



Healthy Eating and Active Living - HEAL Team News



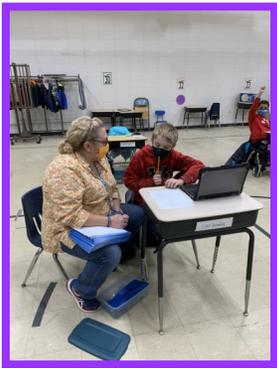
Having a Purpose and Staying Fit at Midwest Food Bank

Midwest Food Bank in Peoria opened in N. Peoria in 2007 by a group of like-minded volunteers from a local church. They were united in their efforts and desires to share the love of Christ by providing food to local non-profit feeding programs that serve hungry people in the greater Peoria area. Business-savvy volunteers set up a food bank model that today serves over 330 non-profit feeding programs (food pantries, homeless shelters, etc.) in 40 counties within Central and Western IL, Eastern IA, and Harlan, KY. Today MFB – Peoria employs 5 people that carry on the original mission however the majority of the work done at MFB is done by the many volunteers who bring their time, talents, and muscles day in and day out to move food from semi-trucks into box trucks, trailers, and vans of partnering feeding programs. In 2020, more than 3,000 volunteers gave over 36,600 hours – the equivalent of 17.6 full-time employees. Volunteers of any ages and abilities can find purpose at MFB. The girl scouts that bag cere-

al, or a special needs group of young adults that label cans, or people of all ages pushing carts, driving fork lifts, and loading boxes into trucks all build sweat equity into a few hours of their days. Are they tired after leaving MFB? You bet but the satisfaction they leave with diminishes any tired feet or aching muscles. If they aren't using the bodies, they are using their minds and hearts to answer the phones, do the bookkeeping, update the inventory spreadsheets, or writing grants. It is not uncommon to see people in their 70s, 80s and even 90s working at MFB. It gives them a powerful purpose that keeps them feeling and looking far younger than their actual age. You don't have to go to the gym to get a good workout when you can come to Midwest Food Bank and impact a community while using your muscles, minds, and hearts.

Call Midwest Food Bank at 309-691-5270 to get a workout that impacts you and others like no other workout.

"The heart of our mission it to provide food and the blood of MFB is our volunteers" - Monica Scheuer, Executive Director



Supporting Student Success (S3)

S3 is a program provided in collaboration with the Heart of Illinois United Way and East Peoria School District Number 86. The main goal of S3 is to ensure a student's success in school. The S3 program provides students with physical, social/emotional and behavioral services focusing upon prevention, intervention, and case management. S3 also connects students and their families to community resources. The program is offered 3 days per week, both after school and in the summer. TCHD's S3 program serves Kindergarten-5th grade students enrolled in Don D. Shute and Lincoln Elementary School in East Peoria.

-Katie Hansen, S3 Project Director

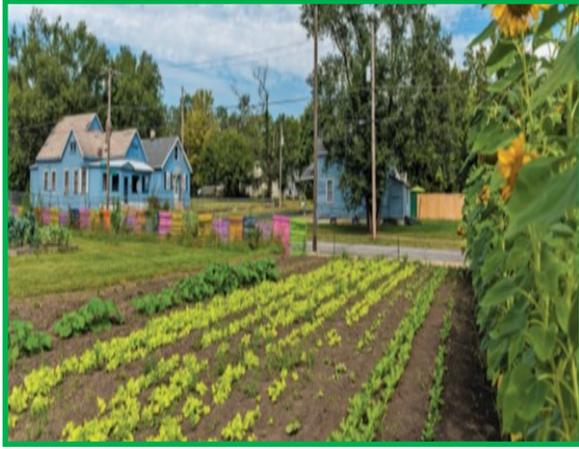
Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP)

The Diabetes Prevention Program is an evidence-based program that offers participants support and accountability as they strive to make lasting lifestyle change to prevent/delay the onset of Type 2 Diabetes. Lifestyle coaches walk alongside participants helping them create healthy habits surrounding physical activity, mindful eating, stress management, and goal setting for a healthy lifestyle change.

Diabetes Prevention Program cohorts are held throughout the Tri-County. If interested in more information, please contact the HEAL action team.

-Kim Litwiller, DPP Lifestyle Coach





OSF Gardens of Hope—
St. Ann's and St. Matthew's
www.saintfrancis.org/gardenofhope

OSF identified the need to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to the underserved population to address food insecurity. We also realized the importance of educating the community on healthy eating, exercise, and stress management to improve overall health and wellbeing. We felt strongly that a community garden could help address health disparities and social determinants of health. This would provide the opportunity to focus on disease prevention rather than treating chronic diseases after they occur.

In June of 2018, we were able to hire a full time garden coordinator. At that time, the garden located in the south side of Peoria, grew from a small plot to 1.0 acre. Before we knew it, we had a garden almost 3 acres in size. There are a wide variety of fruits and vegetables ranging from over 25 types of tomatoes to Kohlrabi. Healthy recipes utilizing the garden produce are located throughout the garden in colorful mailboxes. Over the past year, we were able to provide education to local children in the garden. We discussed the benefits of exercise and gardening along with reviewing stress management skills. The children took a tour of the garden and did a bit of planting. They spent time in the "serenity space" which is peaceful and therapeutic. Flowers surround this area along with several benches along with a statue and prayer of St. Francis of Assisi.

Under the direction of the garden coordinator, volunteers help to sustain the Gardens of Hope. They assist with planting, watering, weeding, and distributing. This past year we had over 1,290 volunteer hours. We could not maintain the gardens without the assistance of our volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please visit the below Garden of Hope website.

In 2019, the one acre Garden of Hope St. Matthew's was established. It is located at Rt. 91 between the OSF Center for Health and the OSF Hospice Home. A greenhouse will soon be constructed at this site to allow us to provide fresh fruits and vegetables year round. This past year, 12,745 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables were distributed to neighbors, senior centers, and food pantries. We are grateful for the strong community collaboration which exists in these garden projects. We love the purposeful work we are doing while serving with the greatest care and love.

-Susie Smith, OSF HealthCare Saint Francis Medical Center



For more information, please visit
www.healthyhoi.org