The State of Our Health:
Executive Summary
Winter Park | Maitland | Eatonville

Health Study Results & Recommendations
March 2013
The “i” in illness is isolation. The crucial letters in wellness are “We.”

~Author unknown, as quoted by Mimi Guarneri, The Heart Speaks: A Cardiologist Reveals the Secret Language of Healing

Healthy Central Florida (HCF) is a community-based partnership established to transform our communities into the healthiest in the nation. Its aim is to get people moving more, eating healthier, feeling better, and enjoying a more vibrant, energized life. To join the movement, go to healthycentralflorida.org.
Just over a year ago, Florida Hospital and the Winter Park Health Foundation launched Healthy Central Florida (HCF) with 500 business and community leaders and a visit from Dr. Mehmet Oz. He helped mark the occasion with an inspiring keynote address and a hearty endorsement of our mission, which is to transform this community into the healthiest in the nation, concurred that we must all work together and we must act now.

With obesity and diabetes rates escalating, a true health crisis looms and it’s impacting all of us—children, adults, wealthy, poor, employers and workers alike. We’re all paying for the increasingly poor health of our population—in human terms as well as in financial ones.

This is the first generation of children who may live shorter lives than their parents. How can that be? We’re the most advanced country in the world and our communities have remarkable assets and smart leaders. But this problem is layered, systemic and insidious. Unhealthy options are everywhere we turn. Advertising calls us to drink soda, eat fast food and sit in front of one of our many screens for hours a day. And far too many do.

To become the healthiest community in the nation, it will require a paradigm shift in thinking. We must start considering health as an investment instead of a cost. We must consider health when we build a road, a building or a school. We must think of our vulnerable pedestrians and cyclists. We must think of our children and their ability to be more like the “free range” kids we were growing up. We need communities designed more for human beings and less for cars.

It turns out that what makes most humans feel happy, alive and engaged (walkable, bike-able connected communities, beautiful green spaces and public spaces) is also what boosts property values and attracts new businesses, young people, and families who want to lead more active, healthy lives.

These strategies don’t ensure quick results and there is no magic pill—well there is, but it’s called exercising and eating right. That’s the honest magic formula for individuals. For communities, it requires all of us working together—restaurateurs, employers, hospital administrators, educators and transportation engineers, working alongside parents (for years).

So where do we begin? That’s the good news. We already have. We’ve joined more than 300 communities across the nation that are using best practice models similar to ours. We’re replicating strategies that are producing promising results elsewhere.

We are also building upon our community’s outstanding assets—from engaged leaders to a remarkable climate and physical beauty. We also have the momentum of our movement. We hope you will join us.

On behalf of our founders, Florida Hospital and the Winter Park Health Foundation, thank you to the 100-plus volunteers who’ve already joined us and donated more than 1,400 hours in the last year alone. Let’s keep the momentum going and realize our vision of becoming the healthiest communities in the nation!

Jill Hamilton Buss
Executive Director
Healthy Central Florida
Founding Partners

Florida Hospital and Winter Park Health Foundation recognized the alarmingly high rates of obesity, inactivity, smoking and emotional health challenges facing residents in our communities. These problems drain precious limited resources from businesses, schools and hospitals and have a profound impact on the quality of life for children and adults in Central Florida. To create large and small-scale change and a “culture of well-being”, a coordinated community effort was needed. Healthy Central Florida was founded to lead this effort.

Florida Hospital, the largest not-for-profit Protestant health care system in the U.S., is dedicated to improving lives, not only in Central Florida, but also around the world. Operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Florida Hospital is committed to serving the health care needs of patients with a holistic approach to heal the mind, body and spirit. Founded over 100 years ago, Florida Hospital maintains a rich history of health and healing and today, cares for more patients than any other hospital in the U.S., according to the American Hospital Association.

Winter Park Health Foundation (WPHF), focused on its long-term mission of helping create the healthiest community in the country, has been at the task for nearly 20 years. The not-for-profit organization supports programs that improve the health of youth, older adults and the community-at-large in Winter Park, Maitland and Eatonville. It also conducts research and provides education on health issues affecting these groups. Through its leadership, the Foundation has been the catalyst for the development and implementation of many ongoing efforts that ensure our communities are healthy places to live, learn, work, worship and play.

Very special thanks to all Healthy Central Florida Partners

Many organizations, individuals and companies have partnered with the founders of HCF during the past year. In particular, we must cite and thank the municipalities of Winter Park, Maitland and Eatonville. The mayors and staffs of these communities have worked diligently to create healthier environments that improve the well-being of our residents.

We are grateful to many other partners, including:

- American Diabetes Association
- Bike/Walk Central Florida
- City of Maitland
- City of Winter Park
- Eatonville Family Health Center
- Orange County Government
- Orange County Public Schools
- Our Whole Community
- Publix Supermarkets
- RDV Sportsplex
- Rollins College
- Salter Mitchell
- Town of Eatonville
- University of Central Florida
- Whole Foods Market
- Winter Park Chamber of Commerce
- Work Well Winter Park
- YMCA of Central Florida
Table of Contents

