



Year Five Report to the Community




heartsbeatbackTM

THE HEART OF NEW ULM PROJECT

Foreword

It's hard to believe the Heart of New Ulm Project (HONU) has completed its fifth year! When the project started, we could not have predicted the tremendous cultural changes that have occurred in the community.

Today, New Ulm residents are more physically active and are making better food choices by eating more fruits and vegetables. At New Ulm restaurants and even many school concession stands, the healthful options are more plentiful. Memberships at the New Ulm Recreation Center have dramatically increased. The KNUJ Farmers Market extended its selling season and often sells out of produce before closing time. Those are just a few of the many examples we have seen throughout the community.

All of this great work simply could not have been accomplished without the many organizational partnerships we have developed and nurtured over the years — or without the ongoing support and enthusiasm of New Ulm residents. While HONU's goal is to eliminate heart attacks, our goal on the HONU team is to work ourselves out of a job! We aren't quite there yet, but we're getting



Jackie Boucher



Cindy Winters

closer. We may never eliminate heart attacks completely, but if we can help people in New Ulm extend the length and quality of their lives, the project will truly be a success.

“While HONU's goal is to eliminate heart attacks, our goal on the HONU team is to work ourselves out of a job!”

Planning for the future of the project is an exciting and complex prospect. At this stage, we need to focus our efforts on sustaining the momentum and filling the gaps. We need to keep people moving, eating healthfully and engaging people to take an active role in their health care.

So, what does the roadmap look like for the future to ensure New Ulm sustains its culture of health after the HONU staff are no longer driving the efforts? What programs will be maintained,

Cover photos, clockwise from the top:

Attendees enjoy a dancing activity at the second annual New Ulm Area Day of Play.

A participant shares who she stays healthy for during an activity at the Sixth Annual Community Summit.

Representatives from the Platz Farm display their fresh produce at a local farmers market.

Employees from Citizens Bank Minnesota and their families pose at the C25K (Couch to 5K) Employee Challenge.

A group enjoys a snowshoe outing at Flandreau State Park.

adapted or continued in the future by other organizations? What programs are no longer necessary because we achieved a goal? What gaps still remain and how can we address them? These are the questions we will be looking to answer over the next several years.

Some of HONU's programs have already transitioned to other organizations. For example, the City of New Ulm Park & Recreation department, ISD #88 Community Education department and other groups or individuals have adopted some of the activities that our district volunteer leaders initiated over the years. A variety of organizations are offering more 5K runs and walks than ever before.

In our first five years, we've had a significant focus on clinical, worksite and community programs. Over the next five years, we can all work together to help sustain a culture of health by:

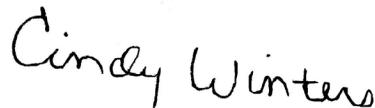
- Creating policies, systems and environments in our community that make it easier for people to make healthful lifestyle choices. For example, the Complete Streets initiative described on page 13 of this report is designed to help create an environment that supports active living in our community.

- Engaging more organizations and residents in our plan for sustaining the project long term.
- Being visionary and creative in our approaches to maintain the momentum.

The HONU Project will live on, but it may look different than it has in the past. That's why some of the most important work our team can do every day is to serve as a catalyst and resource for helping the broader New Ulm community take ownership in efforts to improve our community's health. We invite you to talk with us and explore how *you* can play a critical role in keeping the momentum going!



Jackie Boucher, MS, RD, CDE, senior vice president and chief operating officer, Minneapolis Heart Institute Foundation and project director, Heart of New Ulm Project



Cindy Winters, manager, Heart of New Ulm Project



“ The great thing in the world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving. ”

— Oliver Wendell Holmes

The Heart of New Ulm Project Success at a Glance:

- The estimated cost to treat one heart attack in New Ulm is \$50,000. If New Ulm successfully reduces heart attacks by 25 percent in 10 years, the estimated savings will be **\$10 million**.
- From 2009 to 2011, New Ulm made **bigger improvements than Minnesota** in its rates for age-adjusted acute heart attacks and deaths from coronary heart disease, according to the Minnesota Department of Health.
- Electronic health record data show New Ulm residents are making **bigger improvements in blood pressure and cholesterol** than are being seen in trends for the rest of the nation (see page 4 for a five-year results comparison).
- Collectively, New Ulm citizens have **lost more than 8,000 pounds** in the past three years.
- **1,024** patients have received phone coaching from health professionals over the last three years to help them make healthier lifestyle changes.
- **More than 5,100** people participated in free heart-health screenings in 2009 and more than 3,100 in 2011. A comparison of the data on behavioral changes shows:
 - The number of people eating five or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day increased from 19 percent to 33 percent.
 - The number of people taking daily aspirin increased from 32 percent to 40 percent.
 - The percent of people getting 150 minutes a week of moderate exercise increased from 67 percent to 77 percent.

New Ulm's culture is truly changing

- Grocery stores now feature healthier salads in their delis that are really selling well. Restaurant managers once skeptical about offering healthier options are now seeing the demand — selling as many salads as french fries.
- New Ulm Recreation Center memberships increased from 1,500 to 5,000 since the project started.
- The high school student council proposed healthier options at concession stands.
- More than 2,000 people who live or work in the community signed on for a weight loss challenge where a community prize was chosen over individual rewards. A total of 72 employers are participating in the challenge.
- In 2013, a farm sold out of its shares of Community Supported Agriculture and a new food co-op opened in the community. Farmers markets closed early in summer 2013 on a regular basis because the produce sold out.
- Prior to the project, only two annual walk/run events were held in New Ulm. With the support of the project, there are now eight races each year, with HONU staff directly involved in only one.
- A restaurant and fitness center cited the health-conscious attitude of the community as factors in their decision to locate their new business ventures in New Ulm.

