Our work grows out of the BYI Definition of Health

Health is a state of physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. It is not only the absence of infirmity and disease.

Health is the state of balance, harmony, and connectedness within and between many systems – the body, the family, the community, the environment, and culture. It cannot be seen only in an individual context.

Health is an active state of being; people must be active participants to be healthy. It cannot be achieved by being passive.
**Growing the Backyard CHAT**

Growing the Backyard CHAT is a community partnership, which is a Table Coop, organizing a growing team to preserve patatas for water consumption. The Growing in the Backyard CHAT is poised to build a sustainable community food system in a collaborative network that integrates a sustainable and food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management in order to enhance the environmental, economic, and social health of the Backyard residents.Farmers, consumers and community leaders in our CHAT partner to create a more locally-based, self-reliant food economy. The Growing in the Backyard project empowered Backyard residents to produce their own healthy foods, increase their local food production, and their health by understanding how the local food system works. From May through October, weekly deliveries of locally grown fresh produce were distributed throughout the backyard area. Overall goals achieved by our project include:

1. Developed a CHAT work plan and activity list which includes seed selection, planting, growing, and harvesting schedule.

2. Developed Growing the Backyard Buying Club, CSA programs, created a distribution and delivery system which includes cleaning, sorting, and processing with the Community Table coop, one of our project partners.

3. Organized residents and organizations in South Minneapolis to network a healthy food businesses and developed partnerships with local businesses to apply healthy eating solutions.

**Specific achievements:**

- Collaborated with youth form to train 15 youth and start 10 gardens
- Collaborated with Happy Acre Farm & Plant and grow 120 square feet and trained 1 youth
- Produced 500 pounds of vegetables
- Developed a community garden with the Hope Community that has an average of 8 families per year
- Several families benefited from our CSA project
- Distributed 400 pounds of vegetable which were made available to the community. Throughout the months of July, August, and September of 2013.
- Partnered with 2 Somali Community Center; Sabahane and White House Food Bank
- Delivered an average of 40 pounds of fresh foods to 2 locations weekly located within 20 miles.

**Learning by the Circle of Healing CHAT in 2013**

- Ways of knowing represent a form of study and knowledge integral to creating health and managing the complexity and unpredictability of health
- A paradigm shift is required to be better able to care for communities
- Practitioners of healing ways have a role in informing the design of health delivery models
- Cultural ways of knowing facilitate a deeper process through which the body may achieve health and healing

**A Story Describing the Achievements of the ANCHOR FAMILY CHAT**

Mr. Younger lives in the BYI area in an apartment building with 50 units. Every day, he checks in on his neighbors and asks if there is any way he can help. Just this week, he wrote three letters for neighbors who are unable to write because of learning disabilities. He gets groceries for his neighbor who is homebound. He even makes sure there is cable and air service in the recreation room of his building when his neighbor has a birthday.

- There are many elderly residents living on limited incomes in the building who had difficulty receiving their rental reimbursement checks. They were falling behind in their rent payments, putting their housing security at risk. Mr. Younger reached out to a contact at the Court House and was able to get a person to come out to the apartment building to complete the necessary forms for them to continue receiving their rental reimbursements and keep their housing.

- He is also an amazing mentor at all CHATS meetings.

**Out in the Backyard CHAT (OIBY) 2013 Achievements!**

- Conducted over 200 classes in Zambia, Yoga, Hip-hop, Bollywood, Self-defense, nutrition and more in partnership with Minneapolis’s Powders Park and East Phillips Park Community Centers.
- 9 Circle of Healing groups
- Hosted 11 Community Potlucks
- Wrote 2 articles in The Alley Newspaper
- Organized two major community events - Holi and Dandiya festivals
- Participated at Powders Park 24, Field Festival, Midtown Global Market Feast.
- Allina’s research studies
- Participated in health care survey with Rainbow Health Initiative
- Participated over 40 times in various BYI events such as BYI Commission, BYI Assessment Committee, BYI Research Committee, and monthly ALL CHATS meetings.

In 2014:

- OIBY is getting ready for a fun 2014. Brain games and LGBT documentary series (DIDS) have been purchased for game and movie nights.
- In 2014 we have over 500 likes in Facebook and we are growing every month.
- We have an interactive website http://www.outinthebackyard.org to reach our community.

**Rebirthing Community CHAT**

Rebirthing Community is a strong voice in the BYI CHAT wheel. We looked at the socio-economic status of the community and assessed that we are healthy when we have personal autonomy and self-sufficiency. Our community is in need of these pathways in order to improve physical and spiritual health.

We reached out to our network of internal/external contacts, co-op members, etc. to create a viable model. For example: MADDADS provide workshop participants and deutschen center. Minneapolis Transition Charter School produces the basic solar generator cart; we participated in the last 3 May Day Parades coordinated by The Heart of the Beast Theatre; participated in MGM’s Annual Musical Festival where we demonstrated and sold our products and recruited workshop participants.

**ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Communities of Light, through its Solar Lantern and Solar Generator Workshops have:
  - Conducted over 150 workshops and empowered more than 200 families.
  - Introduced over 1000 people in our community to a message of self-sufficiency and the need to develop independent energy strategies.
  - Hosted Anchor Family Community Market Place, providing an opportunity for the community to speak their truth and be a part of a safe environment for more than 1000 community participants.
  - Created large inventories of solar lanterns and personal portable solar electric generators for sale within our store and display room.
  - Opened fully equipped Communities of Light Solar Store & Showroom with demonstration models of the portable generators and lanterns in January 2013.