Meet the Leadership Teams ........................................................... 6
Target Communities: Winter Park, Maitland and Eatonville ......................... 8
Our Goals .......................................................................... 9
The Model .......................................................................... 9
Healthy Places = Healthy People ...................................................... 10
Levels of Intervention .................................................................. 11
State of Our Health: Summary & Recommendations ................................... 12
Research Methodology .................................................................. 14
Data-at-a-Glance ......................................................................... 15
Summary of Findings ...................................................................... 16
  Smoking ........................................................................ 16
  Obesity and BMI .................................................................. 17
  Heart Disease/Attack and Stroke .............................................. 18
  High Blood Pressure and High Cholesterol ..................................... 19
  Diabetes ........................................................................ 20
  Activity Levels .................................................................. 21
  Stress ............................................................................ 22
  Social Cohesion .................................................................. 23
  Perceived Health Status ....................................................... 24
  Nutrition and Lack of Access to Healthy Foods ................................. 25
HCF Team Policy Objectives and Status Update ......................................... 26
Highlights of HCF Team/Partner Achievements ......................................... 29
Walking the Talk ......................................................................... 30
Meet the Leadership Teams
Carrying Out the Mission in Winter Park, Maitland, and Eatonville

Carrying out the mission of creating the healthiest communities in the nation, it is important to leverage the relationships, knowledge, assets and passion of local community leaders.

These teams were recruited and trained in the fall of 2011 and have already made great progress. They have been evaluating and targeting unique issues in each community and are employing policy and environmental change strategies that impact health where we live, learn, work, worship and play. These committed community volunteers serve as the steering committee for all HCF work undertaken in the three target communities and we are grateful for their dedication and service.

**Healthy Winter Park Leadership Team**

Ken Bradley, Mayor, City of Winter Park / Senior VP & Administrator, Winter Park Memorial Hospital
Joie Cadle, School Board Member, Orange County Public Schools
John Cardone, District Vice President, YMCA of Central Florida
Susan Caswell, Planning Manager, Orange County Government
Patrick Chapin, President and CEO, Winter Park Chamber of Commerce

People & Partners

Healthy Winter Park Team at HCF launch event in February 2012
People & Partners

Marian Chase, Adjunct Faculty Member, UCF College of Nursing
Michelle del Valle, Assistant City Manager, City of Winter Park
Sharon Line Clary, Executive Director / Marketing and Business Development, Winter Park Memorial Hospital
Leah Nash, Executive Director, Our Whole Community
David Overfield, Environmental Administrator, Orange County Health Department
Bruce Stephenson, Professor in Civic Urbanism, Rollins College
Dwaine Stevens, Media/Community Relations Manager, Publix

Healthy Maitland Leadership Team

Regina Buchanan, Faith Community Nurse, First Presbyterian Church of Maitland
Marian Chase, Adjunct Faculty Member, UCF College of Nursing
Karl Droppers, President, MVP Sports Clubs and RDV Sportsplex
Sheila Holley, Assistant Principal, Lake Sybelia Elementary
Henry Maldonado, President, Enzian Theater
Ron Maxwell, Principal, Maitland Middle School
Becky Nickol, Therapist/Coach, Becky’s Garden Therapy for Children
Dr. Timothy Pursley, Board Certified Family Practitioner, Maitland Family Practice
Michelle Sartor, Certified Health Coach
Mike Sasso, Store Manager, Publix
Ellen Schellhause, Director of Library Services, Maitland Public Library
Howard Schieferdecker, Mayor, City of Maitland
Catherine L. Sterba, Director of Client Services, DiCom Software LLC
Jim Williams, City Manager, City of Maitland

Healthy Eatonville Leadership Team

Lisa Abdallah-Nosakhere, Vice President, L&L Market, Inc.
Cecil Allen, President (Retired), Cecil Allen Construction
Rod Bargaineer, Director of Recreation, Town of Eatonville
Dr. Lisa Barkley, Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion and Assistant Professor of Medicine at the UCF College of Medicine
John Beacham, President, Red Bug Landscaping
Ellareetha Carson, Founding Partner/Nutritionist, Hebni Nutrition Consultants
Michael French, President, Lake Lovely Neighborhood Association
Katrina Jackson, Lab Technician, Florida Hospital
Jordan Klarfeld, Store Manager, Publix
Felix Lake, Sr., President, Alpha International K-12 Academy
Austin Long, Service Director, Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida
Ron Maxwell, Principal, Maitland Middle School
Bruce Mount, Mayor, Town of Eatonville
Ayanna O’Connor, Former Operations Manager, Eatonville Community Health Center
Seth Rosenblatt, Operations Manager, Eatonville Community Health Center
Stephanie Staggers, Special Assistant to the Mayor, Town of Eatonville
Tonja Williams, Parish Nurse, Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church

Lisa Portelli, Program Director, Winter Park Health Foundation and Jill Hamilton Buss, Executive Director of Healthy Central Florida, serve as the coaches for all three teams.
Winter Park, Maitland & Eatonville
The Targeted Communities Achieving Great Results

The goal of Healthy Central Florida is to make our communities the healthiest in the nation. Because of their deep ties and legacy of improving health in Winter Park, Maitland and Eatonville, the Winter Park Health Foundation and Florida Hospital have chosen to launch Healthy Central Florida in these communities.
Our Goals

Goal 1: To increase the number of Central Florida residents who improve their health and quality of life through healthy eating, active living and tobacco cessation

Goal 2: To increase the number of community-level policies, environmental support systems and related communication initiatives that are implemented to support healthy eating, active living and tobacco cessation

Goal 3: To increase the number of organizations and businesses that implement healthy eating, active living and tobacco cessation policies, interventions and programs

The Model

Healthy places foster healthy people. Yet despite great weather and recreational opportunities, the rates of diabetes and obesity and the number of chronic diseases have continued to escalate in our local population. Childhood obesity has more than doubled in children and tripled in adolescents in the past 30 years, according to a 2011 report from the National Center for Health Statistics. More than half of all adults and more than a third of all children and adolescents are overweight or obese.

