



# BACK YARD INITIATIVE



BYI AREA

...Connecting in the Backyard...Connecting in the Backyard...Connecting in the Backyard...



"For me the greatest benefit has been being a part of a group of people who are so determined to do something good together."

"Being a part of people who are really doing things to help strengthen and heal the community... has been a blessing."

"I've made a lot of connections here. We come together, share information, and try to do even better tomorrow than we did today."

"I feel I've connected to a lot of cultural values here. The togetherness here is what has really given me energy. I've learned a lot that I couldn't learn from a university or anywhere else."

\* Quotes from Commissioners are random.



## 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.







# BACKYARD INITIATIVE Community Health Action Teams (CHATs)



## A Partnership Of Diabetics (A-Pod) 2013 Accomplishments

- A-POD continued to host weekly or twice monthly 90-minute “Meet-ups” to provide the type of support lacking in many clinic/hospital-based programs. Meet-ups focused on sharing personal experiences and tracking progress toward health goals. Other activities included:
- Hosted a monthly Diabetes Breakfast in conjunction with Waite House, Native American Community Clinic, Allina Health, International Diabetes Center and Novo Nordisk.
- Assisted regular A-POD participants in achieving D-5 goals for patients with diabetes.
- Initiated a twice monthly Latino A-POD group on Wednesday evenings with Amy Shellabarger and Lesley Mondragon, co-facilitators and CHAT members.
- Continued weekly East African A-POD group with Ifrah Alim, Sara Ali, Sahara Ali as co-facilitators and CHAT members. Gennet Beyan is an assistant facilitator.
- Mentored numerous Phillips Neighborhood Clinic (PNC)/University of MN Health Science students affiliated with the PNC CHAT group who attended Meet-ups and monthly breakfasts
- Participated by providing diabetes screening with Out In The Backyard CHAT at weekly Zumba events
- Conducted a Latino-specific diabetes screening event with UMN Public Health students and Waite House staff
- Provided community-based health presentations at Backyard High Rises featuring Siad Ali, Dr. Harrare, and the MNSure Somali group.
- Participated in developing an Allina/A-POD-based “Diabetes Self-Management Pre-pilot Program” for the East Lake Allina Clinic through special Blue Cross/Blue Shield funding.
- Received HIPPA training through Allina Health as a requirement for an upcoming research study.
- Began preparations for writing two books in 2014: Casting Seeds Upon the Earth - How to start and operate A-POD Groups for Optimizing Diabetes Self Management; The Empowered Diabetic is a personal process training manual for increasing skills of diabetes self-management and systematically tracking and reporting that progress.



## Project S.E.L.F. Achievements 2013



- Produced a S.O.M.A.L.I. Spoken Work CD
- Conducted inter-generational storytelling gatherings every Tuesday
- Assisted in coordinating a Somali Independence Day celebration where over 6,000 people attended!
- Hosted numerous community gatherings



## Growing the Backyard CHAT

- Growing the Backyard CHAT’s partner, Community Table Coop, organizing a processing team to preserve potatoes for winter consumption.
- The Growing in the Backyard CHAT is poised to build a sustainable community food system in a collaborative network that integrates sustainable food production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste management in order to enhance the environmental, economic and social health of Backyard residents. Farmers, consumers and communities in our CHAT partnered to create a more locally-based, self-reliant food economy. The Growing the Backyard project empowered Backyard residents to produce their own healthy foods, increase connection to the local food system and each family’s understanding of 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:
- Developed a CHAT work plan and activity list which includes seed selection, planting, growing, and harvesting schedule.
  - 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.
  - Organized residents and organizations in South Minneapolis to create a network of healthy food businesses and developed partnerships in South Minneapolis to apply healthy eating solutions.

### Specific achievements:

- Collaborated with youth farm to train 15 youth and start 10 gardens
- Collaborated with Happy Acre Farm to plant and grow on 2 acres and trained 3 youth
- Produced 15,000 pounds of vegetables
- Offered 5 cooking classes with the Hope Community that has an average of 8 people per class
- Served 45 families who benefited from our CSA project
- Distributed 6,000 pounds of vegetable which were made available to 2500 people during the months of July, August, and September of 2013.
- Partnered with 2 Southside Community Centers: Sabathani and Waite House Food Shelf
- Delivered an average of 60 pounds of fresh produces to 2 farmers markets located within 3 Churches



## 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



## Out In The Backyard CHAT (OIBY) 2013 Achievements!



- Conducted over 200 classes in Zumba, Yoga, Hip-hop, Bollywood, Self-defense, nutrition and more in partnership with Minneapolis’s Powderhorn Park and East Phillips Park Community Centers
- 9 Circle of Healing groups
- Hosted 5 Community Dinners and 11 Community Potlucks
- Wrote 2 articles in The Alley Newspaper
- Organized two major community events - Holi and Dandiya festivals
- Participated at Powderhorn 24, Pride Festival, Midtown Global Market Music Festival, Allina’s research studies
- Participated in health care survey with Rainbow Health Initiative
- Participated over 40 times in various BYI meetings such as BYI Commission, BYI Assessment Committee, BYI Research Committee, and monthly All-CHAT meetings.

