

February 27, 2013

News Release

For Immediate Release

City, Healthy Living Alliance Partner on "Let's Move"



Mayor Bob Stephens has designated Springfield a *Let's Move* city, as part of First Lady Michelle Obama's campaign to solve the problem of childhood obesity in our country. Mayor Pro Tem Jeff Seifried will meet the First Lady Thursday as she visits Springfield on her national *Let's Move* tour this week to celebrate the campaign's third anniversary. The White House has not indicated the exact time or location of her visit.

The City joined the initiative originally in 2010. Thursday's announcement illustrates a renewed commitment that includes agreeing to five actionable and achievable goals:

Goal I: Start Early, Start Smart

To provide children with a healthier start, local elected officials commit to helping early care and education program providers incorporate best practices for nutrition, physical activity and screen time into their programs.

Goal II: My Plate, Your Place

To empower parents and caregivers, local elected officials commit to prominently displaying My Plate in all municipally- or county-owned or operated venues where food is served.

Goal III: Smart Servings for Students

To provide healthy food in schools, local elected officials commit to increasing participation in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

Goal IV: Model Food Service

To improve access to healthy, affordable foods, local elected officials commit to implementing healthy and sustainable food service guidelines that are aligned with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans in all municipally- or county-owned or operated venues that serve food.

Goal V: Active Kids at Play

To increase physical activity, local elected officials commit to mapping local play spaces, completing a needs assessment, developing an action plan, and launching a minimum of three proven policies, programs or initiatives aimed at increasing access to play.

Let's Move Continues Work Already Underway in the Community

The Healthy Living Alliance will help the City lead the effort. Healthy Living Alliance partners are moving a number of initiatives forward already that align with White House *Let's Move* objectives around healthy eating and physical activity.

The goal of the Healthy Living Alliance, which has grown to more than 30 partners in two years, is to improve lives and strengthen the city's economic outlook by reducing the high family and community costs of diet- and lifestyle-related diseases. Initiatives include healthy eating opportunities for kids and promotion of walking and biking for all ages.

The Healthy Living Alliance recently partnered with St. Agnes School, for example, to implement fresh produce garden bars, which reduce canned fruits and vegetables at lunch.

Students at St. Agnes named their new garden bar "The Michelle," in honor of First Lady Michelle Obama's efforts to provide healthier opportunities for kids.

"We are proud that our garden bar provides our kids with daily, fresh lunch choices," said Jeanne Skahan, St. Agnes School Principal. "We are excited about the direction we are going!"

Another healthy eating initiative is the Healthy Living Alliance's work with partners such as the Downtown YMCA, Homegrown Food Hub, and the Springfield Urban Agriculture Coalition to serve fresh local produce in after-school snacks as well as provide garden-based nutrition education.

On the physical activity front, the Healthy Living Alliance and partners are developing programs such as after-school Hip-Hop dance classes. Hip Hop classes last year involved more than 800 hours of kids getting much-needed and fun-filled exercise. Current classes are at Robberson Elementary School.

The Healthy Living Alliance also supports existing programs such as [The LINK](#) and [Let's Go Smart](#).

The LINK is a City of Springfield project to develop a cross-town pedestrian and bicycle route. The City will celebrate a new section of The LINK in the Doling Park neighborhood area later this year thanks in part to funding the Healthy Living Alliance has secured.

Let's Go Smart is an [Ozark Greenways](#) campaign to encourage alternative modes of transportation, from walking to carpooling. The Healthy Living Alliance has secured funding that will help put this campaign on radio and television.

"The Healthy Living Alliance is helping Springfield make *Let's Move* progress by connecting and advancing the many positive healthy living efforts already underway," said Katie Towns-Jeter, Administrator of the Springfield-Greene County Health Department's Division of Chronic Disease Prevention.

The health department helped organize the Healthy Living Alliance along with co-founders Jordan Valley Community Health Center and the Ozarks Regional YMCA, which hosts the Healthy Living Alliance.

"Serving as HLA's lead agency, we are proud to be the home base of the community-based Healthy Living Alliance," said Brad Toft, Chief Executive Officer of the Ozarks Regional YMCA.

Interview and Photo Opportunities

St. Agnes School

St. Agnes School in partnership with HLA began a garden bar in April 2012, serving four to six fresh fruits & vegetables daily to more than 150 students. To date the school has served more than 2,000 pounds of fresh produce at its garden bar. The children have nicknamed their garden bar "The Michelle" in honor of First Lady Michelle Obama's efforts to provide healthier opportunities for kids.

Contact: Jeanne Skahan, Principal at St. Agnes, (417) 866-5038, jskahan@scspk12.org

Photo: Visit the garden bar at lunch, starting 11:15 a.m.

Location: 531 S. Jefferson Ave

Hip-Hop Classes

To increase physical activity opportunities for kids after school, HLA has launched popular Hop-Hop movement classes at local elementary schools. Current Hip-Hop classes are Wednesdays from 3:00-3:45 p.m. at Robberson Elementary School.

Contact: Christian Mechlin, Community Resource Coordinator at Robberson, (417) 523-1857, ckmechlin@spsmail.org

Photo: Visit a hip-hop class Wednesdays from 3:00-3:45 p.m.

Location: 1100 E. Kearney St.

About the Healthy Living Alliance

The Healthy Living Alliance is a network of more than 30 organizations working to make Springfield a healthy place to live, work, and play. Projects range from healthy eating initiatives such as school lunch garden bars to neighborhood engagement in sidewalk and bike route development. For more information about HLA's partners and projects, visit www.hlaspringfield.org.

About the Ozarks Regional YMCA

The HLA is based at the Ozarks Regional YMCA, an association of eight YMCA branches with more than 20,000 members. The YMCA has served Springfield and surrounding communities since 1889, uniting members, volunteers, supporters and advocates around healthy, active living. To learn more, visit orymca.org, or join us on Facebook "Ozarks Regional YMCA."

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