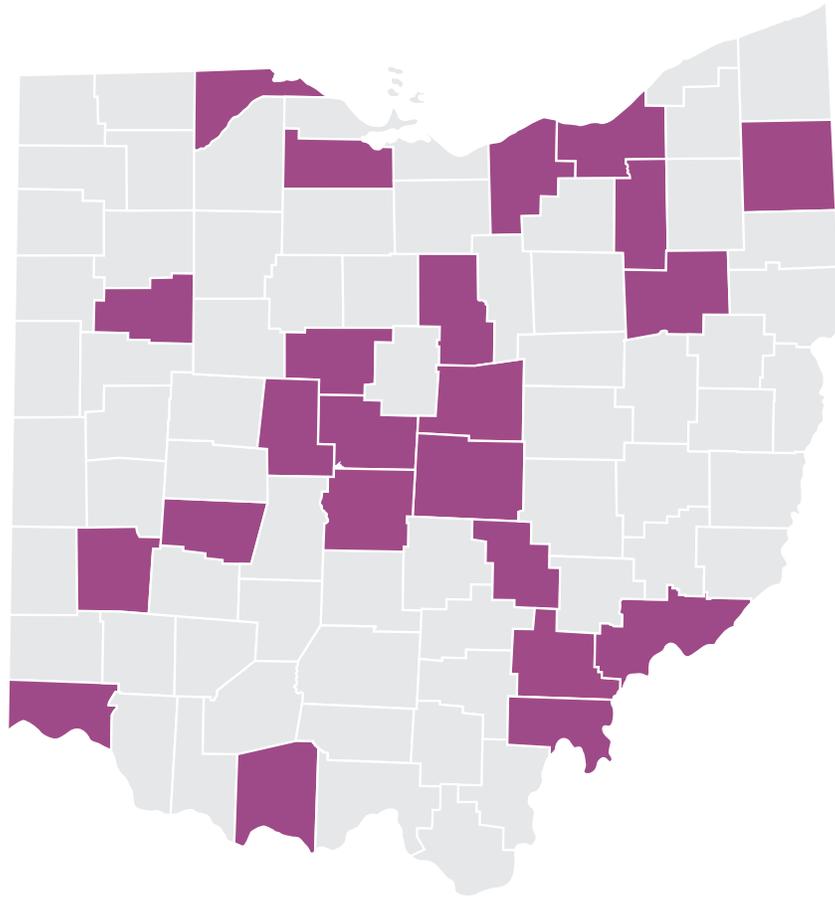


# SUCCESS STORIES 2015



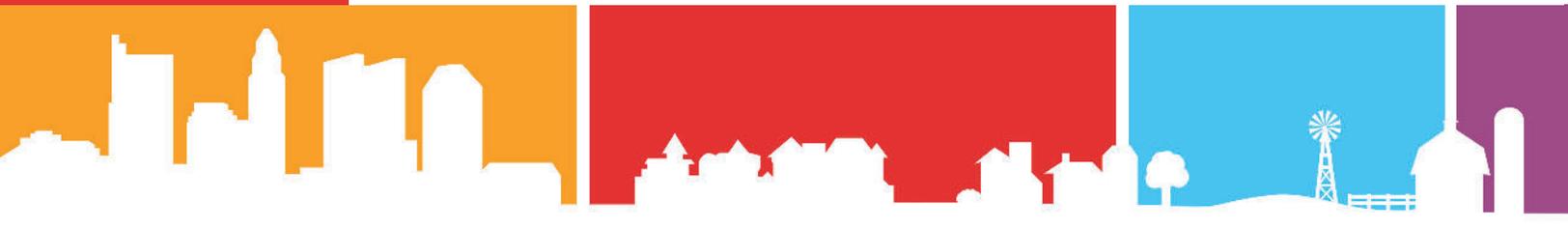


**Vision:**

Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice

**Mission:**

Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) is committed to preventing and reducing chronic disease statewide. Through cross-sector collaboration, we are activating communities to improve access to and affordability of healthy food, increase opportunities for physical activity, and assure tobacco-free living where Ohioans live, work and play. By implementing sustainable evidence-based strategies, CHC is creating a culture of health.





