



**Iowa Public Health Association  
AmeriCorps HealthCorps**



**2011-2012**

**PROGRESS REPORTS**

**(Submitted by AmeriCorps members and edited by Program Director)**

**I. PROGRESS REPORTS -SAMPLING OF PROGRESS REPORTS THROUGH OCTOBER, 2011**

- Development of health education lessons at preschools and childcare centers
- School wellness programing.
- Working to begin production of training videos for measuring BMI in children and youth with special health care needs.
- Updating websites
- Nutrition education on sugar sweetened beverages to 4th and 5th graders at area elementary.
- Recruiter for Activate Quad Cities Creating a Healthy Workplace campaign.
- Implementing a nutrition handout with healthy recipes and tips into a weekly Hands-On Parenting class.
- FAMILY sponsored a toy give away at local elementary school and created a display with a nutrition tips and a handout for parents to take home.
- Met with the director of the Keep Council Bluffs Beautiful program to collaborate on a community gardens project in the spring.
- Blue zones

**II. DETAILED PROGRESS REPORTS FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER**

<b>Visiting Nurse Services of Iowa (VNS)</b>	November 2011
<b>AmeriCorps member (s): Chelsey Thomsen</b>	

- I am beginning to develop a fun nutrition piece to add to the preschool dental screenings that the I-smile coordinator here at VNS performs. In January, I will start going with her to different preschools in the area and talking to the kids in smalls groups before they have their dental screening. In the past, I-smile coordinators have not included nutrition information to the kiddos.

- Researching community contacts, such as schools, doctor offices, churches, colleges, and other businesses that cater to low income families in the 5 outer counties (Mahaska, Poweshiek, Jasper, Jackson, and Clinton) VNS covers along with Polk. Contacts will be used to build new relationships with in hopes of informing them about the importance of having information easily accessible for families about low-cost or free health insurance for youth.
- Had community outreach events distributing information about Hawk-I health insurance and supplemental dental programs for low income families. Outreach events were at Weeks Middle School in Des Moines and at Wells Fargo Arena for a large event that was put on by Convoy of Hope. These events are great because I am able to reach out to many people.
- VNS has a great program called Family Peer Support (FPS) which is targeted for families with youth who have been diagnosed with a Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) such as, Bi-Polar disorder and ADHD. Monthly meetings provide support for the families and an opportunity for the parents to talk about their frustrations or achievements. I will be doing activities with the youth while the parents are in the meetings. I am beginning to plan activities to address how eating healthy is important and having fun with food.
- Assisting with the volunteer coordination for MLK day of service VNS helps to organize.
- Attended the Webinar for Community-based Physical Activity Initiatives

Visiting Nurse Services of Iowa	<b>December 2011</b>
<b>AmeriCorps member:</b> Chelsey Thomsen	

- Attended a meeting to discuss the start-up for planning a health fair which is put on by different community members and is held in August at East High School. VNS will be a partner and I will play a large role in the planning and part of the committee.
- Provided our nurses with resources about nutrition during pregnancy. Many of our clients are in their teens and/or overweight.
- Continued to be a part of the Health Care for Kids Coalition (HCKC). We were the recipients of the CHIPRA grant and are in the process of how we are going to use the money. I was spotlighted in the HCKC newsletter.
- Had the opportunity to go on more home visits where my co-worker Flor assisted clients with the application for Presumptive Medicaid for her children. I will begin to

take on my own clients, which will allow VNS to reach a larger number of children who are uninsured and help them acquire Medicaid or Hawk-I insurance.

- Organizing volunteers for MLK day of service VNS puts on in conjunction with our Senior Companion program. Clients from the program can sign-up to have a volunteer from the community come to their house to complete projects (painting, repairs, deep cleaning) that they cannot do on their own.
- Attended the Webinar Healthy Eating for you, your family and your workplace.
- Attended “A New World” workshop VNS held.
- Volunteering to help out with a series of Family Nights Out, had our first meeting this month. This program is being put on by the IDPH (Christine Hradek). In March and April we will hold a Family Night Out at 11 different Des Moines Public Schools. These nights will focus on nutrition in a fun and relaxed environment.

