



March 31, 2009

Dear Healthy Communities Ambassadors,

This month Christine and I headed to Jackson, Mississippi for the Leadership for Healthy Communities biannual grantee meeting. We met with the rest of the grantees and heard about the great projects underway in their communities. Additionally we heard from Mississippi's Director of the Office of Healthy Schools on their efforts to combat childhood obesity.

Be sure to check out the events section of the newsletter this month. There are several conferences this summer on childhood obesity prevention and active living. We're also planning a meeting for all of you at ICMA's Annual Conference in Montreal, Sept. 13-16, and would welcome any suggestions or requests for a speaker or theme for discussion at that meeting. ICMA will be able to provide its Ambassadors with a travel stipend to attend that gathering, with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. We will have more details to share with you at a later date.

Best regards,

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NEWS

Children Living Near Green Spaces Are More Active

A Canadian study found that for each park within a half mile of their home, girls were twice as likely to walk to school and boys were 60 percent more likely to walk for pleasure. The results were similar across socioeconomic classes. "This is important because active transportation is a promising public health strategy for increasing overall physical activity, and for helping to curb the obesity epidemic" said Tracie A. Barnett, Ph.D., lead author of the study.

Stimulus to Help Retool Education, Duncan Says

Public schools, universities, and early childhood education centers are slated to receive \$100 billion in stimulus aid. The monies will go toward remodeling outdated school buildings and preventing teacher layoffs but Education Secretary Arne Duncan would also like to take it a step further and turn schools into community hubs that provide health care, meals and other help for at-risk families.

New York City Mayor Plans to Close Parts of Broadway to Traffic

Mayor Bloomberg is turning parts of Broadway around Time Square and Herald Square into pedestrian malls. The changes will be made in late spring and will stay in place until the end of this year, potentially becoming permanent if they run smoothly. In addition to the space for pedestrians, the mayor is hoping the closures will improve traffic congestion because Broadway's diagonal path slows traffic at intersections with other streets.

RESEARCH

Policy and Action for Cancer Prevention. Food, Nutrition, and Physical Activity: a Global Perspective

A recent international study by the World Cancer Research Fund found that about one-third of non-smoking-related cancers in developed countries can be prevented through diet, exercise, and weight control.

Bike Lanes, On-Street Parking and Business: A Study of Bloor Street in Toronto's Annex Neighborhood

This study of a Toronto neighborhood, conducted because of area merchants' usual opposition to bike lanes in lieu of street parking, found most of the visitors to the area arrive on foot or by bike and most store owners agreed that wider sidewalks would increase business.

RESOURCES

Safe Routes to School 2009 Policy Report - Moving to the Future: Building on Early Achievements

A new report from the Safe Routes to School National Partnership discusses the challenges and opportunities in program implementation. The report also reviews how policy decisions like school siting, complete streets and bus route cuts can positively or negatively affect the program.

Safe Routes to School State Network Project: 2008 Annual Progress Report - Building Momentum and Policy Change

The 2008 Annual Progress Report provides an update on the major accomplishments of the nine states and the District of Columbia that are part of the State Network Project. The report features lessons learned, state summaries and information on the Local Schools project.

FUNDING

Building Evidence to Prevent Childhood Obesity

Deadline: Open (Grants are awarded on a rolling basis)

The call for proposals supports time sensitive studies that evaluate changes in policy and environment that will help children at the highest risk of obesity. Funded research may focus on physical activity, healthy eating or both. Priority will be given to applicants that are public entities or nonprofit organizations.

Smart Growth Implementation Assistance

Deadline: April 23, 2009

The U.S. EPA is looking for communities that are committed to smart growth but lack the tools to implement their smart growth projects for its annual Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Program (SGIA). Three to five communities will be selected for the program, which was created to support communities and create regional examples of smart growth while identifying common barriers and opportunities. The selected communities will receive assistance from a team of national experts in one of two areas, policy analysis or public participatory processes. The deadline for applications is April 23, 2009. Read about past implementation projects [here](#).

