



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR HEALTH EQUITY (CPHE) NEWSLETTER

Dear CPHE participants and friends,

We are so happy to be sending you the first issue of our quarterly CPHE Newsletter! Thank you all for helping to grow the CPHE community.

Given the new political climate and continued uncertainty about health reform in the US, this is a crucial time to take CPHE to another level, both in scope and depth, as part of the progressive health equity movement in the US. We envision this newsletter as another way to strengthen the CPHE network, along with our website, social media announcements, yearly meetings, and our continued support of the good work each community is doing. You have all affirmed that, through CPHE, the Cuban experience propels communities to work towards changing their narrative to a more 'can-do' approach. You have emphasized that the people most affected by inequities need to be key players in altering existing power structures in order to achieve lasting change. Currently there are approximately 250 individuals in CPHE, representing dozens of organizations in 12 sites throughout the US. Each site has been able to draw on Cuban approaches to improve health and health equity locally. MEDICC will continue to support your authentic community voices to influence health policy at local, State and National levels. We will use this newsletter to provide current news and information from MEDICC, highlights from your communities, information on upcoming events, and opportunities and resources that we hope will be helpful as you continue to adapt and expand programs inspired by Cuba's upstream principles.

This first issue of the newsletter includes some 'catch-up' news from 2016, but future issues will be quarterly. We will be especially interested in your comments, suggestions and input for the newsletter. Sadly, Michelle Nader, CPHE Program Manager, will be leaving MEDICC in April, but we wish her well as she pursues a Masters in International Studies at the University of San Francisco. We would also like to welcome Vanessa Falcon, who is now working with CPHE (vfalcon@mediccglobal.org). Please feel free to send Vanessa and Diane (dappelbaum@mediccglobal.org) any news, stories, announcements and comments you would like to share (next issue will be July, 2017).

We wish each of you the very best as we enter Spring, a time of warmth and renewal,

Diane, Michelle and Vanessa

www.medicc.org

CPHE NEWS FROM MEDICC

CPHE New Orleans

In January, 2017, MEDICC launched a new CPHE in the community of Central City, New Orleans, through partnership with Ashe Cultural Arts Center and our site coordinator "Mama Jamilah," a longtime community health activist. Central City offers a rich array of organizations

taking innovative approaches to community development. The group will be traveling to Cuba in October of this year. Diane Appelbaum and MEDICC Board Member, Arnold Perkins, visited in January 2017 for an orientation and to visit sites in the Central City community.



MEDICC Board member Arnold Perkins and Jamilah Peters-Muhaammad discussing New Orleans CPHE.

CPHE Evaluation

MEDICC is planning to embark on an evaluation of the past 12 years of CPHE. We will work collaboratively with experts in community-based participatory research on a retrospective study of CPHE to harness the knowledge gained over the past decade about the different outcomes in the US that were informed by Cuba. The evaluation will also examine how the CPHE experience has catalyzed transformative learning, providing fresh insights on dominant paradigms in the US with regard to culture, race, and political will. This evaluation will inform future work, both within MEDICC and for other organizations working toward health equity and policy change.

Health Equity Leaders Exchange February 12-19, 2017

As part of our effort to broaden the visibility and impact of the CPHE Network, MEDICC organized a strategic group of health equity leaders to travel to Cuba to witness Cuba's place-based, cross-sectoral health system. The group was comprised of academic and public health leaders, as well as executives from community, state and national organizations. Included in the group were Joaquin Baca from Albuquerque CPHE and Linda Kemp from South Bronx CPHE, both of whom were able to provide accounts of how Cuba has inspired projects carried out in their communities. Evaluations from the trip indicate that it was significant in bringing more awareness of Cuba's health system to decision-makers in the US, while providing a wider understanding and support for CPHE communities.



Rolando Martinez, director of El Cachón garden cooperative in Cojimar, speaks with health equity leaders from the US.

Third Annual CPHE Network Meeting, August 25-27, 2016

Approximately 50 participants representing all 12 CPHE communities attended MEDICC's CPHE Network meeting in Milwaukee, WI last August. A shared action plan around youth empowerment and capacity building was accepted by the group. Each CPHE site will tailor the youth initiative to their existing (or new) youth programs, while drawing on their own history, culture, and assets of youth in their communities. The overarching goal for CPHE sites to meet within the next 5 years is as follows: "Activate and empower youth to be engaged in the health of their communities as part of the movement for health equity." Thank you to those who participated in our Youth Survey! We discovered that 63% of you work with youth directly, and that a vast majority of you (89%) collaborate with other community organizations that work with youth. MEDICC is actively seeking funding to help carry out your great work.

Additional News from 2016

- As a result of the Navajo Nation exchange in Cuba, two articles appeared in local newsletters, written about [Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez](#).
- In March 2016, Diane Appelbaum presented on CPHE at the Grantmakers in Health CEO meeting.

MEDICC CPHE "Building People Power" Webinar, March 8, 2017

Community Coalition's Vice President of Policy, Karren Lane, presented her webinar on Building People Power on March 8th. As the first of MEDICC'S Webinar Series, this presentation provided an in-depth analysis of Direct Action Organizing (D.A.O.). D.A.O. is a powerful tool that community based organizations or change-minded institutions can use to empower everyday people to become the next leaders for small to large scale community transformation efforts. Lane is part of CPHE South LA, and who last traveled to Cuba in April, 2016, as part of CPHE.

