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Newsletter



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: ZEITGEIST



ZEITGEIST IS A NONPROFIT ARTS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION.

They practice the art of growing a healthy, connected community empowered to create and thrive. As an arts organization, Zeitgeist uses storytelling in all its forms to hold up a mirror to the community and shine a light where it's needed. They support established and emerging artists by providing a venue free of censorship, judgment, or restriction.

While they are often known for their restaurant, Renegade theater, and Zinema 2, Zeitgeist has been active in community development work for many years, addressing health disparities and food access, and increasing active living and well-being in Duluth's Hillside neighborhood. They grow grassroots leadership by creating spaces where citizens can learn advocacy and leadership skills, interact with local leaders, and impact the policies, systems, and structures that impact their daily lives.

HEALTHY HILLSIDE

In December 2020, Zeitgeist hired 7 Hillside community members to join a leadership team dedicated to helping Hillside residents get through the COVID-19 pandemic as successfully as possible. The Healthy Hillside team hosted COVID Vaccine clinics in the Hillside and delivered resources door-to-door, checking on neighbors and assessing and addressing health disparities. Since then, the team has expanded to include additional team members and, based on community input, our work has broadened to address social-connectedness, mental well-being, and active living in addition to vaccine confidence. The team can be found in Duluth's Hillside neighborhood distributing COVID-19 test kits, N-95 masks, connecting people to health care services and insurance and developing a vision alongside their neighbors for a healthy, connected Hillside.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT - JOE MURPHY

Joe Murphy is the Food Access Coordinator at AEOA in Virginia where he conducts SHIP projects as a part of the Rutabaga Project, preforms SNAP outreach, and plays a role in a variety of work relating to healthy, whole foods in the Taconite Assistance Area of the Arrowhead. He graduated from the University of Minnesota - Duluth where he received his BA in Environment & Sustainability Studies. In his free time, Joe enjoys reading, camping, hiking, ice fishing, gardening, photography, and spending time with his partner Kai.



SUCCESS STORY - AITKIN COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP TEAM (CLT)

Over the last year, Aitkin SHIP Coordinator Hannah Colby has redesigned the Aitkin Community Leadership Team (CLT) to better engage with stakeholders most connected to and aware of emerging health needs of the county. Hannah put the call out for community members who are passionate about the health of their community to join the group. In the few months since the group has been meeting, the new CLT has already made impressive progress addressing health and well-being needs and set the stage for great things to come in Aitkin County.

"The new CLT includes key stakeholders and voices representing the community. They are the drivers of the (SHIP) workplan, so they are actually going out into the communities in Aitkin County and making the changes happen," says Hannah. The group includes representation from the Aitkin Food Hub, Aitkin Farmers Market, Riverwood Health Center, Aitkin County CARE, the Aitkin Community Food Shelf, and the Aitkin City Park Project, as well as the Mayor of Aitkin. These same people also represent the needs and perspectives of local farmers, business owners, and community members through their involvement in the Aitkin CLT.

By building upon the membership's experiences and connections, the group is uniquely poised to solve problems. Hannah says the new CLT has been a huge success. The CLT members are energized, and they bounce ideas off one another. Workgroups within the CLT naturally drive each project forward, leading to new projects and funding opportunities. Allison Rian with the Aitkin Food Hub said, "Being at the table with other community team leaders is helping me get in the right mindset for problem-solving and further direction. If the Aitkin Farmer's Market were not to be in the room with business leaders and health professionals, how would we make those connections amongst ourselves?"

The Community Leadership Team has made those connections and we are now able to make bigger strides to help improve the health of our community with nutrition." The Aitkin CLT advances the SHIP workplan, creates new opportunities to work around issues, and collectively develops new ideas.

Lynne Jacobs, Executive Director of Aitkin County CARE and Aitkin CLT member had this to say about the SHIP CLT:

"The partnership with Aitkin County SHIP has been invigorating. Additional partnerships are being created on a regular basis through the CLT. And these collaborations continue to grow and develop very meaningful projects for our community while improving the health of our community. Projects include community gardens, promotion of the food hub through market boxes of fresh produce, understanding the healthy brain and the impact of dementia, programs for social connections in the community, and much more. There are always so many things that we want to get done but joining forces with Aitkin County SHIP has been one of the most beneficial partnerships that I have participated in and really appreciate the collaboration!"

Moving forward the group will continue to build momentum to support Policy, System, and Environmental change to improve the health of individuals and communities in Aitkin County. "These concepts are layered within the strategies coming out of the leadership team. It's built into the work that we're doing," Hannah says. "The pandemic identified work and connections between food access, health care, and city government" ... and the Aitkin CLT "sees the importance of community resiliency and well-being."

UPCOMING EVENTS AND RESOURCES

- [Arrowhead Grown - NE MN Farmers Market Directory Updated for 2022](#) SHIP staff across the region are actively partnering with several NE MN Farmers Markets in 2022 to support increasing access to healthy food for all.



The Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) supports community-driven solutions to expand opportunities for active living, healthy eating, commercial tobacco-free living, and well-being.