<b>Agency: Siouxland District Health Department</b>	<u>Monthly Progress Report:</u> <u>November 2011</u>
<b>AmeriCorps member (s): Amy Houser</b>	

During the month of December I have spent time facilitating health education lessons at two local preschools, researching and preparing information for the upcoming Live Healthy Iowa Kids Governor’s challenge, and job shadowing individuals in various areas of the health department.

This month I was able to utilize the preschool health education lessons that I prepared in November. I have been teaching these lessons at two preschools on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday mornings. On Tuesdays and Thursdays I teach lessons to preschoolers at the Siouxland Community Christian preschool. This facility has 13 children. On Fridays I teach lessons at St. Paul’s Lutheran School. At this facility I teach a combined class of 6 preschoolers and 6 kindergarteners. Thus far, the lessons have gone very well. To date I have taught two physical activity lessons and one nutrition lesson. I will be teaching these lessons until mid-January. Beginning in January I will also be teaching health education lesson classes at a resource center located at the Siouxland District Health Department. In this setting I will be teaching Spanish speaking parents how to use the health lessons I have prepared with their own children.

I have also spent time preparing for the upcoming Live Healthy Iowa Kids Governor's Challenge that will be starting mid-January. My supervisor Angela Drent and I have been in continued contact with several local elementary schools to encourage their participation in this challenge. Additionally, I researched potential incentive options to promote the participation of students in the program and created a budget and instruction sheet to be presented to schools.

Lastly, I have also spent time this month job shadowing individuals who work in other areas of the health department. I have been able to shadow a food inspector and visit a resource center parent education class. Later this month, and in January, I will have the chance to go on a HOPES homecare visit with a nurse and join a resource center staff member on an in-home education visit. I have enjoyed these experiences and the value they bring to my understanding of public health.

Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health	December 2011
Janae Halm	

I continued with Better Choices, Better Health in two communities. One of my "successes" at one of them revolved around medication usage. We had a couple of individuals who were having problems remembering certain medications. One gentleman stated that he was always 100% at taking his morning and evening medications but for some reason he could not get into the habit to remember to take his mid day pill. He only was able to remember about half the time. His doctor wanted to increase the number of times he took the medication from 3 times a day to 4 times a day. However, he was resistant to that because he had problems taking it 3 times a day. The group brainstormed and came up with a solution about setting an alarm on his cell phone. He and another woman who was having difficulty remembering to take her medications did not realize there was an alarm feature on their phone and did not know how to set it up. During a break, I met with both of them to show them how to program the alarm. They came back the following week excited about the alarm and determined that it helped them to take their medications accurately. The other class was not as successful do to the fact that a lot of participants

did not continue through all six sessions. I attribute most of the inconsistency due to the fact that the class was held the week of Thanksgiving to the week after Christmas—a time when a lot of people are traveling and have a lot of other activities.

The MyPlate kiosks at the Hy-Vee stores are still going well. There were a total of 164 tip sheets taken and 496 recipes taken this month for a total of 762 tip sheets and 1727 recipes overall.

We held a Lunch and Learn for Cerro Gordo County employees at the beginning of the month. I had a dietitian from Hy-Vee come and speak about gluten allergies. We had six individuals participate. See “Survey Results” attachment for post testing (“Post Test” tab)

On December 12th I went to Clear Creek Elementary School to give a presentation to 18 preschoolers on Energy Balance (balancing calories in with calories out). The subject matter was requested by the teacher even though I thought it was a little too complex for that age group. I tried to make it as basic as possible with visual aids and a couple of activities. I did not perform pre and post testing.

