

Healthy Belvedere Community Health Initiative (Healthy Belvedere)

Purpose: Healthy Belvedere is a partnership between Kaiser Foundation Health Plan for Georgia, The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, and the community of Belvedere in southeast DeKalb County, Georgia. Healthy Belvedere's objective is to promote healthy eating and active living through community-based and community driven strategies to reduce the incidences, ill-effects, and health disparities associated with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, obesity, cardio-vascular disease, etc.

Challenge: Obesity disproportionately affects people in communities that face discrimination, poverty, and a lack of education and community resources. Data from the Department of Human Resource's *Overweight and Obesity in Georgia* show that:

- Adults living in households earning less than \$15,000 are twice as likely to be obese as those living in households earning \$75,000 or more.
- African American adults (67%) are more likely to be overweight or obese than whites (56%), and similarly, African American middle and high school youth were more likely to be overweight than their white counterparts.
- Only 40% of Georgia adults are regularly active, and only two out of three students in middle and high school exercise vigorously.

In metro Atlanta:

- 9,780 – number of deaths in Georgia attributed to obesity and overweight (2005).
- 17% of DeKalb County high school students were overweight and 12% were obese.
- 21% of Hispanic students were more likely to be obese than other ethnic groups.

The Opportunity: Healthy Belvedere is one of several "Community Health Initiative" sites established by Kaiser across the nation. Kaiser sought the input of The Community Foundation because of our deep connections to metro Atlanta; our knowledge of the key civic, nonprofit, and community-based players; and our reputation for developing solutions to critical community issues. Focused on health intervention and outcomes achieved by building grassroots community capacity, a scan of relevant literature and a "Readiness Assessment" evaluating the health status and capacity of several metro communities was completed. Based on multiple factors, Belvedere was selected as the site for the work.

Process and Grantmaking: The grantmaking process is unique, providing an extended opportunity for community buy-in and involvement. In 2007, Healthy Belvedere will provide small grants to residents and community stakeholders who implement the concept of "small wins" through tangible programs and activities to improve healthy eating and active living in youth and adults. A Belvedere leadership group comprised of approximately 20 residents, public, private, and nonprofit sector members has been convened to plan and implement the program activities. In 2007-2008, their initial charge is to gain broad input on the community's vision for health and to promote healthy eating and active living as a new culture of Belvedere. By 2011, the Foundation expects to grant up to \$1 million from 2008-2011 to the Belvedere community.