HEALTH EQUITY ZONE
WOONSOCKET

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY
April 2015 - March 2016
Woonsocket, a city in northern Rhode Island, is home to roughly 41,000 residents. The overall mission of the Woonsocket Health Equity Zone is to utilize collective impact and leverage community resources to address health and wellness disparities in Woonsocket by focusing on the social determinants of health. The Woonsocket Health Equity Zone uses a place-based approach to ensure that the neighborhoods in the community become the kind of places that enable all children and families to succeed and thrive. Woonsocket is disproportionately affected by many health disparities. Disparities are driven by upstream factors including a lack of access to healthy food and recreation, high rates of teen pregnancy, trauma, domestic violence and accidental drug overdoses. The Woonsocket Health Equity Zone decided to focus on these topics after conducting a comprehensive review of available data and talking to community leaders.

The Rhode Island Department of Health states: "Health equity means everyone has an equal opportunity to take advantage of resources that will help them live a long, healthy life. It focuses on differences in population health that are related to unequal economic and social conditions in specific locations. These conditions are both systemic and changeable." The Woonsocket Health Equity Zone aims to improve health equity by addressing upstream factors for particularly vulnerable populations.

Thundermist Health Center is the backbone agency. The action team members are: the Woonsocket Police Department, City of Woonsocket, Grace International Church, Community Care Alliance, Connecting for Children and Families, Farm Fresh Rhode Island, Gateway Healthcare/Lifespan, Landmark Medical Center, RiverzEdge Arts, NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley, Sojourner House, Woonsocket Prevention Coalition, YMCA of Pawtucket, Woonsocket HeadStart Child Development, Rhody Food on the Move, the YWCA Northern Rhode Island, Woonsocket Education Department, and Center for Southeast Asians.
The HEZ will work to build infrastructure for equity.

**Collaboration**
Partnerships and collaboration are highly valued to ensure sustainability

**Equity**
Programs ensure that all people can reach their highest level of health

**Impact**
Organizations work together using collective impact to increase effect

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**Health Equity Zone Response**

- **9** Residents who are Community Ambassadors to guide the Health Equity Zone
- **17** Organizations who are partners of the Health Equity Zone
- **11** Unique Health Equity Zones designed by the Rhode Island Department of Health

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**Community Spotlight**

**Community Ambassadors**
The Woonsocket HEZ has hired 9 Community Ambassadors. The Community Ambassadors will provide invaluable guidance and community input to the HEZ. The Ambassadors will act as community catalysts, using a "bottom-up" approach to raise awareness about health equity and the HEZ. The HEZ will train Community Ambassadors on topics of social justice, health equity, and advocacy. Each Community Ambassador will have one primary work group affiliation; they will work side by side with the chairpeople of their work group to ensure that a community voice is present and steering the work of the group.
Healthy Food Access

Background

Many people in Woonsocket do not have access to healthy, affordable, fresh food.

3 in 10
Eligible people are not enrolled in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program

17%
Woonsocket residents eat recommended servings of fruits and vegetables

Barriers
Many people in Woonsocket face barriers to accessing a grocery store

Health Equity Zone Response

6
Create six new food access points in Woonsocket, including pop-up markets

Assessment
Conduct a needs assessment and plan to improve food systems in Woonsocket

$5 → $7
Implement "bonus bucks" for people using WIC and SNAP at farmers markets

Community Spotlight

Needs Assessment

The Woonsocket Health Equity Zone worked with consultants Karen Karp and Partners to conduct a needs assessment of the food system in Woonsocket. Of the respondents to our food survey (n=352):

* 3 out of 4 respondents stated that someone cooks dinner in their home every day.
* 41% of respondents had run out of food in the past year and did not have money to buy more.
* 75% of respondents use some sort of food assistance program. Many respondents noted the foods they want are not affordable. The Health Equity Zone is working with Karen Karp and Partners to create an actionable work plan based on this needs assessment.
OVERDOSE PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

Background

Woonsocket has high rates of substance misuse and overdose deaths.