To address this, HCF employs a two-pronged strategy of policy/environmental change (resolutions, policies, rules, regulations) and social marketing (the discipline that took seat belt usage from 14 percent in 1984 to nearly 90 percent today and reduced smoking rates from more than 50 percent a few decades ago to just under 20 percent today).
Personal choices are made in the context of a larger environment. If you forget your lunch at work or don’t have time to go out, whatever is available in the vending machine is probably what you eat—usually chips, a candy bar and a soda. If there is no healthy choice, it’s impossible to make one. The same holds true for our physical or “built environments.” If there are no sidewalks, safe places to play, walk or jog, or no grocery stores selling healthy foods, it’s much more difficult to get moving or to make a healthy food choice.

In recognition of the impact environments have on health, there has recently been a paradigm shift in how health advocates and policymakers view efforts to reduce obesity/chronic diseases. Rather than focusing on individual behavior and a lack of willpower or a moral failing, the lens has widened to include an understanding of the environments, systems and interpersonal, organizational, and community factors that are a critical part of the health equation.

The pyramid on page 11 illustrates the features of each approach.

“It is unreasonable to expect that people will change their behavior easily when so many forces in the social, cultural, and physical environment conspire against such change.”

—Smedly and Syme (2000)
Levels of Intervention that Impact Long Term Environmental Change

### Definition of Interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Level</th>
<th>Environmental/Systems Intervention</th>
<th>Individual/Program Intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A law, ordinance, resolution, mandate, regulation, or rule approved formally or informally.</td>
<td>Physical or material changes to the economic, social, or physical environment or elements of an organization, institution or system.</td>
<td>Activities, individual or group instruction, curricula, training or programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examples:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Examples:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Examples:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• State law requiring motorists to yield to pedestrians</td>
<td>• Incorporating sidewalks and walking paths into master plan</td>
<td>• Health fairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• City ordinance of no smoking in parks</td>
<td>• Zoning for green space and permitting community gardens</td>
<td>• After-school programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Workplace policy rewarding employees who ride the bus</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Cooking classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Family rule of one hour of TV for every hour of active play</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Word About Program Interventions

Programs play an important role in addressing immediate needs but they are not sufficient alone to create large-scale, lasting change. If a law or policy is enacted, it is very difficult to undo. Even if a CEO, administrator or a mayor changes, the policy, law or regulation will most likely live on.

This is why HCF is focusing on policy, systems and environmental change in order to create new social norms and long-lasting change. Where appropriate, HCF will employ the use of programs or one-time events, but the majority of our work focuses on strategies for creating long-term change.
The following are the highlights and recommendations based on research and Healthy Central Florida team input. All community feedback gathered through surveys, more than a dozen focus groups, one-on-one interviews and community discussion groups in all three communities has been considered:

**Key Findings:**

- People care deeply about their health and are focused on it—nearly 100% of respondents in every community share this concern.
- The majority of people want to be more active than they are. Various barriers—financial, time, lack of family or social support—all impede steps toward getting moving. Our interventions should help people translate their motivation into action—and help remove barriers to being active.
- Health disparities uncovered must be addressed. Within these three communities we found shocking health disparities, in particular the 24.2% rate of diabetes in Eatonville. This compels a community response.
- The rates of smoking in two of our communities, Winter Park (11%) and Maitland (16.6%), are below the national average of about 20%. For these two communities, the vast majority are non-smokers. In Eatonville, the rate is 34.7%, and is highest in young males. We are identifying strategies to target and lower rates in the community and in this target demographic.
- Place matters—Communities in which healthy food and activity choices abound are healthier (availability of grocery stores, sidewalks, parks, roads that are safe to cross on bike or on foot).
- Environments shape choices—As much time as we spend in workplaces, schools or community settings, having healthy choices available encourages us to make them. Environmental cues/policies like “no soda” in schools and workplace break rooms and “smoke free” patios at restaurants, contribute to the culture of health.
- We must all work together—no individual, family, company or even a single community can create the changes needed by working alone. Together we can create new, healthier social norms.
- Great assets to build upon—starting with people. We have outstanding volunteers; strong, caring leaders; committed partner organizations; and generous and visionary founders, Florida Hospital and Winter Park Health Foundation willing to fund and support this work. We also have beautiful parks, many sidewalks, bike trails and SunRail. We also have momentum.

The kind of large-scale change we seek will take time and will be more difficult for communities that lack some of the basic necessities of healthy living, for example, grocery stores or restaurants that offer healthy options. Without access to healthy foods, a car or mass transit, or if you live in a virtual food desert, what would you do? You’d rely on what’s available, and if that is only pre-packaged, processed food, then all too often that’s what you and your family eat.

If you live in a more affluent area, your address provides access to more than great schools, fresh fruits and vegetables and rising real estate values. It might improve
your odds of staving off a chronic disease like diabetes, hypertension, or exposure to second-hand smoke. Our study is not the first to document the disparities between the health of people who live at the poverty level and those whose incomes allow extra money and time for exercise and healthy food options. This study and others have also documented that in some respects money can “buy happiness.” Those with higher incomes did report being “happier.” And this was true in every community. When you’re worried about not being able to pay rent, or keep the lights on, life is not as happy and it’s far more stressful.

Despite challenges related to low incomes, Eatonville scored higher than any other community when it came to “social cohesion”—the feeling of being connected to neighbors and to one’s community. This may also serve as a protective factor for stress and for life satisfaction. Eatonville residents fared favorably on these measures.