“ We want to fuel our kids for success both on and off the court. Adding some healthier options to the concessions mix is a great way for us to give a consistent message about our commitment to promoting activity and good health for both our kids and our fans. ”

— Jeff Anderson, president
New Ulm Basketball Association
as quoted in the *New Ulm Journal*

“ We are working with the Heart of New Ulm Project to find ways to increase health-related topics and options for our staff and students. Encouraging walking to school, eating healthier foods and fostering positive relationships in school all help students to focus in school and life. ”

— Jeff Bertrang, superintendent, ISD #88
as quoted in the *New Ulm Journal*

“ Early in 2013, a vendor chose to remove its beverage vending machine from our building due to the machine’s low volume of pop and juice sales and resulting unprofitability. It’s great to see Brown County employees and visitors making healthier choices! ”

— Tom Henderson, Brown County Services

“ It’s important for us to have a healthy workforce. Healthy workers mean local companies don’t have to spend as much on health care. Businesses interested in operating here are also more likely to do so if they know the workers they hire here are going to cost them less in the long run. ”

— Robert Beussman, mayor of New Ulm
as quoted in *Mpls/St. Paul magazine*

“ The Complete Streets work being proposed for New Ulm is more than just making our streets pedestrian and bicycle-friendly — this effort can be life changing. It will encourage people to get out of their cars and become healthier. Our streets can become entertaining, visually appealing, safer, offer convenience, and invite us outdoors. Several generations may benefit from this initiative in many ways. ”

— Dan Beranek, member, Coalition for Active, Safe and Healthy Streets

Left: Community members enjoy free Dance Your Heart Out classes at Lincoln Park.

Right: Fans get a taste of a healthier meal at SWAP IT to ROCK IT night at a high school football game.



A Look at New Ulm's Progress

Data from electronic health records at New Ulm Medical Center show the progress that people in New Ulm have made in improving their risk factors for a heart attack. Over the past five years, a significant percentage of people have improved their blood pressure and cholesterol levels. These improvements are particularly notable because they represent larger improvements than trends being seen in the rest of the country.

Management of Risk Factors for Heart Attack, 2008-2013			
Combined data for men and women in New Ulm ages 40-79			
	2008-09 n = 7,222	2010-11 n = 7,432	2012-13 n = 7,584
Desirable risk factor measurement			
Blood pressure level within recommended range (<140/90 mm/Hg)	79%	82%	86%
LDL cholesterol level within recommended range (<130 mg/dL)	68%	72%	72%
Total cholesterol level within recommended range (<200 mg/dL)	58%	64%	65%
Body weight within recommended range (not obese; body mass index <30)	56%	56%	55%
Blood glucose level within recommended range (<100 mg/dL)	55%	56%	48%
Does not smoke or use tobacco	88%	87%	87%

Source: Electronic health record data

More good news on blood pressure: Research indicates that the Heart of New Ulm Project's programs are associated with an improvement in blood pressure. Among people with high blood pressure in 2009, those who participated in any HONU programs were about twice as likely to reduce their blood pressure to recommended levels by 2011 as those who did not participate.

New Ulm improvements bigger than Minnesota: From 2009 to 2011, New Ulm made bigger improvements than Minnesota in the rates of acute heart attacks and deaths from coronary heart disease, according to the Minnesota Department of Health. Overall, men made bigger improvements than women.

Age-adjusted Heart Attacks and Heart Disease Deaths in New Ulm and Minnesota, 2006-2011		
	% change from 2006 to 2011	
	New Ulm	Minnesota
Acute heart attacks resulting in hospital visits	-13%	-10%
Deaths from coronary heart disease	-30%	-11%

Source: Minnesota Department of Health data

Community Health Action Team

Throughout 2013, volunteers on HONU's Community Health Action Team planned a variety of events for the entire community, including Fitness Sampler events at New Ulm Recreation Center, free Sunrise Yoga classes in Hermann Heights Park and a free Amazing Quest event where participants biked, walked, ran or strolled to various locations in New Ulm to find a clue at each site and ultimately find a treasure "quest" box with a surprise at the end of the event.

Day of Play

Martin Luther College, The Heart of New Ulm Project, New Ulm Medical Center and City of New Ulm Parks & Recreation partnered to bring New Ulm residents the second annual Day of Play held in September at the New Ulm Civic Center. The free family event featured a host of activities for all ages and attracted more than 825 people.

Sixth Annual Community Summit

More than 200 community members attended our Annual Community Summit held in October, featuring healthy lifestyle expert Joe Piscatella, who shared tips on stress management, and local resident Brice Andree, who shared his story of successfully losing weight.

825+

people attended the second annual New Ulm Area Day of Play



Top: Community members enjoy Sunrise Yoga.
Middle: Families enjoy the Day of Play activities.
Bottom: Joe Piscatella speaks at the Community Summit.