- 2nd Highest rate of overdose deaths in Rhode Island from 2010-2012
- 122 Times EMTs used Naloxone, a drug that reverses overdoses in 2014
- 0 Residential substance use treatment centers currently open in Woonsocket

Health Equity Zone Response

- 39 People trained on using Naloxone, a drug that reverses overdoses
- Recovery Create a space open 16 hours a week with peer recovery services
- 38 Unduplicated individuals provided with peer recovery services

Community Spotlight

The Serenity Center

The Serenity Center operates as a free community drop-in center for adults in recovery. Staffed by Certified Peer Recovery Specialists, the Serenity Center offers a rotating schedule of activities and events with space always available for fellowship, fun and support. The Serenity Center hosts weekly drop-in hours on Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. The Serenity Center has organized 9 community events. A peer led advisory council will help grow and develop the Center’s vision and mission. To date more than 38 people have accessed peer services and over 100 people have attended events the Center. Serenity is located at Community Care Alliance, 245 Main Street (2nd Floor).
TEEN HEALTH

Background

Teens in Woonsocket are greatly affected by pregnancy.

- **1 in 9**
  Teens aged 18 and 19 have given birth in Woonsocket

- **6%**
  Teens accessing Title X services use long-acting reversible contraceptives

- **1 in 4**
  Teens drop out from high school in Woonsocket

Health Equity Zone Response

- **12**
  Teens are part of the teen leadership committee (TLC)

- **Survey**
  Teens create and administer a survey about pregnancy and contraception

- **LARC**
  Increase access to long-acting, reversible contraceptives (LARC) for teens

Community Spotlight

Collaborative

The Health Equity Zone will conduct preconception education and coordinate outreach and supports for teens at the school-based health center and with partner organizations that work with youth across the city. We will work to decrease barriers to care—including by developing a comprehensive case finding and coordinated care network to reach teenagers where they are and bring them into the health center receive health care including long-acting reversible contraceptives if indicated.
TRAUMA

Background

Woonsocket is a community deeply affected by trauma.

- **407**
  - Arrests for domestic violence made by police in 2014

- **2 in 5**
  - Arrests for domestic violence in Woonsocket had a child present

- **2.5x**
  - The rate of child abuse in Woonsocket compared to the rest of Rhode Island

Health Equity Zone Response

- **Train**
  - Provide training for organizations to provide trauma-informed care

- **Screen**
  - Implement screening and referrals at agencies for trauma

- **Collaborate**
  - Create a strong network of partnerships to address trauma

Community Spotlight

**Training in Trauma-Informed Practice**

Community Care Alliance is an organization that offers programs and services for people with basic needs, need of employment, with mental health issues, substance use problems. Community Care Alliance notes that the Health Equity Zone gives Woonsocket an opportunity to address trauma awareness on a city-wide scale. To that end, Community Care Alliance offered training to health equity zone partners about various forms of trauma, the principles of a trauma-informed approach, understanding individual and community level trauma, and understanding how to become a trauma-informed organization and community.
HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

Background

The environment of Woonsocket can be enhanced to encourage physical activity.

- 1 in 3 People in Woonsocket feel traffic and safety prevent them from exercising
- 51% Of Woonsocket residents do not get recommended amounts of physical activity
- Prevent Physical activity helps to prevent many chronic diseases, including diabetes

Health Equity Zone Response

- Implement Plans to increase walkability and safety in Woonsocket
- Leverage Utilize community assets that increase physical activity and walkability
- Create Work with the city to improve and create spaces for people to be active

Community Spotlight

Woonsocket Walks

"Woonsocket Walks- A City on The Move" is a pedestrian walking plan created by the YWCA, in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Health and Rhode Island Department of Transportation. The plan highlights ways to improve the walkability of Woonsocket to promote physical activity, improve safety, and build a sense of community. Some of these solutions include: improving pedestrian facilities and site conditions, encouraging historical and cultural preservation, and connecting residents to public transit. The HEZ healthy environments work group will deepen implementation of the Woonsocket Walks plan in Year 2.
Health Equity Zone Participants

