Florida
Communities Putting Prevention to Work
success stories!

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On behalf of the Florida Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) program, I am pleased to announce the successful completion of grant activities and share examples of best practices from within your community. The goal of CPPW—to encourage healthy habits through policy, systems, and environmental change in schools, worksites, and local parks—was achieved throughout Florida using a variety of innovative and timely strategies. In just over two years, CPPW regional coordinators helped launch Walking School Buses in elementary schools, facilitated and raised awareness of lactation support policy implementation in school districts and state agencies, and encouraged park districts to go tobacco-free using signage and community events.

These success stories show the multitude of ways in which physical activity, improved nutrition, and tobacco prevention can be encouraged and brought to life at the local and state level. I hope you will continue to promote healthier living through prevention and awareness and share these successes with your community partners.

Thank you for your time and commitment to public health promotion.

Sincerely,

Betsy M. Wood, BSN, MPH
Acting Director
Division of Community Health Promotion
Florida Department of Health

For more examples of successful community health initiatives, visit http://www.cdc.gov/healthycommunitiesprogram/
COMMUNITIES PUTTING PREVENTION TO WORK

REGIONAL INDEX The Florida Department of Health Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) program recently compiled a collection of success stories. The two-year program, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, began in 2010 and has worked with schools, worksites and communities to create relevant and sustainable initiatives for preventing chronic diseases and address chronic disease risk factors, such as obesity and smoking. Visit floridacppw.org for information and resources related to these initiatives. For more information on any of the success stories, please contact Lauren Berlow at the Florida Department of Health Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at (850) 245-4444 x3856 or lauren_berlow@doh.state.fl.us

West Florida
West Florida Counties Embrace Breastfeeding Support Policies

HOLMES, WASHINGTON, LIBERTY, FRANKLIN, JACKSON & CALHOUN Citing the health benefits of breastfeeding and the “Nursing Mothers Provision” of the Fair Labor Standards Act, CPPW worked with these counties to create or expand policies supporting breastfeeding women in the workforce.

BAY County uses signage to stamp out tobacco. Using signage provided by CPPW, Frank Brown Park, the largest recreational facility in Panama City Beach, now provides tobacco free zones for its patrons.

ESCAMBIA & SANTA ROSA Students walk and bike to school. In an effort to increase physical activity and promote safety for students before and after school, CPPW partnered with community and school organizations to launch Walking School Bus (WSB) and bike to school programs and events.

South Florida
PALM BEACH County fights childhood obesity in Latino populations. CPPW partnered with school and community organizations to film a 30-minute TV feature called “Fit Kids,” which aired on Azteca America and LATV. The program encouraged choosing healthy foods and engaging in opportunities for physical activity, such as walking to school.

LEE, MANATEE, MIAMI-DADE South Florida parks use signs to stamp out tobacco. Using more than 400 signs provided by CPPW, South Florida parks, fields and play areas discourage smoking around youth.
Public Health Issue

- Chronic conditions such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and arthritis and their related complications account for at least 75% of deaths and tens of millions of disabilities in Florida.
- Lifestyle changes such as increasing physical activity, improving nutrition, and abstaining from tobacco use can prevent or delay the onset of chronic disease. Thus, interventions targeting at risk populations are necessary to reduce this public health burden.

The State CPPW team wasted no time building the program from the ground up—setting objectives and milestones, compiling resources, and preparing materials for each initiative. Tallahassee’s “home base” would give the technical support and training to representatives in several regions of the state. By July 2010, thirteen regional coordinators were working throughout the state with local health departments, health advocacy groups, civic organizations, school districts, and city and county officials to implement policy, environmental, and systems changes in accordance with the three chosen health interventions. These dedicated individuals served as CPPW’s “boots on the ground,” attending countless meetings with stakeholders, assisting in school and community events, performing audits and surveys, and providing materials to worksites.

Perhaps the greatest success of CPPW lies in the steadfast partnerships that were formed among the program’s key stakeholders. Regional coordinators selected committed champions to continue the activities they had begun, ensuring the sustainability of their diligent efforts.

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Florida's Steadfast Partnerships Yield Sustainable Programs

“The mere existence of a policy does not guarantee that there is awareness of it among employers and employees. We wanted mothers to receive the full benefit of the breastfeeding policy.” —Emily Clark, Region 4 CPPW Coordinator

Public Health Issue

The Centers for Disease Control reported on their Breastfeeding Report Card for 2011 that almost 80% of mothers initiated breastfeeding, but less than half of those were exclusively breastfeeding at 3 months. Florida mothers are also below the national average in non-exclusive breastfeeding at 6 months.1

About 14% of high school students in Suwannee County are at or above the 95th weight percentile.2

The majority of Branford High students live outside of the 2-mile radius which warrants walkability. An after-school walking program provides a way for students to log physical activity time and learn other aspects of healthy living.

Program Action

Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) has been instrumental in efforts to create policy change and establish healthier activities in schools and worksites. By the same token, it was also the harmonious partnerships with local organizations that helped to produce high-quality and long-lasting programs. These counties are progressive in their efforts to make their communities healthier places to work and go to school.

