

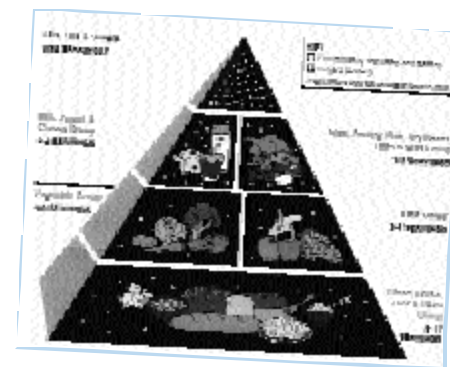
The number of overweight children aged 6 to 17 more than doubled in the past decade.

- Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine



UICNI Spearheads Partnership for Healthy Eating and Fitness

The University of Illinois at Chicago Division of Community Health of the UIC Neighborhoods Initiative (UICNI) has launched a new name and identity for the citywide community-university partnership-Chicago Partnership for Health Promotion (CPHP)-developed to promote healthy eating and fitness in an effort to prevent and reduce the incidence of chronic disease in the Chicago Metropolitan area. The organizations in the partnership have been working to increase access and appropriate utilization of Food Stamps and provide comprehensive food, nutrition, exercise and health education programs to low income and eligible families. The initiative is being funded under a contract from the United States Department of Agriculture.



Food Pyramid

Source: Food & Drug Administration

Partnerships Make It Possible

"UICNI has a longstanding reputation for establishing effective partnerships that address critical community issues," said Dr. Cynthia Boyd, UICNI Director. This project brings together the expertise and resources of well-established organizations. The Partnership includes the University of Illinois Medical Center and LaRabida Hospital among other community based partners. Each partner will bring other organizations they have relationships with creating a wide network of providers to impact the largest number of Chicago residents possible. UICNI brings into the partnership numerous campus wide resources including the University of Illinois Medical Center, UIC Mile Square Health Center, the College of Nursing; the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs (CUPPA) and the School of Public Health. "UICNI is committed to forging and encouraging internal cooperation for a healthier community," Boyd continued.

"While attempting to teach new and healthier alternatives, we know that we are in a battle," explained Anastasia McGee, CPHP Program Director. Chicago families are bombarded with consistent, pervasive and persuasive media messages encouraging unhealthy choices including an abundance of soft drink and fast food ads. They are on TV, on billboards throughout the community and even in the schools. Additionally, they are offered few options in accessible, affordable opportunities for healthy food and exercise choices convenient in their neighborhoods. "We will have to work hard to overcome the impact of these obstacles and break through the communications clutter to develop meaningful messages and programs that offer healthy alternatives," she continued.

Take Charge of Your Health Program

"Take Charge of Your Health" is the new name for the nutrition education programs offered by CPHP. This suggests the importance of self-empowerment and a commitment to healthier decisionmaking. The logo depicts a line drawing of an individual in a running stance with a clear visual of the heart and an apple suggesting the benefits of exercise and healthy eating. The colors are bright and bold and will communicate well to the diverse communities the program will target. Culturally relevant materials and programs have been developed to present to children, adults, individuals and families in familiar community settings. Health fairs, classes, grocery store tours, materials in beauty and barber salons, health ministries, after school exercise programs, health assessments, case management services, low birth weight baby and developmental analysis management services and social marketing communications efforts are all facets of the "Take Charge" initiative. "Our nutrition educators, community peer educators and case managers are in the community in as many venues as possible. We are where people gather giving them good information to make choices for a healthier life," said McGee.



CPHP presents healthy snack food alternatives to students.

Kids in Chicago and cities across America are getting heavier according to a nationwide survey reported in the Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine. The survey shows the number of overweight children aged 6 to 17 more than doubled in the past decade to double digit figures by the dawn of the new millennium. Many health experts say the children's survey supports the notion that the United States is in the midst of an epidemic of obesity. "To insure that these children become healthier adults we must act now and act together," McGee continued. "Results from programs around the country have shown us that effective change must come from a committed community of informed health care providers, public health professionals, and parents, educators and leaders from all walks of life. That's the purpose of the 'Take Charge' partnership," she explained.

Fighting Obesity

A CDC research group has found that childhood obesity rates have risen from 15 to 23%--almost ¼ of U.S. children are too heavy. The biggest jump in weight was among African American girls. "We must reverse this trend in Chicago by getting them to eat healthier and be more physically active," Dr. Boyd continued. Research shows that dieting alone doesn't work for adults and is risky in children because it may interfere with growth. That's why "Take Charge" is teaching and promoting healthy food options along with increased physical activity for youth. "This combination has proven effective," Dr. Boyd added.