## Delaware County Village of Ashley Children Enjoy New Playground

### Summary

Childhood obesity is a growing problem in the Village of Ashley. Without a place to play, children lack access to opportunities for physical activity, a major contributor to childhood obesity. Thanks to the efforts of the Ashley Village council and the Delaware County Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program, there is now a playground for more than 350 children and residents of all ages to play safely and be physically active.

### Challenge

The Village of Ashley needed a better place for children to play and be physically active. The existing park had sparse equipment that was either old or unsafe for kids to play. According to the Child and Family Health Services and Reproductive Health and Wellness Program 2014 Delaware County Report, 17 percent of children aged 2-5 years old were overweight and 14 percent of children aged 2-5 years old were obese. The 2014 Delaware County Youth Health Assessment revealed that 28 percent of third grade students and 29 percent of seventh grade students were overweight and obese. According to the CDC, regular physical activity reduces the risk of developing obesity and other chronic diseases among young people, as well as improving academic performance and reducing anxiety and depression.

Access to safe areas for play has a large impact on increasing physical activity rates among youth, which in turn may decrease the incidence of childhood overweight and obesity.

### Solution

Delaware County Creating Healthy Communities coalition and Village Council member Elaine McFarland saw the need to improve a local park so that children had a place to be physically active. Council Member McFarland had long seen a need for an improvement to the park, so when the CHC program approached her for ideas, she saw the perfect opportunity for collaboration to improve the park. The rest of the Ashley Village Council agreed and work began by selecting and installing a state of the art playground for the park.



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*“Providing a safe area for kids to play is an important priority for the Village Council. We have been looking for many years for a way to improve the village’s community park and are pleased to be working with the CHC program to make it happen.”*

— Elaine McFarland  
City Council

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## Results

The village’s collaboration with the Delaware County CHC program resulted in a state of the art playground being installed in the local park. The playground provides Ashley Village with not only a safe place for children to play, but also a park in which the community can be proud. Interviews of residents show that the playground has already increased physical activity among children. The playground was the just beginning of many positive changes to improve and promote healthy lifestyle for community residents.

## Sustaining Success

The goal of the playground project was to increase physical activity among the youth in the Village of Ashley and surrounding areas. The playground represents a major improvement to the physical environment in Ashley Village, but also an improved quality of life and plans for more improvements and enhancements. The improved park has also sparked the village to plan for further improvements to the area, including a skate park and a community garden, as well as an improvement in the infrastructure surrounding the park to make walking and biking to the park a safer option. With the support and commitment of the Ashley Village Council, these improvements and enhancements will be implemented in the next five years.

## Your Involvement is Key

Join the Delaware County CHC coalition to help improve health in Ashley Village and in Delaware County. Contact Abbey Trimble with the Delaware County Creating Healthy Communities Program to find out how.



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# SUCCESS STORIES 2016





# Delaware County

## Buckeye Valley Local School District is Walking Together to Connect the Community

### Summary

The Buckeye Valley Local School District (BVLSD) developed a walking path for students, teachers, families and residents to encourage more physical activity. This half mile path includes four different fitness stations, benches and unique scenery. The hope for this path is to unify efforts and connect the district with the community.

### Challenge

Obesity continues to be a top health risk in Delaware County. According to the 2013 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Delaware County's adult

population is 61 percent overweight and/or obese. The obesity rate of Delaware County 3rd graders was 25.7 percent according to a 2009-2010 BMI survey. In Oxford Township only 75.9 percent of adults get 30 minutes of physical activity a day compared to 87 percent in the county. Increasing access to physical activity is one strategy to help decrease the prevalence of overweight and obesity. Additionally, the Buckeye Valley Local School District, which services residents in Oxford Township, covers a 200 square mile catchment area across the top half of Delaware County. This creates an interesting challenge when it comes to creating a sense of community in the district that lacks a central town to call their own.

