

SPRING 2024

# EAST PROVIDENCE HEALTH EQUITY ZONE

Newsletter

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EAST PROVIDENCE HEZ

BY ALYSSA GLEASON

Happy Spring! As we head into warmer weather and longer days, EP HEZ can't wait to get outside and enjoy Spring in East Providence. Love to garden? We would love to meet you! Join our Community Garden workgroup by contacting [eprovhez@ebcap.org](mailto:eprovhez@ebcap.org). Interested in some outdoor Spring cleaning? Join our Community Connections series at Fuller Creative Learning Center on Tuesday, April 23rd at 4 p.m. for an Earth Day Clean-Up. Have an idea for a community event? Let us know! We can always be reached at [eprovhez@ebcap.org](mailto:eprovhez@ebcap.org).

We are coming up on a big milestone at EP HEZ-our fifth anniversary! EP HEZ began in Summer 2019, and over the last five years we have connected with over 20,000 residents, distributed over 100,000 masks, participated in (and hosted!) hundreds of events, and directed over \$40,000 in funding and programmatic supplies into the community. Our Collaborative has grown to over 150 members, and our focus areas have expanded to include health/nutrition literacy and environmental justice, along with supports for families with young children, food access, and addressing social isolation.

Have a great EP HEZ story you'd like to share? We'd love to hear from you! Reach out to [eprovhez@ebcap.org](mailto:eprovhez@ebcap.org) with your story, and let us know how EP HEZ has impacted you and the community.

Sincerely,

*Alyssa*



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*

We're thrilled to bring you the latest update on our community wellness initiatives! Here's a rundown of what's been happening:

**Housing Authority Focus Group:** Our recent focus group session at Goldsmith Housing Authority was inspiring! Residents shared their experiences and insights, highlighting the practical impact of our programs. From mastering the art of organizing medical appointments to sharing valuable health tips with friends, the enthusiasm was shared across the room.

**Focus Group Insights About Workshops:** Our workshops continue to empower and educate. Residents are embracing the power of knowledge sharing, advocating for self-care, and eagerly participating in interactive sessions. The thirst for lifelong learning is evident, and we're committed to providing diverse programming to meet the community's needs.

**Harbor View Health Workshop:** Our inaugural health workshop at Harbor View, in partnership with the Alzheimer's Association, was a resounding success! Participants were eager to learn and engage, soaking up valuable information about health and wellness.

As we move forward, we remain dedicated to fostering a culture of wellness and empowerment in our community. Your participation and enthusiasm drive our success, and we're grateful for your ongoing support!



# EAST BAY COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM'S 19TH ANNUAL SEASIDE GALA



DATE: THURSDAY,  
JUNE 13, 2024

TIME: 5:30-9:30 PM

LOCATION:  
ATLANTIC RESORT NEWPORT,  
WYNDHAM NEWPORT HOTEL  
240 AQUIDNECK AVE.  
MIDDLETOWN, RI 02842

TICKET AND SPONSOR  
INFORMATION COMING SOON  
ON [WWW.EBCAP.ORG](http://WWW.EBCAP.ORG)

# GRANT UPDATE

BY NAOMI ZELTZER, FAMILY NAVIGATOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE GRANT LEAD

## ***Environmental Justice Workgroup***

Our EP HEZ Environmental Justice Workgroup continues to meet monthly to discuss topics of concern to our members and the city of East Providence. Recently, workgroup members have been brainstorming project ideas and areas of interest to focus on for this coming year; some ideas are stormwater mitigation, addressing/greening transportation and mobility barriers, and more environmental education and youth involvement. We're always looking for new members; if you are interested in joining this group, please reach out to Naomi at [nzeltzer@ebcap.org](mailto:nzeltzer@ebcap.org) or 401-280-8756.

## ***Community Garden Workgroup***

The Community Health Team at EBCAP has been supporting a group of residents through the process of starting a community garden in East Providence, which EP HEZ will now be facilitating! This project is still in early stages of development, and we hope for this garden to be resident and community-driven. If you are interested in joining this group of residents trying to get this initiative off of the ground (or rather, in the ground!), please reach out to Naomi at [nzeltzer@ebcap.org](mailto:nzeltzer@ebcap.org) or 401-208-8756.

