



## Statewide Health Improvement Program October-December 2011

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## In the News

### [do.town launches in Bloomington, Edina and Richfield](#)

SHIP has the power of "**do.**" to get Bloomington, Edina and Richfield residents on board with healthy living. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota joined with the three cities' mayors to build off of SHIP initiatives and its successful **do.** Campaign. The **do.** Campaign encourages *people* to "groove your body every day" by moving more and eating better. The new initiative, dubbed "**do.town**," will *engage the community* to work toward providing opportunities for active living and healthy eating.

Through **do.town**, SHIP with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota will leverage each others' resources to engage the community in removing barriers and finding sustainable ways to make healthy living part of our daily lives. SHIP examples include working to create safer and easier walking and biking opportunities (Walk to School Day picture at right) and increasing availability of healthier foods in schools, workplaces, places of worship and city venues.

What does this mean for you? It's exciting! In a community with opportunities to live longer and healthier, you can look forward to doing more of what you enjoy AND prevent rising health care costs. Get on board and make it happen!

If you live in Bloomington, Edina or Richfield, go to [www.do-town.org](http://www.do-town.org).



## **Bloomington Public Health receives continued SHIP funding on behalf of Bloomington, Edina and Richfield**

Bloomington Public Health recently learned it will receive 1 of 18 grants for continued SHIP funding in Bloomington, Edina and Richfield. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) awarded the grants to 4 cities, 51 counties and 1 tribal government to lower the number of Minnesotans who use tobacco or who are obese or overweight - factors that drive up health care costs.

"The Statewide Health Improvement Program reflects our commitment to improving the health of our communities and is an important part of containing the spiraling costs of health care," said Minnesota Health Commissioner Dr. Edward Ehlinger.

"SHIP is, at its core, a program by and for local communities," says Patricia Adams, director of the Office of Statewide Health Improvement Initiatives. SHIP uses proven best practices from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other leading public health organizations to create a menu of health improvement strategies. The grants will allow local communities to choose what works best for them.

More information from MDH: [here](#).

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## **Community**

### **Edina's new Peak Café promotes healthy choices**

The City of Edina's Edinborough Park facility made a bold move. They opened a new concession stand, Peak Café, with almost half the choices being "healthier." SHIP staff worked with Edina Parks and Recreation staff to identify healthier choices for the concession stand. SHIP staff used standards from the Institute of Medicine and guidelines from The Alliance for Healthier Generations. The Alliance gives guidelines for foods sold in schools and vending machines.

"We are excited that we are offering healthier options for our guests," said Edinborough Park Manager Ann Kattreh. "Edinborough Park is a great venue for kids to exert energy and be active. We do not want to negate the exercise component of our facility by filling their tummies with junk food."

"The food choices adolescents have where they hang out make a big difference to their health," said Nutritionist Joan Bulfer from Bloomington Public Health SHIP. She said poor choices lead to poor eating which may result in nutritional deficiencies, obesity, eating disorders and harmful, long-term effects on health. She also said the choices that *adults* provide send a message, and Edina's Peak Cafe is sending a clear message about the importance of children's health.

For more information: Joan Bulfer at 952-563-8992 or [jbulfer@ci.bloomington.mn.us](mailto:jbulfer@ci.bloomington.mn.us)

### **SHIP community gardens in Bloomington, Edina and Richfield donate nearly one ton of fresh produce**

We all want to live in a "healthy" community; but how, when many people in our community can't afford to be healthy - when they must make food decisions based on cost instead of health? This year SHIP funded new gardens and required the growers to donate a portion of their harvest to a food shelf or similar organization so more people have access to healthy foods. Through September this year, the gardens contributed nearly ONE TON of fresh produce to VEAP and other food shelves in Bloomington, Edina and Richfield.

The VEAP food shelf alone serves over 6,500 individuals per month. Frances Lubecke, VEAP Program Director, said many people who use the food shelf have health problems, like diabetes, for which fresh produce is much better than canned. People who use the food shelf want fresh produce. They like it and put it to good use. "We can never have enough (fresh produce). It keeps the community healthy," she said.

SHIP aims to create healthy communities by establishing communities of health - where healthy living is easy for everyone. Creating more community gardens to increase the availability of fresh produce is just one of SHIP's initiatives that will make our community healthy. A healthy community protects the health of people and could result in lower health care costs or other factors leading to a better standard of living – for everyone.

For more information: Deb Miller at [dmiller@ci.bloomington.mn.us](mailto:dmiller@ci.bloomington.mn.us) or 952-563-8928

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## Schools

### Enthusiasm for Walk and Bike to School Days grows in Bloomington, Edina and Richfield

If enthusiasm is any indication, International Walk or Bike to School Day is here to stay in Bloomington, Edina and Richfield. On October 6, 2011, over five hundred students from 10 schools walked or biked to school. This number nearly doubled the 2010 number (*Oak Grove Elementary School pictured at right*). What the day stands for, however, is more than just an opportunity to walk to school on the same day as children all over the globe. The annual event has the potential to transform communities.

Communities are using Walk or Bike to School Day as the first step to change community culture and create environments that are more inviting for everyone – young and old. Whether your concern is safer and improved streets, healthier habits, or cleaner air, Walk or Bike to School Day events are aimed at bringing forth permanent change to encourage a more walkable America — one community at a time.

For more about Walk and Bike to School Day, visit the website: [www.walktoschool.org](http://www.walktoschool.org)

To find out how you can become involved, contact Robyn Wiesman at [rwiesman@ci.bloomington.mn.us](mailto:rwiesman@ci.bloomington.mn.us) or 952-563-8917.

### Students at Olson Elementary and Middle schools in Bloomington grow to like veggies

Olson Elementary and Middle schools are successfully challenging the long-held *belief* that children don't like vegetables. It's because students are excited to eat the vegetables they've grown, and parents think it is awesome (*picture at right*). That is the reason SHIP has promoted and provided funds for school gardens.

Theresa Jacobs, Olson School's food service manager said, "When we put the herbs (from the garden) in the spaghetti, the Elementary kids got so excited, they told their parents, who sent me messages saying how awesome that the kids were getting Olson grown produce." She said students eat anything grown from the Olson garden – and ask for more. They are trying new things just because they were grown at school.

If this continues, we could some day scoff at the idea children won't eat vegetables. It will be a time when, conceivably, 80 becomes the new middle age as a result of successfully decreasing obesity and chronic disease risk factors!



## Educational opportunities are growing at Richfield Middle School

The Richfield Middle School garden is opening a whole new world of educational possibilities. The school received garden funds from SHIP to increase opportunities for physical activity and improve students' acceptance of vegetables. What they and other schools have found is that children learn and do so much more with a garden.

The garden is their outdoor classroom for learning about science, math and nutrition. It provides inspiration for art and writing projects and gives students leadership opportunities and job skills.

In the spring, students built twelve raised beds, hauled soil, put plants in the ground, and helped put together a compost bin. In summer, the garden had cucumbers growing up bamboo tepees, cantaloupe growing on the fence, zucchini and summer squash plants taking over the pathways (*picture at right*).



An early fall harvest party included coleslaw, green bean salad and fresh salsa all made with vegetables from the garden! The students, staff, administrators and parents who got involved were so excited that they offered more of their time to help prep the area for the winter.

The garden opened the door for involvement and positive interactions among staff, students and community. What this means for the future of children's education is inspiring.