Photo: Food & Nutrition Services, USDA

UIC is committed to forging and encouraging internal cooperation for a healthier community.

Additional "Take Charge" adjunct partners include schools, school based clinics, grocery stores, churches, community-based organizations, hospitals, clinics, public health agencies, businesses, health clubs and salons. "We want to partner with organizations connected to the people that need information about healthy eating alternatives," said Dr. Boyd. "We have included a wide array of partners across the area because the issue is not just the cost of choosing healthy foods. It's the convenience, traditions, diet preferences and choices that we must address to see real changes in lifestyle and overall outcomes. Chicago residents want to live to see their children grow up healthy and we want to give them the tools to make that happen," McGee concluded.

For more information about "Take Charge" programs or for CPHP partnership opportunities, please call CPHP at (312) 355-3659.

10th Anniversary Great Cities Winter Forum

December 5, 2003
9am - 2pm
UIC, Chicago Circle Center



You are invited to be part of the conversation as local and national leaders and researchers discuss many fundamental questions facing our cities.

For registration and more information on the 10th Anniversary Great Cities Winter Forum, please visit www.uic.edu/cuppa/gci/events/wf2003/index.html or call 312-996-8700.

10th Anniversary Winter Forum

What do Steve Edwards, host of Chicago Public Radio *Eight Forty-Eight*, Sylvia Manning, Chancellor, UIC, and Alicia Mazur Berg, City of Chicago Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Development, have in common? Each will be part of the Great Cities Institute's annual daylong Winter Forum on December 5, 2003.

Celebrating its 10th Anniversary, the Winter Forum has come to be considered by many as "Chicago's town hall meeting": a place where hundreds of policy experts, academic and community leaders come together to assess the state of the city at the local and national level. Organized around a crosscutting urban policy theme, this year's discussion is entitled: *Where We Stand: Cities, Challenge and Change*.

"The 10th Anniversary Great Cities Winter Forum promises to be one of the most exciting yet," states David Perry, director of UIC Great Cities Institute. "Working in partnership with the National League of Cities, the Forum will discuss the core challenges facing American cities and assess where our city and our neighborhoods stand in light of such challenges and the changes they will bring."

The theme of this year's 'town meeting' will address the many challenges currently facing community leaders and service providers:

- What are the most common challenges facing cities today?
- How are structural changes in the economy affecting cities?
- How are neighborhood development strategies being altered in the face of where we stand as a city?

"When you look around the room and see the diversity of the panelists and the participants, it's really exciting to see people of different professions and perspectives discuss the complex issues that we deal with in our individual work"

says Nacho Gonzalez, associate director of UICNI. "It's a very invigorating experience."



"Making News" in Partnership



A Message from UICNI Director, Cynthia Barnes-Boyd

Dear Colleagues,

Each Fall I dutifully sit down to write this annual letter with a sense of dread. Mind racing, I ask what should I write this year? How should I word this important first message of the year? After all, for many who receive our newsletter this is one of few times in the year that we have a direct conversation. Knowing the importance of this opportunity, I search my mind to be certain that we have not overlooked

some vital communication, tidbit of news or important announcement that I should comment on. It was during one of these searching moments that I realized that the very dilemma I faced was our most important news. Our communication vehicles worked!

Each year we have increased our effort to communicate information, big and small to our partners. Technology has allowed us to develop electronic formats to augment paper communications. Our East and West campus Partners Council meetings have provided an opportunity to communicate face to face and to learn more about each other through presentations and networking. For all the bother of email, our electronic listservs do provide a means for efficient, immediate communication about successes, failures and new opportunities.

This Fall at our annual meeting, I had an opportunity to appreciate just how far consistent communication has brought us with regard to nurturing relationships. Our agenda focused on the challenges facing the University as a result of the dismal economic climate. In advance of the meeting, we shared that our agenda would include creative brainstorming about how to do what we do and more, with less. I believe it is a testament to the strength of our relationships that even when it was clear that this would be a challeng-

ing year for UIC... people came anyway! Not only did they come, they contributed passionately. The product of our conversation is a thoughtful, supportive summary that can be used to focus our energy throughout the year.



Learning today's communication tools at Instituto Del Progreso Latino, a UICNI partner.

So the news is just this...we are privileged to enjoy a relationship where we are "making news" in partnerships. My hope is that we will continue to nurture these partnerships in such a way that our communication is clear, timely and simply a matter of routine.

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