I have also continued with the employee wellness challenge—A Larger Life in a Smaller You. As of the 12th week, the 14 participants have lost a total of about 110 pounds resulting in a loss of an average of 3.7% of their body weight.

Another project I have been working on is an Active Living Map. I am almost complete with it. I am finalizing the maps and inputting all of the information into the County’s web site.

<b>Agency FAMILY</b>	December 2011
<b>AmeriCorps member (s): Alejandro Hughes &amp; Brittany Schwartz</b>	

During the busy month of December we wrapped up the Hands On Parenting group for 2011 that we have been hosting. Hands On Parenting is designed to facilitate parent-child interaction through a weekly discussion of healthy developmental topics. We have been creating handouts focused on a specific nutritional area for each week. In addition, we introduced healthy methods of preparing and serving nutritious foods to young children (birth to five). This included activities like fruit parfaits, portion control, and ways to add

variety to a child's diet. Group concluded with a holiday party for all of the families in our program. Kids were able to get their picture taken with Santa, share snacks with their family, and make various crafts.

Just before Christmas we visited Primrose Retirement Community in an attempt to recruit volunteers for various ongoing projects here at FAMILY. We were able to successfully recruit several volunteers who we will be utilizing in the coming weeks.

Some of our future endeavors include: hosting a Dr. Seuss birthday bash, working with a fellow AmeriCorps member who is also serving here in Council Bluffs for a Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day service project, and collaborating with the local I-Smile coordinator to visit local schools and educate the students on the importance of nutrition and its effect on oral health.

<b>Child Health Specialty Clinics</b>	<b>Monthly progress reports -- December, 2011</b>
<b>AmeriCorps member (s): Stephany Mottet</b>	

I continue to work on the training video for measuring BMI in children and youth with special health care needs. I am finalizing the scripts, sending them out for feedback and trying to secure actors.

I finished up my role as a recruiter for Activate Quad Cities Creating a Healthy Workplace campaign. In the end, I contacted 10 work places and was able to recruit 5 of them.

My supervisor and I met with one of our client's teachers regarding his weight issues. We have made arrangements for tracking his weight together. I will be visiting the school to conduct meal observations and meet with the nurse regarding regular weight checks and possibly developing a health plan for this particular student.

I worked with the Iowa State University Extension specialist to develop sample news-letter write-ups regarding the school nutrition environment and a survey to be sent out to all teachers in the district to monitor nutrition practices. Some examples of the news-letter articles are using food as a reward and sending treats to school.

I attended training on using GIS mapping to connect public health resources with one and another. CHSC has been looking into mapping our resources in a more sustainable and effective way. This system called CIM and operated locally by United Way, could be very effective if CHSC could tie into it.

Met with Dr. Helena Laroche at the University of Iowa. We were able to hear Dr. Laroche speak at the State of Weight conference in September and were really intrigued to her systems approach of addressing obesity. She was able to give us insight on resources we might utilize to get our program off the ground. She connected us with the Motivational Interviewing team at the University of Iowa as well as offered her evaluation expertise once we get a project started.

Talked with a pediatrician connected with Health Literacy Iowa regarding a project of theirs we will be participating in. They will be providing us 144 books written at a 2nd-5th grade level for parents of children who are overweight. We will be trained on how to use the books and will also conduct pre and post evaluation studies.

We continue to try to develop a clinic flow protocol for the kids who are above the 95th percentile. I have begun to work on building smart phrases to help guide the nurse practitioners and registered dietitians clinic appointments.

<b>Child and Family Policy Center</b>	December 2011
<b>AmeriCorps member (s): Linh Huynh</b>	

December was a different month all together. The grant from Making Connections is over so the projects that I have been working on at Carver Elementary with the Hispanic mothers, MidCity with the community networking organization, and Girl's Group cooking class at the church are being tested on sustainability without the help of additional funds. I would prefer to continue to go and establish the relationships I have already made even further.