Another glaring concern that was mentioned repeatedly was pedestrian safety. As the most dangerous city in the nation, according to Transportation for America, that concern is right on target. Related issues centered on reliable mass transit, sprawl and poor pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. All of these challenges present threats to our health and to leading more physically active lifestyles.

Although there is no magic pill or one right path to achieve HEALTH (Healthy Eating Active Living Tobacco cessation and Happiness/Social cohesion), we have good reason to be optimistic. Our communities and partners have already made great strides, including in area schools with nutrition. All three communities adopted Smoke-Free Parks Resolutions and Winter Park passed a Complete Streets Resolution. All of the communities are working together on connecting bike paths to each other and to the new SunRail stops in Maitland and Winter Park. Real collaboration and cooperation are taking place between Healthy Central Florida teams, area governments and among private citizens.

To address the high rate of diabetes and related health challenges in Eatonville, Florida Hospital, Winter Park Health Foundation, UCF, YMCA of Central Florida and other partners are working together with our Healthy Eatonville team on a long-term diabetes intervention. Similar strategic collaborations are taking place across the communities to address healthy food access and other challenges.

Through a sustained effort and the dedication of those who believe we can do better and be better, we will change the trajectory of poor health in our communities. We will continue to build on the momentum that’s been created by our coalition, partners and other groups, and we look forward to the day when our vision is realized and we are, in fact, the healthiest community in the nation.
State of Our Health
Research Methodology

In order to assess the health of the three target communities and to establish a baseline for the work of HCF, the organization contracted with University of Central Florida (UCF) Institute for Social and Behavioral Sciences to conduct a random sample survey in Winter Park, Maitland and Eatonville. The sample size was designed to be large enough so that the data gathered could be generalized to each unique community for planning and intervention purposes. Additionally six focus groups, two in each community, were conducted during this same time period. Focus groups, town hall-style meetings, and one-on-one interviews were also used to collect qualitative information in the three communities. All of the qualitative data continues to inform the work of HCF. However, the UCF survey results are the focus of this report.

Methodology

The Healthy Central Florida survey used a slightly modified version of the survey tool BRFSS (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System—a national instrument) initially designed as a computer assisted telephone survey of adult (over 18) residents of the three target communities: Winter Park, Maitland and Eatonville.

Winter Park, at 27,852 residents as of the 2010 Census, is the largest and most affluent community in the region, although pockets of poverty lowered the average household income to $52,261. Maitland is considerably smaller in population but holds the highest median income of the three cities at $77,673. Eatonville is a small town with 2,159 residents and has the lowest median income at $27,344 and the highest local poverty rate of 27.7 percent. A town with proud traditions, Eatonville holds the distinction of being the oldest African American incorporated town in the U.S.

NOTE ABOUT SOURCES: Since the BRFSS questionnaire was adapted for most of this study, where possible, Healthy Central Florida has used other reports (the most recent data available was used) to compare our results to other local, state and national data. Primarily, these comparisons came from the 2009 PRC Community Health Survey of East Central Florida, which was sponsored by Winter Park Health Foundation. Additionally, comparisons were obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data; Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2010). For the purpose of this study, East Central Florida is defined as Brevard, Seminole, Orange and Osceola counties.

![Summary of Findings](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>95% Confidence Intervals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>45,762</td>
<td>± 3.21 percentage points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Park</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>27,852</td>
<td>± 4.54 percentage points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maitland</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>15,751</td>
<td>± 5.38 percentage points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eatonville</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>2,159</td>
<td>± 8.40 percentage points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Data-at-a-Glance

## Health Differences by City of Residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Health</th>
<th>Winter Park</th>
<th>Maitland</th>
<th>Eatonville</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-rated Health: Very Good or Excellent (%)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-rated Health: Fair or Poor (%)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% who have: Chronic Heart Disease</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffered a Stroke</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertension</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Cholesterol</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Yes to any of the above:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Taking medication for the condition</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Eating better diet</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Exercising more</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Tobacco

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currently smoke (% Yes)</th>
<th>Winter Park</th>
<th>Maitland</th>
<th>Eatonville</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Nutrition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean servings / day of fruit</th>
<th>Winter Park</th>
<th>Maitland</th>
<th>Eatonville</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean servings / day of vegetables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% who have cut size or skipped meals in past year because of money</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Exercise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Any exercise in past month (% Yes)</th>
<th>Winter Park</th>
<th>Maitland</th>
<th>Eatonville</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean days of moderate exercise / week</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean days of vigorous exercise / week</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever go to gym (% Yes)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to be more active (% Yes)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Weight

### BMI (Body Mass Index)

*BMI (Body-Mass Index) is a measure of someone’s weight in relation to height*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Winter Park</th>
<th>Maitland</th>
<th>Eatonville</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BMI Normal</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI “Overweight”</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI “Obese”</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently trying to lose weight: (% Yes)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trying to change diet: (% Yes)</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trying to exercise more: (% Yes)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Mental Health

| Self-rating: Excellent or Very Good                  | 73         | 79         | 68         |
| Self-rating: Good                                   | 19         | 15         | 19         |
| Self-rating: Fair or Poor                           | 8          | 6          | 13         |
| % saying life is Very or Extremely Stressful        | 15         | 16         | 28         |
| % Very Happy                                        | 53         | 50         | 20         |
| % Somewhat Happy                                    | 45         | 47         | 36         |
| % Not Too or Not At All Happy                       | 2          | 3          | 44         |

*BMI (Body Mass Index)*

Calculate BMI by dividing weight in pounds (lbs) by height in inches (in) squared and multiplying by a conversion factor of 703.

