

The Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center

Newsflash

Summer 2018 Issue

The PRC has prepared this electronic **Newsflash** to keep you informed about our work and invite you to take part in our research, education and outreach activities. It serves as a communication tool for our Community Committee members, and our colleagues in academia, education, clinical settings, and social service agencies. If you have ideas for working together on shared projects, please let us know.

For more information about the Yale-Griffin PRC:

Please visit our website at <http://www.yalegriffinprc.org>

PRC Updates

Griffin Hospital hosts a new community garden: As part of the Valley United Way's "Grow Your Own" program, construction has been completed on a 2,000 square foot garden at the end of the hospital parking lot, at the intersection of Seymour Ave. and Division St. It will be one of several gardens in the Naugatuck Valley that will provide fresh fruits and vegetables to residents who need assistance in purchasing food. The produce grown will supplement what residents obtain from local food pantries. The "Grow Your Own" program will also encourage neighborhood gardening to help stem food insecurity issues. The garden on the hospital property is an extension of Griffin's population health efforts to focus greater attention and resources on keeping people well and preventing chronic disease. Other partners on the garden include Massaro Community Farm, TEAM Inc., and the Yale-Griffin PRC. Additional assistance has been provided by Peralta Design, Prudential, Irving School, Team Inc., Trusted Properties, and Alderman Richard Kaslaitis.



Dr. Katz hosts a culinary learning experience in Sicily: In April, Oldways and PRC Director Dr. David Katz and his wife, Dr. Catherine Katz, a scientist and Mediterranean cooking expert, joined forces for a week-long exploration of Sicily, which included four nights in Palermo and three in Siracusa. The trip included a cooking class, a discussion of Mediterranean cooking, visits to food markets and museums, and guided tours of archaeological sites. Registered dietitians who participated were eligible for CPE credits.

Current Projects

UPDATE - Valley Initiative to Advance Health & Learning in Schools (VITAHLS)

This initiative, led by the PRC and Griffin Hospital in partnership with school and community partners, aims to develop, implement, evaluate, and sustain comprehensive school-based programming focusing on nutrition and physical activity for PreK-12 students. Our school partners are the Ansonia, Derby, Seymour, Shelton and Naugatuck school districts, and Emmett O'Brien Regional Technical School. For more information, contact VITAHLS Coordinator Kim Doughty (email kim.doughty@yalegriffinprc.org).

- **Healthy Cooking Challenge:** On May 15rd, the finals of the 5th Annual Healthy Cooking Challenge took place in the Griffin Hospital Dining Room. This year's theme was "Asian Fusion", with five students from Valley schools and their winning recipes from their local competitions in school districts having advanced to the finals. Contestants included: 6th grade student Victoria Koether from Seymour Middle School; 5th grade student Brooklyn Neff from Perry Hill School in Shelton; 5th grade student Nicole Gregory from Bradley School in Derby; 6th grade student Naomi Ortiz from Prendergast School in Ansonia; and 4th grade student Rocco Grella from Maple Hill School in Naugatuck. All finalists received a personalized apron, gardening tools and seeds from Massaro Community Farm, a gift card to the Sports Center of Connecticut, and a cookbook. Naomi Ortiz, who received the top chef award from a panel of judges for her recipe for chili salmon with white jasmine rice, also received additional prizes. The PRC and its school partners look forward to holding this contest each year because it provides a fun and exciting way for local students to showcase their talents for cooking, and it encourages healthy eating and cooking at home and in the community.



- **Update on VITAHLS Mini-Grants Provided to School Districts:** The June meeting of the VITAHLS Working Group included presentations on three of the projects that have been funded by mini-grants from the PRC during the 2017-2018 school year. These included the following:
 - **Morning Marathon Walking Club (Ansonia Public Schools)** - All K-6 students at Prendergast School were invited to take part, with maximum space available for 50 students. About 23 students took part on a regular basis. The walking club met before the start of the school day. The students completed the equivalent of a half-marathon (13 miles) by walking 1 mile each Friday until reaching this goal and taking part in a celebratory breakfast.
 - **Fitness Project (Derby Public Schools)** – The school purchased a treadmill for the high school fitness center that enables students in physical education classes to perform interval training exercises at different challenge levels. Students are encouraged to record the data from the treadmill (e.g., date, time, miles, calories burned) in a workout journal.
 - **Kinesthetic Classrooms (Seymour Public Schools)** - With funding from the Katherine Matthies Foundation and the VITAHLS mini-grant, Bungay Elementary School purchased kinesthetic (movement-promoting) equipment such as stability balls, wobble chairs, foot rockers, pedal desks, under-desk cycles, and standing desks with foot fidgets. This equipment allows students to be in motion while they learn. Its potential benefits include improved physical fitness, attention, focus, and academic performance.



