyard Initiative has learned.

Health care reform and research on the determinants of health are changing how health care systems operate. Health care systems are increasingly focused on

supporting people to stay healthy and addressing the fundamental conditions that contribute to illness and disease.

The Backyard Initiative is an example of how community members and institutions, sharing resources and working together for the benefit of the whole community, can strengthen social support, social cohesion, health education, and health empowerment—strong determinants of health. By demonstrating some of the strengths of a community engagement approach to health, the Backyard Initiative approach has important implications for the future of health care.

The Assessment Team and the Evaluation Team members recommend for future study the connections between the themes, how they might reinforce one another. No one element was shown to be more important than another, but further investigation might reveal how each of them influences the other and provide more detail about how they are best achieved in diverse communities.



Recommendations



Based on these findings and the findings from previous evaluations, the BYI CHATs, Commission on Health, and CRB offer these recommendations for consideration to members of the Backyard community, leaders of future health activities, Allina Health, and other institutions wanting to tap into the power of community to improve health.

To the Backyard Community

- Continue to hold community gatherings where people from diverse backgrounds can dialogue and share with one another.
- Support the Backyard Initiative principles of inclusiveness, social connectedness, and community engagement.
- Use this evaluation to promote and guide future work in the community.
- Keep engaging new people, including seniors and youth.
- Ask Backyard community members what the evaluation results say to them.

- Engage in your own health maintenance and improvement and the community's. Walking your talk creates a strong model for others.

To Allina Health and other institutions

- Continue incorporating these themes in the way you engage with community and work to support communities.
- Consider the ways that a community approach and the BYI Definition of Health might impact the way health is understood within your organization.
- Strengthen community by supporting people to contribute to their community, and by supporting people to take care of their own and each other's health.
- Support community institutions and groups, including cultural and religious, to teach about health.
- Utilize the BYI Definition of Health in your future work to continue to improve community health.



Growing the Backyard CHAT members celebrating after building a box for a vegetable garden.

Appendices

Appendix A:

The History of Backyard Initiative Evaluations: Community Members Taking Ownership of Valuing Their Work and Producing Knowledge

The work of the Backyard Initiative has been evaluated throughout the ten years of its existence. All the work was done by members of the BYI Assessment Team, composed of Community Health Action Team (CHAT) leaders, staff of the Wellness Center, and Allina staff.

2009-2010: The Community Health Assessment

Community members facilitated 21 Listening Circles and took part in administering 674 surveys, in person or by phone. The BYI Assessment Team analyzed and interpreted the findings, out of which three themes emerged:

- The Power of Interconnections: Each dimension of health named in the 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 many determinants of health. People talked about the need for personal connection in all things related to health. Exercise is best done with others, as a social activity; healthy eating requires the whole family to support each other; talking with family and friends about your problems keeps you mentally healthy; accountability between people and between people and institutions keeps the community healthy.
- The Power of Knowledge and Creativity: Cultural knowledge, information exchange between patients and health practitioners, and community dialogue are resources for health.

2012: Leadership Study

Evaluators assessed the extent to which the foundation of the Backyard Initiative was strong. The evaluation question was: Did the BYI have the right people and the right process? After conducting interviews with 30 Commission members and CHAT leaders, the evaluators 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.



2013-2014: The CHAT Capacity Study

The CHAT Capacity Study assessed the extent to which the Backyard approach, through the CHATs, demonstrated the community's capacity to impact health. The evaluation question was: Has the BYI approach successfully implemented necessary changes to create health promotion capacity at the community level? Evaluators assessed the capacity of eight CHATs that were in existence in 2013 and re-assessed their capacity in 2014 using criteria developed by an Evaluation Team, composed of community residents, CWC and Allina staff, and evaluators. They concluded that all the CHATs increased their capacity from Time 1 to Time 2. 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.

2015: Resident Health Benefits

The evaluation question in 2015 was: Has the BYI approach changed Backyard resident ability to take care of their own health? Evaluators had the goal of interviewing eight community members from each of the CHATs to ask how they have been impacted by BYI activities. With the BYI Definition of Health and the 2009 Assessment Report in mind, the Community Commission on Health (the decision making body of the BYI) decided to focus on four "health indicators": social support, social cohesion, health education, and health empowerment. From the information that was collected, we found that participants had positive changes in health, had made new social connections and were sharing information with other participants.

2016: Health Benefits

The Assessment Team decided to continue evaluating the health benefits of the BYI activities and strengthen the findings by conducting a survey of CHAT participants. The survey, developed by the Assessment Team, was administered to participants at CHAT activities held in the Backyard during June-September 2016. A total of 454 surveys from BYI participants and 19 from BYI leaders were eligible for analysis. The results showed that the CHAT activities had increased social support (93%), social cohesion (95%), health education (90%), and health empowerment (86%) for the participants.