LOSE IT to WIN IT Community Health Challenge

LOSE IT to WIN IT™

Weigh in, New Ulm

In June 2013, HONU launched LOSE IT to WIN IT, a free 12-month challenge that encourages everyone to ‘weigh in’ for success and come together to support each other in making healthier choices for eating, physical activity and more in order to lose weight (goal of 10 pounds) or maintain their weight if already at a healthy weight.

The challenge focuses on weight loss, since data from HONU’s community health screenings shows that more than seven out of 10 people in New Ulm need to lose weight in order to reduce their heart attack risk.

“Wins” all around

In addition to “wins” for their own health, there’s a big win for the entire community if enough people succeed in enrolling, losing weight and completing the challenge. If

goals are met, New Ulm will earn a community prize of \$100,000 worth of new outdoor fitness equipment for its parks and bicycle improvements such as bicycle racks, bicycle lanes and signage. The prize and the entire challenge are being funded with a grant from UnitedHealth Group and a generous donation toward the community prize from New Ulm Medical Center Foundation using funds raised from individuals, businesses and fundraising events.

The challenge has more than 2,000 adults who either live or work in New Ulm enrolled and will end just before Thanksgiving in 2014. To further encourage social support, 72 employers are participating in the challenge and 30 are conducting quarterly onsite weigh-ins. Periodic team challenges throughout the challenge also encourage people to team up with friends, family members, neighbors or coworkers and compete in categories such as total weight lost.

2,000+ people who live or work in New Ulm are enrolled in the LOSE IT to WIN IT Community Health Challenge

Left: City employees display their challenge wristbands and show their support for losing or maintaining weight.

Right: A display at New Ulm Recreation Center features a sample piece of the outdoor fitness equipment prize.



Tom Henning: Staying Healthy for His Family

The secret to a happy and fulfilled life may not be as elusive as most of us think. According to long-time New Ulm resident, Tom Henning, the key is to know what's important to you.

"I am truly blessed with a wonderful wife, children, grandchildren and now great-grandchildren," said Henning. "It's important to my wife and me to stay healthy so that we can travel and spend time with all of them."

Over the years, that priority has guided many of Henning's decisions. In 1962, Henning and his wife Elaine relocated their family from Seattle, Wash., to the city of New Ulm when he was installed as the pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Even with a busy schedule, Henning continued to look for ways to stay active. This included getting together regularly with friends to play tennis, a sport that he had pursued in both high school and college.

When their children became adults, it occurred to Henning and his wife that it would be beneficial to find a fitness activity that they could do together. Even though it was new to both of them, they decided to go to a fitness center and start using indoor workout equipment. They have now been exercising together for 25 years. Henning also takes daily half-hour walks with his seven-year-old golden retriever, Penny.

Even though for many years the couple has been making efforts to stay healthy, Henning knew that now at age 81 he should be doing more.

"This past May, I went to see my doctor and I weighed 230 pounds," said Henning. "I already knew that I had heart disease and my weight had crept up over the years. My doctor told me that I should lose 20 pounds."



32

pounds is how much weight Tom Henning has lost through LOSE IT to WIN IT

While reading the local paper last June, Henning and his wife noticed an announcement about the Heart of New Ulm's free 12-month "LOSE IT to WIN IT" community health challenge.

"Right away I told my wife that this program was for us," said Henning. "We were right. It has easily fit into our lives and we are definitely seeing positive changes. At my last doctor appointment, I weighed 198 pounds. I'm now at a healthy weight that I want to maintain."

Henning said that for him and his wife, the most useful parts of the program are the weekly and daily food menus and ingredient lists they receive via email.

Continued on page 8

Tom Henning, continued from page 7

“We vary the recipes a little, but follow them pretty closely,” said Henning. “We are eating three meals and three snacks a day, losing weight and not feeling deprived at all. Many of the snacks make me feel like I’m having dessert.”

Henning also said that the menus have introduced them to many foods that they didn’t know they would enjoy so much. “I didn’t think I liked squash, but now I really enjoy it,” continued Henning. “We eat salsa, avocados, tacos, burritos, grapefruit and other foods that we have found we also really like.”

To track their progress, Henning and his wife weigh themselves weekly at the fitness center, track their weight on their home calendar and

“We have so many reasons to want to stay healthy. My wife and I will be celebrating our 57th wedding anniversary and will soon welcome our ninth great-grandchild. Staying healthy will help us be able to be there for all of it.”

also weigh in regularly at the HEALTHspot® weight kiosk at New Ulm Medical Center.

“We encouraged family members and others to join the community program,” said Henning. “Just being able to participate in the program is the biggest incentive for us. I feel better and definitely want to stay on this program. I’ve finally found something that has helped me lose weight and that will help me stay healthy.”

“We have so many reasons to want to stay healthy,” continued Henning. “My wife and I will be celebrating our 57th wedding anniversary and will soon welcome our ninth great-grandchild. Staying healthy will help us be able to be there for all of it.”

Denise Leitz: One Pound, One Day, One Meal at a Time

These days, Denise Leitz’s living room is littered with exercise machines, her refrigerator is stocked with healthy foods and she no longer wakes up every morning feeling defeated before her day has even begun.

The 55-year-old mother of three has lost 50 pounds and is looking forward to keeping up with her 12 grandchildren for many years to come. And she said it’s all thanks to the support and motivation she’s received through the LOSE IT to WIN IT Community Health Challenge, part of the Heart of New Ulm Project.