UPDATE – Community Health Opportunities Organized with Schools at the Epicenter (CHOOSE)

Our core research project for this 5-year CDC funding cycle expands within/beyond VITAHLS school districts to include other health promotion “portals” as well in their respective communities.

- **Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program** - The PRC has partnered with Wholesome Wave®, a Bridgeport-based non-profit, to pilot test an adaptation of its Fruit and Vegetable Prescription program, which has been offered elsewhere in clinical settings. As part of CHOOSE, we are offering this program in a worksite “portal” (Griffin Hospital) and examine its impact on participants’ fruit and vegetable purchases and intake, along with their diet quality and health-related outcomes. A total of 60 hospital employees are randomly assigned to one of two groups: fruit and vegetable prescription program (30 participants) or control/no intervention (30 participants). Those in the fruit and vegetable prescription group receive advice and tips to eat more fruits and vegetables, offered through 10 skill-building educational sessions (45 minutes each), along with financial incentives (coupons/vouchers) to purchase fruits and vegetables. The sessions focus on delicious, nutritious, affordable, simple and quick meal preparation. They are led by a multidisciplinary team comprised of a chef/instructor, a nutritionist and/or dietitian, MD and/or Preventive Medicine Resident, and PRC staff. We are currently recruiting a second cohort of Griffin Hospital employees for this study, with the first educational session scheduled for July 25th. For more information, contact Rockiy Ayettey (email rockiy.ayettey@yalegriffinprc.org, phone 203-732-1265 ext. 300) or Kim Doughty (kim.doughty@yalegriffinprc.org, phone 203-732-1265 ext. 305).

UPDATE – Community Alliance for Research and Engagement

The Community Alliance for Research and Engagement (CARE) extends the PRC’s work with a mission to improve health in New Haven, CT. CARE, in partnership with the New Haven community, is working in tandem with the PRC to take action against chronic diseases and other challenges that threaten the health of community members.

- **Community Garden Project** - CARE is excited to coordinate the Southern CT State University (SCSU) 6-week Community Garden Nutrition Education program for its second iteration this summer. Two MPH students will create the program curriculum, recruit residents, and execute the program. Dr. Victoria Zigmont, Assistant Professor at the SCSU Department of Public Health, will provide oversight. They will offer weekly nutrition lessons, cooking demos, recipes, and gardening seminars to New Haven residents; and will provide participants with shares of produce from the garden.
- **Update on Health Leadership Program** - In late 2017, CARE launched this program for New Haven residents and SCSU graduate students to work together on solutions to pressing social and health issues identified by the community. CARE is now pleased to report on two projects that took place in the spring of 2018. In the West Rock neighborhood, an SCSU student and a resident leader held four meetings with community residents, whose primary issues of concern related to transportation and public safety. Mayor Toni Harp and state and city officials attended one meeting to hear their concerns. A follow-up meeting with the city transportation department and CT Transit led to the reinstatement of a bus route and a city commitment to traffic calming measures. In the Whalley, Edgewood, and Beaver Hill (WEB) neighborhood, an SCSU student and a resident leader learned that the WEB residents perceived a need to engage more males in conversations about their wellness to serve as positive role models for youth. Because barbershops are a setting where men gather to share stories and give advice, the team received permission from four barbershop owners to survey their patrons regarding minority men’s attitudes towards wellness. They collected 100 surveys and will analyze the data and help determine whether a barbershop intervention will be appropriate for the community. If so, CARE will support a project during the next academic year.



William Mustfa Moore, owner of Fresh Ones Barbershop, welcomed Health Leaders to survey his customers.

