

Healthy Change

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SPRING 2011



Top photo, from left: AmeriCorps members Amal Deria, Danielle Oester, Heather Dougherty and Jaimie Tyler received help from BBGC members and staff.

BRISTOL

"Make It A Day On, Not a Day Off"

On Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, AmeriCorps shared this message with its members across the country, urging them to extend their reach into local communities in response to United We Serve, President Obama's national call-to-service initiative. In response, the Community Health Center AmeriCorps jumped into action, creating a mural at the Bristol Boys & Girls Club (BBGC), located next to the Community Health Center of Bristol.

"The Bristol Boys & Girls Club is committed to building healthy communities, similar to CHC's commitment," said Yvette Highsmith-Frances, director of CHC's Hartford County sites, who recommended the group work with the BBGC. "The BBGC makes a significant impact in the lives of underprivileged youth. I thought AmeriCorps members would be great role models for service, and the collaboration on the mural would make a lasting imprint."

Joined by 10 children, the group painted the mural at the Outreach Unit site in Cambridge Park.

"The Bristol Boys and Girls Club Outreach Program addresses the need to improve access for public housing residents," said Jay Maia, unit director of the BBGC. "There is a certain uniqueness associated with our outreach unit that cannot be replicated by our main facility or other youth agencies. By being located in the neighborhood, we are able to reach those children and families that may have been considered unreachable by others."

AmeriCorps members chose to focus on empowerment in the mural. "Our group used a piece of Henry David Thoreau's famous quote, 'Dance to the beat of your own drum,' to illustrate our theme," said AmeriCorps member Danielle Oester. "The visual focus of the mural is a young boy playing a snare drum, and from it spirals a musical staff that gradually fills with images of activities that empower youth."

Reflecting on the experience, AmeriCorps member Amal Deria commented, "One of the BBGC employees who accompanied us grew up attending the same center where we helped paint the mural. It is amazing to think that the first-graders who helped us paint and design the mural might be able to come back and look at it as adults."

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A quarterly publication featuring news on CHC's Service Expansions, Innovations, Partnerships and Special Events

Developing Health

GE Foundation and Community Health Center, Inc. partner to improve access to primary care and delivery of services

In December, Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) was selected by the GE Foundation and the GE Corporate Diversity Council to receive \$500,000 in grants, along with three years of GE volunteer support, under the GE Developing Health™ program, with the goal of increasing access to primary care for uninsured and underserved populations in Norwalk and Danbury.



From left: Mark Masselli, president and CEO of Community Health Center, Inc.; Dr. Nwando Olayiwola, chief medical officer of Community Health Center, Inc.; Katherine Yacavone, CEO of Southwest Community Health Center, Inc.; Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch; Bob Corcoran, president of GE Foundation; Beth Comstock, chief marketing officer for GE; Ludwig Spinelli, CEO of Optimus Health Center, Inc.; and Deb Elam, chief diversity officer for GE at the "Developing Health" launch in December.

The Day Street Community Health Center in Norwalk and Community Health Center of Danbury will each receive \$250,000. The grants expand the reach of GE Developing Health™, a three-year, \$50 million commitment that provides grant funding and GE employee engagement to selected healthcare centers across the United States. Fairfield County is the tenth location in the U.S. to receive grants through the Developing Health initiative.

"It's particularly meaningful for us to expand Developing Health to Fairfield County—not only home to our corporate headquarters and GE Capital, but also thousands of GE employees," said Beth Comstock, chief marketing officer of GE. "Increasing access to primary care is vital to our community, and Developing Health will help do this right here in our back yard. There's a perception that Fairfield County doesn't have as many underinsured or uninsured residents, and that's simply not the case."

With the funding, CHC will develop systems that allow for early identification of behavioral health issues in childhood and meet the behavioral health needs of children and their families in the Norwalk and Danbury communities. The funding will also support recruitment and hiring of multilingual providers, community outreach and support care for uninsured children and families—all of which can be sustained and expanded in the future.