Example: Weight = 150 lbs, Height = 5’5” (65”)

Calculation: \( \frac{150 \times 703}{65 \times 65} = 24.96 \)

Less than half of the adults in the United States have a healthy BMI. For adults, an ideal range is between 18.5 and 24.9; a person with a BMI over 24.9 is considered overweight, over 29.9 is considered obese and a person with a BMI under 18.5 is considered underweight. For children, a BMI between the 5th and 85th percentiles is considered healthy.
Tobacco use accounts for 430,000 deaths in the U.S. annually—remaining the leading preventable cause of death in the U.S. and worldwide.

Almost forty years after the famous Surgeon General’s report that concluded, once and for all, the lethal health consequences of cigarette smoking, tobacco use alone accounts for 430,000 deaths in the U.S. annually; about 20% of all deaths. This remains the leading preventable cause of death in the U.S. and worldwide.

According to the CDC, as of 2010, the percentage of U.S. adults who smoke cigarettes has dropped to 19.2% (the first time since this data was first gathered that the number has been fewer than one in five). Cigarette smoking in Winter Park (11.1%) is notably lower than the national average. Maitland (17.4%) is about at the national average; Eatonville (34.7%) residents smoke at nearly twice the national rate.

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the extent to which smoking rates have changed varies by race and ethnicity. Rates of tobacco use among Hispanics and Whites declined by 10% and 18%, respectively, over the past decade. African-Americans, however, continue to have the highest rates of smoking and their rates increased slightly over the same time period, from 22% to 23%.
Obesity and BMI

Obesity, one of the risk factors for diabetes and many other diseases, is also a factor in premature deaths. Together, obesity and physical inactivity account for over 300,000 premature deaths each year.

All survey respondents were asked to state their weight in pounds and their height in feet and inches. Weight remains a somewhat sensitive question and some refused to answer so the sample size for this analysis is slightly reduced, but Body Mass Index (BMI) was calculated for 869 of the 912 survey respondents (95%), using standard Health and Human Services (HHS) BMI standards. By those standards, 47% of the entire sample are “normal” (or underweight in a very few cases), 34% are overweight, and 19% are obese (BMI ≥ 30). In Winter Park and Maitland, just under half are of normal weight and just over half are overweight or obese; in Eatonville, the proportions are 35% of normal weight and 65% overweight or obese. The rates of outright obesity are 20%, 14% and 32% for Winter Park, Maitland and Eatonville respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Winter Park</th>
<th>Maitland</th>
<th>Eatonville</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underweight</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obese</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Overweight &amp; Obese</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>64.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The “Cascade” of Risk.

The effects of obesity on health outcomes are, of course, well-known and as obvious in these data as any other. Compared to those of normal weight, for example, the obese are:

- 48% more likely to have chronic heart disease
- Twice as likely to have suffered a stroke
- Two and a half times more likely to have high blood pressure
- Twice as likely to have elevated serum cholesterol
- 5 times more likely to be diabetic

Unfortunately, obesity is correlated more generally with unhealthy lifestyles, so much so that in considering the health status of the obese, one must be aware of what might be called the “cascade of risk.”

Together, obesity and physical inactivity account for over 300,000 premature deaths each year.
Heart Disease/Attack and Stroke

According to the national Healthy People 2020 initiative, heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. Heart disease and stroke have been ranked number one and number four as leading causes of death for Floridians for more than seven decades, according to the Florida Department of Health.

In the U.S., stroke is the third leading cause of death. Together, heart disease and stroke are among the most widespread and costly health problems facing the nation today.

Fortunately, they are also among the most preventable health problems. The leading modifiable risk factors for heart disease and stroke are:

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Cigarette smoking
- Diabetes
- Poor diet and physical inactivity
- Overweight and obesity

### Have you ever suffered from or been diagnosed with heart disease/attack?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>% Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winter Park</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maitland</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eatonville</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange County</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Central Florida</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Have you ever suffered from or been diagnosed with stroke?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>% Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winter Park</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maitland</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eatonville</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange County</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Central Florida</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High Blood Pressure and High Cholesterol

The study also questioned residents about high blood pressure and high cholesterol, which have been proven to cause heart disease and stroke. Eatonville residents have a 45.7% rate for high blood pressure and 24.2% rate for high cholesterol. People living in Winter Park have a 31.2% rate for high blood pressure and 29.6% rate for high cholesterol. Maitland’s rates came in at 29.8% for high blood pressure and 23.5% for high cholesterol.

Medication, diet and exercise are the primary tools available to control blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose. Nearly everyone who was diagnosed with one or more of these conditions is at least doing something to manage the condition, according to the survey results. But the percentage who are doing everything they can—like eating a better diet, taking medications and exercising more—is only about half.
Diabetes

Have you ever suffered from or been diagnosed with diabetes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>% Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winter Park</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maitland</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eatonville</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Central Florida</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diabetes, especially Type II diabetes, has reached near-epidemic proportions and is now killing about 360,000 Americans each year.

Diabetes rates are concerning in all three communities, but are alarmingly high in Eatonville. Dr. Richard Pratley, medical director of the Florida Hospital Diabetes Institute, summed up the local problem:

“The people of Eatonville suffer disproportionately from diabetes, hypertension and other chronic conditions that impact their health and the well-being of the community. The reasons for this are not clear. What is clear is that there is an urgent need to address these issues.”

Retired Publix deli worker, Darlene Zackery, said her diabetes diagnosis was a call to action.