### Solution

The Buckeye Valley Middle and High Schools share a campus in the district; students in both schools use the grounds for practice and games. The cross country team has stomped out the half mile path around the practice fields behind the middle school and a local resident recently donated more than enough mulch to cover it. Through collaboration with the Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program at the Delaware General Health District (DGHD), work was contracted and the path was completed in December 2016.



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*“I want to thank the BVLSD central office, the Delaware General Health District, and Mike Kelley for their team effort to provide a healthy resource for the students and the Buckeye Valley community as well as for the citizens of Delaware County.”*

*— Brian Baker,  
Principal at Buckeye Valley  
Middle School*

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## Results

The completion of the path has inspired many programs at the middle and high schools to incorporate this resource into their curriculum. The physical education department is planning to utilize the path in their classes by walking and using the resistance training units. The path is also now part of the cross country team’s 3.1 mile competition course. The middle school has utilized the path for their annual fundraiser, the Color Run, which helps students in 5th to 8th grade raise money to attend the annual 8th grade trip to Washington, D.C. The soccer and baseball teams will also use the path for training during their seasons.

Additionally, the special education class plans to take advantage of the path for therapy, exercise and the benefits of fresh air.

## Sustaining Success

In the short term, the path will benefit students and families in the district by providing a space for physical activity. The middle school principal, Brian Baker, and other school leaders hope that every community member will see this as a resource to use and continue to support the great efforts of the district. To ensure continued growth and use of the newly developed path, communicating the availability of the path is the next project for the school system and the CHC program. Since the path was recently completed in December 2016, efforts will still need to be made to share this asset with the community, which will include a ribbon cutting ceremony in the spring.

## Your Involvement is Key

Many communities and school districts are encouraging physical activity options for their residents. Get involved by supporting your local community or school districts efforts to increase physical activity. You can strengthen efforts of ongoing projects to create a healthier lifestyle in your community. Join the Delaware County CHC Coalition.

*Courtesy of Buckeye Valley Middle School  
Landon Froehlich, 10 year old 5th grader at  
Buckeye Valley Middle School, quickly poses for  
a photo during the Color Run Fundraiser on the  
path.*



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# SUCCESS STORIES 2017





# Delaware County

## Fitness Stations Enhance Walking Path in Harlem Township Park

### Summary

The Delaware General Health District partnered with the Harlem Township Trustees to enhance the existing township park. The park is commonly visited by families attending baseball games and individuals taking advantage of the paved 1/3-mile walking path. Township trustee Carl Richison and a team of volunteers worked to install ten fitness stations along the walking path to provide better exercise options to visitors of the park.

### Challenge

Achieving recommended amounts of physical activity is a continual challenge for Delaware County residents. According to the 2016-2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, only 27 percent of youth (grades 6-12) got at

least 60 minutes of physical activity daily. In the 2013 Community Health Assessment, 57.7 percent of adults in Harlem Township reported getting 30 minutes of physical activity daily, compared to 87 percent in the county. The number of overweight adults in Harlem Township was 48 percent, considerably higher than county rates of 36 percent. Harlem Township residents also experience higher rates of chronic disease than the county. While growing quickly, Harlem Township still remains a more rural section of Delaware County. This provides challenges when residents look for ways to be physically active. Finding an existing community destination in which to incorporate the fitness stations was key in ensuring the success of the project.