The adoption of a district-wide school employee breastfeeding support policy in 2011 led CPPW regional coordinator Emily Clark to team up with the Alachua County Health Department and school district in generating an incentive of which employees would likely take advantage. The result? “Goodie bags” for teachers and staff that apply for maternity leave, complete with breastfeeding materials and informative packets of community resources, a description of the policy, and a Business Case for Breastfeeding booklet. A data collection tool was developed by CPPW to track the use of these materials, and to identify participating mothers’ knowledge of and attitudes toward the new breastfeeding policy.

Employees applying for maternity leave in Alachua County are now eligible to collect the following materials:
- double electric breast pump
- nursing pads
- milk storage bags
- cooler with ice packs for milk

As a result of the school district’s Nursing Mothers’ policy, the Alachua County Health Department implemented their own, reaching 200 employees.

Between 25 to 35 students and numerous parents and teachers participate in the BHS walking program daily.

Alachua’s neighboring Suwannee County took on an obesity prevention initiative at Branford High School, in the form of an after school grant project run through the Department of Education. Three components—health, personal enrichment, and parental involvement—were combined and developed into a daily walking program that invites parents to join, allowing them the opportunity to spend quality time with their children and talk informally with teachers and administrators. Other, related lessons on healthy lifestyle were also implemented into program curriculum, adding to the multifaceted nature of the program’s goals.

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1 http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/reportcard2.htm
2 Florida CHARTS. 2010 BRFSS report
New Signs Help Stamp Out Tobacco from Florida’s Parks

“Parks are for enjoying clean air, natural beauty, and healthy activities. Cigarette butts are unsightly and toxic. People are using good, healthy sense by making parks and recreation facilities tobacco free.” —Peggy Caldwell, Tobacco Prevention Specialist, Bay County Health Department

Public Health Issue
- Tobacco litter poses serious health risks to children and wildlife, and has the potential to contaminate water bodies. A single cigarette butt may take up to 10 years to biodegrade.¹
- A 2006 report on secondhand smoke released by the Office of the Surgeon General reports that children are more heavily exposed to secondhand smoke than adults, and are more adversely affected by it; experiencing asthmatic episodes, ear infections, and other health problems.²
- According to Florida’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS) data from 2010, Lee County’s adult smoking rate, at 25.5%, is considerably higher than the state average, at 17.1%.³

Program Action
- State, county, and municipal parks are ideal settings for a wide range of health, recreation, and environmental youth activities and educational opportunities. Tobacco in parks seems out of place—and its negative influence on youth, as well as the weighty health burden it imposes on a significant number of Americans, was the driving force behind one of Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW)’s preventive health initiatives—Tobacco Free Parks.
- The benefits, including (but not limited to) cleaner air and environment, reduction of fire hazards, and more positive influence on youth, show the multidimensional nature of this initiative—the outcomes, while varied, are equally important. In these three counties, CPPW’s chosen method of signage on park grounds was instrumental in the movement to make Florida’s parks healthier and more positive places for kids and their families to enjoy.

Frank Brown Park, located in the popular tourist area of Bay County’s Panama City Beach, sits on a 200-acre area of outdoor recreation facilities surrounding beaches. Baseball, soccer, and other recreational fields and walking trails are all open to the public year-round, and its tournaments draw both local and

IMPACT
- In conjunction with signage posting at Frank Brown Park, Panama City Beach mayor Gayle Oberst and the City Council adopted a resolution promoting the health benefits of tobacco free facilities.
- The 148 signs posted throughout 20 Lee County parks’ baseball fields and play areas discourage smoking around youth.
- Nearly 10,000 cigarette butts and other tobacco products tossed as litter in children’s play areas were collected by 18 volunteers from SWAT, Tobacco Free Clay, and UNF during the Clay County Billions of Butts Cleanup.
- 350 tobacco free signs placed throughout Jacksonville’s park system will be seen by its millions of annual park goers.

“The signs are great—not only do they look good; they also help the Sheriff and our Rangers to enforce the rules.” —Barbara Manzo, Lee County Parks and Recreation
Communities Putting Prevention to Work

The signs are great—not only do they look good; they also help the Sheriff and our Rangers to enforce the rules.” —Barbara Manzo, Lee County Parks and Recreation

traveling sports teams and spectators. However, tobacco litter was a consistent problem and there were legitimate concerns about the health and enjoyment of park-goers among both staff and members of the community.

Three unique sign designs, including the baseball-themed “Breathe Easy” example featured at right, were presented to the park director by CPPW regional coordinator Bryan Russell. They were posted in several park zones by fall of 2011. The goal of discouraging tobacco use around the playgrounds and Little League fields in Lee County parks gave rise to their interest in obtaining signage from CPPW, after coordinator Kim Cabral approached them in 2011. Graphics of children and slogans like “Healthy Lungs at Play” on these signs now remind others of their responsibility to honor the welfare of young people around them.