They call her “Speedy Gonzalez” because she’s the pacer of the Mayor’s Walk and Talk group that begins at dawn and travels through Eatonville before many have had their first cup of coffee. Darlene Zackery walks every Monday and Wednesday and credits her group with helping her lose 17 pounds.

Diabetes runs in Zackery’s family. She has three siblings with the disease. The retired 59-year-old Publix deli worker said her pre-diabetes diagnosis was a call to action.

“I stopped eating sugar and everything white and I don’t even have salt in my kitchen,” said the Maitland resident. “My grandkids complain there’s no junk food in the house.”

The Mayor’s Walk and Talk group has become a routine and a lifeline with others who share her health concerns.
Activity Levels

The nation’s population has become disturbingly sedentary. The 2012 edition of America’s Health Rankings found that 26.2% of adults are almost completely inactive and do not meet the minimum recommendation of 150 minutes of physical exercise a week—or about 30 minutes per day, five days a week. The HCF study found that one in seven Winter Park and Maitland residents and one in four people who live in Eatonville fit that description. They responded “no” when asked if they ran, walked, swam, worked out, played golf, gardened or participated in any physical activity during the past month.

For comparison, the percentage of sedentary adults in other states ranges from a high of 36% in Mississippi to 26.9% in Florida to the national low of 16.5% in Colorado.

Of the three local communities, Eatonville residents reported the highest rates of both moderate and vigorous exercise, perhaps because they report walking or riding bicycles more every day for transportation.

Survey respondents who wanted to be more active said there were several barriers to achieving higher levels of physical activity.

During the past month, other than your regular job, did you participate in any physical activities or exercise, such as running, swimming, working out, golf, gardening, walking for exercise, or some other leisure-time physical activity?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winter Park</td>
<td>86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maitland</td>
<td>85.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eatonville</td>
<td>77.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Central Florida</td>
<td>74.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>76.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>76.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Their answers included age, infirmity, time constraints, concerns about physical safety, a lack of sidewalks, too many unfriendly dogs and even, candidly, sheer laziness.

Eatonville residents reported the highest rates of both moderate and vigorous exercise, perhaps because they walk or ride bicycles more for every day for transportation.
Stress

Would you say that most days are extremely stressful, very stressful, moderately stressful, not very stressful or not at all stressful?

One in five American adults say they are in fair or poor health, and they also report higher levels of stress.

As the economy has continued to struggle, many residents have felt the effects of prolonged unemployment, under-employment and recession-related difficulties. Many of those surveyed also cited challenges to balance work, home life and healthy behaviors, with stress often taking a toll on their physical health.

One in five American adults or 22% say they are in fair or poor health, and they also report higher levels of stress and are more likely to have physical symptoms of stress than those who rate their health as excellent or very good, according to the American Psychological Association’s 2010 Stress in America report.
Social Cohesion

According to the World Health Organization report “The Solid Facts,” social cohesion is the quality of social relationships and the existence of trust, mutual obligations and respect in communities or in the wider society. Further, it notes that social cohesion helps to protect people and their health.

A study of a community with initially high levels of social cohesion showed low rates of coronary heart disease. When social cohesion declined, heart disease rates rose according to the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health.

Simply said, we need friends, support, engagement and community connections. Those contacts were the strongest in Eatonville, where 56.3 percent of residents said they feel “strongly connected” to their neighbors, compared with 32.3 percent in Winter Park and 35.7 percent in Maitland.

Without these, research shows we become more prone to depression, drug use, anxiety hostility and feelings of hopelessness, which all impact physical health.

How connected do you feel to your neighbors and to others living in your community?

A study of a community with initially high levels of social cohesion showed low rates of coronary heart disease.
Some people may dismiss survey questions about self-rated health status, but they correlate quite strongly with clinical indicators and assessments. So health professionals would do well to pay attention to these questions.

The good news: A majority of Winter Park and Maitland residents (60% or more), and more than 40% of Eatonville residents, feel they are in excellent or very good health.

In Eatonville more than one quarter of people surveyed rated their health as fair or poor.

The bad news is the substantial proportions whose health is self-assessed as only good, fair or poor. In Maitland and Winter Park, 9-13% rated their health as fair or poor. In Eatonville, it was more than one in four. In a 2007 survey of the entire U.S. population that asked an identical question, the percentage reporting fair or poor health was 9.5%.
Nutrition and Lack of Access to Healthy Foods

In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in your house ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn’t enough money for food?

![Chart showing the percentage of respondents who cut the size of or skipped meals due to lack of money for food in Winter Park, Maitland, and Eatonville.](chart)

**Skipping Meals**

Nearly 20 percent of Eatonville respondents said they cut the size of or skipped meals because there wasn’t enough money, compared to 8 percent in Maitland and Winter Park. National studies of food insecurity in low-income communities report about the same number as Eatonville—about one in five. For some, transportation is a barrier. The length of a traffic signal can also be an obstacle in crossing a road like U.S. Highway 17-92 carrying a bag of groceries, or pulling a cart. The challenge of affordable, healthy foods is particularly acute for seniors, those on fixed incomes or for people with disabilities.

**Nutrition**

Respondents in all three cities said they ate about two servings of fruits and vegetables a day—about half of the five servings recommended for adults by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. One Eatonville woman told interviewers she didn’t buy more fruits and vegetables because “they’re too expensive and spoil too fast.”