**In 2014:**  
OIBY is getting ready for a fun 2014. Brain games and LGBT documentary movies (DVDs) 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>.



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



Anchor Family CHAT members being recognized for their work

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 having strokes. He gets groceries for his neighbors who are homebound. He even makes sure there is cake and ice cream in the recreation room of his building when one of his neighbors 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 rental 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.

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



Caption: Mr. Lee Younger

## Rebirthing Community CHAT ~ Communities Of Light Co-Operative



### Amen Corner Marketplace

**Communities of Light Co-operative, (COL)** created the co-op, its workshops and products to help members achieve personal solvency and self-sufficiency as gateways to eliminate isolation, improve physical and spiritual health of the BYI communities. The co-op model empowers members with tools for energy conservation and independence and experience in new business models and entrepreneurial opportunities. It also provides the means for employment, financial solvency, and self-sufficiency.

Rebirthing Community is a strong *spoke* 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 solvency and self-sufficiency. Our community is in need of these gateways in order to improve physical and spiritual health.

We reached out to our network of internal/external consultants, co-op members, etc. to create a viable model. For example: **MADDADS** provide workshop participants and decorates solar lanterns; **Minneapolis Transition Charter School** produces the basic solar generator cart; we participated in the last 3 May Day Parades coordinated by **In 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 Amen Corner Market Place, providing the opportunity for the community to speak their truth and be a part of a safe environment for more than 1,000 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, 920 East Lake Street, Suite 137, Minneapolis, MN 55407.**



Solar Generator Workshop

## Somali Women’s Health

- Our chat is most proud of coordinating
- Friday Somali girls group
  - Monthly women empowerment group
  - Educational training on drugs and the justice system. We also host crime prevention activities which include cleaning up streets in our neighborhoods.

(Photo right) Information table at Somali Women’s Health event



## Latino/a Environmental Health Begins at Home CHAT (Lehbah)



Sample of safe cleaning products used by LEHBAH CHAT members when cleaning or teaching others about safe cleaning methods for their homes.

- Some of the highlights of LEHBAH’s achievements in 2013 include:
- The LEHBAH CHAT has largely been comprised of only women in the last several years. This is most likely because the key activity of the CHAT has “safe cleaning methods”. However, for the first time, 2 men joined and remained committed to the work of the CHAT.
  - LEHBAH has moved from just one method of educating about environmentally safe 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:
    - 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.
    - conducting one-on-one sessions. This method works especially well with single men who live alone in apartments or single-room occupancy situations.
  - 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 to build trusting relationships so that their is someone to call in emergency situations such as vandalism, fire, falls, etc.





# THE BACKYARD INITIATIVE History and framework

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.

## 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 Community's Definition of Health  
A Vision to be Achieved!

**“The  
Community’s  
Definition of  
Health,  
A Vision to be  
achieved!”**

**The Community Care System**  
Supporting the Community/BYI Work

March 2, 2011  
© 2011 The Cultural Wellness Center

### The CHATs

Community residents have been supported by the Cultural Wellness Center to form Community Health Action Teams or CHATS. The CHATS are study groups, health improvement activators and cultural community circles who research and organize to work on a particular topic of importance to the whole community’s health and well-being. The focus of CHAT work and activities relates to the findings and recommendations that came out of the Community Health Assessment and grounded by the principles of the Definition of Health.

### The Commission on Health

The BYI Community Commission on Health is composed of 2-3 members of all of the CHAT’s as well as staff from Allina Health and the Cultural Wellness Center. Representatives from 2 organizational partners, Hope

Community and Portico as well as the Commissioner of Health from Minneapolis also have seats on the Commission. It meets monthly and has the following purpose:

1. To protect and build the partnership between the community and Allina Health; to assure the work of community is valued.
2. To monitor the health of the community.
3. To listen to the people in the community about their health concerns; to keep in touch with the pulse of the community.
4. To educate people in the community about issues and available resources.
5. To build community capacity for taking responsibility for its own health.
6. To research, study and produce knowledge about conditions in the community, and to design solutions to change them.

## Two Resource CHATS for other CHATS and the Commission:

### ASSESSMENT CHAT

This team carries out the assessment, evaluation, and research needs of the Commission. The team has two primary roles:

To ensure that the CHAT projects and other activities of the BYI are consistent with the vision and mission of the BYI, and,

To oversee the research process of the Backyard Initiative. This process includes assessment, evaluation and any work to create new knowledge

### COMMUNICATIONS CHAT

The BYI Communications CHAT works to assist with internal communications between the Backyard Initiative CHAT teams. We also help the CHAT teams

communicate in their own words and ways with the 45,000 residents and 15,000 households in the Backyard area. Examples include:

also represented the BYI at couple of neighborhood events: Midtown Phillips Festival, Midtown Global Market Music Festival and Allina Volunteer

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

Beginning in April 2013, through our partnership with Alley Communications, we featured a specific CHAT team or BYI activities on the back page of The Alley Newspaper.

In July, we helped to coordinate a show featuring 3 BYI CHATs on the Truth To Tell KFAI radio show

The Communications CHAT

Fair. BYI Back Pages and the Definition of Health have been turned into posters so that CHAT teams can communicate about their BYI work.

An inventory of available meeting space in the BYI area is being compiled for publication in early 2014.