“Most people have furniture in their living room; I have a ski machine and a trampoline,” quipped Leitz. “I have to warn people walking into the house to not walk into my bike!”

All jokes aside, embarking on this journey to make healthy lifestyle changes wasn’t easy for Leitz. In fact, she admitted to being afraid to sign up for the challenge.

A native of New Ulm, Leitz moved to Wisconsin in 1976. A year later, she gave birth to her first child. That, said Leitz, is when her weight struggle began. Three years ago, however, she moved back to New Ulm and started a job with the Kwik Trip convenience store. Since then, at the urging of her children, she has made the bold decision to lose weight.

“There is nothing worse than sitting on a bench because you can’t play with your grandchildren. I couldn’t sleep at night or even walk from the car to my apartment,” admitted Leitz. “I decided to

settle down and get my health back. So, in June, I signed up for the LOSE IT to WIN IT Challenge.”

Today, Leitz is continuing to make progress. Making smarter food choices — including creating healthier meals using Heart of New Ulm recipes — has been a big part of her success.

After signing up for the challenge, Leitz also cut back on junk food and sweets. Instead of snacking on candy, she takes advantage of the free piece of fruit offered daily by her employer. She also stocks her refrigerator with healthier foods, like yogurt and vegetables.

“Right now, I don’t have potato chips, cookies or any sweets in the house,” she said.

Leitz also drinks plenty of water and stays active, often biking the local trails near her home. “I don’t put off exercise anymore. It’s at the top of my list for the day,” she said.

“ I don’t put off exercise anymore. It’s at the top of my list for the day. I can’t turn to food every time I get upset. Exercise helps me handle my feelings better. ”

Through the program, Leitz also realized she often ate to ease her stress. “I can’t turn to food every time I get upset,” Leitz explained. “Exercise helps me handle my feelings better.”

Leitz is also a big fan of the motivational messages the program sends to its participants. “They don’t let you quit,” she said. “You can’t fail when you get text messages at 8 a.m., noon and 4 p.m., telling you that you can succeed!”

With the confidence she has gained from her healthier lifestyle, Leitz said she plans to lose about 100 more pounds. She also is making new plans for her future.

“I want to be able to jump rope again,” she said. “When I was in grade school, I loved jumping rope. A hundred pounds is a long way off, but I’m just taking it one pound at a time, one day at a time and one meal at a time.”

50 pounds is how much weight Denise Leitz has lost so far on her journey to better health



SWAP IT to DROP IT™

From September 2012 through April 2013, HONU implemented the SWAP IT to DROP IT™ health communications campaign with funding from UnitedHealth Group. The campaign emphasized how making small eating changes — SWAPs to save 100 calories a day — can help people lose 10 pounds in a year.

At the conclusion of the campaign, HONU conducted a voluntary survey among randomly selected residents that asked questions about their experiences with restaurants, grocery stores and convenience stores in New Ulm. More than 450 people completed the survey and results were compared with the results from a similar survey done in the summer of 2012. The comparison of results showed:

- People (primarily men) perceived that the availability of healthful foods had generally increased in restaurants, convenience stores, grocery store delis and grocery stores.
- An increased number of survey respondents felt it was easy to identify healthful choices, as well as felt confident in their ability to make healthier choices.

Sleepy Eye and Springfield campaign

The Heart of Brown County Project is an initiative funded by the Centers for Disease Control and led by the Minneapolis Heart Institute Foundation in collaboration with Allina Health and Brown County Public Health. As part of this initiative, the SWAP IT to DROP IT campaign launched anew in Sleepy Eye and Springfield in June 2013 and runs through September 2014.

- Participating convenience stores include Casey's, Cenex and Freedom in Sleepy Eye and BP and Expressway in Springfield.
- Participating grocery stores include Schutz Family Foods in Sleepy Eye and Tauer's Grocery and Gas in Springfield, which are offering free educational store tours from registered dietitians.

Several area employers are also sharing campaign materials and promoting key messages to employees.



70 percent of people in New Ulm responding to a random survey recognized the SWAP IT to DROP IT campaign

Left: Registered dietitian Linda Carruthers conducts a sampling event at Tauer's Grocery and Gas in Springfield. **Right:** A campaign billboard in Sleepy Eye promotes a healthful beverage SWAP.





SWAP IT to ROCK IT™

In 2013, HONU worked with local athletic and food personnel from schools and sports organizations throughout the community to make healthier concessions available at area sporting events. Healthier concessions were featured at a home football game, select boys and girls basketball and volleyball games, and at the New Ulm Basketball Association tournament held in February 2014.

The concession campaign uses the slogan “SWAP IT to ROCK IT on the courts ... in the stands ... on the field ... in the classroom ... at home” to convey the message that healthier food choices can help students and adults alike stay energized and achieve optimal performance. Making small, healthier choices on a regular basis — SWAP-ing a healthier choice in place of a less-healthy choice — also helps people manage their weight and helps in the quest to reduce childhood obesity.



on the field ... in the stands ... on the court ...
in the classroom ... at home

6

youth sporting events offered healthier concessions in 2013

“Menu Fairy” Video Series

Funded by a grant from the Minnesota Beef Council, HONU created a series of short videos designed to help people make healthier choices when they eat out. The “Menu Fairy” series follows a family of four as they sit down for dinner at a restaurant and consider their options. When they have questions about a healthy choice, they simply ask the spirited Menu Fairy, who drops in at their table with answers at the ready. The Menu Fairy presents simple and practical tips in a fun and engaging way for the whole family to enjoy.