Voices to be Heard is grasping for funds. I will continue to visit here, working with the kids with incarcerated family members (or once incarcerated). In December we just had lots of

potlucks and social gatherings. I played and did art projects with the kids, who are quite used to me. They save me a seat for dinner every time.

I've enlisted FoodCorps into Carver Elementary and we will be starting a community garden there for this and next year. We are in the early processes of the planning and will start by February to dig and till. I'm supposed to be the liaison for the Hispanic mothers and teachers about the garden. It's not my duty to go to the workshops (Monday evenings for 1.5 or 2 hours) to learn about farming but I guess it would be an awesome life skill to obtain. It's participant observation of sorts into the work that I have been doing, so in the end, I'm sure it'd be worthwhile.

Additionally, I'm working with Christine (from IDPH), Chelsea (from AmeriCorps), Daniel, and Mauricio (from FoodCorps), with Des Moines Public Schools family nights, where we would have little booths to teach kids and parents bits about food and nutrition. It should be good, we're planning this month and plan to do it March to May.

<b>Agency</b> Linn County Public Health	October 2011
<b>AmeriCorps member (s):</b> Jennifer Palmer	

This month I helped to coordinate several walk locations for the Healthiest State Initiative's Start Somewhere Walk. I contacted employers to inform them of the Healthiest State Initiative and help them to set up a walk for their location, and distributed Talking Points to walk coordinators. Cedar Rapids had over 200 walk locations with over 16,000 walkers. I also began administrative duties for the Healthiest State Cedar Rapids Committee, which consists of over 60 community members, including managing the distribution list, meeting agendas and minutes, coordinating subcommittees, and helping to lead meetings.

As a coordinator for the Healthy Living Coalition of Linn County, I organized meeting notices, agendas, and minutes and invited guests to present at our monthly meeting. Additionally, I presented data I collected on two potential projects, addressing walkability and initiating walking groups and/or school buses, for the consideration of the Coalition.

I met with staff from a local non-profit to discuss partnering on a grant they recently received to address access to healthy foods and explore potential programs to increase

access. Finally, I began work with the Public Health Worksite Wellness Committee which conducts worksite wellness evaluations and hosts an annual award ceremony to recognize those businesses that best support healthy living among employees.

Agency Linn County Public Health	December 31, 2011
AmeriCorps member (s): Jennifer Palmer	

Much of my time in December was dedicated to the Blue Zones Cedar Rapids Committee. Following the announcement that we had been asked to move forward in the application process, we put together an application subcommittee comprised of staff from the City of Cedar Rapids, representatives from United Way, Community Health Charities, the YMCA, Hy-Vee and more. These local leaders volunteered their time to put together an extensive application which required that we identify current and proposed initiatives and policies to improve the health of our community, how the Blue Zones would positively impact our community, local leadership to serve in advisory capacity should we be chosen as a Blue Zone Community, potential staff to work for the Blue Zones project, etc. My role in preparing the application for Cedar Rapids was to collect and compile the various pieces as they were split up among committee members. I was also responsible for researching and composing several of the questions and editing the final version.

To increase public awareness and familiarity with Blue Zones, we reached out to all committee members to recruit “Blue Zone Ambassadors.” These ambassadors simply help spread the word and encourage others to ‘pledge’ online. As a committee coordinator, I drafted emails to the committee members to encourage them to recruit others, corresponded with the ambassadors, created and notified ambassadors of weekly challenges, and helped to collect donations from community to assemble “ambassador kits” (with a free t-shirt, books, etc.). Also, within Linn County Public Health I helped to initiate “Blue Zones T-Shirt Fridays” in which our 40+ staff members were encouraged to wear blue jeans and a Blue Zone t-shirt to help get out the word and encourage others in the community to pledge.

Also this month, I worked with the Worksite Wellness Committee to improve and update our worksite assessment tool. I also helped provide feedback for our marketing and nomination forms and began planning for our annual Worksite Wellness Awards.

