



# Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan

*Advocates for Healthy Weight in Children*

## July/August 2014 Newsletter

### **Healthy Food Financing & Voices for Healthy Kids**

According to the US Department of Agriculture, 2.1 million Michigan residents, including more than 500,000 children, live in communities with limited access to a nearby grocery store. These same communities are often challenged, not just by high rates of unemployment, but also with health risks including high rates of obesity.



Since research conducted over the past twenty years shows that access to fresh, healthy foods can contribute to better eating habits and better health, including decreased risk for obesity and diet related diseases, the Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan Coalition's policy goals include working to increase access to healthy food options, such as fresh, local, fruits and vegetables. This is why we are excited to support Voices for Healthy Kids, a joint initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and

American Heart Association, in advocating for Michigan to pursue a healthy food financing initiative. An approach that has proven to work in other states, healthy food financing spurs grocery development in underserved communities by providing one-time loan and grant financing to fresh food retailers. In Pennsylvania, for example, this strategy resulted in 88 new or expanded grocery stores, increasing healthy food access for nearly half a million people.

### **Meet Ted O'Dell, Healthy Food Access Campaign Manager**

Ted O'Dell has been recently hired as the Healthy Food Access Campaign Manager for the Voices for Healthy Kids grant here in Michigan. His first day is Monday, August 18th. Ted has years of experience in increasingly responsible roles with political and public policy campaigns, advocacy and coalition building.

In his most recent position, Ted is Founder and CEO of a Social Security Disability firm specializing in the representation and adjudication of individual disability claims. His campaign and coalition experience is enhanced by his eleven





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years of working inside both chambers of the Michigan Legislature and seven years as a UniServ Director with the Michigan Education Association where he was responsible for all advocacy, labor relations matters, negotiations, grievances, arbitration's, legal representation and coalition building in the Central Upper Peninsula. Ted has also served in various roles within local government.

In his spare time, Ted enjoys building his antique car and petroleum collections.

We look forward to having Ted work with Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan to help us achieve our policy goals around Healthy Food Access!



## **Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan Annual Meeting**

It is hard to believe that fall is right around the corner. Hey, don't blame the messenger! We think that is not all bad, though, as it means that our annual meeting is fast approaching. This year's event will take place on Wednesday, October 29, and will be held at Eagle Eye Banquet Center. Stay tuned for meeting and registration info!

## **Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan Legislative Update**

As the legislature worked to put the final touches on the 2014-15 budget before breaking for the majority of the summer, a few decisions were less than kind to some of HKHM's priorities. Policy that we successfully lobbied in previous years to direct additional funding in the K-12 budget to schools that met certain "best practices", including PE or health education, fell victim to a movement away from best practice funding in general for schools. In addition, funding was directed to support a school health and nutrition education software platform that falls short of appropriate standards and was opposed by several organizations. Curriculum changes that allow greater substitution in lieu of required time in classes such as PE compounded our policy objections.

As rough a June as it was for Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan's priorities, we also saw some success. Money was included in the DCH budget to improve access to breast pumps for young mothers, which can contribute to healthier starts for their children. Also, legislation to protect vulnerable roadway users is still up for consideration on the House floor, complimenting another piece of legislation requiring Driver's Ed courses to educate drivers to be aware and safe around other users, such as motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians.

Stay tuned for more updates and we will look forward to seeing you at our Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan Annual Meeting on October 29.