

MHP NEWS & NOTES

HEALTHYTOWN EVERYWHERE PROGRAM PROMOTES HEALTHY LIFESTYLES



With his 35 years of experience as a family physician, MHP's Dr. Paul Ehrmann, medical director of Family Health Care

Center, knows that many of the common medical conditions that worsen our quality of life and shorten our lives can more effectively be addressed by prevention than by treatment. From childhood obesity through issues that strike primarily our geriatric population, improvements come when people adopt healthier diets, become more physically active, avoid deleterious habits like smoking, and routinely monitor their health through such means as blood pressure screening and regular wellness visits with their doctor.

Dr. Ehrmann has been recognized by *Crains Detroit*, *Hour Detroit*, the State of Michigan, and the Michigan Osteopathic Association for his volunteer work helping children achieve healthier weights, and has written a book about his experience: *Generation XL: The Childhood Obesity Pandemic: A Community-Based Solution*.

Education is key to getting people to better take care of themselves. Doctors routinely bring up the need for healthy

HEALTHYTOWN EVERYWHERE (CONTINUED)

lifestyle choices when speaking with their patients. But effective medical education needs to go beyond the doctor's office to the community as a whole.

This is the philosophy behind HealthyTown Everywhere, an all-volunteer program conceived and created by Dr. Ehrmann to serve his local community of Royal Oak, and ultimately to expand to other communities. Parties collaborating with Dr. Ehrmann and Family Health Care Center to further the goals of HealthyTown Everywhere include Wayne State University's Coordinated Dietetics Program, the Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine, the Oakland County Health Department, the Royal Oak Chamber of Commerce, the Royal Oak School District, Holiday Market of Royal Oak, and the metro Detroit area YMCAs.

2016 was a pilot year for HealthyTown Everywhere, with the emphasis on nutrition and pediatric wellness.

The program provides targeted nutrition education to set a foundation for healthy eating, supplying take-home and Web-based materials as further nutritional guidance for adults and children. Students as young as elementary school are taught about nutrition with the cooperation of the Royal Oak Public Schools. Holiday Market hosts grocery store tours, cooking demonstrations, and interactive discussions on healthy lifestyles. Children are taught the importance of blood pressure and how to maintain a healthy weight. Programs at local YMCAs assist with the exercise component of fitness.

An inaugural event was held at Holiday Market on July 16, 2016. Positive feedback from attendees included: "So happy that I attended the HTE program at Holiday Market. It was incredibly helpful having a dietician walk around the store to show you what products contain...I highly recommend this program to anyone who would like to maintain healthy eating and strongly urge anyone who has any health concerns or risks, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, etc., to do this program so that they can have more understanding about what they are consuming," and "We enjoyed the program. It was informative and time well spent. We learned to: practice portion control; incorporate more fruits and vegetables for snacks and meals; add more protein to our diets; and read and understand food labels."

Additional events at Holiday Market, complete with a tour of the store by a professional dietician, and free blood pressure and blood sugar screenings were held on September 24 and November 3.

As the program develops, more partners and more components will be added, all with the goal of working with families in the community to facilitate healthier lifestyle

HealthyTown Everywhere announces the following upcoming events:

On April 22, join Dr. Ehrmann for the Midtown Detroit-Food Pride event at Wayne State University, 500 E. Warren Avenue, Detroit, MI 48201. Tours start at 11:00 AM and continue through 2:00 PM. Attendees will learn about healthy foods and how to read food labels, will be able to ask questions of Dr. Ehrmann and other experts, and will receive healthy lifestyle materials to take home.

(<https://vimeo.com/accenthealth/review/207331149/272202296a>)

On May 4, HealthyTown Everywhere and the Walk With a Doc program (walkwithadoc.org) will have their inaugural combined event. Addams Elementary fifth grade students and their parents will meet at Lawson Park in Royal Oak at 9:00 AM and walk to Holiday Market for a grocery store field trip.

In May, Dr. Ehrmann will present the lecture "Physicians Engaging Their Community to Improve Health Behavior" at the Michigan Osteopathic Association midyear meeting.



Move More-Eat Right-Live Well

choices.

Dr. Ehrmann has specified eight elements to his "plan of action" for the program for 2017:

1. The grocery store tours will continue, expanding to two tours per month.
2. Dr. Ehrmann will participate in the "Walk With a Doc" program (walkwithadoc.org), with a monthly walk from May through October.
3. Wayne State dietary graduate students will teach nutrition to Royal Oak elementary school students in the Fall and Winter terms, culminating in field trips for 5th

[Continued on Page 3]

HEALTHYTOWN EVERYWHERE (CONTINUED)

grade students and their parents.

4. Teams of Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine students and mentors will provide free blood pressure, blood sugar, and body mass index measurements in July, September, and November.
5. New programs will be added to the existing ones. Among those being considered are healthy cooking classes and a lecture series.
6. In addition to the existing Facebook page, a new HealthyTown Everywhere website will be debuted.
7. Additional communities in Oakland, Macomb, and Wayne counties will be added to HealthyTown Everywhere.
8. HealthyTown Everywhere will continue to combine with Wayne State University's Coordinated Dietetics Program to work with additional elementary schools.

As Dr. Ehrmann notes, it's important to get out into the community and interact with people where they are making

HealthyTown Everywhere isn't just for Royal Oak, but potentially for "everywhere." Dr. Ehrmann's vision is for more MHP physicians to join him in applying its principles in the communities they serve, to educate their patients and the broader public about the importance of healthy lifestyle choices and preventive medicine.

Want to get involved? Contact Dr. Ehrmann through the HealthyTown Everywhere Facebook page, his webpage at www.docpaul.com, or pehrmann@mhpdoctor.com to learn how to make your town a HealthyTown.

their most important healthy—and unhealthy—lifestyle decisions, such as purchasing food for their families.

To learn more about the HealthyTown Everywhere program and its future events, see <https://www.facebook.com/HealthyTownEverywhere>.