In addition to the grants, Developing Health includes a three-year volunteer commitment from area GE employees. GE employees will work with both health centers, applying their business management skills and expertise in a primary care setting to drive improvements that benefit patients, workflows and health outcomes.

"This funding and volunteer support from GE will be a huge asset as we continue to enhance and expand our comprehensive primary care services throughout Norwalk and Danbury," said Mark Masselli, president and CEO of Community Health Center, Inc. "The partnership will help us reach more area residents in need of quality care, as well as support our efforts to improve health outcomes and create healthier communities."



imagination at work



Building a **WORLD-CLASS PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SYSTEM** focused on special populations.

Community Health Center, Inc. is a private, non-profit agency. Since 1972, we have been building a world-class primary health care system, that is committed to caring for special populations, and that is focused on improving health outcomes for our patients as well as building healthy communities. We bring many resources to this task but there are three critical components—First, is our commitment to excellence in the provision of primary care. But we are also engaged in Research and Development. We believe we have an obligation to improve primary care through both formal research, and through testing innovations in care delivery. Finally, we support the future leaders of primary care through our own health professional training initiatives.



NEBRASKA



CALIFORNIA



National video contest winners announced; CHC visits winning schools in California and Nebraska

In September, Community Health Center, Inc. asked youth across the country to create videos and share their ideas for combating childhood obesity as part of its national Recess Rocks™ childhood obesity prevention campaign. An array of creative video contest entries featuring raps, dances, skits and mock news segments followed, but six stood out.

Daniel Schratz of Franklin, Mass., Jabulela Inyoni of Los Angeles and Natalie Ervolino of Dubuque, Iowa, all won first place in the individual category. In the group category, O'Neill Elementary from O'Neill, Neb., won first place, Macdonough Elementary School in Middletown, Conn., won second place, and Cobblestone Elementary School in Rocklin, Calif. took third place.

"We decided to hold the contest, because few people were asking children and teenagers—those directly affected by the childhood obesity epidemic—for their ideas," said Mark Masselli, CEO and president of CHC. "As we suspected, they offered a wealth of creative solutions. Though the contest is over, we hope they will continue these conversations about preventing and reversing childhood obesity, voice their ideas and become leaders in their schools and communities who advocate for healthy changes."

Lead Recess Rocks™ Instructor Kim Thibodeau traveled across the country this winter, visiting the three winning schools to present their prizes and lead students in Recess Rocks™ movement activities.

"It didn't matter if I was on the west coast or in the midwest—both Cobblestone and O'Neill Elementary Schools welcomed Recess Rocks™ with open arms," said Thibodeau. "Student, teachers, parents and grandparents, principals and even a superintendent were ready to celebrate and rock the moves, and the winning classes proudly wore their Recess Rocks™ tee shirts. At Cobblestone, I learned that the school was already incorporating Recess Rocks™ movement in their classrooms, and, in O'Neill, teachers are anxious to bring the program into the school. A dedication to finding solutions to childhood obesity is spreading like wildfire throughout these schools."

In addition to the video contest, the Recess Rocks™ campaign consisted of the national launch of the Recess Rocks™ program. To help schools and youth organizations bring Recess Rocks™ to their communities, CHC developed an online toolkit that includes an A-to-Z program implementation manual, sample lesson plan tie-ins and videos. Since the campaign launch, more than 230 schools in 26 states have requested copies of the implementation manual and expressed interest in bringing the program to their students.

This summer, Recess Rocks™ team members will hit the road again—this time to Kentucky, where they will train approximately 60 program coordinators with the Family Resource Centers who wish to implement Recess Rocks™ in their after-school programming. The program coordinators will then train 400 of their colleagues to lead Recess Rocks™ in 840 elementary schools across the state and move kids to health.

Visit RecessRocks.com to view a full list of contest winners in each category and their videos, as well as the Recess Rocks™ program toolkit.

CHC Expands Health Care Access in Schools Opens school-based health center in Stamford

In January, Community Health Center, Inc. opened a school-based health center at Domus' Trailblazers Academy and Stamford Academy to bring medical and mobile dental care to approximately 300 middle and high school students. The center is the first that CHC has opened in Fairfield County and one of only 22 throughout the state.

