

# Newsletter

Fall 2013



## ***TAKOMA PARK IS A "HOT SPOT" FOR DIABETES AND ALCOHOL ABUSE HOSPITALIZATIONS***

*Data compiled by Healthy Montgomery, the County's health improvement process within the Department of Health and Human Service, shows that the 20912 zip code (Takoma Park and Long Branch) has the highest age-adjusted hospitalization rate for diabetes in Montgomery County. The hospitalization rate is 25.0 hospitalizations per 10,000 people.*

*This is more than double the county wide rate which is 11.6 hospitalizations per 10,000. The Healthy Montgomery data also shows that the 20912 zip code has a very high rate of emergency room visits related to alcohol abuse in the County, 109.3 visits per 10,000 people. This is more than 5 times the County wide median of 23.6 per 10,000 people.*

*Find out more in a post on our blog..*

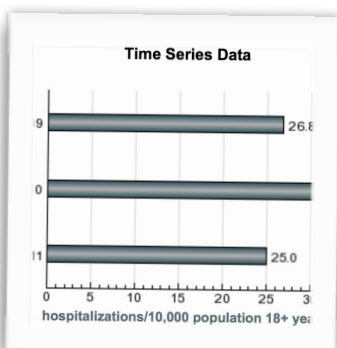
## ***BUILDING LOCAL ECONOMY IN TAKOMA PARK AND LONG BRANCH***

*CHEER is partnering with IMPACT Silver Spring on a "Learning Journey" to build an inclusive and vibrant local living economy in Long Branch. We are in the process of working with local business leaders and other community partners to formulate a vision, and ultimately a plan that fulfills that vision.*



*CHEER is bringing this process to Takoma Park as well. Projects are already under way to make an inclusive and vibrant local economy. On **Thursday, December 5** we will hear three local economy pioneers:*

- Preston Quesenberry from the economic restructuring committee of the Old Takoma Business association, which is developing a new approach to investment in independent locally owned businesses



- Tebabu Assefa, founder of Blessed Coffee, a benefit corporation who uses a “virtuous exchange” a model to build community, and
- Lorig Charkoudian, who is making the Community Kitchen in Takoma Park a reality to promote healthy local food enterprises.

There will also be an open discussion to bring new ideas and identify other projects that are in formation or under way that also contribute to the vision of an inclusive and vibrant local economy. Join us as we pursue the path to a wealthy community.

## **DIABETES WELLNESS CIRCLE**

*Diabetes Wellness is one of the programs envisioned under the Health Enterprise Zone. With funding from the Healthcare Initiative Foundation, it is now in the process of being implemented. CHEER has established partnerships in support of Diabetes Wellness Circles that will provide people with uncontrolled diabetes a community supported environment and resources to bring their diabetes under control. CHEER is beginning the recruitment process for the first four circles, each with about 15*



*participants. The initial target location is the Maple Avenue high rise apartments in Takoma Park.*

*Nailah Lee, CHEER’s community coordinator and a licensed social worker, will co-facilitate the circles with a qualified health professional who has experience working with diabetes patients. CHEER expects to hold approximately 8 sessions, which will meet every two weeks starting in January or February. The sessions will focus on identifying participants’ barriers to maintaining diabetes successfully which includes being in control of this disease and developing a sustainable social network where people can continue to make positive lifestyle adjustments.*

*The African American Health Program and Impact Silver Spring is collaborating with CHEER in developing culturally appropriate programming targeting diabetics aged 30 to 60 who have previously completed a diabetes education program, but are not under good blood glucose control, i.e. HbA1c is above 7%.*

*Mobile Med and Mary’s Center will provide primary medical care, lab and diagnostic testing, and necessary diabetes supplies and medication to all*

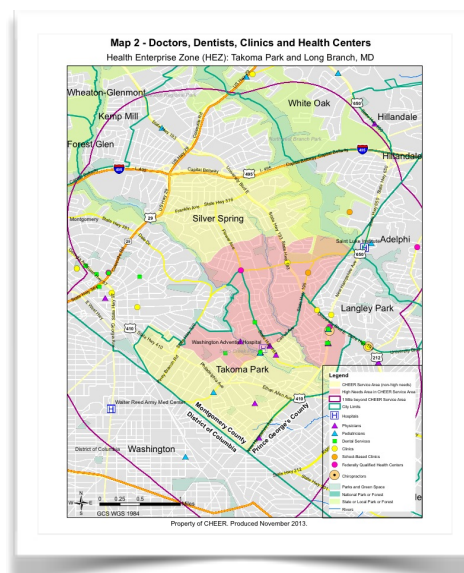
*uninsured participants who may not have these already.*

