

FALL 2023

EAST PROVIDENCE HEALTH EQUITY ZONE

Newsletter

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EAST PROVIDENCE HEZ

BY ALYSSA GLEASON

Happy Fall! Whether we are trunk-or-treating, apple-picking, or enjoying the Great Townie Pumpkin Festival, EP HEZ is loving one of the most beautiful times of the year in East Providence. As we gear up for the colder weather (and, unfortunately, cold and flu season), EP HEZ is stocking up on masks, hand sanitizer, and resource packets to distribute throughout the City. We are also planning some great community events! As we head into shorter days and colder nights, we know it can be tough to stay connected with our friends, families, and neighbors. Join us and make some new friends or have a night out with your loved ones at our **Community Connections series** at Fuller Creative Learning Center. All are welcome on November 30th for our freestyle paint night and on December 14th for cookie decorating. **Have an idea for a community event?** Let us know! We can always be reached at EProvHEZ@ebcap.org.

As summer and warm weather become a distant memory, we could all use a little extra support. Worried about keeping your home warm this winter? Contact the East Bay Community Action Program (EBCAP) LIHEAP office to learn about the statewide heating and energy assistance program and while you're there, make sure to ask about the Weatherization Assistance Program. Struggling with the increasing (and increasing, and increasing) prices at the grocery store? The EBCAP Food Pantry at Bullocks Point Ave. is available to all East Providence residents twice per month! Stop by, check out our options, and enjoy our nutritionist-approved recipes. Want some suggestions on how to eat healthy during the holiday season? We can help there too! Have a great money-saving trick or tip that you want to share? Send it to EProvHEZ@ebcap.org-maybe you will be featured in our next newsletter!

Partner Spotlight: EBCAP Family Visiting

The Parents as Teachers (PAT) and Healthy Families America (HFA) programs are evidence-based programs that promote healthy adult-child interaction and family well-being through activities and partnering with parents, while providing monthly connections with other families, including family activities and community events. Sound great? We think so too! Contact us by email or phone (information found on last page of newsletter) to learn more, or check out our website at www.ebcap.org.



EAST PROVIDENCE
HEZ
HEALTH EQUITY ZONE



east bay community action program
THE BRIDGE TO SELF-RELIANCE

Health Equity Zones are an initiative of the Rhode Island Department of Health. This newsletter is produced by East Bay Community Action Program, the backbone agency for the Warren, Bristol, and East Providence Health Equity Zone's, and does not necessarily represent the views of RIDOH.

GRANT UPDATE

BY SARAH BURDE, RHODE TO EQUITY COORDINATOR

Rhode to Equity/Produce to People Grant

Over the summer and continuing into fall, we have continued our partnership with the East Providence Housing Authority and we continued hosting monthly health education workshops. In September the Rhode Island chapter of the Alzheimer's Association came and did a presentation on topics such as the difference between Alzheimer's and Dementia, symptoms, risk factors, high-risk populations, as well as programs available at the Alzheimer's Association. At this workshop, we had a great turn out of 23 residents and heard a ton of positive feedback.

At the end of October and beginning of November we will be co-hosting two health fairs at multiple East Providence Housing Authority sites. Residents attending can expect to see vendors such as Asthenis Pharmacy who will be doing free Flu and Pneumonia vaccines, Neighborhood Health Plan, Blue Cross and Blue Shield, UnitedHealthcare, Pace-RI, and many more. Attendees will be entered in a raffle to win a to-go size blender. Education programming will be continuing following the health fairs at the start of 2024. We are thrilled to offer programming that meets the needs of the East Providence residents.

Alyssa Gleason and Sarah Burde led a panel discussion at CTC-RI's annual conference where they shared their work on the Rhode to Equity Grant. They were able to speak about the programming that was implemented and the relationships that have been established since the start of Rhode to Equity.



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR CITY:

HEALTH FAIR

This event will be held on Tuesday, November 14th from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM at Harbor View Manor. This event is geared towards adults and seniors. This event is open to residents of Harbor View Manor only.

INFORMATIONAL SESSION ON SOCIAL SECURITY AND IMMIGRATION

This event will be held on Wednesday, November 29th from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM at the Cape Verdean Progressive Center. This free event is open to the public and registration is not required. A continental breakfast will be provided.

CITY HALL TREE LIGHTING

This event will be held on Saturday, December 2nd from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM at East Providence City oHall. This event is open to the public.