In Northeast Florida, including Jacksonville and its neighboring counties, CPPW’s tobacco free activities emphasized marketing, education, and community action. Education related to the health and environmental implications of tobacco free parks was dispersed throughout the region. Media attention in the form of radio PSAs, social networking updates, and newsletter announcements heightened community awareness of the initiative. Partnering with the Clay County Tobacco Prevention Program and Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT), Northeast Florida Regional Coordinator April Seliga organized a park cleanup event with HelloChange.org, a contributor to the “Billions of Butts” campaign. Through these efforts, CPPW has made an undeniable impact on community parks.

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“Parents want their kids to have a safe, clean environment for playing. This initiative creates that in a community setting.” —Kasey Stevens, Chair of Tobacco-Free Jacksonville Coalition, Northeast FL AHEC

3 Florida CHARTS. http://www.floridacharts.com/maps/CHARTS_COUNTY_MAP/charts2.html?Sid=cqkcbbzdycrksq45dh1f15fzt1
Florida Panhandle Makes the Grade in Bike & Pedestrian Safety

“Safety is no accident. It requires a team of partners working together to prevent devastating loss from the leading cause of death to our nation’s youth.” — Sandra DiNatale, Region 1 CPPW Coordinator

Public Health Issue

- In 2007, Florida’s age-adjusted injury death rates were higher than the national average by 28% for unintentional motor vehicle injuries, many of them involving pedestrians and bicyclists.1
- Of the 13,847 students transported in Santa Rosa County, just 637 (4.6%) were granted hazardous walking ridership in 2008.2 Without available bus transport, students and parents require an alternative. The Walking School Bus (WSB) not only addresses the most basic need for transport, it also provides exercise, reduces fuel emissions, and teaches safe walking skills.

Program Action

Throughout the duration of its two-year existence, Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) focused its physical activity goals for children on the Safe Routes to School, Walking School Bus (WSB) initiative. Region One CPPW Coordinator, Dr. Sandra DiNatale, took this issue a step further by addressing pedestrian welfare concerns relevant to the area and the need for a regional research-based center for traffic safety. The Northwest Florida Alliance for Safety Education and Research was formed in response to this need.

A Master Agreement between the University of West Florida (UWF) Health, Leisure, and Exercise Science Department and the Department of Transportation would allow for funded opportunities to enhance the safety of residents, utilizing innovative and evidence based practices. Numerous partners collaborated with CPPW to ensure a high quality program, including Unite Escambia Health Solutions Team, the Early Learning Coalition, Escambia Safer Routes Coordination Team, the Regional Community Traffic Safety Teams, public school districts and county health departments, the Florida Traffic and Bicycle Safety Education Program at the University of Florida, and the Region Three DOT Safe Routes to School staff.

Following a November workshop, local neighborhood associations also jumped onboard in an effort to promote “occupied” neighborhoods and their ability to

IMPACT

- The Alliance’s “Making it Safe” workshop in November 2011 drew about 20 guests and informed stakeholders of plans currently underway to improve infrastructure and education for protecting walkers and bicyclists.
- Following this workshop, an op-ed written by the president of the local Neighborhood Associations appeared in the Pensacola News Journal.
- Pensacola’s We Believe in Children 5k in January 2012 also included a kids’ “Fun Run” and brought partners together to raise awareness. Helmets, reflectors, and educational materials were distributed.

1 http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/reportcard2.htm
2 Florida CHARTS. 2010 BRFSS report
facilitate safer outdoor activities, i.e. walking and bicycling. One county east of Escambia, in Santa Rosa, a pilot WSB program was established at Holley-Navarre Intermediate. This school had been identified by the District Superintendent as one which met the objectives of the WSB initiative. A kickoff event on International Walk to School Day in October of 2010 began a series of weekly walks, co-lead by CPPW’s Dr. DiNatale and Leah Roberts, from the Santa Rosa County Health Department. This continued through the duration of the 2010–2011 school year. Plans to create and sustain additional programs at elementary schools ensued. One particular method was chosen by CPPW to attain this goal and further it by cultivating an environment more conducive to walking and bicycling to school. This goal—policy implementation at the district level—was no small task. A formal presentation to the school board was very well received, due in part to their involvement since the project’s humble beginnings. One school board member who had taken part in International Walk to School Day even went so far as to say “I love the Walking School Bus program.” It is CPPW’s hope that resources will continue to be identified and funds allocated for pedestrian safety programs through the efforts of an institution such as UWF’s Northwest Florida Alliance for Safety Education and Research. Programs and safety education are only half the battle; the other half requires the infrastructure to support them. The strong ties among individuals, their communities, local advocacy groups, schools, and public works are the driving force behind these improvements.

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**IMPACT**

- The eighteen elementary schools with 13,020 students in Santa Rosa County are encouraged to implement the Walking School Bus program under safe conditions.
- A free-standing, district-wide WSB policy was passed in November of 2011. Its impact will extend not only to the tens of thousands of elementary school students in Santa Rosa County, but also their teachers, parents, and potentially their older and younger siblings.