### Solution

Harlem Township retains a strong sense of community with local leadership willing to do what they can to improve the health of residents. The Harlem Township Park provides a space for individuals and families to spend time outdoors, taking a walk or playing in a baseball game. The park serves as a community hub for events such as ice skating in the winter and an annual community festival in the summer. As the community grows, the park will continue to serve as an important resource for more and more families looking to be physically active. The opportunity for community impact helped guide the Creating Healthy Communities Program to work with the Harlem Township Trustees and community volunteers to install ten fitness stations along



the paved walking path. This project was a collaborative effort with local leadership as the CHC program relied on their input regarding location and design as well as community support to assist with the installation of the stations.

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*“We have had many folks comment on how nice it is to have the fitness trail in our park. I have personally observed both young and old using the system. It also appears to have brought more people to our park, which is a wonderful thing. I was honored to be a part of giving this to my community. Thank you for this opportunity; it will serve our community for years to come and hopefully aid in their fitness quest.”*

*— Carl Richison,  
Former Harlem Township Trustee*

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## Results

The addition of the fitness stations has been well received and utilized in the Harlem Township community. Between October and mid-November 2017, trail counters estimate 4,500 passes on the trail where the fitness stations are located. There has been

positive feedback from township leadership and community members. According to Carl Richison, the equipment was being utilized as of the day of installation. The stations have been further enhanced with hooks to hold dog leashes after community feedback cited difficulties when using the fitness stations while walking dogs.

## Sustaining Success

Usage of the fitness stations at the Harlem Township Park will continue to increase as the weather warms. The stations will serve greater populations as baseball season approaches and families visit the park. The Township will maintain and monitor the fitness stations as they do other park amenities. In September 2018, trail counters will be installed and left up through mid-November to track park usage. All park usage data will be communicated to the township trustees to support any future park enhancements as their population grows.

## Your Involvement is Key

Communities can work to increase the availability of healthy spaces and opportunities for exercise. If you are interested in learning more about how to increase the active living opportunities in your community, consider joining the Delaware County Creating Healthy Communities Coalition. The coalition works on healthy eating and active living strategies in Delaware City South, the Big Walnut Catchment area, and Oxford Township/Village of Ashley.



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# SUCCESS STORIES 2018



Department  
of Health



# Delaware County

## Sunbury Farmers' Market Helps Connect Community with Fresh Produce

### At a Glance

The Sunbury Farmers' Market began in 2005 with the goal of connecting the local community to vendors selling home grown and homemade products. Each Saturday morning from mid-May thru mid-October the market is held, rain or shine, on the Sunbury Square. The Sunbury Chamber of Commerce is responsible for the planning, marketing, and facilitation of each scheduled market day. In 2018, the Chamber partnered with the Big Walnut Catchment Area Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) coalition to grow and better promote the market. The Chamber realized in past years market growth had declined and wanted to do more to preserve the valuable community resource. CHC was excited to partner in helping to expand the number of produce vendors and participants at the market. Through a vendor survey and with the assistance of the Chamber, the coalition decided a

re-brand and marketing strategy would increase the number of vendors, as well as participants shopping at the market.

### Public Health Challenge

The Village of Sunbury has long sustained a small farmers' market but has struggled to grow, promote, and engage more residents and vendors. According to the 2017 Delaware County Community Health Assessment (2017 CHA), 65 percent of Delaware County adults are considered either overweight or obese based on Body Mass Index (BMI). In the Big Walnut School District specifically, the number of adults considered obese increases to 72 percent. Over the past 10 years, a trend has emerged, where overweight/obesity rates for adults in this school district has increased 21 percent (2017 CHA). Additionally, only 35 percent of Delaware County adults eat the recommended five daily servings of fruits and vegetables (2013 CHA). When

residents of a low-income community in the Big Walnut area were surveyed, 26 percent reported barriers to consuming fresh fruits and vegetables. Some barriers included high prices, no access, and no variety. Big Walnut faced a challenge in how to best expand existing resources in the community to give residents access to healthy fruits and vegetables and address growing health concerns.