Agency Trinity Muscatine Public Health	November 2011
AmeriCorps member (s): E. Adriana McMullan	

In November, I attended the Non-Profit Summit in Ames, and completed my training requirements. I attended a health fair in Wilton, IA. I explained our presentation was on the Eat & Play: 5-2-1 message. The Wilton School District had their students blocked off to

arrive throughout the morning so we had a lot of interactive displays for them, such as the hand washing tool that shows how many germs are on their hands after washing them.

I've been very active in the Blue Zones application for Muscatine. We hosted a Public Forum on the Blue Zones concept and did community interest groups on each initiative. This helped our steering group see which groups self-selected as priority initiatives as well as which ones had interest but work needed to be done to promote it. There were approximately 50 people in attendance at the forum, which we viewed as a success.

Agency Trinity Muscatine Public Health	December 2011
AmeriCorps member (s): E. Adriana McMullan	

In December, I helped plan a business engagement breakfast for the Blue Zones application. A key piece is the cooperation of the local businesses so we invited members of the board for the Chamber of Commerce. There were at least 40 businesses in attendance. We got Helen Eddy from Corporate Hy-Vee to give a brief presentation showing the economic benefits of the Blue Zone project, and the local Hy-Vee donated materials for a healthy breakfast. It was also viewed as a success since so many businesses had a presence as well as signed commitment papers that morning.

A lot of my work this month was spent on finalizing the Blue Zones application. This included coordinating co-chairs for initiatives and collecting bios from each of them. I even wrote a few answers to questions, edited them, and participated in the application group meetings.

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### **Maureen Meyer September 2011**

One commitment is to serve on the Johnson County Obesity Task Force (OTF). This is a coalition of organizations and community members that work to combat childhood obesity. My responsibilities will change depending on the needs of the OTF. To start, I will attend the monthly meetings and assist in planning the "Start Somewhere Walk." This will include mapping the route and helping to advertise the event.

I will be assisting with the Blue Zones application process.

Another responsibility I have is to work with Nick Sobocinski, the Project Director of the Safe Routes to School Program. At our initial meeting, I learned more about Safe Routes to School and the Iowa Bicycle Coalition, who partner together on various events. I was tasked with contacting all PE teachers and nurses employed at schools in Johnson County to encourage them to have their students participate in International Walk to School Day. Nick and I will also work together on implementing a walking school bus in at least one school in Johnson County, too, in the coming months.

Since October is “Walk to School Month,” I thought it would be beneficial to draw as much attention to this topic as possible. Every year, the College of Public Health Student Association (CPHSA) enters the UI Homecoming Parade to promote a different public health issue. I used my contacts as a former CPHSA Executive Board Member to have the Homecoming Parade Float center around “Walking to School.” Nick volunteered to supply hand-outs for the kids to receive along the parade route. When the float is announced at the “judging area,” the importance of walking will be expressed to all attendees.

I will also work with Heather Widmayer who coordinates the Iowa City Community School District (ICCSA) Farm to School Program. I learned about Farm to School and the Johnson County Local Food Alliance during our first meeting. She also provided information on Farmer Fairs that they have sponsored, which is one of the jobs I will work on this fall and again next spring.

### **Maureen Meyer October 2011**

October 5, 2011 was International Walk to School Day. To prepare for this, I had contacted all PE teachers and nurses in Johnson County schools to encourage participation in this event. Several schools did participate across the county, so the event was successful. Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the event at any of the schools because my background check clearance had not gone through.

October 7, 2011 was the “Start Somewhere Walk.” I decided to create signs to line the route. I came up with 14 unique walking facts to put on each sign. I purchased blank signs, and put a walking fact and the “Start Somewhere Walk” logo on each sign. I put them together the morning of the event, and then placed them along the route. I also checked walkers in at the start of the walk. We had about 30 attendees, which were primarily Johnson County employees.