*Lastly, food and nutrition education support will be provided by the Crossroads Community Food Network. Physical activities will also be provided, but specific partners have not yet been chosen because the activities selected will be influenced by the participants' needs and interests.*

### **CHEER CREATES A HEALTH AND WELLNESS ASSET MAP FOR LONG BRANCH/TAKOMA PARK**

*As CHEER engaged health care providers through its role as convener of the Health Enterprise Zone, it became evident that there were barriers to collaboration that were limiting the effective deployment and coordination of health resources in Long Branch and Takoma Park. Health Enterprise Zone participants indicated a need to know what health related resources are available in the community. At the same time community members, especially seniors, indicated that they felt burdened by a lack of information about resources available in the community. Consequently, CHEER has begun creating a health asset inventory and maps that will both help community residents find local resources and also*

*help HEZ partners, such as health care providers, see where they can fill gaps.*



*The primary goals of the asset inventory are to promote a more cohesive and coordinated health and wellness system for Takoma Park and Long Branch and provide a baseline measure of healthcare resources available in the community. This project began in September and the first version of the inventory and maps has been completed. The map will be improved over time through the support of service providers and with the help of community members who will fill in details about services in their community. Community members will be needed to help make the asset map complete and useful. If you want to contribute to this process contact Bruce Baker at [bruce@communitycheer.org](mailto:bruce@communitycheer.org).*



## **NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROCESS HELPS ESSEX HOUSE FIND PATH TO SUCCESS**

*The Leadership Team at Essex House, a 135 unit high rise rental property on*



*Maple Avenue, has achieved recognition from the building owners and is now for the first time managing*

*its own budget. Since beginning the Neighborhood Improvement Process six months ago, the Essex House Leadership Team has built capacity and implemented several successful programs that benefit the residents.*

*CHEER provided for leadership training and support for Essex House residents to build a functioning formal Leadership Team organization. The team also had support from the owners, the Community Preservation and Development Corporation, and the backing of their City Council Member, Jarrett Smith, who has provided resources and opportunities for the residents of Essex House.*

*Successful programs in recent months include a summer reading and learning program for school aged children, and a summer free lunch program. Essex House residents also arranged for*

*distribution of school supplies to children at back to school time. The Leadership Team has successfully advocated for residents' interests over landlord and tenant concerns, and brought heightened awareness of health and quality of life concerns. For more details on Essex House see the recent posts at [insert link on www.communitycheer.org](http://www.communitycheer.org).*

## **TAKOMA PARK "UNNATURAL CAUSES"**

*CHEER conducted two events that included screenings of the PBS documentary mini-series "Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making us Sick?" This documentary shows how social factors – such as neighborhood quality, social status, income, employment, and race/ethnicity – have a much larger impact on health outcomes than access to health care. In June, about 25 people gathered in the Azalea Room to see the first episode, "In Sickness and in Wealth," and had a discussion about social factors. This was followed by a session in July to create literal visions of a healthy community through artistic expressions. In October, CHEER showed another episode, "Place Matters," which shows how housing and neighborhood quality affects health. The community participants learned that*

*your zip code is a more powerful predictor of health than your genetic code and had a dynamic discussion about the effects of housing and neighborhood quality in Takoma Park.*

## **ABOUT CHEER**

*CHEER's mission is to give people the knowledge and ability to create healthy thriving communities. We work with community members to formulate a shared vision and goals. We conduct research that informs community members about issues that are of concern to the community. We facilitate processes and actions that community members can engage in to fulfill the shared vision.*



## **Volunteer and Internship Opportunities:**

- *Communications and Social Media: CHEER needs someone to maintain and expand the CHEER website and to keep CHEER active in various social media channels, such as Facebook and Twitter. This includes opportunities to produce and publicize short videos.*
- *Learn more about the community by helping to develop the Long Branch and Takoma Park community asset map. We need people to share information about assets in the community and assure the completeness and usefulness of the maps.*
- *Organize events in your neighborhood and among friends. Host a potluck dinner to discuss neighborhood issues, host showings of an episode of "Unnatural Causes," a documentary series showing how social factors, such as neighborhood quality, social status, income, employment, and race/ethnicity, impact health outcomes even more than access to health care. Donate to CHEER <http://communitycheer.org/get-involved/donate/>. **Support our work by making CHEER part of your charitable giving this holiday season!***