

Healthy Homes – Block by Block Initiative

Vision: Price Hill is the best place in Cincinnati to start and raise a family.

Mission: Empower families to realize the dreams they have for themselves and their children.

Residents in the Price Hill Neighborhood experience education, health and social disparities. Mothers are less likely to receive full prenatal care, infants are at much higher risk for prematurity and infant mortality, children are much more likely to arrive at kindergarten not ready to learn and close to half of the youth do not graduate from high school with their class.

While effective programs exist to serve Price Hill residents our most at risk families remain isolated and disconnected from traditional social service pathways. Lack of transportation, competing urgent needs, different parenting priorities and beliefs, and lack of trust are just a few of the challenges that hamper efforts at improved health and overall wellness outcomes. Our Initiative aims to learn new ways to engage these high risk families in East and Lower Price Hill.

Our Healthy Homes - Block by Block Initiative utilizes residents from the community in a role that we have termed “Block Captains”. Block Captains are neighbors on the block who seek to identify and support the most at-risk families in the East and Lower Price Hills neighborhoods of Cincinnati. Our Initiative will develop these informal community leaders or Block Captains, work with them to find and engage hard to reach families and support local shifts in the local cultural norms in partnership with these trusted neighborhood residents.

By tapping into the wisdom and experience of local residents, Block by Block seeks to change the outcomes for children and their families. On regular neighborhood walks, Block Captains look for inherent strengths and identify needs on the blocks they serve. Based on the information collected on walks and at gatherings, the team develops a communication network customized to serve neighborhood families. We seek to build a cadre of informal but influential local health leaders who can shift the ‘culture of health’ in their own neighborhood. We are actively building a sense of fellowship and camaraderie among the Block Captains as we think this is critical for long-term success. The goal is to empower local residents to deliver materials, resources and community engagement opportunities to their neighbors and to increase the well-being of children and families.

We envision that Block Captains will ultimately help families address barriers (financial, social, health, educational) that stand in the way of personal and family related goals. Over the past twelve months 11 block captains have identified 45 active homes on 5 blocks. We have initially focused their work on developing ‘Healthy Homes’ on the blocks. We define that as having a working smoke detector, 15 children’s books with information about shared reading, safe sleep options for newborns (along with a teach back on the ABCs of safe sleep) and a medical OB/GYN and pediatric home. We have surpassed our 2014-15 goal of an 80% bundle completion rate (currently 86%).

Fortifying communities: one heart, one home, one neighbor at a time.

Our intended Healthy Homes Block by Block Initiative goals:

1. Create a “Change Package” to include Healthy Homes curricula, Block Captain recruitment and training, community goal setting, measures, and continuous quality improvement approach used to design the work.
2. Design and spread strategies to cover a broader region in Price Hill and a toolkit to adapt the Healthy Homes model to allow for additional prototypes in other neighborhoods in Cincinnati.
3. At a minimum ensure that all target homes have safe sleep options, books, home safety equipment and/or connection to a medical home.
4. Revise and build upon local resource guides to ensure block captains have current information to utilize when working with families that have food insecurity, housing issues, employment, etc. needs.

Our target Block by Block neighborhoods are in East and Lower Price Hills in Cincinnati, Ohio. On those blocks, a target home in Price Hill is defined as a home with pregnant moms and/or children between the ages of 0 and 6. We will focus on the East and Lower Price Hill neighborhoods (in zip codes 45204, 45205). Approximately 26,000 individuals reside in these zip codes, and well over 40% of households have incomes at or below the federal poverty line. Additionally, approximately 35% are African American, and 6% are Hispanic/Latino. In East Price Hill 19% of the 1,135 homes are reported to have children ages 0-5, and in Lower Price Hill 35% of the 119 homes are reported to have with children ages 0-5.

Captains actively collect, review and improve their own results as well as the collective team results. They own the data and problem solve as a team. Results are also shared in the community at monthly Price Hill Place Matters Early Care and Education Community Meetings and within CCHMC and Santa Maria through quarterly and yearly reports.

Success will be a thriving neighborhood connected by a shared vision for healthy children, influenced by informal neighborhood leaders, who serve a critical role in reaching the hardest to reach families. In the end, an initial evaluation of this prototype will demonstrate enough strength for scaling up the effort delivering a toolkit that other neighborhoods could adapt and utilize based on their unique assets and needs. In addition, success will include guiding other neighborhoods with similar issues to successful strategies.

Finding difficult to engage families will provide the impetus for new funding. We recently learned that the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation awarded Block by Block \$40 to expand the work to 15 blocks in 2015-16. Contact Chellie McLellan for more information (513) 969-3153.



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