

Interact for Health Leads Local Communities in Grassroots Efforts to Promote Health and Wellness

Provides Expertise to Spearhead Active Living in Neighborhoods

Cincinnati, March 28, 2016– [Interact for Health](#), a catalyst for health and wellness, announced today it has awarded funding to two area communities to develop programs that will promote health in the Greater Cincinnati region. The grants are in addition to ongoing coaching and expertise Interact for Health provides through their community guidance model.

The city of Mt. Healthy and Forest Park each received *Thriving Community* grants to begin building Thriving Community networks in their local areas. Grants were awarded for a three-year period. Each community will receive \$15,000 the first year; with a potential for up to \$10,000 the second year, and up to \$7,500 the third year. Both communities will focus on encouraging residents to engage in active living.

The new grantees will join Avondale, Oxford, Norwood, Brown County, Evanston, Walnut Hills, Pendleton County and the Hamilton County Appalachian Community who previously received *Thriving Community* grants.

“Interact for Health is focused on building healthy communities,” said Mary Francis, Interact for Health program officer. “Through our Thriving Community efforts, we can fuel these community leaders with knowledge and expertise so they can better the health of their neighbors. They know their community best and there is lasting power in community-owned processes.”

Thriving Community grant recipients were selected through a competitive application process and are expected to promote health in one or more of Interact's four priority areas: Health Eating; Active Living; Mental and Emotional Well-being; and Healthy Choices about Substance Use. In addition to the initial identified projects, selected communities will engage in a continual planning process with Interact for Health staff and consultants to identify healthy living needs and develop evidence based strategies resulting in more projects for the communities to work on together.

Each Thriving Community will direct its own path to transform its culture and profoundly improve its health. Thriving Communities will develop solid infrastructure, engage community members in planning and carrying out activities and teach other communities how to make an impact.

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Interact for Health has awarded *Thriving Communities* grants to:

- **City of Mt. Healthy** – Thriving Mt. Healthy will promote community-led health in multiple priorities and will create a culture of health within their community. Tactics include making investments to provide safe routes for walking to school, developing a youth athletic association soccer program that is affordable, accessible and communitywide, and train adults from the community to referee and coach the youth soccer games. The group will use these projects to create on-going community conversations and generate deeper interest in healthy choices about active living.
- **City of Forest Park** – Forest Park will focus on creating a culture of health in their community through active living initiatives. They will begin with establishing well-marked walking and biking paths, expanding existing walking groups, and re-establishing the Forest Park Charge 5K that will be open to all residents. The long term goal of the group is to affect policies, systems and environmental influences in Forest Park using a “health in all policies” approach.

About Thriving Communities Process

Interact for Health will use its Empowering Communities Strategy¹ to help organizations transform their neighborhood to support well-being and make healthy choices easy and affordable. The Empowering Communities Strategy will use a recognized National Prevention Strategy as its guide, which empowers people and offers the most effective and achievable means for improving health and well-being. Interact for Health’s Empowering Communities also will offer technical assistance to help organizations successfully implement activities in their communities.

Empowering Communities builds on the knowledge developed by Interact for Health’s [Assistance for Substance Abuse Prevention \(ASAP\) Center](#), which has been a key prevention support system at the local level for more than a decade. Regional health studies have found evidence-based practices are essential in forming healthier attitudes toward alcohol, tobacco and other drug use.

About Interact for Health

Interact for Health is building healthy communities for all people. We serve as a catalyst for health and wellness by promoting healthy living through grants, education, research, policy, and engagement. Interact for Health is an independent foundation that serves 20 counties in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. More information can be found at www.interactforhealth.org

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¹ [National Prevention Strategy Report 2011](#)