**Servings of Fruits & Vegetables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Winter Park</th>
<th>Maitland</th>
<th>Eatonville</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total fruits &amp; vegetables</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% who eat recommended 5+ servings of fruits &amp; vegetables</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overcoming Barriers to Healthy Foods**

HCF is talking with Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida, the Winter Park Housing Authority, the Winter Park Health Foundation and others, seeking solutions for bringing nutritious, affordable, healthy foods to everyone. HCF and our Healthy Eatonville team along with local partners are studying the feasibility of a farmer’s market, a mobile farmer’s market, community gardens and even micro-loans or partnerships with existing healthy food retailers in underserved areas. We must address this problem at a community-wide systemic, sustainable level.
## HCF Team Policy Objectives and Status Update

### Winter Park

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HCF Baseline Data</th>
<th>2013 Policy Objectives</th>
<th>Status and Progress on Policy Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overweight &amp; Obesity 51.6%</td>
<td>Increase access, awareness and use of outdoor recreational facilities and enhance infrastructure supporting walking and bicycling.</td>
<td>HCF has started or is supporting and promoting walking groups in all three communities. HCF is working with volunteers and paid staff to enhance walking and biking infrastructure. HCF is increasing the number of adults participating in walking/biking clubs and groups in Winter Park, Maitland and Eatonville.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart Disease/Attack 8.3%</td>
<td>Increase access to SunRail by developing options for connectivity to the train.</td>
<td>HCF is exploring use of marked/sponsored walking paths. HCF is working with teams and inter-community sub-groups to improve connectivity between contiguous communities and to create and enhance way-finding signage for marked bike routes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stroke 4.8%</td>
<td>Increase the number of worksites that promote and support health.</td>
<td>HCF commissioned a study of healthy food access in Winter Park and uncovered pockets of food insecurity, especially for older adults, low income and disabled residents. HCF is working with Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida, the Winter Park Housing Authority, Winter Park Health Foundation and others, to find long-term solutions to bring nutritious, affordable, healthy foods to everyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes 8.5%</td>
<td>Increase access to healthy food and decrease access to unhealthy food in public places.</td>
<td>HCF is working with WWWP, Florida Hospital and others to promote healthy workplaces; currently about 40 employers are in various stages of evaluating and implementing healthy workplace policies and environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking 11%</td>
<td>Increase the number of public places in Winter Park with smoke-free policies.</td>
<td>City of Winter Park passed a Smoke-Free Parks Resolution in 2012; HCF is working with partners to expand smoke-free patio dining at area restaurants; additional smoke-free strategies being evaluated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCF Baseline Data</td>
<td>2013 Policy Objectives</td>
<td>Status and Progress on Policy Objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight &amp; Obesity 50.8%</td>
<td>Increase access, awareness and safety of outdoor recreational facilities and enhance infrastructure supporting walking and bicycling.</td>
<td>The Maitland Walk and Roll program is one of the most robust in Central Florida; HCF is working to build on the success at Dommerich Elementary, Maitland Middle School and the Walking School Bus program at Lake Sybelia Elementary. The founder of the Walk and Roll Program was hired by HCF to expand this strategy throughout Maitland and all public schools in the three communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart Disease/Attack 4.9%</td>
<td>Increase access to SunRail by developing options for connectivity to the the Maitland station.</td>
<td>HCF is working with City of Maitland staff, who are working to improve bike trails; connection has also been made with Winter Park and plans are to help with connection to other contiguous communities to facilitate recreation and transportation options throughout the region and connecting to SunRail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stroke 1.8%</td>
<td>Increase access to smoke-free outdoor public places.</td>
<td>A Smoke-Free Parks Resolution was adopted by the Maitland City Council in 2012; additional non-smoking venues are being sought including all public places, restaurant patios and places where children walk, bike and play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes 8.9%</td>
<td>Increase the number of worksites in Maitland that promote health.</td>
<td>Walking paths in dense work and office complex areas of Maitland are being evaluated. HCF will be working with business leaders to increase the use of healthy workplace policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking 16.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td>HCF is working with the City of Maitland to encourage the use of checklists to promote healthy design principles for all development and redevelopment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Eatonville

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HCF Baseline Data</th>
<th>2013 Policy Objectives</th>
<th>Status and Progress on Policy Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overweight &amp; Obesity</strong> 64.8%</td>
<td>Increase access, awareness and safety of outdoor recreational facilities and enhance infrastructure supporting walking and biking.</td>
<td>Workshops and presentations by planning experts were delivered to town residents and to the Town Council, along with proposed language for the “Healthy Master Plan.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heart Disease/ Attack</strong> 7.1%</td>
<td>Increase access to education and information regarding diabetes, pre-diabetes or the risks of diabetes.</td>
<td>HCF is partnering with the Town and others to increase opportunities for residents to be active such as adding bike racks throughout town; refurbishing the weight room at the Hungerford Gym; and conducting sidewalk audits and subsequent improvements to improve walkability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stroke</strong> 1.6%</td>
<td>Increase access to SunRail by developing options for connectivity to the train stations in Maitland and Winter Park.</td>
<td>Additional research was conducted in Eatonville in 2012: four town hall-style meetings, three focus groups, multiple Walk and Talks and site visits to better understand the barriers and the strengths to build on. HCF and the Healthy Eatonville Team convened a group including, Florida Hospital, Winter Park Health Foundation, UCF, YMCA, the American Diabetes Association, and the Eatonville Community Health Center to collaborate on a long-term strategy for intervention, prevention and education. A longitudinal study is also being planned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diabetes</strong> 24.2%</td>
<td>Increase access to smoke-free outdoor public places.</td>
<td>A Smoke-Free Parks Resolution was passed in 2012. This year, the Zora! Festival was smoke-free and additional outdoor public (and private) spaces are being evaluated for smoke-free strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypertension</strong> 45.7%</td>
<td>Provide incentives to food retailers to locate in and/or offer healthier food and beverage choices in underserved areas/Eatonville.</td>
<td>A targeted youth initiative is being developed to explore youth smoking and other health behaviors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Smoking</strong> 34.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Support of a community newsletter or newspaper is being evaluated to facilitate sharing healthy news with residents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Summary & Recommendations**

