

SPRING 2023

EAST PROVIDENCE HEALTH EQUITY ZONE

Newsletter

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EAST PROVIDENCE HEZ

BY ALYSSA GLEASON

Happy Spring! As the weather (slowly) gets warmer and we all look forward to longer days and sunshine, EP HEZ is looking forward to a spring and summer filled with community events and connecting with residents. ***Have little kids at home?*** Join us for one of our Play-and-Learn series and connect with our friends at the EP School Department and Weaver Library. ***Interested in gardening?*** Check out our new community gardens and hydroponic gardening intro classes at Fuller Creative Learning Center. ***Need some help brushing up your resume, or connecting with one of the many services offered by East Bay Community Action Program?*** Find us at the East Providence Laundromax (and keep an eye out for our free soap days!). ***Have a topic you would like to learn more about, from housing in East Providence to how to cook healthy meals on a budget?*** Reach out to us at EProvHEZ@ebcap.org- we are always planning new and exciting workshops, based on resident feedback. ***Want to be a part of our workgroups?*** We would love to have you! Check out our Facebook page for our workgroup schedule, or feel free to reach out to us directly. We hope to hear from you this Spring, and look forward to seeing you all out and about in East Providence!



Health Equity Zones are an initiative of the Rhode Island Department of Health. East Bay Community Action Program is the backbone agency for the Warren, Bristol and East Providence Health Equity Zones.

GRANT UPDATE

BY NAOMI ZELTZER AND KASSIE PAQUETTE,
EP HEZ FAMILY NAVIGATORS

Preschool Development Grant (PDG)

We have been running a few different early childhood programs this winter!

Family Music Time with the Phil, a collaboration between the RI Philharmonic Orchestra & Music School and Parents as Teachers, is a little over halfway through its 30-week run! The program continues to have regular attendance and positive feedback from caregivers- they even created their own Facebook group to stay in touch and connect outside of the program!

We also offered another Play & Learn Series for children 24-48 months in partnership with Weaver Library. This 6-week program featured two evidence-based curriculums for parents and caregivers, as well as crafts, story times, plenty of free play, and a new book to take home every week. The director of EBCAP's Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) came to one session to talk about the nutrition program and offer advice for eating and mealtimes with kids. Overall, the program had consistent attendance and received positive feedback!

We have expanded our partnership with the ***East Providence School Department!*** Our School-Based Family Navigator, Kassie, is now holding weekly drop-in hours at Whiteknact Elementary, Martin Preschool, and Martin Middle School to assist families and connect them to resources like behavioral health services and early childhood programs. Our first initiative began at Hennessey Elementary School with our Family Navigator Naomi, who still holds weekly drop-in hours to support the families of Hennessey Elementary School. We are looking to support East Providence families more by having drop-in hours at Weaver Library this Spring.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR CITY:

INCREDIBLE YEARS

EPHEZ is once again offering the Incredible Years® series for parents and caregivers looking for more support in raising children ages 3-6. Each session focuses on strengthening caregiver-child interactions, nurturing relationships, and promoting children's social, emotional, and language development. This program started on March 23 and will meet weekly on Thursday evenings for 14 sessions. Flyer is attached, [*link to register here:*](#)

<https://forms.gle/ucvXZC7AQpcbs1FK9>

PLAY & LEARN SERIES

EP HEZ is having another Play & Learn series on Wednesday mornings at 9AM at Martin Preschool. This will run for 6 weeks from April 19-May 24. This program is targeted at kids 0-2 but older children and siblings are welcome! Flyer is attached, [*link to register here:*](#) <https://forms.gle/fG83b6DJQUg7j2SJ9>

SAFE SLEEP

EP HEZ will be offering another Safe Sleep workshop for caregivers of newborns and infants! It will most likely be held sometime in the late spring. ***More details are to come.***

GRANT UPDATE

BY NAOMI ZELTZER, FAMILY NAVIGATOR

Environmental Justice Grant

Earlier this year, EP HEZ was awarded an Environmental Justice Grant, under which we will be forming a workgroup to learn more about and address environmental health equity. More information on this to come!

Community Gardens

Over the past few months, EP HEZ has placed hydroponic garden systems into even more classrooms across East Providence, including the Head Start location as well as Whiteknact Elementary School. We also started a collaboration with Fuller Creative Learning Center in which they will be incorporating hydroponic gardens into their programming and building an accessible outdoor garden bed this spring. Finally, we will once again be giving out Seed Started Activity Kits during outreach after they were such a big hit last year! Look out for this kits later this spring.

GRANT UPDATE

BY LYNDSEY FERREIRA, PROJECT COORDINATOR

Health Disparities Grant

The EPHEZ continues to be as busy in 2023 as they were in 2022. There are lots of exciting upcoming events and projects that we will be working on and cannot wait to share with the community. One project EPHEZ has recently started is our health education series at City View Manor which occurs once a month and each month has a different health topic that we will focus on. We will bring in speakers related to the topic and HEZ will be there providing additional resource information as well as PPE for the community.