“"The key to getting the district Walking School Bus policy was collaborating with our community partners. After attending the 2010 WSB kickoff at Holley-Navarre, one school board member urged others to vote ‘yes’. The vote passed unanimously.” —Leah Roberts, Santa Rosa County Health Department

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1 CDC WISQARS: Age-Adjusted Rates per 100,000 population
2 Florida Transportation Surveys
Florida Schools Adopt the Retain, Don’t Retrain Philosophy

“This has been a really nice accommodation for our staff. They feel at ease knowing they have a comfortable place to go.” —Fred Terry, Assistant Principal, Wadsworth Elementary

Public Health Issue

One of the most effective and economical preventive health measures a mother can take for herself and her infant is to breastfeed. However, although 75% of mothers in the United States initiate breastfeeding, only 43% of babies are exclusively breastfed at 6 months of age.1

The 2011 US Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding identified lack of accommodation to breastfeed or express milk in the workplace as an obstacle.

Schools employ a large percentage of women of childbearing age, making them a prime setting for implementing policies and practices that are “family friendly”.

Program Action

In the summer of 2011, Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) met with school district personnel to educate administrators and Human Resource officers about the recently amended Fair Labor Standards Act. This “Nursing Mothers’ Provision” mandated that employees be given reasonable break time and a private place to express milk for up to one year after they give birth. Advocating for preventive health measures as well as strong business ethics, CPPW also advised school districts as to how they may broaden their interpretation and extend beyond basic compliance with this law. Partnering with champions such as the Florida Breastfeeding Coalition (FBC) and Flagler County Health Department, Regional coordinators Deborah Saulsbury and Cathy Klein surveyed schools on their current practices and introduced avenues that schools may take to become bronze, silver, or gold-level Breastfeeding Friendly worksites. Materials provided for the initiative included posters for reminding employers and raising staff awareness of the law, suggestions for developing furnished lactation rooms, and model wellness policy language addressing lactating employees. Flagler’s example demonstrates great respect for employee morale, and as more school districts implement policy, it will undoubtedly serve as a strong business model.

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1 http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/reportcard2.htm
2 Florida CHARTS. 2010 BRFSS report
Florida Community’s Challenge Presents Opportunity for Change

“Program Action

Indian River County Schools had a problem. Recent cutbacks and the subsequent elimination of courtesy busing for students attending their area’s Boys and Girls Club after school necessitated an alternative mode of transportation—preferably one that was economical, safe, and healthy. Enter Florida Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW), whose objective to promote walking programs at elementary schools fit perfectly with the situation at hand. The Clubs’ close proximity to several elementary schools in the area made the Walking School Bus (WSB) model a viable transportation option, and one that addressed the positive lifestyle objectives of the Boys and Girls Club. The Indian River County Health Department received a $3,500 minigrant to implement a pilot WSB Program for two elementary schools with high percentages of Hispanic students in low-income areas. The availability of Spanish-speaking volunteers and Spanish-language versions of CPPW materials helped overcome what would otherwise have been a difficult language barrier. In October, 2010, a kickoff event took place at Fellsmere Elementary

School in honor of International Walk to School Day and has maintained daily and monthly after-school walks ever since. Boys and Girls Club staff have WSB duties and are trained in pedestrian safety. To continue these efforts, Indian River Schools hired a Walking Coordinator who will oversee all WSB activities in participating schools.

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Public Health Issue

• 2009 Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System (PedNSS) data reported that nearly one in three low income children is overweight or obese by their fifth birthday.1
• Individuals from low income households may have less access to physical activity and healthy foods, making them more susceptible to obesity and its associated complications.
• Children ages 5 to 9 often lack the skills necessary to safely walk to school. In especially traffic-dense or otherwise unsafe areas, children are even more vulnerable.

Impact

• One school eliminated the need for a bus to transport students to their Boys and Girls Club, saving over $4,500 per year.
• Students participating in Fellsmere’s WSB march a combined total of 46,875 steps, one way. In one school week, this translates to almost a quarter of a million steps!
• The number of children who walk from school doubled after Fellsmere’s WSB launch.
• The walks are true community affairs, attracting commissioners, the superintendent, and local law enforcement officers.
• The timing of a crosswalk light on the route from Vero Beach Elementary to its respective Boys and Girls Club location was extended to allow all walkers across the street together.

“Program Action

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Enthusiasm for Walking School Buses Expands to Communities

“The community has embraced this program because safety is a priority here in Volusia County. When we walk in the mornings, people who drive by us look and smile. I think that says a lot.” —Amy Bauchle, Spirit Elementary WSB Lead Volunteer

Public Health Issue

- An average of 15% of children living within two miles from school arrive by walking or bicycling today. Forty years ago, 48% walked or biked.¹
- Obesity prevalence among children and adolescents is almost three times as high as it was in 1980.²
- Nationwide, health and safety advocacy groups promote active commuting as a means of increasing physical activity among children and adults, teaching practical skills, and providing social interaction and overall enjoyment.

