



Active Michigan Communities

Winter 2006

Welcome

The snow is drifting down out my window as I write this greeting to you. It is just steady enough to make everything white and clean again but without the bitter temperatures most of us prefer to avoid. A nearly perfect winter day. And although February is drawing to a close, winter is not. So, my fellow Michiganders, there are still many opportunities to enjoy winter physical activities, fully embracing the season fully rather than simply biding time until the warmer weather appears.

Did you know that Michigan has more than 40 downhill ski resorts and that *Ski* magazine named Michigan as the Midwest's Top Ski Destination? Learn more at www.michigan.org/travel/outdoors, Travel Michigan's website. Here, you will find places to ski and hike as well as other outdoor activities in Michigan. If you're looking for organized physical activity events, you will find a list for March in this newsletter and can search for more at our website www.michiganfitness.org. So many opportunities to keep moving for health!

In addition, this issue features Muskegon as our community spotlight. You might be surprised at how much is happening in this former industrial-based city. Finally, grant opportunities, resources and other news is also included. We hope this information is of value to you in your pursuit of an Active Michigan Community.

Happy reading,

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Community Spotlight: Muskegon

Muskegon, once primarily an industrial community, is in the process of reinventing itself as a premier tourist destination. One way the community is accomplishing this is designing the built environment so that it is inviting and convenient to walk or bike to destinations. In recent years, Muskegon has started to reclaim the lake front for recreational uses. The Lakeshore Trail is one amenity that attracts people to the city's waterfront. The 8 mile trail, completed in October 2006, wraps around the entire shoreline of Muskegon Lake and provides direct access to Downtown Muskegon and the Heritage Landing. The Heritage Landing was an abandoned brownfield that has been converted into a public gathering place and hosts several festivals throughout the year. The Lakeshore Trail and the Heritage Landing provide opportunities for residents and visitors to walk, bike, and recreate! In addition to the waterfront, the city has a mission to create a vibrant 24-hour downtown that attracts a diversity of people. Former industrial sites have been demolished or renovated for residential or commercial space along with provisions for pedestrians. One example of this is the Amazon Building, a former knitting factory, that has been converted into apartments. There are also many historic sections of Downtown Muskegon that have great streetscapes with sidewalks and buffer trees; these areas are a wonderful places to walk. Finally, Western Avenue from Third Street to Terrace Street has seen many improvements. Once a site for an indoor shopping mall, the area is now being reconstructed. The design includes new buildings, 10' sidewalks to accommodate sidewalk furniture, street buffer strips with trees, pedestrian crosswalks, a boulevard, decorative lighting, and a traffic circle at the intersection of Western Avenue and Third Street. Clearly, Muskegon is making great strides as an active community.



Lakeshore Trail



Western Avenue

Safe Routes to School Training



Safe Routes to School (SR2S) is an international movement to make it safe, convenient and fun for children to walk or bike to school. Many school children used to walk or bike to school, but today less than one-third of those who live within one mile from school walk or bike there. The children that walk or bike to school are not only setting an example of how physical activity can be incorporated into daily routines, but are also

learning healthy habits to last a lifetime.

To learn the step-by-step process to develop and implement a SR2S program in your community, **enroll now for FREE SR2S Training**. This is a great opportunity for school team representatives or other interested community members to learn about the step-by-step process for a successful local effort and about the federal funding opportunities for SR2S programs.

Spring 2007 Training dates and locations include:

- March 13– Ypsilanti
- March 21– Grand Rapids
- March 27– Escanaba
- March 29– Flint
- April 18– Lansing

Training sessions are from 8:30am to 4:00pm and lunch is provided. There is no fee to attend, but pre-enrollment for the training is required. Space is limited and sessions fill up quickly, so enroll today. To enroll, please call or e-mail Alex Nikoloff at the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness at (800) 434-8642 or anikoloff@michiganfitness.org. Be sure to indicate your location preference in your e-mail. For more information about Michigan's Safe Routes to School program, visit: <http://www.saferoutesmichigan.org>.

Save the Date for Promoting Active Communities

Mark your calendars, the 2007 version of the Promoting Active Communities (PAC) online self-assessment tool will be launched on March 20th. This improved version will make it even easier for communities to take steps to become models of active living. The online assessment is part of the PAC program that recognizes communities that have made a commitment to become healthier places to live. A team of community members use the assessment tool to evaluate their community's environments, policies, and programs related to promoting and supporting physical activity. These categories function like three legs of a stool; each is essential for a comprehensive approach to create and maintain an active community. Each PAC assessment section is scored and a personalized community report is created that can be used for planning purposes. This unique online self-assessment tool was created in partnership with the Michigan Department of Community Health, the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Michigan State University, and the Prevention Research Center of Michigan. Communities that complete the assessment are also eligible for an award which recognizes them as innovative Michigan communities who are making it easier for their citizens to lead an active lifestyle.



