



## Active Living by Design

### An RWJF national program

In *Active Living by Design*—a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) that ran from 2001 to 2009—25 communities implemented projects designed to revamp the built environment, change public policies and expand programs to make physical activity part of everyday life. The RWJF Board of Trustees authorized the program for up to \$15.5 million.

#### CONTEXT

In 1996, the U.S. surgeon general established the health benefits of regular physical activity,<sup>1</sup> noting that it reduced the risk of heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, colon cancer, arthritis, depression and anxiety, and that inactivity increased the risk of contracting these conditions.

That same year, the CDC recommended that adults get 30 minutes of moderate physical activity, such as brisk walking, at least five days a week. Yet in the years that followed, national statistics showed that:

- Only 54.6 percent of American adults met the CDC's recommendation in 2001.<sup>2</sup>
- Between 1999 and 2001, nearly six in 10 adults (57.1 percent) were overweight, and about 22 percent were obese.<sup>3</sup>

“In the years in which physical activity had been promoted as an important part of health behavior, you had a flat line in terms of the percentage of people who did it. Nothing seemed to work,” said RWJF's Kraft.

“We needed a whole new paradigm... a social culture that valued physical activity, and an environment that supported it through various policies and

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<sup>1</sup> Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General, 1996. Available [online](#).

<sup>2</sup> Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Health Behaviors of Adults, 1999–2001, a CDC report based on the annual National Health Interview Survey. Available [online](#).

programs and its actual physical structure,” noted Killingsworth, the original director of *Active Living by Design*.

## The Built Environment

Research also showed that accumulating 30 minutes of physical activity 10 or 15 minutes at a time—such as by walking or biking to school or work, or playing in a park—is as effective as 30 minutes of continuous exercise.<sup>4</sup> However, opportunities for routine physical activity had been engineered out of most people’s lives. Communities often lacked sidewalks, bikeways and trails that provided ready access to schools, shops and workplaces.

Research was also beginning to show the importance of the built environment in encouraging active living. For example:

- People walked more in densely populated neighborhoods with sidewalks and interconnected streets, and with homes, work, schools and shopping in close proximity.<sup>5</sup>
- Ready access to parks, playgrounds, trails and recreation facilities spurred physical activity.<sup>6,7,8</sup>

## RWJF’s Interest in This Area

In 2001, RWJF chose promoting healthy communities and lifestyles as a key goal. When Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, MD, MPH, became Foundation president in 2003, the focus of the active living work began to shift to preventing childhood obesity.

## The Active Living Programs

RWJF’s portfolio of active living programs launched in 2001 aimed primarily to change the built environment by supporting environmental and policy approaches that were most likely to spur physical activity. “We wanted to reengineer activity back into people’s lives,” said former RWJF Program Officer Karen Gerlach Joyce, PhD, who worked with Kraft to design the programs.

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<sup>4</sup>According to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services data.

<sup>5</sup> Saelens et al. “Environmental Correlates of Walking and Cycling: Findings From the Transportation, Urban Design, and Planning Literatures. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 24(2): 80–91, 2003. Available [online](#).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Jeffery RW. “Public Health Strategies for Obesity Treatment and Prevention.” *American Journal of Health Behavior*, 25(3): 252–259, 2001. Abstract available [online](#).

<sup>8</sup> Schmitz MK and Jeffery RW. “Public Health Interventions for the Prevention and Treatment of Obesity,” *Medical Clinics of North America*, 84(2): 491–512, 2000. Abstract available [online](#).

RWJF staff members who had worked on programs that focused on tobacco control had learned from that work that policy and environmental changes were essential to promoting health and changing behavior on a large scale.

The other active living programs were:

- *Active Living Network* built a national coalition of leaders and organizations committed to designing healthy, active communities (2002 to 2007). See [Program Results Report](#).
- *Active Living Research* aims to build the evidence base for active living by supporting research on how environments and policies influence physical activity among children and their families (2002 through November 2012). Also, see [Program Results Report](#).
- *Leadership for Healthy Communities* (formerly *Leadership for Active Living*) engages policy-makers to build political will, leadership and advocacy for active living policies and programs (2002 to 2012).
- *Active Living Resource Center* provided communities and public health advocates with tools and resources to make walking and biking part of healthy communities (2002 to 2010). See [Program Results Report](#).
- *Active for Life: Increasing Physical Activity Levels in Adults Age 50 and Older* studied how to deliver and sustain research-based physical activity programs in real-world settings so that large numbers of older Americans could benefit from them. See [Program Results Report](#).