Program Action

Two central Florida schools, Spirit Elementary in Volusia County and Lake Sybelia Elementary in Orange County, created remarkably successful Walking School Bus (WSB) programs as a result of the Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) physical activity initiative. The similarities between the two are striking, although not by coincidence—Spirit’s program design inspired Lake Sybelia’s. Nonetheless, both have successfully built dedicated volunteer bases, mapped precise routes that serve several neighborhoods, and advertised in various types of media. Their organized systems have generated consistent participants, passionate teacher and administrator advocates, and supportive parents and neighbors. It is no exaggeration to say that these WSBs have become sources of community pride.

Spirit Elementary School’s WSB, as Regional Coordinator Cathy Klein described, developed “organically, by the school’s nourishment and support of its volunteers.” CPPW, in collaboration with local partners such as the school district and transportation department, helped Spirit launch their WSB in the fall of 2010, and from there it blossomed. The WSB is run almost entirely by parents, many of whom have volunteered for two consecutive years and plan to sustain the program in subsequent years.

Spirit’s route includes three “bus stops” where children are picked up along the way. It passes through a stretch of busy road...

¹ http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/reportcard2.htm
² Florida CHARTS. 2010 BRFSS report
Lake Sybelia Elementary was awarded a minigrant of $1,000 to jump start their WSB program in fall, 2011. The extremely long car drop-off line was Regional Coordinator Joy Goff-Marcil’s main selling point when she applied for non-infrastructure funds through Safe Routes to School. Operational, educational, and marketing materials were provided by CPPW, and thanks to additional funds from the Department of Transportation, a large wagon to tote backpacks and other heavy items was also purchased. Parents were made aware their option to walk with the group by an automated telephone recording of the principal, encouraging them to “Hop on the Walking School Bus and start your day the healthy way!” Her excitement for the program caught on quickly, and before long students and parents alike were joining the weekly walks. One impressive detail to highlight is that the program began without any promise of material incentives for participating; just the benefits of exercise and socializing. And it’s catching on. Lake Sybelia’s program was cited by a local legislator and child advocate as his inspiration for asking for CPPW’s help in beginning another WSB at an inner-city school. This cascade of events is a true testament to the ways in which the sharing of best practices and leading by example can bring about positive change.

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IMPACT

● According to the Pedestrian Savings Calculator, developed by the Missouri Bicycle and Pedestrian Federation and Safe Routes to School, a group of 20 students walking just once per week, 1 mile to and from school, saves the following:
  — 69 gallons of fuel
  — 1354.7 lbs carbon emissions
  — 89.7 lbs other pollutants
  — Altogether almost $7,000

● The Lake Sybelia Elementary School WSB was invited to participate in the annual City of Winter Park Holiday Parade down historic Park Avenue in Winter Park.

“After walking with the Walking School Bus, my kids begged me to walk again the next day. We now walk three to four times a week. We get fresh air, burn off excess energy, and talk along the way.” — Cynthia Forness, Lake Sybelia mom
**Public Health Issue**

- Palm Beach is the largest geographic county in Florida, with a fast-growing Latino population that currently accounts for 12% of residents.1
- Although childhood obesity is a problem in the United States across the general population, children of Latino background may be at greater risk,2 making them more vulnerable to chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease later in life.

**Program Action**

The Florida Department of Health’s Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) program, whose promotion of activities that reduce the chronic disease burden caused by inadequate nutrition, lack of physical activity, and tobacco use, focused its initiatives primarily on policy implementation and the creation of sustainable projects in schools and school districts. The activities in Palm Beach County owe much of their success to the collaborative efforts between CPPW coordinator Pamela Santucci and representatives from community organizations such as the school district’s Wellness Committee; the Robert Wood Johnson Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities Project; and the Safe Routes to School Coalition. One project spearheaded by these individuals took a direct approach to the childhood obesity epidemic among Latino populations. In February of 2011, the group’s plans to venture into the media realm came to fruition when they discussed a childhood obesity-related informational program with the director of Azteca America Channel 48, part of the Four Points Media Group of West Palm Beach. A 30-minute piece was produced for the Spanish news-magazine television show Enfoque Comunitario. “Fit Kids” emphasized the importance of physical activity and the benefits of walking to school, featuring a Walking School Bus demonstration at Highland Elementary School. It provided tips on preparing simple yet nutritious snacks and meals, understanding food labels, and shopping on a budget. Another segment discussed breastfeeding and its many benefits to both mother and child. This array of topics, presented with cultural sensitivity and relevance, made for a lasting impression on Latino families.