The videos are available on HONU’s YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/user/HeartofNewUlm

Top left: SWAP IT to ROCK IT signage promotes the benefits of healthier choices.

Top right: Life-size cardboard cut-outs of coaches and players help promote the campaign.

Farmers Market and Local Foods

In 2013, HONU continued its work promoting local foods in partnership with the local farming community as part of its work through the USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program grant. The KNUJ Farmers Markets operated Thursday afternoons and Saturday mornings at Running's Farm & Fleet, as well as Monday evenings at a new Marktplatz Mall location. In addition to cooking demonstrations at the markets, HONU partnered with NU Chef's Pantry to offer a series of six "After the Market" cooking classes.

HONU also offered educational meetings for local produce farmers and helped those with Community Supported Agriculture programs promote membership through advertising, working with local employers to host break-and-learn sessions, and conducting other educational presentations.

4,721

visits were made to the KNUJ Farmers Markets over a three-month period in 2013

Community Garden

As a testament to the community's growing commitment to the promotion of local foods and sustainable agriculture, the Putting Green environmental learning park and HONU established a new Growing Green Community Garden in the spring of 2013 at the corner of 20th S. and Valley streets. The garden offers individual plots for community members, a "Plant It Forward" plot for growing vegetables for the food shelf, and educational sessions and individual consultations from Master Gardeners and other area experts.

- Left:** A presentation on starting an herb garden introduces community members to the basics of herb gardening.
- Right top:** Farmers markets experience growing interest and demand from the community for local foods.
- Right bottom:** Participants enjoy learning to cook with some of their purchases from the farmers market at free cooking classes with local chef Topher Jacobson.



Complete Streets

As part of the grant-funded Heart of Brown County Project, staff worked to spread the word about the benefits of Complete Streets and how to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety.

About Complete Streets

Complete Streets are designed and operated to be safe and accessible for users of all ages and abilities: pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers. The Minnesota Legislature passed a Complete Streets law in 2010. By making changes to the environment, communities can help promote and support physical activity, which in turn improves residents' physical, emotional and social health and well-being.

Progress in 2013

Throughout the year, local citizens gave presentations to service groups and organizations. In October, the project welcomed Mark Fenton, a national public health, planning and transportation consultant, along with Kelly Morphy, the executive director of the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute (WALC).

Activities included a driving tour of New Ulm to identify assets and areas of improvement in traffic flow and bicycle and pedestrian safety, a walk audit around New Ulm elementary and high school, and presentations about the many benefits of Complete Streets to New Ulm city leaders and the Brown County Commissioners.

Moving forward

The WALC Institute has created a report with recommendations about how New Ulm can improve safety for all users. In 2014, a leadership group is working on the recommendations and providing guidance to action teams. The teams are working specifically on the areas identified in the report, providing education on bicycle and pedestrian safety, and developing processes or procedures that ensure all users are taken into account whenever any street work is done over the next several years.



Top: Mark Fenton and Kelly Morphy lead a group of community leaders on a walking audit.

Bottom: Fenton talks about Complete Streets projects with Brown County officials at the corner of Center and State streets in New Ulm. County officials from left: Highway Engineer Wayne Stephens, County Commissioner Andy Lochner and Sheriff Rich Hoffmann. (Photo by Fritz Busch, *Journal of New Ulm*)

6

key recommendations are offered in a report from the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute for improving safety for all users of New Ulm streets

HeartBeat Connections

In 2013, its third year, the HeartBeat Connections program helped nearly 600 people who are at high risk for heart disease or those who have diabetes or heart disease.

Through monthly phone coaching sessions, people are encouraged to improve risk factors that could lead to a heart attack. The program is free to New Ulm residents and selects individuals to participate based on data from their electronic health record, as well as referrals from primary care providers.

Evaluation results

A recent evaluation of the HeartBeat Connections program compared participants in the first six months of the program with people who were eligible for the program, but did not participate. Results showed:

- More program participants significantly decreased their LDL (“bad”) cholesterol than eligible people who did not participate.
- More program participants successfully quit smoking compared to eligible people who did not participate.
- The more times participants talked with their program coach, the faster they generally improved their risk factors.
- Overall, participants are making a variety of healthful lifestyle changes, such as quitting smoking, increasing the amount of fruits and vegetables they eat and increasing their physical activity. Many are also taking a prescribed statin to help lower their cholesterol in conjunction with these lifestyle changes.

800

people participated in phone coaching sessions in 2013 for help in making healthful lifestyle changes



Phone coach Kate Callahan Schmitz, RD, talks with a HeartBeat Connections participant.

Weight Management Coaching Program

In January 2013, HONU launched a new weight management phone coaching program. It’s offered to community residents age 18 and older who are overweight with a Body Mass Index above 30 and are also participating in the LOSE IT to WIN IT community health challenge.

In 2013, more than 200 participants received personalized weight management coaching from a trained health professional through this additional program. Coaching includes monthly phone calls to help participants set goals to lose weight and improve their overall health.