For more information about the PAC program, contact Risa Wilkerson, Vice President of Active Communities at the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports at (800) 434-8642 or via e-mail: rwilkerson@michiganfitness.org or visit www.mihealthtool.org/communities

Correction!

The "Caching Physical Activity Fever" article in the November/December issue attributed the *Charming Chelsea City Cache* to Mr. Mike Steklac, Chelsea City Manager. In fact, this cache was developed by Nurse Nanna, another Chelsea geocacher. Mr. Steklac's cache is titled *Healthy Communities*. We apologize for any confusion.

Detroit Chosen to Test New Healthy Community Tool

Detroit is serving as a pilot city to test the new Environmental Nutrition & Activity Community Tool (ENACT). This tool was created by the Strategic Alliance, which is associated with the Prevention Research Institute in Oakland, California, and provides a menu of strategies designed to help you improve nutrition and activity environments at a local level. The strategies are based on best practices from around the country and are divided into seven categories: Childcare, School, After School Programs, Neighborhood, Workplace, Healthcare, Government Institutions & Practices. Within each category, there are multiple resources listed that outline strategies for positive community change. ENACT is a great planning resource for community organizations and coalitions interested in improving their nutrition and physical activity environments. For optimal results, the tool should be used by a team of community members. Each participant has an opportunity to rank priorities and the current status of each strategy for community improvement; this provides a baseline from which community members can work to address nutrition and physical activity environmental issues. The tool is designed to complement current education and community efforts, empower local action to address community issues, and provide avenues for implementation of community change. For more information, please visit: <http://www.preventioninstitute.org/sa/enact/members/index.php>.

Endorsed Physical Activity Events

Get the Governor's Council's seal of approval on your event! The organization partners with events that encourage physical activity in communities across the state. The Governor's Council endorses physical activity events from running races to softball tournaments and more! Having your event endorsed is free, and gains you additional publicity through the Governor's Council website! The following March events have already been endorsed:

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| March 3 & 17 | Special Olympics Michigan State Basketball Finals | Multiple Locations |
| March 3 | Steppin' for the Library | Pickney |
| March 10 | Special Olympics Michigan State Basketball Finals– Juniors | Lansing |
| March 10 | Hospice Holiday 5K Run/Walk | Brooklyn |
| March 11 | St. Patrick's Parade Corktown Races | Detroit |
| March 16 | St. Patty's Pacer 5K Run/Walk | Holland |
| March 17&18 | St. Patrick's Day Races | Bay City |
| March 17 | Special Olympics Michigan State Basketball Finals– Female | Bullock Creek |
| March 17 | Shamrock Run, Walk and Roll | East Lansing |
| March 17 | Spectrum Health Irish Jig 5K | Grand Rapids |
| March 17 | Leprechaun Loop | Port Huron |
| March 21 | Road Running Emu Trot | Ypsilanti |
| March 24 | Kal-Haven 33.5 Mile Trail Run | Kalamazoo |
| March 24 | Kent City Ridge Run 15K or 5K | Kent City |
| March 24 | Food 'n' Fitness 5K Run and Walk | Lansing |
| March 24 | Run a Mile for a Child | Belmont |
| March 31 | Bill Agresta Scholarship Shuffle (B.A.S.H) | Hemlock |

Do you have an event that you think could be endorsed by the Governor's Council? Visit www.michiganfitness.org/endorsements to fill out an application. The review committee considers application criteria related to the safety and well-being of participants, qualifications of event organizers and officials, proper emergency procedures, and maximum participation opportunities. If you have questions about the endorsement application, contact Tricia Fraas at (800) 434-8642 or tfraas@michiganfitness.org.