Steering Committee
Antonio Rodriguez – NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley
Bridget Bennett – Community Care Alliance
Captain Michael Lemoine – Woonsocket Police Department
Carolyn Kyle – Landmark Medical Center
Charlotte Boudreau – Connecting for Children and Families
David Testoni – Gateway Healthcare
Dee Henry – Woonsocket Head Start
Diane Martin – Woonsocket YMCA
Dr. Patrick McGee – Woonsocket Education Department
Ivy Medeiros – Community Care Alliance
Joe Garlick – NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley
Kelly Henry – Sojourner House
Lisa Carcifero – Woonsocket Head Start
Marcela Betancur – NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley
Mary Dwyer – Community Care Alliance
Meghan Grady – YWCA Rhode Island
Rebekah Greenwald Speck – RiverzEdge Arts
Sheri Griffin – Farm Fresh Rhode Island
Susan Jacobsen – Health Equity Zone Initiatives
Ckara Agudelo – Woonsocket Health Equity Zone, Program Manager
Elaine Trujillo – Health Equity Zone Program Assistant

Teen Health Workgroup
Charlotte Boudreau – Connecting for Children and Families
Deb Smith – YWCA Northern Rhode Island
Dee Henry – Woonsocket Head Start
Dennis Horta – Thundermist Health Center, WIC
Diane Martin – Woonsocket YMCA
Estelle Borucki – Thundermist Health Center
Jody Ragosta – Woonsocket Head Start
Karen Mazzola – Thundermist Health Center
Lisa Carcifero – Woonsocket Prevention Coalition
Liz Holohan – RiverzEdge Arts
Rachel Phillips – Woonsocket Head Start
Renee Belanger – Community Care Alliance
Susan Jacobsen, Workgroup Chair – Health Equity Zone Initiatives
Stump Olsen – Community Care Alliance
Tara McConkey – Community Care Alliance

Overdose Prevention & Recovery Workgroup
Angela Carrier – Andrea’s Hope
Carolyn Kyle – Landmark Medical Center
David Testoni – Gateway Healthcare
Kim Edwards – Andrea’s Hope
Lisa Carcifero, Workgroup Chair – Woonsocket Prevention Coalition
Captain Michael Lemoine – Woonsocket Police Department
Mary Dwyer – Community Care Alliance
Monica Blanchette – Student Assistance

Healthy Food Access Workgroup
Anna Abdollahi – Woonsocket Head Start
Annajane Yoklen, Workgroup Co-Chair – Thundermist Health Center
Antonio Rodriguez – NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley
Dennis Horta – Thundermist Health Center, WIC
Eliza Sutton – Thundermist Health Center
Heidi Collins – Connecting for Children and Families
Sheri Griffin, Workgroup Co-Chair – Farm Fresh Rhode Island
Shanay Cohen – Karen Karp & Partners
Thea Upham – Farm Fresh Rhode Island

Trauma Informed Community Workgroup
Antonio Rodriguez – NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley
Bridget Bennett, Workgroup Co-Chair – Community Care Alliance
David Testoni – Gateway Healthcare
Dee Henry – Woonsocket Head Start
Emma Dandy – Community Care Alliance
Eve Keobounthan – Center for South East Asians
Ivy Medeiros, Workgroup Co-Chair – Community Care Alliance
Jess Karten – Woonsocket Head Start
Kelly Henry – Sojourner House

Community Advisors/Guest Speakers
Ainsley Cantoral – NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley
Beth Killian – Community Care Alliance
Chuck Jones – Thundermist Health Center
Cynthia Carozzi – Woonsocket Head Start
Elena Marchand – Community Care Alliance
Helen McDonald – Sojourner House
Jeanne Rheama – Community Care Alliance
John Speck – RiverzEdge Arts
Julie Blascio – Woonsocket Head Start
Karen Barbosa – RiverzEdge Arts
Lauren Nocera – Thundermist Health Center
Lesly Lopez – Thundermist Health Center, WIC
Linda Plays – City of Woonsocket
Linda Thibault – Senior Services Rhode Island
Rafael Agudelo – Woonsocket Prevention Coalition
Rosa Goncalves – Community Care Alliance
Thuy-Diem Nguyen – NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley
Tom Joyce – Anchor Recovery Community Center
Tracy Walsh – Andrea’s Hope

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