Professional Education for Providers

Through two Grand Rounds educational events in 2013, health care providers had the opportunity to hear presentations from national experts on key gender differences in heart disease and also the treatment of high blood pressure with the help of integrative medicine.

Worksite Consulting and Lifestyle Change Programs

Throughout 2013, employers continued to embrace resources, tools and consulting from HONU as they worked to engage their workforce in practicing a culture of well-being while at work. HONU staff consulted with several employers considering tobacco-free and healthy vending policies and engaged employers in various programs throughout the year, including the LOSE IT to WIN IT Community Health Challenge.

Staff also worked with New Ulm Medical Center staff to develop a reporting process for New Ulm Medical Center to be able to conduct heart-health screenings for worksites that are either outside the area served by the Heart of New Ulm Project or want to have a screening in a year when HONU does not offer them.

Sixth Annual Worksite Summit

Held in October, our annual Worksite Summit was attended by more than 45 worksite wellness leaders and featured a presentation by national health consultant Mark Fenton on “Health Jeopardy: Building a Healthier Workplace.” The presentation helped leaders learn the importance of creating environments and policies that encourage physical activity as a routine part of daily life.

72

local worksites have employees participating in the LOSE IT to WIN IT challenge



Top: Employers such as BIC APP are actively promoting the LOSE IT to WIN IT challenge to employees as part of their overall worksite wellness activities.

Bottom: Citizens Bank Minnesota is an example of the many local employers embracing a culture of wellness. An employee 5K called the C25K (Couch to 5K) Challenge was held on June 4, 2013, and included 40 employees and some of their family members who walked or ran the course.

Beacon Promotions: A Successful Recipe for Worksite Wellness

On any given day at Beacon Promotions in New Ulm, you're likely to hear employees talking about healthier recipes they've tried and swapping them. And at the company's annual spring Safety Day — which has actually evolved to align more with their wellness focus — you'll find a healthy potluck with a popular recipe competition that yields several proud winners.

The real winners at Beacon, however, are *all* of its 120 employees, who seem to have found a successful recipe for worksite wellness. It's a combination of positive attitude, accountability, support, fun and supportive leaders who champion the efforts.

In the office of Sarah Weidman, channel manager for special markets and former director of human resources for the promotional products supplier company, employees often pop in to share with her how they've lost five pounds or need to buy new clothes because everything's now too big. Some share how they have quit smoking, while others are interested in how they might get a standing workstation, for which the company is

exploring options. The reports in her office show a workforce that has seen some improvement in absenteeism over the years, too.

"People are definitely in tune with what's going on and excited about creating a healthier lifestyle for themselves and their families," said Weidman. "They are so happy and they want to tell me what they've done and what lifestyle changes they've made. It's really fun to hear about all the successes and see the pride ... the impact ... the confidence."

Employees eager to participate

In 2009, Beacon took on a more active role in the wellness arena and formalized a wellness committee. They became involved with the Heart of New Ulm and tried to take advantage of all the health promotion programs that were offered. Since then, the wellness committee has also conducted at least one big program on its own each year and consistently achieved high levels of participation.

Employees at Beacon Promotions take stretch breaks at 10 and 2 every day to help manage stress.



During their three-month Get Fit Challenge in 2010, 56 employees participated (70 percent of all employees at the time) and collectively lost more than 100 pounds and 90 inches. In 2013-2014, 73 percent of all employees are participating in HONU's LOSE IT to WIN IT challenge. The impressive program participation results from all-company emails and meetings, leaders talking about programs at department meetings, and often personally walking around to talk to people and encourage them to participate.

"We're fortunate to have a great leadership team who believes in health and wellness and knows the ROI on these programs is well worth the time and energy," Weidman stressed. "Just the awareness that we have these programs gets people excited. It's truly a credit to our employees that they want to participate for their own health and it creates positivity. We have healthier workers who come to work better-rested, with a better attitude."

A supportive team environment and accountability are also key factors driving employee engagement and success in programs. As part of the Get Fit Challenge, Beacon hired a dietitian and offered individual counseling for interested employees. The dietitian met with employees every two weeks to review their food journals, weigh them and take measurements.

"That was really impactful on a lot of people," said Weidman. "It was a fun, team-oriented competition and I received lots of feedback that meeting with the dietitian held people accountable. I think a lot of us really need that accountability to stay on track."

Tobacco changes, healthier vending offerings and stretch breaks

In addition to regular programs, Beacon offered a Heart of New Ulm screening in 2011, has begun to address smoking on campus and also started to explore healthier vending options. Although they haven't gone tobacco free, smoking is now restricted to one area in the parking lot at each of their three buildings and they hope to offer an onsite smoking cessation program soon.

“We’re fortunate to have a great leadership team who believes in health and wellness and knows the ROI on these programs is well worth the time and energy.”

The wellness committee met with vending company representatives in mid 2013 to talk about alternatives and a handful of new healthier items have sold reasonably well. They plan to continue tweaking their vending offerings and are considering offering fresh fruit for sale on the honor system in the breakroom soon.

Weidman said the integration of wellness topics into Safety Day has also gotten a very welcome reception and spurred positive changes, such as when Holly Glaubitz, a health educator who serves as HONU's worksite lead, gave a presentation on reducing stress at work.