Grant Proposals and Awards

RECENTLY-SUBMITTED PROPOSAL

- [Funding Renewal Request to CDC \(2019-2024\)](#)

In June, the PRC sent a proposal to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to request funding for the next 5-year cycle starting in October 2019. As in the past, the funding will cover many of the costs of maintaining our infrastructure and conducting a multi-year public health research project. We plan to continue our focus on chronic disease prevention, while expanding the emphasis to include prevention research in the digital age. During the past 20 years since our Center was founded, there has been a tectonic shift in communications, digitally and in cyberspace, with a resulting opportunity to reach target populations using strategies and a scope that were previously unimaginable. Our proposed core research project will assess the feasibility and health impacts of offering a virtually-delivered Diabetes Prevention Program facilitated by community health workers and hospital-based community nurses to low-income adults at risk for type 2 diabetes. *Improving Health in Low Income Communities: Virtual Delivery of a Diabetes Prevention Program Facilitated with Community Care Coordination* will take place in two diverse low-income communities (New Haven and the Valley), and will address many barriers that keep people with low incomes from successfully participating in evidence-based lifestyle interventions. We plan to conduct formative assessments, collect clinical and behavioral data, and assess cost effectiveness of program delivery. In New Haven, our primary partner will be the Community Alliance for Research and Engagement (CARE) based in the Yale School of Public Health and Southern CT State University. Ultimately, we expect to develop a process for translating this model for use in other socio-economically vulnerable communities.

Presentations

David Katz, MD, MPH, FACPM, FACP, PRC Director, delivered the following presentations:

- March 13th at the Mediterranean Diet Roundtable Ambassador's Breakfast in Washington, DC.
- *Is the Digital Landscape Really Making Consumers Healthier?* on April 19th at the DTC National Conference in Boston, MA.
- *Food for Life* on April 26th at the UPMC Health Plan Conclave in Farmington, PA.
- *Lifestyle is the Medicine; What's the Spoon?* on May 31st at Pri-Med Educational Programmes Ltd., in Anaheim, CA.
- *Science and Sense of the Mediterranean Diet: Of Health, Heritage, and the Love of Good Food* on June 25th at the Mediterranean Diet Roundtable at Yale University in New Haven, CT.

Publications

- Logan AC, Prescott SL, Haahtela T, **Katz DL**. *The Importance of the Exposome and Allostatic Load in the Planetary Health Paradigm*. J Physiol Anthropol. 2018 Jun 4;37(1):15. doi: 10.1186/s40101-018-0176-8. Review. PubMed PMID: 29866162.
- Murimi MW, Moyeda-Carabaza AF, Nguyen B, Saha S, Amin R, **Njike V**. *Factors that Contribute to Effective Nutrition Education Interventions in Children: A Systematic Review*. Nutr Rev. 2018 May 24. doi: 10.1093/nutrit/nuy020. [Epub ahead of print] PubMed PMID: 29800311.
- Prescott SL, Wegienka G, Logan AC, **Katz DL**. *Dysbiotic Drift and Biopsychosocial Medicine: How the Microbiome Links Personal, Public and Planetary Health*. Biopsychosoc Med. 2018 May 3;12:7. doi:

10.1186/s13030-018-0126-z. eCollection 2018. PubMed PMID: 29743938; PubMed Central PMCID: PMC5932796.

- **Doughty KN**, Ronnenberg AG, Reeves KW, Qian J, Sibeko L. *Barriers to Exclusive Breastfeeding Among Women With Gestational Diabetes Mellitus in the United States*. J Obstet Gynecol Neonatal Nurs. 2018 May;47(3):301-315. doi: 10.1016/j.jogn.2018.02.005. Epub 2018 Mar 3. PubMed PMID: 29510090.

In-Service / Training Opportunities

You are invited to join us at our **Journal Club meetings or other professional development sessions**, usually held every other month. We review and critique publications on topics such as community-based research, clinical research, and public health. This helps us stay up-to-date on research findings. It also allows us to examine publications (for the research questions, study design, results and conclusions) so we can apply the knowledge gained and lessons learned to the design of our own projects. Occasionally, we devote these sessions to reviewing recent findings from our own studies.

Our next meeting will be held at the PRC on the second floor of Griffin Hospital.

- **Tuesday, July 17TH from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.**
Scherr RE, Linnell JD, Dharmar M, Beccarelli LM, et al. *A Multicomponent, School-Based Intervention, the Shaping Healthy Choices Program, Improves Nutrition-Related Outcomes*. J Nutr Educ Behav. 2017 May;49(5):368-379.e1

If you have questions, please contact Dr. Valentine Njike by email at valentine.njike@yalegriffinprc.org, or by phone at 203-732-1265 ext. 304.

Let's Stay in Touch

We want to hear from you – let us know what you are doing and how our research might assist you in your work. Please contact Beth Comerford, MS, Deputy Director (beth.comerford@yalegriffinprc.org) or any of the staff listed in this **Newsflash**.

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The Yale-Griffin PRC is a member of the Prevention Research Centers Program.



Healthier Communities Together

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