"Our schools provide kids who've been unsuccessful in traditional schools a very comprehensive school experience, including individualized attention, rigorous academics and significant family and behavioral support, but we've long lacked the important on-site health care piece," said Domus Executive Director Michael Duggan. "Students dealing with minor health issues will now be able to stay in the building and return to class quickly, missing less instruction, which is critical to helping them regain lost academic ground. The value to our kids and families can't be overstated."

The school-based health center provides comprehensive primary care, including immunizations, complete physical examinations, medication management, intervention for acute chronic illnesses and long-term chronic care. Students without health insurance receive free services and are provided assistance in determining their eligibility for a public health insurance program. In addition to medical care, the center is a site for regular mobile dental visits.

"There was a significant need within the two academies for easy access to primary care services," said Jane Hylan, CHC's director of school health services. "Prior to our opening, several students from these academies came to our Franklin Street Community Health Center for sports physicals. It quickly became evident to our providers that these students had limited or no health care histories or medical records. I applaud Michael Duggan for recognizing a need and reaching out to us."

Nurse Practitioner
Angela Matera examines
a Trailblazer Academy
6th grader. Photo courtesy of
The Hour Newspapers.



CHC Gives Kids a Smile Day of free dental services reaches Connecticut children

On February 4 and 5, Community Health Center, Inc. provided free dental services to children with HUSKY or no insurance in recognition of the American Dental Association's annual Give Kids a Smile Day. Partnering with groups including New Britain Dental Society, New Britain Oral Health Collaborative and dentists in the communities, CHC hosted events in New Britain, Meriden, Norwalk and Old Saybrook, serving 150 children throughout Connecticut.

Free cleanings, exams, sealants, fillings, fluoride treatments and dental education were among the services provided to children by over 70 volunteers. Procedure costs donated totaled \$30,137.

Each year on the first Friday in February, thousands of the nation's dentists and their dental team members provide free oral health care services to underserved children across the country as part of the Give Kids A Smile® program. Give Kids A Smile activities also highlight for policy makers the ongoing challenges that low-income families face in finding dental care.

On February 9, New Britain Mayor Timothy Stewart, New Britain High School and Roosevelt Middle School students who received free dental services and representatives from the Connecticut State Dental Association, Department of Public Health and Connecticut Oral Health Initiative joined CHC at New Britain City Hall to celebrate the success of Give Kids a Smile Day and other community efforts to increase access to dental care. The group also discussed the need for access to dental care throughout the city and state and beyond. Each year, an estimated one in five, or 17 million, American children goes without dental care.

Visit chc1.com to learn more about CHC's year-round mobile dental program, designed to increase access to dental services for children in schools and community sites like Head Start programs.



NEW BRITAIN



Homeless Remembered During Memorial Services



Shown above and at right:
The homeless who passed away in
2010 were honored through song,
speech and candlelight vigils.

Healthcare for the Homeless program raises awareness of need for community efforts to prevent homelessness

In recognition of National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day on December 21, CHC's Wherever You Are Healthcare for the Homeless program hosted memorial services and candlelight vigils in Middletown, Meriden and New Britain. The public services, which take place each year, were in memory of the areas' homeless residents who died in 2010.

State Sen. Donald DeFronzo; State Sen. Paul Doyle; State Rep. Chris Donovan; Middletown Mayor Sebastian Giuliano; Meriden Mayor Michael Rohde; New Britain Mayor Timothy Stewart; representatives from various social service agencies and shelters; and homeless individuals all spoke about the importance of communities collaborating to end homelessness.

Similar services are conducted in more than 150 communities across the country on the first day of winter—the longest night of the year—to recognize the need for political advocacy and efforts to end homelessness.

"Each year, homeless residents in our communities pass away," said Agi Erickson, program manager for Wherever You Are Healthcare for the Homeless.

"Many of these deaths could have been prevented, had these individuals had shelter, food and access to health care. Communities must continue working together and sharing the responsibility to end the preventable tragedy of homelessness."

