STORY SPOTLIGHT: SILVIA ADAMES

Last year, Silvia Adames was, in her own words, “really big” and had trouble walking. Both she and her mother were diagnosed with diabetes and high blood pressure. When her mother heard of the free Adult Aerobic Exercise classes being offered through the City of Providence Health Equity Zone, she encouraged Silvia to attend, saying “If you go, I will go!” They have been attending classes every week for about a year.

She values the positivity and encouragement of Terris Gonsalves, the class instructor, and is delighted to report that she has dropped from a size 22 to a size 16.

“I started for my health and have loved it from the first day! I feel so good! I can walk better and I have more strength.”

-Silvia Adames

BACKGROUND INFO

The Providence Citywide HEZ focuses on:

- Improving community health around the city’s recreation centers;
- Improving nutrition;
- Developing community gardens;
- Offering the Providence Summer Food Service Program;
- Developing healthy food policies for public facilities;
- Increasing access to physical fitness programs for adults and youth in public places;
- Conducting activities to increase health and safety in parks and recreation centers;
- Offering diabetes prevention and self-management programs;
- Improving environmental health by implementing green infrastructure projects.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS:

- June 2015
  - Began recreation needs assessments, community surveys and food scan

- February 2016
  - Needs assessments completed

- May 2016
  - 35 children enrolled in bike education at Bailey Elementary School

- June 2016
  - Began promotion of farmers’ markets in underserved neighborhoods

- July 2016
  - Summer Meals, Playcorps 2016 and diversified Recreation Camps kick off

- August 2016
  - Monthly Healthy Neighborhood Celebrations kick off at General Street Park (Wanskuck neighborhood)

- September 2016
  - Began Camden Street Garden Club

- November 2016
  - Completed rain garden at Joslin Recreation Center/D’Abate school
The City of Providence Health Equity Zone enables the City’s Healthy Communities Office to work with a wide variety of partners in making sure that our community is active and healthy. Together, we are developing a vision for Providence’s neighborhoods that includes resources to enable youth and adults to make healthy life decisions. The HEZ collaborative is building partnerships between youth-led organizations, City departments, community-based nonprofits and health systems to increase opportunities for exercise, good nutrition, health education, and connection with health services. We are excited that the relationships our organizations are building with each other are making a real difference in the lives of Providence residents.

WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WE ARE GOING

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“\textit{It’s inspiring to see Providence residents coming together to learn about and access healthy food, exercise in our parks and public spaces, get out on bikes and teach each other about living healthy lives. Our collaborative is working together to create so many options for healthy living in Providence’s neighborhoods.}”

\textit{-Rachel Newman Greene}

\textbf{SPOTLIGHT PROGRAM: RECYCLE-A-BIKE PEDAL POWER}

Recycle-a-Bike’s Pedal Power program teaches Providence children the benefits of cycling and trains the next generation of Providence cyclists. In 2016, the program taught essential bike riding and safety skills to 65 children. At the end of the sessions, every student who participated passed the Safe Cycling Test, and nine children who had never ridden a bike before had become confident cyclists. One of the greatest successes is getting kids “hooked” on physical exercise through biking. Every time the class meets students want more, often asking, “can we do one more lap, please?” Students are eager to participate and have fun while building a habit of healthy exercise.

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