**IMPACT**

- “Fit Kids” was featured on two popular Latin TV networks—Azteca America and LATV—and aired throughout the month of July 2011.
- LATV’s partnership with Four Points Media makes it available to more than 75% of the Hispanic households possessing televisions.
- CPPW’s partnerships in Palm Beach have produced:
  - an official district “Bulletin” related to lactation support for employees
  - District-wide Safe Routes to School program mobilization and wellness policy language
  - local exposure of initiatives through print and broadcast media

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Florida School Districts Pump Up Employee Lactation Support

"My administration and others at my school have been very supportive of my requests to pump twice each day while at school. They have truly made every possible accommodation for me." —Kristen Chaves, Union Academy, Polk County

Public Health Issue

Breastfed babies generally experience fewer ear infections and stomach viruses, and are less likely to develop asthma, type 2 diabetes, and obesity.1 Therefore, moms who breastfeed may miss fewer work days to care for their sick children.

Women now make up the slight majority of the U.S. workforce, and about 72% of those women with children under 18 are employed.2

Program Action

In spring of 2010, a Nursing Mothers’ Provision was added to the Fair Labor Standards Act, requiring that lactating employees be given reasonable break time and a private place to express milk for up to one year after they give birth. Collaborative efforts among the Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) program, local health departments’ WIC services, and school districts helped incorporate this law into workplace policy handbooks and make room for additional accommodations for nursing moms at work.

A campaign was launched in multiple counties, including Nassau, to raise awareness of CPPW’s initiative. Radio, email, and CPPW marketing materials such as a map of existing policies in other counties helped to spread the word and garner support. Regional Coordinator April Seliga wrote a minigrant requesting funds for breast pumps and other supplies to be used in a Nassau County school. The grant was submitted by the health department’s WIC liaison, Heather Huffman, and awarded soon after. Seliga also assisted in developing a district level policy to address teachers and use of their break time to express milk.

CPPW coordinator Kristi Joyner partnered with the Polk County Wellness department and provided education and resources to convey the benefits of implementing policy. The wellness committee surveyed the current school staff who were pregnant and preparing for child care after maternity leave. The information gathered was used to draft a comprehensive policy. Now, in coordination with the Babies and You and Babies 1st programs currently utilized by the wellness department, expectant mothers are provided the assistance, information, and support they seek, from prenatal to postnatal care.

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1 “The Risk of Bottle Feeding for Developing Childhood Obesity” (2009) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Public Health Issue

- Children who are physically active and of healthy weight are better able to focus in school and possess higher self-esteem than those who are sedentary and likely to struggle with weight problems.1

- Almost 70% of Pride Elementary’s students are eligible for free or reduced lunch; this may indicate relatively few opportunities for activities that promote good health—like sports, bicycle riding, and eating nutritious foods.2

Program Action

At Pride Elementary in Deltona, FL, students’ unsafe behaviors and several firsthand experiences with bicycle theft set the stage for extending the school’s existing Walking School Bus (WSB) program to include a Bicycle Train. In fact, the remarkable turnaround of one student is what initially sparked the idea. This young lady was known for quarrelling, playing “chicken” games, and showing little regard for traffic after school, so she was given a bicycle to encourage a faster, no-nonsense trip home. What occurred as a result reached a level of success above and beyond what was originally anticipated.

The Florida Department of Health awarded grant money to Pride in 2010 to kick off the WSB and Bike Train. Assistant Principal Kevin Flassig requested that unclaimed bicycles collected by the Sheriff’s Department be donated to the Bike Train program. They obliged, and a local bicycle shop fixed them up at a significantly reduced rate. Program leaders established an incentive system in which students exercising caution and obeying crossing guards receive “punches” on WSB cards. These punches earn them tokens toward prizes, as well as entrance into a monthly drawing for a bicycle. Educational safety literature, helmets, reflectors, bike locks, and more materials were provided by CPPW and the Volusia County Department of Transportation’s Safe Routes to School program. The relationships that were cultivated among CPPW coordinators Deborah Saulsbury and Cathy Klein and Mr. Flassig, the County Crossing Guard Supervisor, and school crossing guards truly enhanced program outcomes. These individuals established a continuous feedback loop that keeps each of them informed of students’ behavior and safety. Their commitment to this program ensures that future generations of students at Pride Elementary will continue to learn pedestrian and bicycle skills, responsibility for the welfare of themselves and others, and the importance of physical activity (and fun!) for years to come.

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2 FL Dept of Education
Public Health Issue

- Florida has the highest Pedestrian Danger Index in the country¹, according to transportation surveys and census data compiled by Transportation for America, a nonprofit advocacy group.
- Due to economic circumstances, inner-city kids may be at greater risk for developing obesity. Healthy food costs more, making healthy meals take time and effort, and safe places for physical activity and recreation are often inaccessible.
- Walking in a “Walking School Bus” requires no cost and it provides a healthy and safe means of transport to school.