GRANT UPDATE

BY NAOMI ZELTZER, FAMILY NAVIGATOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE GRANT LEAD

Environmental Justice Workgroup

Our EP HEZ Environmental Justice (EJ) Workgroup continued to meet over the summer and into this fall. Recent discussions have covered topics such as the intersections of race and income in environmental justice issues, soil contamination, and voting on grant and funding opportunities. In September, Sienna Viette of Open fArms Retreat held an educational presentation for the group about Soil Testing and Amendments, Raised Beds, and Cold Frames. There will be more presentations from community experts and great discussions with EP residents in the coming months! If you are interested in joining this group, please reach out to Naomi at nzeltzer@ebcap.org or 401-280-8756.

New Grants and Initiatives

The Environmental Justice in the HEZ Mini-Grant awarded to EPHEZ in the spring wrapped up in September, but our environmental justice work is far from over!

In late summer, EP HEZ applied for and received the Environmental Health Risk Assessment Program (EHRAP) Community Outreach, Education & Assessment Mini-Grant. Under this grant, Naomi will be creating educational outreach materials around the risks of lead contamination in soil, especially for EP residents raising young children and growing food for themselves or their community. These materials will discuss contamination risks, soil testing resources, suggested amendments, and alternatives to in-ground growing methods.

EP HEZ was also chosen to collaborate on a climate change engagement initiative with ProChange, a small Rhode Island health behavior change company. This pilot text messaging program is designed to help Rhode Islanders protect themselves from extreme weather, like the recently experienced heat waves and hurricanes. We are currently seeking community input and feedback on the details of this text-messaging program. If you are an EP resident over age 18, you are eligible to participate in paid interviews! If you're interested in lending your voice to this initiative, please contact Sasha at sbosack@prochange.com or 401-714-5204.

RECENT OUTREACH



EAST PROVIDENCE HEZ EMPLOYEES STAFFED A TABLE AT EAST BAY COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM'S GENDER AFFIRMATION CLOTHING CLOSET AND RESOURCE FAIR ON OCTOBER 7, 2023.



BOB DASILVA, EAST PROVIDENCE MAYOR, AND RITA CAPOTOSTO, VP OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT AT EAST BAY COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM, POSE WITH EAST PROVIDENCE HEZ STAFF FOR A SELFIE.

GRANT UPDATE

BY RACHEL STANCIL, COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER

Produce Week

Fall Harvest in the Pantry

Now that the weather has been getting cooler, the Produce Week recipes have been getting warmer. With the support from Farm Fresh Rhode Island's Farm to Food Pantry grant, EP HEZ and the East Bay Community Action Program's East Providence food pantry (located at 100 Bullocks Point Ave.) have been able to provide residents with locally grown fresh produce throughout the summer and into the fall.

Pantry guests have been happy to receive such a wide variety of seasonal foods. The seasonal produce items include kale, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, garlic, squash varieties, apples, and many more! A couple of the recently popular recipes using the ingredients above are the Roasted Tomato Sauce and the Sautéed Kale with Garlic. Both recipes are quick and simple to follow and can be paired with numerous pantry staples such as pasta, grains, and proteins to make complete meals for the entire family to enjoy!

Additionally, EP HEZ plans on introducing hydroponic gardens into the food pantry later on in the season. This will make fresh herbs more available to guests as we enter the colder months. On top of that, this will continue to support the idea of eating locally sourced and nutritious foods.



PANTRY RECIPE: ROASTED TOMATO SAUCE



INGREDIENTS:

- 3 tablespoons of olive oil
- 4-6 cloves of garlic, chopped roughly
- 3 lb. ripe (med-large) tomatoes, cored and cut in half OR 3 lb. small tomatoes, whole
- 2 teaspoons of Italian seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- Pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Pre-heat oven to 400 F.
2. Drizzle a large, rimmed baking sheet with olive oil. Sprinkle with garlic.
3. Place the sliced tomatoes cut-side down OR the small tomatoes whole on the sheet pan and roast for 30 minutes. Add the Italian seasoning and roast 10 more minutes, or until skins have lifted off the tomatoes.
4. Let cool, pull off their skins, then pour all tomatoes and their roasting juices into a bowl. Mash with a fork or potato masher. Season with salt and pepper.
5. To use right away, reheat in pan or pot. You can also refrigerate for up to 5 days, or freeze.