## ***Grants and Initiatives***

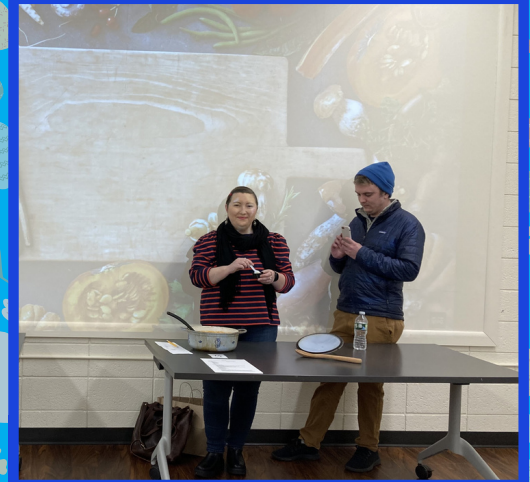
### ***Let's Grow Together***

As mentioned previously, EP HEZ applied for and received the Environmental Health Risk Assessment Program (EHRAP) Community Outreach, Education & Assessment Mini-Grant. Under this grant, Naomi created educational materials about soil contamination risks, soil testing resources, amendments, and alternatives to in-ground growing methods, especially for EP residents raising young children and growing food for themselves or their community. These materials, including an informative brochure and a children's activity book, are in the final stages of review and will be distributed during outreach this spring!

### ***Community Engagement Events***

In December 2023, EP HEZ applied for the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's (RIDEM) Community Engagement in 2025 Climate Action Strategy Funding Opportunity jointly with the Bristol and Warren Health Equity Zones as well as the Town of Barrington. Under this grant, there will be ten (10) community and regional events throughout the four municipalities to engage families with young children in educational activities around climate action priorities while supporting the development of the 2025 Climate Action Strategy. Events will have offerings for residents of all ages, incorporating fun environmental activities for youth while guiding adults in conversations around reducing greenhouse gas emissions and climate justice. We are thrilled to announce that we were chosen to receive this funding! Stay tuned for more information on these community events.

# RECENT OUTREACH



GUESTS ENJOYING SOME DELICIOUS CHILI AT THE EP HEZ AND EAST PROVIDENCE PREVENTION COALITION COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS CHILI COOK-OFF EVENT ON JANUARY 11TH AT THE FULLER CREATIVE LEARNING CENTER.



EP HEZ STAFF KASSIE PAQUETTE AND RACHEL STANCIL PROVIDE OUTREACH SUPPORT AT EAST PROVIDENCE CITY HALL.

# GRANT UPDATE

BY RACHEL STANCIL, COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER

## ***Produce Week and Senior Center Collaboration***

Produce Week has continued to be a favorite among guests who visit the East Providence food pantry. This month EPHEZ increased the reach of Produce Week and kicked off the long-awaited collaboration with the East Providence Senior Center. After the “Produce to People” program, we learned that many senior residents are faced with transportation barriers when it comes to accessing the food pantry and fresh produce. The goal of this partnership is to eliminate that barrier by directly bringing staple food items and fresher options to a handful of residents identified by the senior center at the place within their community where they feel a sense of belonging. We are working closely with a Community Health Worker from the senior center to make this possible.

Keeping in mind potential health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease, accessibility needs, and most popular items, the foods chosen for the bags were carefully selected. To make the bags easier to carry and to make the items easier to use, we chose not to include heavy canned goods. Overall, the bags contained milk (1% or almond), whole grain cereal, reduced sugar and sodium peanut butter, dates, lentils, rice, a bulb of garlic, onions, red and white potatoes, blueberries, portioned boneless skinless chicken breast, and a choice of asparagus with sweet potatoes or green beans, (these same items were available in the pantry for guests as well). We also provided two recipes – one for asparagus and sweet potatoes, and the other for green beans and red potatoes. We are looking forward to hearing resident feedback and suggestions on what they would like to see in the bags in the coming months!

*Pictured below on the left is Rachel Stancil, Community Health Worker, assisting clients in the food pantry.*



# PANTRY RECIPE:

## ROASTED GREEN BEANS AND RED POTATOES



## INGREDIENTS:

- Olive oil
- 2-4 medium potatoes
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- 1 teaspoon of garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon of ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon of dried parsley

## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Pre-heat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Lightly coat a rimmed baking sheet with olive oil.
2. Cut potatoes in half if they are golfball-sized or larger.
3. Lay potatoes and green beans in a single layer on the prepared baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil. Then sprinkle salt, garlic powder, pepper, and parsley on top.
4. Bake in the preheated oven until potatoes are tender, 25 to 30 minutes.

