



WeTHRIVE! Puts Our Kids and Communities Ahead of the Game

With the recent passage of the *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act* and release of the nation's *Healthy People 2020* goals, schools and communities around the country are asking the question, "What do we have to do?". Thanks to the collaborative community program WeTHRIVE!SM, Hamilton County can proudly proclaim, "Look what we've already begun!"

The *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act* calls for stronger school nutrition standards, encourages the use of local foods and promotes school gardens.

WeTHRIVE! began work on these issues in 2008, bringing parents, teachers and community members together to create schools where the healthy choice is the easy choice. Early success stories include a school garden at Lincoln Heights Elementary School and implementation of nutrition standards for school foods and beverages by the Lockland School District.

Last June, when the state of Ohio passed similar school nutrition legislation, WeTHRIVE! had the tools in place to guide local school districts through the process. By August, Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) adopted new nutrition guidelines for the district's 57 schools. Norwood City Schools stopped selling soda and junk food in the high school's "Snack Shack" during lunchtime and, like other local districts, is working with WeTHRIVE! to set improved nutrition standards.

Healthy People 2020 – the federal government's 10-year plan to improve the nation's health – takes a different approach from the past. The plan calls on communities, not just individuals, to play a role in creating environments that make the healthy choice the easy choice.

Hamilton County is ahead of the game with the WeTHRIVE! program providing communities the tools and resources to confront and overcome barriers to wellness. Last spring, residents broke ground on nine community gardens in Lincoln Heights, Woodlawn and Lockland to help bring healthier food to their neighborhoods. More gardens are set to open throughout the county next spring.

WeTHRIVE! continues to help build a healthier Hamilton County by supporting policy, systems and environmental changes that fight obesity. Things like creating "shared use" agreements to open school and church gyms and playgrounds to residents for physical activity and supporting Safe Routes to School (SRTS), which uses federal funds to promote walking and biking to school.

Thanks to WeTHRIVE!, Hamilton County schools have a head start on making sure that all students have access to healthy food and beverage choices. Our communities are ahead of the game in creating environments where the healthy choice is the easy choice.

While much has been done, we still have work to do. Get involved – for yourself, your school or your community. Visit WatchUsThrive.org to join the WeTHRIVE! movement today.

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