## THE PROGRAM

During *Active Living by Design*, 25 communities implemented projects to change the built environment and public policies to make physical activity part of everyday life. To pursue the projects, the communities relied on interdisciplinary partnerships that integrated the fields of public health, land use, transportation, parks and recreation, health care and others.

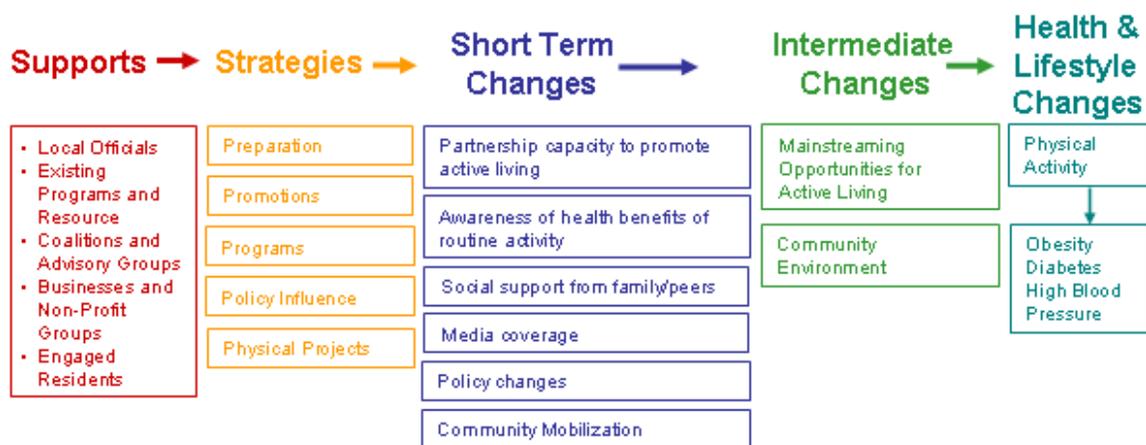
Each partnership focused on:

- Providing diverse opportunities for active living and expanding residents' access to them
- Eliminating design and policy barriers that reduce opportunities for active living
- Developing programs that expanded public awareness and understanding of the benefits of active living

The communities followed the Community Action Model, developed by the national program office, which relies on five strategies—dubbed the 5P approach—to address the many influences on physical activity:

- Preparation
- Promotions
- Programs
- Policies
- Physical projects

### Active Living by Design Community Action Model



For more information on these strategies, see [Appendix 1](#).

### The Active Living by Design Partnerships

RWJF received 966 brief proposals from communities interested in participating in *Active Living by Design*—a record-breaking number of responses. “It was a perfect storm of the data and a growing understanding of connections between design and environment and physical activity,” said Jamie Bussel, program officer for *Active Living by Design* since 2007.

“It was the right message at the right time,” said Killingsworth, former national program director. “The concept resonated in terms of, how do we make our communities better? But also, it was this collaboration. People were stretched on resources and they were looking for ways to collaborate.”

RWJF, the national program office and a national advisory committee selected 25 partnerships from a diverse set of communities nationwide—ranging from cities such as Albuquerque, N.M. and Honolulu, to the college town of Columbia, Mo., the Winnebago

Tribe in Walthill, Neb., and neighborhoods in Seattle, Louisville, Ky, and the South Bronx, N.Y.

Most partnerships included elected and appointed officials or members of tribal councils, residents and representatives from:

- Advocacy organizations and other nonprofits
- The business community
- Community and faith-based organizations, such as neighborhood associations and walking or bicycling clubs
- Health care organizations
- Media
- Parks and recreation departments
- Schools
- Urban design, planning and transportation departments
- Other government agencies, such as housing authorities, community or economic development, social services, public works and law enforcement.

For a list of the partnerships and their lead partners, see [Appendix 2](#).