"It was a big hit; everyone really loved the message and the content. We took the stretching techniques she shared with us and about a year ago added stretch breaks at 10 and 2 every day. When the bell rings, everyone is encouraged to take five minutes to do the series of stretches that are posted on cards throughout the buildings."

Looking to the future, Weidman knows it's no stretch to say that Beacon will continue to invest in its wellness initiatives.

"I'm a big believer that community health outreach and specifically worksite wellness programs are vital to improving health and wellness and creating long-lasting change in individuals. As long as we're creative in coming up with topics that resonate with people and programs that are unique and fun and challenging — but also simple enough that everyone can handle doing — I think we'll continue to have success and get participation and see improvements in health."

Looking Forward to Five More Transformational Years



Robert G. Hauser, MD

Over the past five years, New Ulmites have shown us what is possible when people work together to support and encourage good health. The idea behind the project is simple — engage an entire community to address health and support disease prevention from all

angles. However, though this idea may seem simple, The Heart of New Ulm Project has proven unique in making the changes necessary to bring this idea to life.

Models like the Heart of New Ulm will become the norm as health care moves beyond hospital and clinic walls and out into communities. Health care is undergoing momentous changes driven by payment reform, provider consolidation and an intense focus on quality and outcomes. Keeping patients well and at home will become the number one priority of providers who, in this new model, will assume responsibility and financial risk for managing the health of entire communities.

Government and private payers will value organizations and programs that can translate new knowledge into more cost-effective methods for preventing disease, as well as treating it.

The entire country is trying to figure out how to accomplish the sorts of outcomes that are already happening in New Ulm and leaders are referencing HONU as an example of what success looks like. In 2013, we hosted a two-day conference for leaders in community health to share the successes of HONU and other successful community health initiatives. During the conference, more than 250 community and health leaders joined together to discuss how to create and sustain successful, collaborative community health programs like HONU.

In 2014, we are hosting another conference to help others learn from our model.

Though the results of the first half of the project have been promising, the work is not yet finished. Our focus in the coming years will be in completing the 10-year mission of the project and creating sustainability for the components of the project that have produced positive outcomes. However, we must also consider the potential of the project to impact other communities. In finishing out the project, we will focus on creating a model that other communities can follow. We've seen that HONU works, and sharing our challenges, strategies and successes with others will allow other communities to reap the benefits of our work.

“The entire country is trying to figure out how to accomplish the sorts of outcomes that are already happening in New Ulm and leaders are referencing HONU as an example of what success looks like.”

HONU and the community of New Ulm are trailblazers in this new era of health care. Thanks to all for your continued investment in the project. Please know that your efforts will see results for years to come — not only in New Ulm, but in other communities as well.

Robert G. Hauser, MD, FACC, FHRS
Senior Consulting Cardiologist,
Minneapolis Heart Institute
Interim President,
Minneapolis Heart Institute Foundation

2013 Publications and Presentations

- “Eat More Fruits and Vegetables to Prevent Heart Disease: The Food Desert Program.” Presented by Rebecca Werner at the 2013 Healthy Food Financing Initiative Convening, Washington, D.C., February 2013.
- “Transforming Rural Health.” Presented by Toby Freier at the American Hospital Association’s National Rural Meeting, Phoenix, Feb. 12, 2013.
- “Prevalence of the American Heart Association’s ‘Ideal Cardiovascular Health’ Metrics in a Rural, Cross-Sectional, Community-Based Study: The Heart of New Ulm Project.” Authors: Kim JI, Sillah A, Boucher JL, Sidebottom AC, Knickelbine T. *Journal of the American Heart Association*, April 2013.
- “Hearts Beat Back: The Heart of New Ulm Project.” Presented by Jackie Boucher at Connecting to Transform Communities: Stakeholders in Health and Wellness, Minneapolis, Apr. 25-26, 2013.
- “Success Stories from the Heart of New Ulm Project.” Presented by Raquel Pereira at the Minnesota Dietetics in Healthcare Communities Spring Workshop, May 2013.
- “HeartBeat Connections: A Program Complementing Primary Care Integrated Within a Community-Based Initiative to Improve the Cardiovascular Health of a Rural Community.” Authors: Benson G, Sidebottom A, VanWormer JJ, Boucher JL, Stephens C, Krikava J. *Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine*, May-June 2013, Vol. 26, No. 3.
- “Hearts Beat Back: The Heart of New Ulm Project: Changing the Role of the Registered Dietitian.” Presented by Rebecca Werner at the South Dakota Dietetic Annual Conference, Sept. 19, 2013.
- “Developing Culturally Appropriate Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Interventions: The Heart of New Ulm Project’s Success.” Authors: Raquel Pereira, Jackie Boucher, Gretchen Benson, Rebecca Lindberg, Rebecca Fliszar. *Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics’ SCAN Pulse*, Fall 2013, Vol. 32, No. 4.
- “The Heart of New Ulm.” Presented by Cindy Winters at the Alliance for Healthy Homes & Communities Second Annual Statewide Convening, Minneapolis, Oct. 1, 2013.
- “Building Heart-Healthy Communities: The Heart of New Ulm Project.” Presented by Jackie Boucher at the Allina Cardiovascular Nursing Conference, Minneapolis, Oct. 8, 2013.
- “Using Worksites to Help Change Culture.” Presented by Holly Glaubitz at the Midwest Health Promotion Conference, St. Paul, Nov. 7, 2013.
- “Short-term Changes in Lifestyle Risk Factors and Incident Metabolic Syndrome in the Heart of New Ulm Project.” Presented by Jackie Boucher at the American Heart Association’s Scientific Sessions, Dallas, Nov. 16-20, 2013.
- “Identifying Acute Myocardial Infarctions from Coded Data in the EHR.” Presented by Jennifer Krueger, Arthur Sillah, Abbey Sidebottom, Michael Miedema, Amatul Hasan at the 2013 American Medical Informatics Association Annual Symposium, Washington, DC., Nov. 16-20, 2013.
- “Assessing the Food Environment of a Rural Community: Baseline Findings from the Heart of New Ulm Project.” Pereira RF, Sidebottom AC, Boucher, JL, Lindberg R, Fliszar R. *Preventing Chronic Disease*, March 6, 2014.
- “Program Participation and Blood Pressure Improvement Over Two Years in the Heart of New Ulm Project.” Authors: Sillah A, Sidebottom AC, Boucher JL, Pereira RF, VanWormer JJ. *Preventing Chronic Disease*, March 27, 2014.