- On May 2016 MEDICC offered a workshop on CPHE with Alberto Retana (South LA), Maria Murphy (S Bronx) Alma Olivas (Albuquerque) at the Community-Campus Partnerships in Health Conference in New Orleans.
- In 2016, Anjali Taneja and Bill Wagner from CPHE Albuquerque received a RWJF Culture of Health Leadership grant for research resulting from Cuba.

CPHE Leaders Trip April 2016

CPHE leaders from South LA and Oakland CA, Albuquerque, NM and South Bronx, NY participated in a special trip to Cuba, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, to reinforce their ongoing projects at home.



CPHE Site Highlights

CPHE Bronx

Maria Eugenia Romero-Garcia, founder of Maravillas De La Infancia Cultivador De Sueños Comunidad, located in Matanzas, Cuba, visited the team in the South Bronx, NY last fall. As part of MEDICC's support for the Bronx CPHE project "Building Capacity that Supports Change" Maria Eugenia served as a consultant to this leadership program, leading discussions and workshops at Claremont Village and Bronx Lebanon Hospital on community engagement strategies that take place in Cuba (For more information about this community, feel free to view our new [CPHE Bronx Video!](#)). Overall, Bronx CPHE members have been inspired by Cuba's strong community leadership and participation in helping neighborhood resident access health information and health care.

CPHE is focused on increasing resident knowledge of resources available to them as well as generating interest in participating in utilization of open spaces. Linda Kemp continues to expand her violence prevention work with her "Bringing the Peace" partnerships with several New York Police Department Precincts, Bronx Lebanon Hospital, Claremont Neighborhood Center, and State policy makers. Her activities include sports, street closures, beautification of parks and Summer Youth Employment Program workshops with Claremont Village youth. Ms. Barbara Holmes works with tenant residents; facilitates breakfast/lunch summer programs, creates Summer Youth Employment activities and now hosts the Vocational Instruction Program (VIP) in her community room 3 days each week. VIP provides health screenings, referrals for housing and vocational training. Ms. Gwendolyn Primus has been working to expand the Food Pantry. She utilizes her community room and is currently working to provide space for health related workshops and to the tenants of her developments and has submitted a proposal to the NYC Mayor's Office to implement additional programs. Also, she has started implementing the practice of weekly lobby meetings along with Ms. Holmes (Morris Houses I & II) and Mr. Norton (Butler Houses).



Linda Kemp and granddaughter.

CPHE Albuquerque

Javier Martinez, CPHE member and New Mexico State Representative (D-Albuquerque), was one of the key champions of a crucial proposal to invest in Early Childhood Education in New Mexico, which passed in the House of Representatives but was defeated on March 17 in the New Mexico Senate. This act proposed a constitutional amendment that would take an extra 1 percent of interest earnings from New Mexico's \$20 billion Land Grant Permanent Fund to help pay for early childhood education. Rep. Martinez, noted that New Mexico ranks as one of the worst states for child poverty. "Spending more on early childhood education would be an important step in changing this," he said. Another initiative in Albuquerque is the launching of FACES for the Future, a new initiative in Albuquerque, demonstrates yet another example of the power of building connections within the CPHEs. Founded in Oakland, CA in 2000 by Tomas Magana (CPHE Oakland), FACES for the Future is a pipeline to health professions program for at risk youth. The program has expanded to 8 additional locations since its inception. Magana affirms that FACES in Albuquerque was made possible through his meeting Albuquerque CPHE participants at the 2015 CPHE Network meeting.

CPHE Milwaukee

MEDICC's CPHE program in Milwaukee has centered on the Walnut Way community (New York Times, August 21, 2016). For the past 3 years, Walnut Way's Peace Project has been designed to allow the participating men of the Walnut Way neighborhood to build an environment of support among their families, and their community. The Walnut Way neighborhood took another devastating hit from violence entering the summer of 2016, when nine year old Za'layia Jenkins was shot and killed during a shootout between two groups of armed individuals.



Attendees at the 2016 CPHE Network Meeting in Milwaukee take a tour of community gardens led by a representative Benjamin Johnson from Walnut Way's Growing Youth Leadership program.



CPHE member and New Mexico State Representative Javier Martinez (D, on right) along with Rep Antonio "Moe" Maestas (D, on left), strong proponents of the Early Childhood Education bill which passed the House, but was defeated in the Senate on March 17.

Seeing the trends of violence continue, participants have taken an even larger role supporting the planning and facilitation of this year's iteration of the Peace Project. Men and boys from 10-21 years old were recruited for the project. In addition to outings and activities, a two hour, ten week workshop facilitated by a different community member was held at the Walnut Way Center. Walnut Way has another important youth program: Growing Youth Leadership is Walnut Way's signature summer teen internship program that engages Lindsay Heights

teens in intensive urban agriculture education, leadership development, and job training. Teens participate in weekly learning labs and community service projects. They grow a wide range of chemical-free vegetables and fruits in production gardens in the neighborhood and sell their harvest at local farmer's markets. <https://www.walnutway.org/>.