Appendix B:

Community Health Action Team's (CHAT) Activities for Community Members

- **Anchor Families** works with residents living near each other to connect community members to each other and support each other. Activities include movie and game nights, grocery shopping help, tutoring children, teaching language and life skills, support for parenting, door-knocking, walk-arounds of the neighborhood, and connecting youth and their families to wellness resources.
- **Growing the Backyard** increases access to affordable, healthy food for Backyard families by training youth and families on gardening techniques and distributing fresh produce across cultures. Activities include hands-on training at community gardens, seed distribution, and a farmers' market.
- **Latino Environmental Health Begins at Home (LEHBAH)** creates healthy environments for Latino families within the Backyard by creating healthier indoor environments. Activities include trainings on environmental health hazards, home audits, house cleanings, and talking with people about healthy eating.
- **Out in the Backyard** offers free exercise classes to all residents and connects individuals from all cultures who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) with the resources they need to be healthy and safe. Activities include Zumba (exercise to music), yoga, Bollywood, and Pilates classes; a community potluck; and presentations and discussions on Ayurveda, health directives, and other health topics.
- **Project S.E.L.F. (Save, Educate, Liberate, and Free)** explores specific health and cultural concerns of people in immigrant communities through educational workshops to assist youth, elders, and families in healthy living and artistic expressions. Activities include poetry sessions, open microphone performances, information workshops, mother-daughter discussions, dance (buraanbur), and other community dialogues.
- **Rebirthing Community: Communities of Light** promotes energy independence, self-sufficiency and the community's personal capacity for leadership, learning and positive change. Activities include solar lantern and solar generator workshops (where community members make products that teach ways to achieve self-sufficiency by getting off the electric grid and becoming a member of a coop that sells these products), and Amen Corner, where youth and adults "speak their truth" through an open mic.
- **TEENS Project** is a peer-to-peer youth leadership and entrepreneurial skills development group. Activities include organizing and staffing the BYI Resource Center housed in the Midtown Global Market in Minneapolis, and organizing activities for Re-Think Your Drink, a partnership with the City of Minneapolis Health Department to encourage youth to find alternatives to heavily sugared beverages and encourage vendors to offer some of these alternatives.



Appendix C:

Interview and Listening Circle Questions

Interview Questions

1. Which Backyard Initiative activities do you participate in or facilitate?
2. How do you participate in the Backyard Initiative? Organize, facilitate, or participate? (Can be more than one)
3. How often do you participate in or facilitate these activities?
4. What or who first brought you to the BYI/CHAT?
5. What or who keeps you involved/engaged?
6. What about the BYI/CHAT/activities most makes you want to keep coming back?
7. What do you see happening in this activity (or these activities) that engages others?
8. Is there anything about the activity that makes engaging difficult? If so, what?
9. Have you invited others to join you? Who? How did you invite them (in person, by phone, etc.)?
10. Have you developed new relationships because of your participation? If so, please describe.
11. If yes, what happens at this activity that helps you to get to know other people?
12. Have you met together with other participants outside of this activity? If so, did the activity encourage this? How?
13. Has this activity (or these activities) helped you to take better care of yourself? If yes, please describe.
14. Specifically, how has this activity or activities that you have participate in helped you in the ways you described?
15. What age range are you in?
16. Do you live in the Backyard area?
17. How would you describe your cultural identity?





Listening Circle Questions

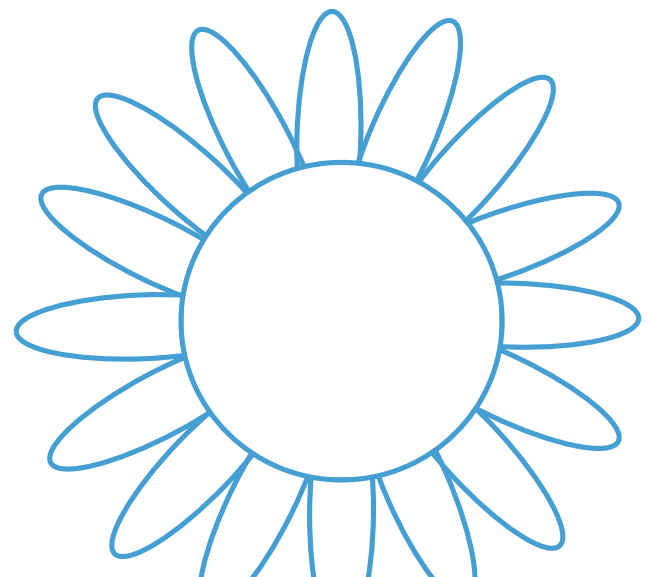
1. What is it about the Backyard Initiative activities that you participate in that keeps you coming back?
2. What is it about the Backyard Initiative activities that helps you make connections with other people?
3. Recall how your participation in the Backyard Initiative has supported you to take care of yourself. What is it about the Backyard Initiative activities that supports you to take care of yourself?