Active Living Research Call for Proposals

Deadline: April 28, 2009

Approximately \$3.3 million will be awarded for research grants exploring six topics focusing on policy or environmental interventions and strategies for increasing physical activity among youth. Target populations include children and adolescents ages 3 to 18, especially those who are at greatest risk for obesity, including racial/ethnic populations and children living in under-resourced and low-income communities.

Funding Sources for Healthy Food Retail

This online guide serves as a clearinghouse for funding opportunities related to developing food retail outlets. The funding sources, which are categorized by eligibility, source, and type of assistance for easy searching, include several available to local governments.

AWARDS

National Award for Smart Growth Achievement

Deadline: April 23, 2009

The U.S. EPA is accepting applications for the National Award for Smart Growth Achievement. Applications will be accepted in five categories: Built Projects; Policies and Regulations; Smart Growth and Green Building; Smart Growth Streets; and Overall Excellence in Smart Growth. Interested parties are encouraged to submit applications for smart growth activities that have shown significant activity between April 23, 2004, and April 23, 2009. Applications are due April 23, 2009.

UPCOMING EVENTS and TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Transportation, Climate Change, and Energy Security

April 2, 2009, 2:00pm Eastern

Within the United States, transportation is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions. Webinar attendees can learn how various modes of transportation impact the environment and energy security, and how our land-use patterns affect vehicle miles traveled and air quality.

Transportation, Housing, and Development

April 16, 2009, 4:00pm Eastern

Real estate development professionals and affordable housing advocates will explore the linkages between transportation and housing development, the shift in housing and real estate preferences and value, and the creation of affordable mixed-use development near jobs and transit.

Leadership for Healthy Communities' Childhood Obesity Prevention Summit

May 7-8, 2009, Washington, DC. Leadership for Healthy Communities, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is hosting a childhood obesity prevention policy summit May 7-8 in Washington, DC. Plenary sessions will focus on the implications of federal policy on states, municipalities and schools; community collaborations for healthier environments; the economics of obesity; and youth perspectives on healthy environments. Workshops will delve into healthy eating and active living initiatives within the built environment (land use planning, zoning, etc.), rural and ethnic/minority communities, and the neighborhood and media environment. Keynote speakers will include RWJF President and Chief Executive Officer Risa Lavizzo-Mourey. Policy-makers from the federal, state and local level of government are expected to attend.

2009 Childhood Obesity Conference

June 9-12, 2009, Los Angeles, CA . The Childhood Obesity conference is devoted to addressing the most pressing and innovative issues related to childhood obesity, including structural issues that impact food access, nutrition, physical activity and the physical environment. Presentations will focus on research and evaluation; community perspectives (programs, coalitions, food systems, and the built environment); before-school, during school and after-school programs; policy (media advocacy, legislation, marketing, health equities, funding, and food insecurity); parents as role models, educators, and advocates; and clinical management and resources.

Weight of the Nation

July 27-29, 2009, Washington, DC. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity, will host its inaugural conference on obesity prevention and control. Weight of the Nation is designed to provide a forum to highlight progress in the prevention and control of obesity through policy and environmental strategies and is framed around four intervention settings: community, medical care, school, and workplace.

Safe Routes to School Conference

August 19-21, 2009, Portland, OR. Learn how Safe Routes to School programs across the country are changing the habits of an entire generation of schoolchildren and putting thousands of families two steps ahead of health and environmental concerns at the 2nd Safe Routes to School National Conference.

Walk 21 Conference

October 7-9, 2009, New York, NY. Walk 21 is the 10th annual international conference on walking and livable communities. This year's conference has four themes: "Walkable communities are sustainable communities"; "Paved with Gold: Investing in the public realm for a successful city"; "There is more to walking than walking: Design strategies for urban quality"; and "Fit cities: community design for active living."

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