Veterans Pursuing Degrees Pound the Pavement with Local Kids

“We should contribute maximum energy to direct children away from the penitentiary and toward the universities. The Walking School Bus project provides guidance from a young generation of veterans to children who may otherwise be led into a darker life of crime.” —Dr. Alzo Reddick, Soldiers to Scholars founder

Program Action

Helping children safely travel to and from school on foot or bicycle was a core focus of the two-year Florida Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) project, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. One partnership to emerge from this involved CPPW, the Orange County Health Department, and the University of Central Florida’s Soldiers to Scholars program. Soldiers to Scholars is comprised of former military men and women who are receiving financial aid toward higher education courses in recognition of community service; namely, in mentoring young people. The program founder and director, Dr. Alzo Reddick, decided to adopt CPPW’s Walking School Bus (WSB) model to provide a volunteer opportunity and to assist the children of an inner-city apartment complex with a challenging situation—no school bus to transport them to and from Eagle’s Nest Elementary.

On International Walk to School Day in October 2011, an Orlando Police Safety Officer gave volunteers and parents a basic pedestrian safety training. CPPW provided safety vests, signs and other educational materials. Before long the WSB was a self-sufficient program. The kids are given a wholesome breakfast each Wednesday morning before heading to school, and they receive incentive items for every five walks taken. A coordinator delegates responsibilities, logs participation and keeps track of materials. Standard Operating Procedures were written for others to follow in the event that usual volunteers are absent. Dr. Reddick views this project as an opportunity to reach a vulnerable population of children and encourage them to be safe, smart, upstanding citizens. He refers to the men and women who volunteer every week as “mentors” in the journey to reach this goal.

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Florida Youth Can Breathe Easy, Thanks to Tobacco-Free Parks

“Providing the education and allowing the leaders of the youth athletic associations to plan and advocate to the County Commissioners created a more relevant, sustainable change.” —Kristi Joyner, Region 9 CPPW Coordinator

Program Action
The Florida Department of Health’s Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) program chose to address tobacco prevention by providing technical assistance, community education, and materials to Parks Departments in 49 cities and counties statewide. Their common goal of promoting clean and positive atmospheres for youth recreation made for a mutually beneficial partnership.

CPPW Regional Coordinator Kristi Joyner established relationships with the Manatee County Parks and Recreation Department and Youth Athletic Leagues to present the idea of discouraging tobacco use in parks to the county commission in June 2011. Commissioners approved posting signs like the one pictured above in areas designated for youth. Another example of the youth-centered tobacco prevention activities supported by CPPW occurred in the city of Hialeah, in Miami-Dade County. Its 14 public parks and five public swimming pools encompass more than 100 acres and attract hundreds of thousands of annual visitors, many of whom are children. In November 2011, the Miami-Dade Parks and Recreation Department hosted their annual Youth Tobacco Summit, advertised through Hialeah’s Early Prevention and Intervention Program, school announcements, and local news sources. Key note speaker and VH1’s 2008 “Do Something” award winner Chad Bullock encouraged youth not to be fooled by tobacco marketing tactics and informed them of the health consequences of tobacco use. Regional Coordinator Sybil Cherian spoke onstage regarding the recently installed “Healthy Lungs at Play” signs and Tobacco-Free” banners, provided by CPPW.

IMPACT
● 200 tobacco-free signs were posted in 79 parks throughout Manatee County.
● Almost 7,000 youth participate in Manatee County seasonal athletics.
● The Hialeah Youth Tobacco Summit featured 20 sponsors including the Miami-Dade County Health Department, Miami Heat and Miami Dolphins sports teams, Florida Coca-Cola, Whole Foods, and more.
● CPPW donated 250 tobacco-free signs for posting throughout 17 Hialeah parks.

Public Health Issue
● Tobacco use is not uncommon among spectators at athletic events, which makes youth athletic associations and facilities prime settings for tobacco-free interventions.
● Research has shown that tobacco-free signage plays an important role in public awareness and compliance, and often reduces the need for additional enforcement.1
● Tobacco companies heavily target youth in their marketing strategies; thus, anti-tobacco interventions are most effective when they appeal to the preferences, hopes, and fears of youth.

School Safety Events Across Florida Produce Savvier Students

“Encouraging activities such as Regional Walk and Bike to School will instill lifelong healthy attitudes while raising community awareness about healthy lifestyles.”
—Valerie Feinberg, Director of Urban Planning, HPCNEF

Public Health Issue

- Funding for many non-academic programs in schools, including traffic safety education, may suffer at the hands of state and district-wide budget cuts. As a result, many students do not learn how to properly heed traffic rules.
- In Volusia County, 22 accidents involving students traveling to and from school took place between August of 2011 and April of 2012.1 Tragically, two of these incidents resulted in student fatalities.2

Program Action

Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) worked with schools and local civic organizations to launch numerous walking and bicycling to school events. Those events emphasizing safety sparked a unique kind of attention, particularly in the wake of recent incidents. At Norwood Elementary School's event in 2010, crossing guards directed students, parents and teachers in traffic simulations with cardboard cutout vehicles and chalk drawn intersections. School board member Wilbert “Tee” Holloway and CPPW coordinator Sybil Cherian spoke about the importance of safe walking behavior, basic rules of the road, and obeying crossing guards’ directions. Miami-Dade County Public School Board Chair Perla Tabares Hantman, Superintendent Alberto Carvalho, and members of local police and fire departments, celebrated “Walk to School Month” in October 2011 at Flamingo Elementary. A parade, with cheerleaders and band members from the local high school, started the day off. Students created a “Safety Dance” and performed other safety-oriented skits and songs at their assembly. CPPW provided promotional items with safety-related tips for the students. Following a series of vehicle crashes involving students in Volusia County, CPPW regional coordinators April Seliga and Cathy Klein, in collaboration with the

IMPACT

- Almost 1,300 Norwood and Flamingo students, in addition to staff, parents, and local officials participated in Miami-Dade Walk to School events.