Grant Opportunities

Michigan Department of Community Health Announces Availability of Free Bike Helmets

Deadline for Applications: March 2, 2007

The Injury & Violence Prevention Section within the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) is pleased to announce the availability of free bicycle helmets and educational materials to SAFE KIDS Chapters/Coalitions, local public health departments, and local law enforcement agencies. Applicants are eligible to receive up to 100 free helmets with no local match requirement. Helmets requested can be a combination of sizes and types (children, adult, bicycle, multisport). Applications requesting more than 100 helmets must provide a local match of one child size helmet for each adult size helmet for each helmet above the initial 100 requested. A signed statement from the source of the local match of child size helmets is required, if requesting more than 100 helmets. The applicant agency is required to coordinate a community bicycle safety event or program that emphasizes proper helmet use, or conduct a helmet fitting station in conjunction with a car seat check event. The agency will also be required to elicit media coverage of the event, distribute the bicycle helmets free of charge to those in need of a helmet, evaluate the event or program, and provide a final report to MDCH. There are no limitations as to what the event or program can be. Remember - creativity is the key! For an application or if you have questions, please contact: Jeff Spitzley, Safe Kids Michigan Coordinator, Michigan Department of Community Health at SpitzleyJ2@michigan.gov (preferred) or (517) 335-8131.

Complete Streets Technical Assistance Grants

Deadline for Applications: March 8, 2007

The Environmental Protection Agency has issued a request for applications for its Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Program, and projects to develop or implement complete streets policies are eligible! As stated in the call for applications, "Through this program, a team of multidisciplinary experts will provide free technical assistance to communities, regions, or states that want to develop in ways that meet environmental and other local or regional goals." The program calls for proposals that help direct transportation investments to better support smart growth, and the program will help with policy analysis, public participatory processes, and implementation. Selected communities will receive assistance in the form of a multi-day visit from a team of experts organized by EPA and other national partners to work with local leaders. Applications will be accepted until March 8, 2007. For more information and application materials, please go to <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/sqia.htm>.

Take Action: Healthy People, Places, and Practices in Communities Project

Deadline for Applications: March 30, 2007

Through the Take Action: Healthy People, Places, and Practices in Communities Project, the U.S. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion and the Regional Health Administrators are seeking community-based groups to develop, carry out, and evaluate a unique set of activities in local settings that support the President's HealthierUS initiative to promote and sustain healthy lifestyles in communities. Up to 270 projects will be funded; recipients will be geographically diverse, and projects will represent a variety of HealthierUS-relevant activities. Only one proposal per organization will be considered for funding. Projects will cover the period July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008. This is a one-time funding opportunity. Each project budget will range from \$2,000-\$5,000 for the project period. Not-for-profit, community-based organizations, including faith-based groups, after-school programs, coalitions and others can apply for these funds. Preference will be given to small organizations with budgets less than \$750,000. Projects that focus on eliminating health disparities are encouraged. Proposed projects must include or promote at least one of the following types of activities: physical activity, nutrition/healthy eating, preventive screenings, making healthy choices/avoiding risky behaviors. These types of activities make up the four parts of HealthierUS, a national effort to improve the health of Americans, and they are described at the www.healthierus.gov website. For proposal forms and additional information, please visit: <http://www.osophs.dhhs.gov>.



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About Us

The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports was established in 1992 to improve the health of, and increase physical activity among, Michigan residents. The Michigan Fitness Foundation was created in 1994 as a 501(c)3 nonprofit public charity foundation to expedite Governor's Council policies and programs and provide a broader funding base to pursue its mission of Getting Michigan Moving. The foundation is licensed by the Michigan Attorney General to solicit and receive charitable gifts and grants (MICS 11523).

Our Mission

The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports envisions a physically educated population with the knowledge and skills to enjoy a healthy, vigorous and safe lifestyle in communities designed to support physical activity.

Resources

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Healthier Worksite Initiative website provides a section on worksite walkability. There are many resources for employers and employees to use to promote walking to work as a means of creating a healthy work environment and promoting physical activity. For more information, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/toolkits/walkability/index.htm>

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) refers to various strategies that change travel behavior (how, when and where people travel) in order to increase transport system efficiency and achieve specific planning objectives. The **Online TDM Encyclopedia** is a comprehensive resource that highlights innovative transportation management strategies. It describes dozens of strategies and contains information on TDM planning, evaluation and implementation. It has thousands of links that provide instant access to more detailed information, including case studies and reference documents. The Encyclopedia has an international perspective, with ideas and examples from all over the world, including both developed and developing countries. The Encyclopedia is created and maintained by the Victoria Transport Policy Institute. To access the encyclopedia, visit: <http://www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm12.htm>

Complete the Streets is an initiative to ensure that streets are designed for to enable safe access for all users. For more information, visit: <http://www.completestreets.org/>

Go for Green, Active Living and Environmental Solutions, is a national not-for-profit, charitable organization that encourages people to pursue healthy, outdoor physical activities that protect, enhance or restore the environment. They aim to inform people about healthy, active lifestyle choices, and nurture commitment and action to improve personal health and the health of the environment. For more information, visit: http://www.goforgreen.ca/home_e.html