FYI - If you are freezing the sauce in a mason jar, make sure jar and lid are clean and sterile. Let sauce come to room temperature. Fill jars leaving 2 inches headroom at the top of the jar to prevent the jar from breaking. Thaw in the fridge for 24-48 hours.

GRANT UPDATE

BY KASSIE PAQUETTE, SCHOOL-BASED FAMILY NAVIGATOR

Preschool Development Grant (PDG)

Upcoming Play & Learn Series

EP HEZ is having their next 6-week Play & Learn series on Tuesday mornings, October 10th-November 15th, from 10am to 11am at Weaver Library. This program is intended for children ages 3-5, but younger and older siblings are welcome to join!

The EP HEZ has been busy with our Play & Learn Series. We have implemented two new Play & Learn programs this year. Our first one being in a special education preschool classroom at Waddington Elementary School for 3 weeks over the summer. The children engaged in activities like paint in the bag, music time, and blowing bubbles, as well as a weekly story time. The Family Navigators sent the children home with resources and our flyers to be given to their parents/caregivers.

Our second one was a mindfulness and movement Play & Learn this past September at Weaver Library where we focused on ways to be mindful while engaging in a full-body dance activity. The parents were able to learn about the basics while the children participated in free play and a mindfulness coloring activity.

We have expanded our partnership with the East Providence School Department even more! Our School-Based Family Navigator, Kassie, is now holding weekly drop-in hours at Orlo Elementary School on top of her original placement at Whiteknact Elementary. Kassie will be adding Silverspring Elementary and Oldham Preschool later this fall while also engaging with other schools in the district such as the High School and Martin Middle School through our partnership with the Project Aware Coordinator of the East Providence School Department. Our Family Navigator, Naomi, is still holding weekly drop-in hours at Hennessey Elementary, providing on-site assistance with accessing resources such as housing and food assistance. We are looking forward to more engagement with the East Providence families.

LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a seasonal program, running this heating season from October 1, 2023 to May 1, 2024. LIHEAP helps households stay warm in the winter through programs that reduce the risk of health and safety problems that arise from unsafe heating practices.



Scan the QR code to learn more or visit:

<https://www.ebcap.org/programs/heating-and-energy/>

CANNED GOODS DONATION DRIVE

Looking to spread a little holiday cheer this season? The East Providence Fire Department and East Providence Health Equity Zone (EP HEZ) will be holding a food drive throughout November, with all contributions going to East Bay Community Action Program East Providence Food Pantry, located at 100 Bullocks Point Avenue.

Please consider donating non-perishables and dry goods. You can donate at either the East Providence City Hall or any East Providence Fire Station.

Questions? Contact EP HEZ by calling 401-431-9870, Ext. 1609 or email at eprovhez@ebcap.org

GRANT UPDATE

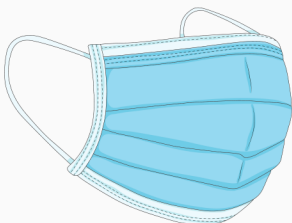
BY LYNDESEY FERREIRA, PROJECT COORDINATOR

Health Disparities Grant

Summer has come to an end and now EP HEZ is getting ready for some exciting fall events. We will be just as busy as we were in the summer! We are working on some projects as well as joining our community partners at local events. We have already attended a few events such as National Night Out, Summerfest at Crescent Park, The Weaver Library Summer Block parties, the Loeff Arts Festival, Neighborhood Day, the Great Townie Pumpkin festival and more.

We are continuing to host our monthly health workshops at City View Manor. We have also been doing some street outreach such as setting up at some local EP laundromats weekly as well as outreach at Weaver Library where we hand out PPE, resource information and also assist with filling out applications such as SNAP, LIHEAP and housing applications.

We welcome residents of East Providence to stop in and chat with us any time you see us doing street outreach or event outreach. We will always be there with our free PPE, resource information, test kits and more. We also have a large inventory of KN95 masks, Adult disposable masks and Children's disposable masks if you or someone you know is in need of these masks they can contact the EP HEZ and we can connect them with some masks and any other PPE they may need. We have also been distributing Narcan during our street and event outreach. For more information on how you can get Narcan, COVID-19 test kits, masks and more please contact the EP HEZ by emailing eprovhez@ebcap.org. We look forward to seeing everyone out in the community this year.



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