Health Planning Council of Northeast Florida (HPCNEF), organized and promoted a Regional “Walk and Bike to School Day” in February 2012. This event was planned in conjunction with the coinciding “Ride America for Safe Routes” campaign, which originated when two avid cyclists pedaled across the country to raise awareness and support for more bike-friendly neighborhoods and roadways. On a brisk February morning, while passing through San Marco, the cyclists rode to Landon Preparatory with dozens of middle school students. Other Walk/Bike to School activities included a poster contest and school walks to Spirit Elementary in Volusia County and Bunnell Elementary in Flagler. County Commissioners endorsed proclamations for walking and bicycling in these counties. Soon after, Volusia County launched a campaign to address bike and pedestrian safety, and garner support for improvements that will help the community avert future tragedies.

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West Florida Counties Embrace Breastfeeding Support Policies

“This project has taught me to expect the unexpected—in a good way. These counties were ready for change and just needed the guidance to push forward policy.” —Bryan Russell, Region 2 CPPW Coordinator

Public Health Issue

- A significant portion of the Florida Panhandle is rural, with education and health services comprising the top industries providing employment to locals, according to city data.
- Several area-specific issues, including limited accessibility to grocery stores, low average income, and an obesity rate approaching 20% among women of childbearing age, make breastfeeding the practical and healthy option for both mother and infant.
- However, mothers who initiate breastfeeding still face obstacles upon their return to work, such as lack of communication with and support from employers regarding their need for special accommodations.

Program Action

In light of the numerous health benefits of breastfeeding, lactation support in worksites employing a significant number of women—notably schools and state agencies—was one of three priorities for the Florida Department of Health’s Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) program. This federal stimulus grant allotted $2.1 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds for Florida to develop initiatives focused on chronic disease risk reduction in three areas of prevention: increased physical activity through Walking School Bus programs in schools, improved child nutrition through lactation support for mothers at work, and cleaner air at tobacco free parks. In March 2010, Congress amended the Fair Labor Standards Act to address the needs of lactating employees. The new directive, called the Nursing Mother’s Provision, laid the groundwork for the CPPW nutrition component—a breastfeeding policy initiative.

In the rural and coastal region of West Florida, CPPW Regional Coordinator Bryan Russell facilitated joint efforts among himself and several individuals from the county health and school district Human Resources departments. During meetings with key decision makers, policy implementation was discussed as a means of protecting employee rights, reducing attrition and absenteeism, and ultimately promoting an economically and nutritionally sound preventive health measure. The response was overwhelmingly positive. Up until the end of the project, CPPW made strides in employee lactation support, appealing to both public and private sector employers.

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FloridaCHARTS. 2010 BRFSS county data.
Public Health Issue

- Tampa’s roadways are among the most dangerous in the country, and pedestrian and bicyclist-related accidents are an all-too-common occurrence. Safety education and adult supervision are imperative for elementary-age children in this region.
- Students who engage in physical activity show better cognitive abilities and alertness, leading to increased academic performance.

Program Action

Walking and bicycling to school are two simple activities that allow school children to exercise both their bodies and their senses of independence. Unfortunately, these are not viable options for many kids traveling unaccompanied in high-traffic or hazardous areas. Even in safe neighborhoods, parents and school leaders are often hesitant to promote active commuting. The Florida Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) program chose this issue as one of its focus areas, launching Walking School Buses (WSBs) in elementary schools across the state. In collaboration with partners such as the Florida Department of Transportation’s Safe Routes to School program, All Children’s Hospital, Hernando County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and the local health departments, CPPW performed walkability audits in schools and collected data on the number of current walkers and bikers. Regional coordinator Lucy Gonzalez-Barr met with members of the School Health Advisory Councils and Community Traffic Safety Teams, providing education and advocating for policy implementation. She also assisted with International Walk to School Day event planning and WSB programs at the school level. CPPW provided participating schools with materials for their walks, such as reflective safety vests, signs, banners, and flyers.

The success of WSBs in Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties during the 2010–2011 school year sparked interest in pilot programs in Hernando and Pasco. In early spring of 2012, Hernando County hosted a training workshop at Brooksville Elementary featuring PedNet, a pedestrian and bicycle safety education consulting company. It provided school officials and parents with fundamentals of WSB development and safety training.

The WSB programs in these four counties may vary among schools, but one common thread runs throughout—a strong commitment to physical activity in a safe, educational format.

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