Attendees at the 2016 CPHE Network Meeting in Milwaukee take a tour of community gardens led by a representative Benjamin Johnson from Walnut Way's Growing Youth Leadership program.

CPHE Navajo Nation

After two trips to Cuba, the Red Mesa and surrounding communities in the Navajo Nation were struck with similarities between Cuban and Navajo approaches to community health. Like the family doctor-nurse team in Cuban consultorios, Navajo Community Health Representatives (CHRs) know their neighbors well. Access to health facilities is difficult in the rural Four Corners region of Navajo Nation, and CHR home visits might routinely include monitoring patients with chronic diseases, providing health education, addressing family and social problems, or arranging to have more firewood delivered for the winter. In Cuba, the Navajo group was impressed by the ways community centers and schools wove the concept of health into cultural activities, history, and art.

In Navajo Nation, with higher numbers of youth moving away or not finishing school, broken families and lack of social cohesion have long been recognized as challenges. Tribal and public health leaders have been adapting innovative ways to strengthen family unity and traditional values – important social determinants of health, especially for youth. Navajo Vice President Jonathan Nez and motivational speaker Echohawk Lefthand - both CPHE members - developed the “Building Communities of Hope” project, providing workshops in Navajo schools to address teen suicide and create resilience in Navajo youth. Former Navajo Nation Vice President Rex Lee Jim spearheads a leadership program to empower youth to practice healthy lifestyles.

Navajo Nation CPHE accompanying Cuban doctor-nurse team on home visit in rural municipality outside Havana.



Following their second trip to Cuba in September, 2016, CPHE Navajo Nation CPHE member, Kerlissa Bitah, Teacher/ Coordinator, T'is Nazbas FACE Program and Community School, led an initiative to create a “Trash to Art” contest in which parents were encouraged to work with their children to use everyday trash to create art-work. With over 100 submissions, the art was displayed in the local gym, at a planned event, with Vice President Nez as a guest speaker. At subsequent community gatherings, the CPHE Navajo Nation group has revived the Teec Nos Pos Community Garden, encouraging families to participate in the upcoming planting season. Health professionals and traditional healers consistently engage in health education during community meetings and events, and have developed screening programs and health fairs to address specific health issues such as nutrition, obesity, HIV, health fairs, hypertension, and diabetes. Preparations are underway now for the “Pray, Run, Eat Healthy & Exercise Daily” event in Navajo Nation on May 17, 2017.

Trash to art submissions by Navajo Children.

Resources, Opportunities and Announcements

FUNDING: The Aetna Foundation's 2017 Cultivating Healthy Communities Grant Program Stage 1 application is due by April 14, 2017 at 3PM ET. Awards up to \$2 million in grants to organizations that increase opportunities for low-income, minority communities to make healthy choices in the places they live, work, learn, and play. Grant requests can range between \$50,000 and \$100,000 for projects that span 18 to 24 months. They seek partners whose work addresses pressing issues in the following domains: Built Environment, Community Safety, Environmental Exposures, Healthy Behaviors, and Social/Economic Factors.

FUNDING: New Connections: Increasing Diversity of RWJF Programming. 2017 Call for Proposals Deadline for receipt of full proposals - May 16, 2017 (3 p.m. ET). For early- or mid-career researchers New Connections, a RWJF's signature leadership program, provides research grants, networking, and skill building to scholars from underrepresented and historically disadvantaged backgrounds and/or who are the first in their family to receive a college degree.

CPHE Toolkit

Feel free to view [MEDICC's CPHE Toolkit](#) online. This toolkit provides unique characteristics and insights gained by CPHE participants. In addition, the CPHE toolkit lists Health Equity Organizations, and identifies resources.

[The Sustainable Communities Initiative: The Community Engagement Guide for Sustainable Communities](#), published by Policy Link and the Kirwan Institute, page 2

America Needs a Network of Rebel Cities to Stand up to Trump, Kate Shea Baird, Barcelona en Comú and Steve Hughes, Working Families Party: <https://medium.com/@BComuGlobal/america-needs-a-network-of-rebel-cities-to-stand-up-to-trump-7c07202e7cc2#.qi5x9atl8>

[Recruiting the Heart, Training the Brain, the Work of Latino Health Access](#), by America Bracho, MD, MPH and the Latino Health Access Collective, Hesperian Health Guides, 2016

The Annual "Bringing the Peace" Event, July 8th, 2017 (10am-5pm) Bronx, NY organized by Linda Kemp from CPHE South Bronx, this day will be dedicated to health and resource outreach, and meeting community partners and residents.

Save the Date! CPHE Network Meeting 2017

The fourth annual CPHE Network Meeting will be held from September 14-16, 2017 in Albuquerque, New Mexico! In past meetings, we have had an attendance of approximately 40-50 CPHE participants, representing all of the CPHE sites. In some cases, MEDICC will be able to help defray travel expenses. We will send further information at the beginning of May.

**STAY
EXCITED!**



**STAY
INVOLVED!**