# GRANT UPDATE

BY KASSIE PAQUETTE, SCHOOL-BASED FAMILY NAVIGATOR

## *Preschool Development Grant (PDG)*

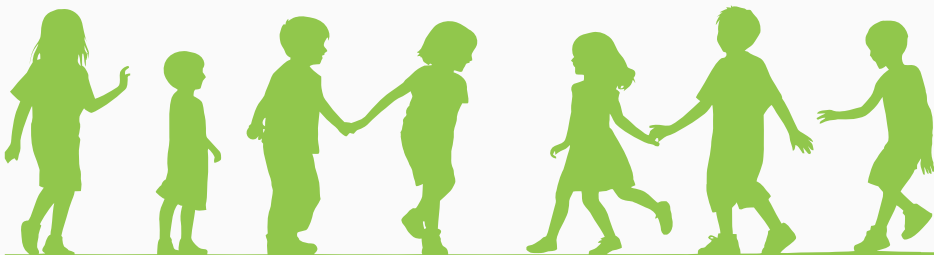
### *Upcoming Play & Learns:*

We are looking forward to hosting our next Play & Learn series on Tuesday mornings at Hennessey Elementary School. This will run for 6 weeks starting April 22nd. This program is targeted for children ages 0-2 but older children are welcome to join! The flyer and registration will be sent out shortly.

This past fall we held our Play & Learn series at Weaver Library for children ages 3-5. We had a steady turnout each week, where children engaged in coloring, painting, and blowing bubbles. Parents and caregivers were given a book and some resources at the end of each session.

The Family Navigators are staying busy assisting families. Family Navigator Naomi is in her third year assisting families at Hennessey Elementary School, Kassie is in her second year assisting families at Whiteknact Elementary, while also in her first year working with Oldham Preschool, Silver Spring Elementary, and Orlo Elementary. In collaboration with the School Department, we are also able to assist families from other schools in East Providence, as our goal is to make these services available to all.

Our collaboration with the school department has been stronger than ever this year as we are engaging with more families, teachers, and other school staff. We were able to provide toys to the families of the East Providence school district this past holiday season, and we are expected to have more engagement with the families and the schools coming this spring.



# 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/>

## VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE (VITA) FREE INCOME TAX FILING

If you earned under \$63,000 in 2023, you may be eligible for free income tax filing assistance. EBCAP's VITA program is here to help you!

To schedule an appointment, call EBCAP's Office of Volunteer Services at 401-435-7876, ext. 1137.

Scan the QR code to learn more or visit:



<https://www.ebcap.org/programs/east-bay-volunteer-income-tax-assistance-vita-program/>

# GRANT UPDATE

BY LYNDSEY FERREIRA, PROJECT COORDINATOR

## ***Health Disparities Grant***

The last few months have been busy for EPHEZ! From attending events hosted by our community partners to street outreach hosted by EPHEZ, there is never a dull moment. ***Here are some highlights:*** In November, we hosted an accessible line dancing event with West Bay RI. The event was well attended and the participants had such a fun time. We also launched our first canned food drive with the East Providence Fire Department. We had collection boxes located at all 4 fire stations and City Hall; together we collected 370 Canned food items that were donated to the EBCAP Food Pantry. In December, we attended Christmas tree lighting events in Rumford, East Providence and Riverside where we were able to connect with residents and provide them with resource information and PPE during the holiday season. During the month of January, we had scheduled outreach at Rumford Towers on Mondays in the North Tower and Tuesdays in the South Tower from 3:00pm – 6:00pm. During that time, we were able to connect residents with services and resources across the City. The residents enjoyed having EPHEZ available to them and asked us to come back soon. EPHEZ also has had a resource table at the East Providence City Hall every Thursday from 3:00pm – 6:00pm during the month of January. We were able to connect with some new residents and during that time we were able to offer direct application assistance. EPHEZ helped residents complete SNAP, heating assistance and housing applications. The outreach at City Hall was so successful that we were asked to come back on Thursdays for the Month of February. We welcome residents of East Providence to stop in and chat with us any time you see us doing outreach. We will always be there with our free PPE, resource information, sanitizing wipes, Narcan 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 need of these masks they can contact the EPHEZ and we can provide them for free. We continue to distribute Narcan during our street and event outreach. For more information on how you can get Narcan, masks, PPE and more please contact the EPHEZ.

**We are looking forward to the warmer weather and to the exciting events that East Providence has to offer. Come by and visit us any time!**

# CONTACT US

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## GENERAL COMMUNITY

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