- Communities of Light store location: Midtown Global Market, 929 East Lake Street, Suite 137, Minneapolis, MN 55407

**Somali Women’s Health**

Out our chat is most proud of coordinating:

1. Fruta Somali girls group
2. Monthly women empowerment meetings
3. Educational training on drugs and the justice system. We also hosted crime prevention activities which include cleaning up areas in our neighborhood.

**Latino/a Environmental Health**

Beginning at Home CHAT (Lehbah)

**Backyard Initiative Community Members**

- As a partner of Universities of Health, the Backyard Initiative (OIBY)

- As told to an invited guest at an All CHATS meeting.

- 9 Circle of Healing groups
- Hosted 1 Community Dinners and 11 Community Potlucks
- 9 Circle of Healing groups
- Hosted 5 Community Dinners and 11 Community Potlucks
- Hosted 2500 people during the months of July, August, and September of 2013.

- 250 people age of 8 people per class

- 50 units. Every day, he checks in on his neighbors and asks if there is any way he can help. Just this week, he wrote three letters for neighbors who are unable to write because of learning disabilities. He gets groceries for his neighbor who is homebound. He even makes sure there is cable and air service in the recreation room of his building when his neighbor has a birthday.

- There are many elderly residents living on limited incomes in the building who had difficulty receiving their rental reimbursement checks. They were falling behind in their rent payments, putting their housing security at risk. Mr. Younger reached out to a contact at the Court House and was able to get a person to come out to the apartment building to complete the necessary forms for them to continue receiving their rental reimbursements and keep their housing.

- He is also an amazing mentor at all CHATS meetings.

Caption: Mr. Lee Younger

Photo Credit: Denisse Velez

Sample of safe cleaning products used by Lehbah CHAT members when they were asked about safe cleaning methods for their homes. Some of the highlights of Lehbah’s achievements in 2013 include:

1. The OIBY CHAT has largely been comprised of only women in the last several years. This is mostly because the key activity of the CHAT has been “safe cleaning methods”. However, for the first time, 2 men joined and remained committed to the work of the CHAT.

2. Lehbah has moved from just one method of educating about environmental and culturally appropriate cleaning methods to a more flexible approach that considers what might be more comfortable ways for people to take in the information. For example:

a. hosting a cleaning session where extended family, friends and neighbors can attend so that it feels more like a community gathering than just a cleaning event.

b. conducting one-on-one sessions. This method works especially well with single men who live alone in apartments or single-room occupancy situations.

3. Lehbah has also intentionally added this question to their information exchange sessions: “If you had an emergency in your home or apartment, who would you call?”

This simple question has helped people to think about reaching out and getting to know their neighbors and start building trusting relationships so that if there is someone to call in emergency situations such as vandalism, fire, falls, etc.,
The Backyard Initiative (BYI) is a dynamic partnership between the Backyard Community and Allina Health to improve the health of residents in the Backyard. The area defined as “the Backyard” encompasses the approximately one square mile area surrounding Allina’s corporate headquarters (2925 Chicago Ave S), Abbott Northwestern Hospital and Phillips Eye Institute in Minneapolis, MN. Neighborhoods in the Backyard include East Phillips, Midtown Phillips, Ventura Village, Phillips West, Central, Powderhorn Park and Corcoran. This Initiative began with Allina engaging in many conversations with community stakeholders in May of 2008. This program began with a relationship and trust building process to surface the knowledge, experience, cultural values, and health-related priorities of the Backyard residents. Backyard residents challenged Allina Health to see themselves as the residents see Allina, as part of the community’s backyard. Community residents began to see their own potential and power as a group for improving residents’ health.

Early in the process, residents developed a Definition of Health that became the foundation for the initiative. (See the Definition of Health below next to the Wheel showing the BYI structure.)

In 2009, the Backyard Initiative BYI completed a Community Assessment. An Assessment Team was formed to create a picture of the current state of health and well-being of residents in the Backyard, engage a broad network of residents in the process, and inform and plan the next steps for the Backyard Initiative. The BYI Assessment Team included community residents and staff from Allina Health, the Cultural Wellness Center, and Wilder Research.

The Assessment was comprised of 21 Listening Circles and 677 face-to-face, walk-around interviews. Three themes emerged from the 2009 Assessment:

• The Power of Interconnectedness: Each dimension of health named in the community definition of health is dependent on the others; one dimension of health cannot be understood or addressed in isolation.
• The Power of Relationships: Relationships impact the many determinants of health. People talked about the need for personal connection in all things related to health. Exercise is best done with others, as a social activity; healthy eating requires the whole family to support each other; talking with family and friends about your problems keeps mentally healthy; accountability between people and between people and institutions keeps the community healthy.
• The Power of Knowledge and Creativity: Cultural knowledge, information exchange between patients and health practitioners, and community dialogue can be resources for health.

The BYI Community Engagement... Policy: Community Functions As A Whole

Every CHAT is a spoke in the wheel of the health of the whole community so their movement/action is cohesive and coherent. When the spokes move independently then the whole wheel has to be remade.

The Commission on Health

A Vision to be achieved!

March 2, 2011 © 2011 The Cultural Wellness Center

Over 19, 174 interactions have occurred between BYI members and the 45,000 residents of the Backyard.