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HEAC - BALDWIN PARK

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Healthy Eating, Active Communities (HEAC) is a four-year strategic initiative funded by [The California Endowment](#) to reduce disparities in obesity and diabetes by improving food and physical activity environments for school-aged children in low-income neighborhoods. CCPHA is working with one of six HEAC grantees, the 57th Assembly District Grassroots Team in Baldwin Park, CA, known as People on the Move. Grantees represent highly motivated community collaboratives that include partners such as schools, community organizations, and local public health departments. This page describes the elements of the HEAC initiative in Baldwin Park.



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BACKGROUND In March 2005, The California Endowment, a private, statewide health foundation, selected six collaboratives located in urban and rural communities in California to participate in its \$26 million, four-year initiative to prevent childhood obesity. Each community received \$1.8 million to work collaboratively to institute [policy change and practices](#) in such areas as schools, after-school programs, neighborhoods, media and advertising, and health care services to improve opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. The HEAC initiative's strong emphasis on peer learning and youth involvement makes it a unique undertaking. CCPHA is working with People on the Move, the community's name for the HEAC initiative in Baldwin Park, CA.

PURPOSE. The mission of *People on the Move* is to foster an environment for school-aged children and their families conducive to healthy eating choices and behaviors, increased physical activity, and a reduction in obesity and diabetes through effective policy making and private, public, and nonprofit collaboration. This mission is being executed through two objectives:

- To implement and evaluate strategies to improve environments for healthy eating and physical activity.
- To create momentum for widespread changes in the policies and practices that contribute to the rising rates of childhood obesity.

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DEMOGRPHICS. Based on the 2004 California Physical Fitness Test of 5th, 7th, and 9th graders as analyzed by the California Center for Public Health Advocacy, more than one-third (34.3%) of all students in the 57th Assembly District (which includes Baldwin Park) are overweight. This rate is among the highest in the state. Overweight children face a greater risk of developing many health problems, including diabetes, high blood pressure, and asthma, as well as low self-esteem, poor body image, and symptoms of depression. Moreover, children who are overweight are more likely to become overweight or obese adults, with serious lifetime health consequences. Baldwin Park has one of the youngest populations in Los Angeles County, with more than 80% of its residents under the age of 35.

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE. *People on the Move* builds on years of collaboration between residents and teens in Baldwin Park and incorporates CCPHA's 57th Assembly District Grassroots Team, Kaiser Permanente, and the City of Baldwin Park. *People on the Move* includes representatives from the Baldwin Park Unified School District, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health—SPA 3 & 4 Area Health Offices, the City of Baldwin Park, Kaiser Permanente, CCPHA, Citrus Valley Health Partners, CHOICES Program, California Center for Civic Participation, and the *Healthy Teens on the Move* Advocacy Committee.

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HEALTHY TEENS ON THE MOVE. A unique component of the HEAC model is its focus on creating a teen advocacy infrastructure at the local level—crossing the areas of policy, program, and practice—to ensure long-term, institutional support for youth development. Since 1999 youth in Baldwin Park have promoted healthy and active living. Building on this history, students from the local high schools created a standing subcommittee that advises *People on the Move* on the barriers to healthy eating and physical activity that students face at school and in the community. *Healthy Teens on the Move* is the name the community's teens give this advisory committee. Through the use of youth assessments and forums, youth identify improvements that would promote healthier eating and physical activity among their peers in Baldwin Park.

As a result of ongoing adult and youth partnerships, *People on the Move* has developed a clear vision of needed policy and environmental changes in schools, neighborhoods, after-school programs, and marketing.

- **Engaging Youth as Advocates**

People on the Move involves youth in assessing and improving their nutrition and physical activity environments through the following strategies:

- Involve students in the implementation of state legislation SB 12 and SB 965, and the school wellness policy. Students lead in marketing healthy food, raising student awareness of legislation, and selecting healthy vending machine items through the following activities:
 - Conducting student surveys and taste tests to guide vending purchases that reflect student preferences
 - Planning interactive and educational health festivals on campus and in the community
 - Working with Associated Student Body directors, food service directors, and the school board to address the fiscal impact of implementing a healthy vending machine policy and to design healthy fundraising and marketing in schools
- Host local forums with student groups and policy makers to promote youth-adult collaboration and establish policy changes in schools and the community
- Provide youth opportunities to serve as spokespersons to local media and elected officials
- Train youth to educate fellow students and the community about the importance of making healthy living choices
- Provide youth opportunities to network with other student organizations and activist groups

- **Photovoice**

Healthy Teens on the Move is using Photovoice, a community research tool, to document what affects teens' access to healthy foods and physical activity. Photovoice, a method of blending a grassroots approach to social action and photography, entrusts cameras to individuals to enable them to act as recorders and potential catalysts for social action and change. By using the immediacy of the visual image and accompanying stories, Photovoice provides an effective means of describing needed health policy changes.

In January 2006, *Healthy Teens on the Move* developed an art display of their Photovoice project to demonstrate to community leaders how their environment affects the choices they have in food and physical activity. Photos included examples of community assets, such as a healthy teen center and community events encouraging physical activity, as well as photos of community challenges, including fast-food diners, prominent marketing of unhealthy food, unsafe and unwalkable sidewalks near schools and elsewhere in the city, and poor-quality produce in local convenience stores. The photos promoted dialogue among the youth, community residents, and policymakers.

For more information contact CCPHA Advocate Coordinator, Christina Cardenas at (626) 961-1179 or cc@publichealthadvocacy.org.

BALDWIN PARK RESIDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE The Baldwin Park Resident Advisory Committee (BP-RAC) is a community group that advises *People on the Move* on policies and programs that can improve children's' environments in Baldwin Park. Members of BP-RAC participate in planning community activities and trainings that support youth and parents in leading healthier lives and improving their community. The BP-RAC meets regularly during evenings and/or on Saturday mornings. In February 2006, the BP-RAC held a series of focus groups and presentations with community organizations, parents, and youth to identify and prioritize local policy solutions they felt would improve children's eating and physical activity environments in Baldwin Park. As a result, the BP-RAC developed the following list of strategies and policy recommendations:

- Involve community residents in drafting nutrition and physical activity policy recommendations that:
 - Ensure healthy food is available at reasonable prices in schools and the community
 - Prevent new fast food establishments from coming into the city
 - Require nutrition information, including caloric content, be provided on children's menus in schools and at restaurants
 - Increase joint use of school and city buildings and improve walkability in the community
 - Improve children's snacks and meals in after-school programs
- Implement state legislation such as SB 12 and SB 965 and the school wellness policy
- Involve community residents in city and school district land use and park master plan processes
- Host local forums with parents, community groups, and the City Council to establish community workgroups to bring about environmental changes in Baldwin Park

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