### Approach

The Village of Sunbury is growing quickly and is expected to become a city following the 2020 Census. While the area is expanding, many residents value the small-town feel provided by the Village Square. The Square is home to the Village Hall, green space, shopping, restaurants, and the farmers' market. Community pride in their market has led the Chamber and many vendors to continue to host and attend the market for over ten years.



This strong foundation led to a unique partnership with the Big Walnut CHC Coalition. A strategy was developed to better promote the market to the community and to expand the number of vendors, especially those offering fresh produce. The Delaware General Health District assisted with rebranding the market's logos and this branding was used on new banners, yard signs, and sail signs purchased to promote the market throughout the Sunbury area. The Chamber and CHC also partnered to create and distribute magnets which were provided to residents of a low-income community in the area who had previously been surveyed about their interest in the market. The CHC coalition assisted with an outreach plan to recruit new vendors and create a new vendor information packet.

## Results

As a result of the promotion and outreach, 12 new vendors were added during the 2018 season. Of those new vendors, 6 sold fresh produce. Facebook analytical data showed the Big Walnut Area Chamber of Commerce's Market Facebook page increased the number of people who "liked" the page from 1,245 to 1,415, a 14 percent increase. When more attendees were able to come to the market, new vendors were able to join and sustain a successful season. Numerous vendors also reported an increase in attendees and better sales during the 2018 season. While attendance and sales saw an increase, new partnerships were also formed to better support and sustain efforts to grow the market and attract vendors. The Glass Rooster Cannery is a local business and CHC coalition member. When a new vendor information packet was being discussed at a meeting, the Cannery expressed interest in using their expertise to support produce vendors at the market. This led to a handout

in the packet which highlighted a new program offered to vendors. Vendors could give leftover produce to the Glass Rooster Cannery who would then create shelf-stable products they could sell at later markets. Throughout 2018, the Sunbury Farmers' Market was able to grow and expand the number of Sunbury residents who had access to fresh produce while supporting local growers and vendors.

## What's Next

The 2018 season's goals of growth and promotion was the first step in building the infrastructure needed to support a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in 2019. The CHC coalition decided SNAP would be an important feature of the market, but to ensure its success the market first needed to expand the number of attendees and produce vendors. Vendors were surveyed at the start of the 2018 season and all supported the addition of SNAP. A common theme was also the need for increased market leadership. This need was supported by Chamber leadership and in 2019 the Chamber and CHC will be exploring ways to fund a dedicated market manager who can handle SNAP, vendor relations, and market promotion. As the Chamber and CHC capitalize on the growth experienced in 2018, Sunbury residents will have an increased opportunity to access fresh fruits and vegetables.

## Find Out More

Communities can work to increase the availability of healthy food options. If you are interested in learning more about how to increase the accessibility and availability of healthy foods in your community, consider joining the Delaware CHC Coalition. The coalition works on healthy eating and active living strategies in Delaware City South, the Big Walnut Catchment area, and Oxford Township/Village of Ashley.



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*"Sales seemed to be up from the last couple of years and it did appear that more people were around also. A lot were regulars but a lot of new faces also...All in all I think it was a better market this past year."*

— Anonymous Vendor

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# SUCCESS STORIES 2019



**Ohio**

Department  
of Health





# Delaware County

## School Hydroponic Garden Provides Access, Promotes Selection of Healthy Foods

### At a Glance

To increase access to and promote the selection of healthy foods, the Delaware General Health District (DGHD)'s Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program partnered with Buckeye Valley Middle School (BVMS) to install an indoor hydroponic garden. In the school district, about 16.7% of students receive free/reduced lunches, and about 20% of children aged 0-17 live below 200% of the federal poverty level. This puts them at higher risk of poor health outcomes in adulthood. The indoor garden provides students with access to fresh vegetables and herbs, and the opportunity to take part in the growing cycle. Thanks to this partnership, the 486 students in grades six through eight at BVMS now can grow and harvest vegetables year-round.