To view papers and conference posters, visit www.heartsbeatback.org and click on Research Publications and Presentations in the lower right-hand corner of our home page.

Our 2013 Steering Committee

Kathleen Backer, New Ulm Medical Center
Foundation Board
Jim Bartels, KNUJ-SAM Radio
Deb Beatty, New Ulm Medical Center
Dan Beranek, Alliance Bank
Bob Beussman, Mayor, City of New Ulm
Carisa Buegler, New Ulm Medical Center
Linda Carruthers, Mayo Health Systems
Jenny Eckstein, New Ulm Chamber of Commerce
Bruce Fenske, New Ulm Journal
Dennis Frederickson, MN Department of
Natural Resources
Marj Frederickson, New Ulm Medical Center
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Tom Henderson, Brown County Family Services

Kitty Hietala, New Ulm Medical Center
Rachel Hoffman, Minnesota Valley Testing Labs
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Cheryl Kormann, City of New Ulm Park & Recreation
Joan Krikava, MD, New Ulm Medical Center
Carol Laitinen, New Ulm community member
Dixie Moorman, Minnesota Valley Testing Labs
Karen Moritz, Brown County Public Health
Keri Parish, Kraft Foods
Leah Shaver, J&R Schugel Trucking
Timothy Plath, Minnesota Valley Lutheran School
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Peter Roufs, New Ulm Area Catholic Schools
Kathy Runck, New Ulm Medical Center
Tom Schmitz, City of New Ulm Park & Recreation
Audra Shaneman, New Ulm Chamber of Commerce
Carsa Spaude, Parker Hannifin
Verna Walters, 3M
Lori Weinberg, Windings Inc.
Katie Wilhelmi, Hy-Vee

Some of the Steering Committee members and Heart of New Ulm local staff at a meeting include:

Front row, left to right: Leah Shaver, Melissa Hoffmann, Shawn Hildebrandt, Katie Wilhelmi, Cindy Winters, Carisa Buegler

Back row, left to right: Phillip Hackbarth, Verna Walters, Rebecca Werner, Jackie Boucher, Holly Glaubitz, Jeff Bertrang, Tom Schmitz, Robert Beussman, Bruce Fenske



Organizations Providing Support in 2013

Allina Health

- Overall project funding

Hy-Vee

- Fuel Saver discount coupons for LOSE IT to WIN IT incentives, food samples at community summit

Jensen Motors

- Fundraising oil change event

Minnesota Beef Council

- Funding for Menu Fairy videos

New Ulm Medical Center Foundation

- Donation of funding for LOSE IT to WIN IT community prize, overall fundraising for HONU in 2013 through golf tournament, Have a Heart Gala and other activities

UnitedHealth Group

- Grant funding for SWAP IT to DROP IT campaign, LOSE IT to WIN IT Community Health Challenge and community prize

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture

- Grant funding through Farmers Market Promotion Program

U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

- Grant funding for The Heart of Brown County Project through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Local businesses donating prizes for LOSE IT to WIN IT drawings:

Dan Beranek, Woodbury Financial Services
3M

J&R Schugel Trucking

Kraft Foods

KNUJ

New Ulm Chamber of Commerce

New Ulm Journal

Parker Hannifin

The Heart of New Ulm Project Team

Jennifer Beaudette, New Ulm Medical Center

Gretchen Benson, RD, CDE,

Minneapolis Heart Institute Foundation

Jackie Boucher, MS, RD, CDE,

Minneapolis Heart Institute Foundation

Theresa Bunkers-Lawson, RN, CDE,

New Ulm Medical Center

Holly Glaubitz, MPA, ACE, New Ulm Medical Center

Joy Hayes, MS, RD, CDE, New Ulm Medical Center

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Raquel Pereira, MS, RD

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Arthur Sillah, MPH, Allina Health, Center for Healthcare Research & Innovation

Charles Stephens, MD, New Ulm Medical Center

Rebecca Werner, RD, New Ulm Medical Center

Cindy Winters, New Ulm Medical Center



Hearts Beat Back: The Heart of New Ulm Project is a collaborative partnership of Allina Health, the Minneapolis Heart Institute Foundation and the community of New Ulm.

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