(GRANT UPDATE CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE)

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR CITY:

AIDS RUN WALK FOR LIFE

This run will be held on Saturday, May 6th from 8:00am till 12:00pm at Pierce Memorial Field in East Providence.

CRAFT FAIR AND FOOD TRUCK FEST

This event will be Saturday, May 13th at Piere Field in East Providence. Exact time of the event is to be determined.

VETERANS EXPO

This event will be held Saturday, May 20th at Pierce Memorial Field. Exact time of the event is to be determined.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

This event will be held on Tuesday, August 1st at the field behind the East Providence Senior Center. Exact time of the event is to be determined.

LOOFF ARTS FESTIVAL

This event will be held on Saturday, August 12th from 11:00am to 6:00pm at Crescent Park in East Providence.

GRANT UPDATE (continued)

BY LYNDSEY FERREIRA, PROJECT COORDINATOR

Health Disparities Grant

We have also been doing a lot of street outreach such as setting up at some local EP laundromats on Thursday evenings and Saturday Mornings where we hand out PPE, resource information and also provide assistance with filling out applications such as SNAP, LIHEAP (for home heating assistance), and housing applications to name a few. We also set up an outreach table twice a month at the East Providence City hall on Thursdays from 3-6pm. Any resident is always welcome to stop in and chat with us and we will have our free PPE, resource information, test kits, and more.

GRANT UPDATE

BY SARAH BURDE, RHODE TO EQUITY COORDINATOR

Rhode to Equity/Produce to People Grant

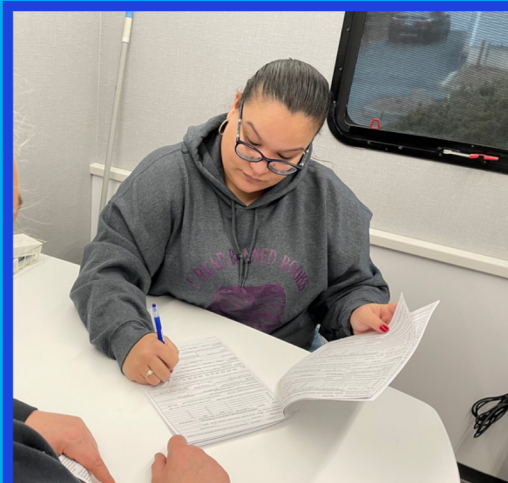
Over the past two years, The East Providence Health Equity Zone (EPHEZ) Rhode to Equity grant has been working to improve food access and increase health education throughout East Providence. Since its beginning as the Diabetes Health Equity Challenge, it has evolved from providing individuals with Diabetes a monthly bag of fresh and frozen produce options, lean proteins, recipes, and peer support to offering this on a larger scale. As of January 2023, the East Bay Community Action Program food pantry at 100 Bullocks Point Avenue has started a produce week, once each month, open to all pantry clients. The thought behind this was to increase our reach by providing the same quality of food to a larger number of people but to support this work at a systemic level rather than an individual level. Rhode to Equity will end in June 2023, but this work will continue to be integrated into the pantry and the community.

(GRANT UPDATE CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE)

RECENT OUTREACH



SARAH AND RACHEL STAFF EP HEZ TABLE AT DIRECT APPLICATION ASSISTANCE DAY



ROBIN IS PICTURED HELPING A RESIDENT FILL OUT AN APPLICATION



LYNDSEY AND KASSIE STAFF SOCIAL SERVICES TABLE AT JANUARY EBCAP CAREER AND RESOURCE FAIR

GRANT UPDATE (continued)

BY SARAH BURDGE, RHODE TO EQUITY
COORDINATOR AND RACHEL STANCIL, COMMUNITY
HEALTH WORKER

Rhode to Equity/Produce to People Grant

Along with this increased pantry access to more diabetic-friendly options, the EPHEZ is working closely with the school system to address free and reduced lunch numbers. The hope in this initiative is to help alleviate the financial burden that comes with school lunches and the associated costs. Accompanying these efforts, we are working alongside the East Providence PreK and Martin Middle School to create and expand school pantries to be able to offer children and families shelf-stable, healthy food options, hygiene, and personal care products, etc., as well as working to incorporate more fresh and frozen produce options.

Food Access Workgroup

The EPHEZ facilitates a food access workgroup where residents and state, city, and non-profit organizations are involved to improve food access and coordinate resources because everyone has a right to affordable, culturally connected, healthy, and enjoyable food.

Health Education Workshops

March was the kickoff of our recurring health education series with the East Providence Housing Authority. Throughout this series, we will have programming brought to the community by experts in health related topic areas and our Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES). We aim to bring programming into the community that meets the needs and wants of our residents and is available to individuals of all ages and backgrounds. As this programming continues to grow and evolve, we will be offering workshops in other locations throughout East Providence.

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