### Public Health Challenge

According to the 2017 Delaware County Community Health Assessment, more than 65% of adults are considered overweight or obese. This increases to about 75% of those surveyed within the Buckeye Valley School District. Additionally, the 2016/2017 Delaware County Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that only 4% of youth in grades six through 12 ate the recommended five daily servings of fruits and vegetables. The BVMS is located within the Ashley Village-Oxford Township priority community, where only 4.6% of the population has access to a major grocery store within 5 miles of where they live. According to 2017 Feeding America data, in Delaware County, 8.1% of the population is determined to be food insecure; of those, 64% are not eligible for SNAP assistance. In the Ashley-Oxford priority community, 19.4% of households made less than \$25,000 in the past 12

months, and 14.5% of households have received SNAP assistance. Individuals and families who are of a lower socioeconomic status are more likely to experience poor health outcomes and live shorter lives.

### Approach

The CHC program approached BVMS to inquire about needs or capacity for implementing a school garden. BVMS had space allocated for traditional garden plots, however, enthusiasm for the garden program had dissipated over the years. CHC and BVMS then discussed options for revitalizing the garden program. The team experienced barriers gaining buy-in from BVMS staff, as traditional gardening requires a lot of maintenance, and upkeep would take place when school was not in session. So, instead of installing outdoor garden boxes, BVMS and CHC implemented an indoor hydroponic garden. The eighth-grade science



teacher welcomed this idea and offered to coordinate and host the garden inside of her classroom. Two different types of hydroponic systems were installed, one system for the growth of deep-root flowering plants like tomatoes, and one for shallow root plants such as spinach and herbs. To ensure that all students had access to the garden, BVMS created a Hydroponics Club that interested students could join to get involved with the garden. The students were responsible for identifying the plants that would grow, monitoring and adjusting the light and PH level of the garden systems, and researching how changes affect the growth cycle, highlighting the differences between hydroponic versus traditional cultivation methods. The plants the students selected to grow were tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers, lettuce, spinach, basil, cilantro, and other herbs.

## Results

In early February, the hydroponic garden was installed at BVMS. Twelve students joined the Hydroponics Club and completed pre- and post-surveys. The CHC coordinator and supervisor were able to visit the garden and discuss the experiences with the club members. The surveys revealed the following:

- 89% of students reported trying new fruits or vegetables after participating in the garden.
- 56% reported changes in how they eat after participating in the garden.
- "Learning about growing different foods" and "Sharing what I learned with others" were reported to be the most useful aspects of participation.

Students shared that coming together as a club was also beneficial to the experience. Students discussed how they worked together to problem

solve and create tracking sheets to ensure proper maintenance and to track growth. They also shared their ideas for other types of plants they would like to grow, how they could expand the garden in the future, and different types of settings they could see benefiting from indoor hydroponic gardens.

## What's Next

The Buckeye Valley School District is dedicated to the health of its students and providing support for implementation and maintenance of garden programs that will ensure students get hands-on learning experiences in healthy eating. The district also owns a school farm and, at the high school level, has partnered with the local career center to offer an Agricultural Science Program. Within this program, students get involved with plant and animal sciences, as well as use of hydroponic and aeroponics to provide lettuce weekly to the school cafeteria. Discussions with the BVMS Hydroponics Club identified other sites that could benefit from indoor gardens such as food pantries, shelters, and community centers. The CHC program has discussed the possibility of installing hydroponic gardens with two local food pantries in upcoming years.

## Find Out More

The DGHD has a commitment to helping communities and schools work together to increase access to fresh, healthy foods. If you are interested in learning more about hydroponic gardens, or other strategies that can increase access to healthy food, please consider joining the Delaware County CHC Coalition. The CHC coalition works on strategies aimed at increasing physical activity and healthy eating among Delaware County residents.



*"The hydroponics system has been giving me more of a connection with the school. Having this system lets me explain everything we do, and we've been together almost weekly that we are kind of like a family."*

— Anonymous eighth-grade



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