- Workshops and presentations by planning experts were delivered to town residents and to the Town Council, along with proposed language for the “Healthy Master Plan.”
- HCF is partnering with the Town and others to increase opportunities for residents to be active such as adding bike racks throughout town; refurbishing the weight room at the Hungerford Gym; and conducting sidewalk audits and subsequent improvements to improve walkability.
- Additional research was conducted in Eatonville in 2012: four town hall-style meetings, three focus groups, multiple Walk and Talks and site visits to better understand the barriers and the strengths to build on. HCF and the Healthy Eatonville Team convened a group including, Florida Hospital, Winter Park Health Foundation, UCF, YMCA, the American Diabetes Association, and the Eatonville Community Health Center to collaborate on a long-term strategy for intervention, prevention and education. A longitudinal study is also being planned.
- A Smoke-Free Parks Resolution was passed in 2012. This year, the Zora! Festival was smoke-free and additional outdoor public (and private) spaces are being evaluated for smoke-free strategies.
- A targeted youth initiative is being developed to explore youth smoking and other health behaviors.
- Support of a community newsletter or newspaper is being evaluated to facilitate sharing healthy news with residents.
- Additional research is being conducted to fully understand why previous farmer’s market did not succeed; exploration of other strategies—mobile farmer’s market, evening farmer’s market or community-based “yards and gardens club” farmer’s market is underway.
- The feasibility of adding a fresh produce section to area stores is being explored.
- Healthy cooking classes are being planned.
Highlights of HCF Team/Partner Achievements

- Launched with 500 business and community leaders with support and a visit from Dr. Mehmet Oz
- Adopted Smoke-Free Parks Resolutions in all three communities
- Adopted a Complete Streets Resolution in Winter Park
- 5,000 pledges for people to be active distributed or completed by area residents
- 60 people walk together weekly in seven group walks offered in each community
- Partners are working with approximately 40 employers to promote healthy workplace policies and environments
- 501 walkers at the Inaugural Mayors’ Sole Challenge
- 70 walkers participated in 90 day walking challenge
- 65 community leaders were trained in policy and environmental change
- Walking audit training conducted by national expert, Mark Fenton—local leaders trained in the art of conducting walking audits
- Walk and Roll—hired walking coordinator to help build capacity and increase walking and biking to and from Winter Park, Maitland and Eatonville schools
- Partnership formed with Florida Hospital Diabetes Institute and Translational Research Institute, Winter Park Health Foundation, UCF, YMCA of Central Florida, the American Diabetes Association, Eatonville Community Health Center, Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church and the Town of Eatonville to address diabetes and chronic health issues in Eatonville.
- 73 Total Volunteers; 1,425 Total Hours Donated
The act of walking, for some, is meditation. For others it’s a means to good health. For others it’s a way to connect. Healthy Central Florida sees walking as all of these things and that’s why we’ve embraced it as a path for getting people moving more and connecting with each other. It’s been one of our brightest success stories this first year. And although the idea of a walking program is a best practice nationally, our walking program was piloted locally, in Eatonville.

One of the most sobering tasks of serving as mayor of a small town is signing funeral resolutions according to Eatonville Mayor, Bruce Mount. After signing hundreds, Mayor Mount decided he had to do something. So, he started a twice weekly “Walk and Talk with the Mayor” program in August 2011. Mount has lost 40 pounds since starting the group and many of his 20 to 30 weekly participants have also lost weight, reduced their medications and improved their health. They’re also meeting new neighbors, strengthening relationships and learning about issues in their town. The program was so successful that HCF used the idea to help launch walking groups in Winter Park and Maitland.
HCF also hosted the first “Mayor’s Sole Challenge,” a friendly competition to see which community could turn out the most walkers. Eatonville proudly won with 169 of the 501 total participants—the largest percentage of residents with nearly eight percent of all residents participating.

Walking not only improves health but also strengthens social connections. Just ask Constance Kenna, who originally started walking in Winter Park, but also joined the groups in both Maitland and Eatonville. She’s made new friends, learned about the communities and has been welcomed and embraced by all. “I do it to keep healthy, but also to meet people,” said Kenna, 72.

The Healthy Central Florida teams also are encouraging local governments to make their cities more pedestrian friendly. The Orlando-Kissimmee metro area has the dubious distinction of being named the most dangerous community in the nation for pedestrians by Transportation for America. Walking is risky business in Orlando, where roads are designed solely to move speeding traffic and pedestrians are viewed as obstacles.

Mark Fenton, a pedestrian advocate and one of the national trainers for the HCF teams, urges local governments to build and maintain their streets to better accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists and transit—not just cars. “As greater numbers of people become more aware of the benefits of walking, they need to have a safe and secure environment in which to walk,” said Fenton. “Otherwise, their motivation will be diluted by safety concerns.”

Bruce Stephenson, Director of the Masters of Planning for Civic Urbanism program at Rollins College, said the arrival of SunRail, will increase the numbers of walkers and bikers throughout Central Florida. He said that property values have increased in places like Baldwin Park because of the ability to walk and bike to schools, churches and stores throughout the neighborhood.

Improved health, social connections, transportation, air quality and even property values—walkable communities create a win-win for all.