

# Sherburne County Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP)

*Making the healthy choice the easy choice for Sherburne County.*

## Big Lake School District Makes Healthy Changes

Big Lake School District has been involved in SHIP since the inception of SHIP in 2009, including having a representative on the Sherburne County Community Leadership Team. This long running relationship has led to great successes across the district. Initially our focus was on increasing physical activity in the classrooms and with SHIP assistance Big Lake implemented a Brain Gym curriculum to promote physical activity in classes outside of physical education. Since then we have also made strides in healthy eating with smart snack regulations and healthy and hungry free kids guidelines. Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) has been another great example of SHIP work in Big Lake. The staff at the ECFE have been trained in I am Moving I am Learning (IMIL), Learning About Nutrition through Activi-



**Children at the Big Lake ECFE program get active.**

ties (LANA), and trainings to supporting breastfeeding. These trainings have led to policy, system, and environmental changes across all aspects of the ECFE programs. SHIP funds were used to develop a lactation room at Independence Elementary where ECFE was previously located. That room is still used by families and staff. All of the ECFE pro-

gramming has moved to Liberty Elementary and a lactation room has been developed there as well. Safe Routes to School planning has been another SHIP strategy that has made changes in Big Lake. After SHIP assessments were done in prior years Big Lake School District was awarded a MNDOT planning grant in 2014.

### Sherburne County Profile

- Population: 88,499
- Square miles: 451
- Urban/Suburban/Rural
- Years as SHIP grantee:
  - 6 continuous years
- Implementation Grantee
- FY 14/15 Awarded: \$575,270
- # of Partner sites: 31
- # of Strategies: 11
- Sectors:
  - Schools
  - Communities
  - Worksites
  - Healthcare
- Other facts:
  - 7 Municipalities
  - 10 Townships
  - 7 School Districts
  - 30% of population under 18 years old

## Childcares Trained On Healthier Options

Kristy Heying, a Community Health Coordinator with Sherburne County Health and Human Services, has been offering a variety of trainings geared towards Early Childhood Family Education, child-

care centers, and home based childcares. The areas of focus are healthy eating, physical activity, and breastfeeding. During SHIP 3 there have been eight classes offered and 94 providers

have participated in at least one of the trainings. One participant after taking a class was quoted as saying, "Great info, will be using information and resources"



## Increasing Access to Fruits and Vegetables

One of the goals of SHIP is to increase access and availability of fruits and vegetables. Across Sherburne County we have used multiple avenues to do this. Promise Neighborhood of Central Minnesota in collaboration with Central Minnesota Sustainability Project planned, developed, and implemented a community garden at Promise Neighborhood in SE St. Cloud. This portion of St. Cloud is considered a food desert so increasing access to fruits and vegetables has had a large impact on the community. In 2014 the garden produced over \$3,000 of

fresh, organic fruits, vegetables, and spices that went directly to the community members.

In Becker, SHIP staff worked with the Becker Area Senior Center to increase access to fruits and vegetables to the senior population. By building raised garden beds that are at a height seniors are able to use without having to bend over or kneel on the ground they are now able to harvest their own fruits and vegetables as part of the Becker Community Center community garden. The seniors took great

pride in building their own raised beds as well.

At Community Aid Elk River, or CAER, SHIP funding was used to purchase a walk-in freezer to increase their ability to stock fruits and vegetables. CAER is a food shelf that provides food to residents of Elk River, Otsego, and Zimmerman. We continue to work with CAER to look at over ways SHIP can collaborate to increase access to fruits and vegetables year round.

## SHIP Work on the Horizon

Sherburne County SHIP staff is excited about the work we are continuing to do across all sectors. Sherburne County is working collaboratively with Benton, Stearns, and Wright Counties on a Regional Active Transportation Plan to increase walking and biking across the region. We are utilizing an advisory group to ensure community input is at the forefront of this project. We are also working

with collaboratively with Stearns County and CentraCare on Community-Clinical Linkages strategies to improve health outcomes across both counties. Schools continue to be a focal point of our work. Becker and Big Lake School Districts are continuing work on their Safe Routes to School plans. Childcare trainings for breastfeed-



Planting of the Community Garden at Promise Neighborhood of Central Minnesota

ing, nutrition, and physical activity will be ongoing throughout the grant cycle.

## Contacts

### **Alison Miller– Schools**

Alison.miller@co.sherburne.mn.us  
763-765-4091

### **Kristy Heying– Childcare/Worksites**

Kristy.heyings@co.sherburne.mn.us  
763-765-4106

### **Mark Lees– Tobacco Free Living**

Mark.lees@co.sherburne.mn.us  
763-765-4114

### **Matt Jackson– SHIP Coordinator**

**Active Living/Healthcare/Healthy Food in the Community**

Matt.jackson@co.sherburne.mn.us  
763-765-4115