Appendix D:

Demographics of People Interviewed

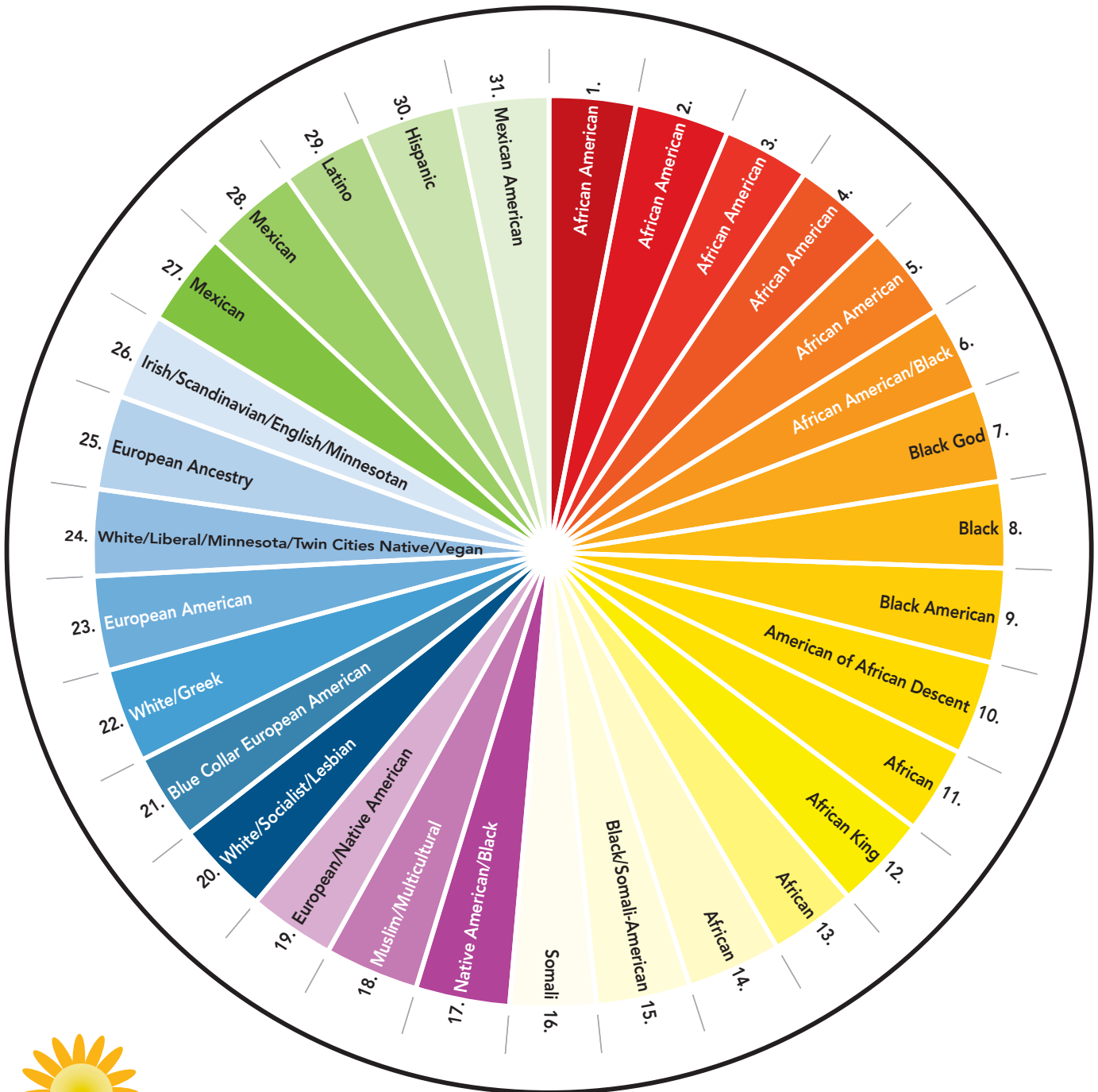
Age range	Number of respondents
18-35	7
36-59	11
60 and older	12
No answer	1

Live in BY	Number of respondents
Yes	12
No	18
No answer	1





How would you describe your cultural identity?



In gratitude to:

- All the Backyard community members who participated in the interviews and/or Listening Circles for sharing your experiences.
- The members of the Assessment Team and Evaluation Team for all their work in developing the process, designing the interview questions, interpreting the results, and developing the recommendations.
- The members of the Interview and Analysis Team for conducting the interviews and Listening Circles and analyzing the results.
- The members of the Community Commission on Health and the CRB for their guidance in the evaluation process.
- All the Community Health Action Team (CHAT) members whose hard work is increasing health in the Backyard.



Allina Health