I had multiple Farmer Fair planning meetings this month. Two meetings were just with Heather. During these meetings, we divided up the work; I asked to play a large role in the planning, leaving only the press tasks for her. We also had two meetings with the Planning Committee at the elementary school. This Committee consisted of the principal and two teachers. As a group, we determined the activities that they were most interested in having and created a rough schedule for the event. I then began working on the activity descriptions, securing presenters, and finalizing the schedule. It was decided that I would lead one of the nutrition presentations, so I had to start brainstorming potential activities. Around this time, I developed a kidney infection, so Heather ended up having to contact all the presenters. I was able to keep up with the rest of the tasks, though.

During the Obesity Task Force meeting, I provided a brief update on Walk to School Day, the Homecoming Parade float, and the Farmer Fair planning. As a group, we agreed to host an informational booth at the upcoming Winter Farmers Markets to be held at an elementary school in Iowa City from November through April. I will help with staffing the booth and creating games for the children. We are hoping to have University of Iowa College of Public Health students participate, so I will be responsible for contacting them.

## **Maureen Meyer Nov. 2011**

The Farmer Fair was November 18, 2011. We had a final meeting of the Planning Committee to ensure all activities were correct, necessary resources were available, volunteers were secured, and the schedule was feasible. I led this final meeting, so I had created an agenda and information packets of all the documents I developed, including: Schedule, Activity Description sheet, Volunteer Responsibilities sheets, Required Resources and Location sheet, Pre-Tests, Post-Tests, and Food Scorecards. I also created a description sheet for each presentation room, and name tags for all presenters. I followed up with all presenters through email the week of the event to provide the final details.

I led a meeting for the nutrition educators. Together, the three of us decided what we wanted to convey in the short time we had to present. I had suggested discussing MyPlate and the food groups. The others agreed, so we decided to move forward with that. We also wanted to include a physical activity component; one of the nutritionists suggested using a Physical Activity Teller. I researched the main messages of MyPlate and kid-friendly explanations of the food groups; I developed a lesson plan each of the nutrition educators could follow so all students would receive the same curriculum. I ended up revising the lesson plan four times; the final version was concise, but comprehensive, and reflected input from the other nutrition educators. I created large MyPlate posters and had them printed; I secured food pictures from the UI Nutrition Center to attach to the posters to have the class build a healthy MyPlate. I created a Physical Activity Teller that used the animals and foods the students were going to be exposed to at the Farmer Fair as the selection pieces. I included activities that the children would be able to do near their desks.

I spent a few hours the day before the Farmer Fair at the Red Avocado, a local restaurant, helping the chef start to prepare the food samples for the event. We washed, peeled, and chopped sweet potatoes, carrots, butternut squash, beets, and beet greens. I also helped with the cooking in the City High kitchen the morning of the event and packed it for transportation to the elementary school.

I staffed my first OTF booth at the Winter Farmer Market on November 19, 2011. I answered questions about what the OTF was, played a nutrition game with kids, and passed out recipes that used winter produce available at the market. We did not have many visitors, but it was still good to reach the few people that I did. I will be meeting with two UI students who are interested in playing a large role in the planning and staffing the OTF booth in early December.

For the Blue Zones Project, Annette, Iola, and I met to divide up answering the questions. I was assigned to respond to three of the four questions JCPH would be providing input on. I had to do some research to answer my questions, and then I compiled my answers to submit to my supervisors. I was also responsible for contacting the Johnson County Local Food Alliance to ask them to develop responses that would be beneficial to include in the final application. The Blue Zones "team" at JCPH will let me know if I have other contributions to make.

We are hoping to help at least one school in Johnson County implement a walking school bus program. We will be jointly hosting a workshop in February about walking school buses that targets school staff and parents. I developed the invitation that will be sent to the schools in January. We will meet in January to start developing the PowerPoint and dividing up the presentation. Nick also suggested hosting a Safe Routes to School workshop that would target city planners; this event will be held in March. We have yet to discuss planning for this event.