### ***Activities of the Partnerships***

The partnerships used many tactics to promote active living. Common tactics included:

- Expanding parks, trails and community gardens
- Promoting opportunities for walking and bicycling
- Changing local zoning laws to require sidewalks in new developments and redesigning street standards
- Developing walking clubs and programs such as Safe Routes to School
- Encouraging employers to provide bicycle lockers, showers and gym memberships for employees
- Engaging local elected officials and the media in the problems and solutions
- Raising public awareness about the relationship between physical inactivity and the built environment

## A “High-Touch, Low-Dollar” Approach

In November 2003, RWJF awarded each partnership a five-year grant of \$200,000. RWJF used a “high-touch, low-dollar” approach: providing fairly modest financial support but considerable hands-on technical assistance from the national program office.

The idea, said Kraft, was to provide “small catalytic grants” that would pay for some staff time to coordinate active living efforts and “cultivate community partnerships that could keep issues of health and the built environment front and center.” RWJF also knew that communities were more likely to sustain their active living work if the partnerships had to raise other funds to support it, using the RWJF grants as a launching pad.<sup>9</sup>

The national program office offered technical assistance through a multidisciplinary team that provided ongoing support, such as coaching, grantee meetings, teleconferences, training sessions, site visits, a [website](#) and an interactive extranet. In addition, to maximize their catalytic grants, RWJF and national program office staff expected partnerships to work collaboratively with the national program office and their fellow grantees through a learning network, and encouraged them to build the active living field by presenting at conferences and serving on advisory committees.

## Additional RWJF Funding

In 2005, RWJF awarded the partnerships two-year Special Opportunities grants to expand the reach and impact of their initiatives. Communities used the grants—ranging from \$15,000 to \$55,000, and averaging \$37,000—to expand their partnerships advocacy or media activity.

Also in 2005, RWJF launched *Healthy Eating by Design*, a pilot program that supported 12 of the partnerships in combating childhood obesity by expanding access to healthy foods among children and families in low-income communities and schools. See [Program Results Report](#) on this effort.

In 2008, RWJF awarded 12- to 18-month Transition Supplement grants to 23 of the partnerships (all that applied), to help them replicate, disseminate or sustain their *Active Living by Design* work.

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<sup>9</sup> RWJF’s Local Funding Partnerships program, in which grantees must raise matching dollars from local funders, has shown a high sustainability rate for its projects after RWJF funding ends. Some 86 percent of all projects funded from the program’s inception through 2001 lasted at least one year after their RWJF grant ended, and 75 percent were continuing to operate when surveyed in summer 2002, according to a study by Mathematica Policy Research.

## Program Management

The national program office relied on two national advisory committees. The first committee, launched at the beginning of the initiative, provided guidance on overall program direction, strategies to attract communities and grantee selection.

In 2005, RWJF and program office staff created a new national advisory committee composed of some original members as well as experts in childhood obesity and working in low-income communities. This committee helped select grantees for the *Healthy Eating by Design* program, Special Opportunities grants and Transition Supplement grants to select initiatives. For a list of members when the committee's role ended in 2007, see [Appendix 3](#).

## The Evaluation

The RWJF-funded evaluation of *Active Living by Design* was incomplete as of June 2011. Information on the findings will be added to this report when it has been published.

## OVERALL PROGRAM RESULTS

The national program office reported the following results to RWJF:

### Fostering Local Changes That Support Active Living

- **The partnerships spearheaded or contributed to 218 projects in neighborhoods, downtowns, workplaces, schools and parks designed to create a built environment that fosters physical activity.** The most common projects were street improvements to make pedestrian and bicycle travel safer, including new crosswalks, sidewalks, bike lanes and parking.

Examples of such projects are:

- *The Cleveland Metroparks Department and the Ohio Department of Transportation developed and maintained the Morgana Run Trail, which connects two Metropark facilities with a broader network.* Residents can use the trail to commute to work and school and run errands, and for recreational walking and bicycling.
- *Among the three participating cities in Isanti County, Minn.:*
  - Isanti installed a trail along a country road to provide a safe route for children to walk to a middle school.
  - Cambridge added sidewalks to many streets and built trails to connect neighborhoods.
  - Braham built a skateboard park for kids.

— *Bike, Walk and Wheel, the Active Living partnership in Columbia, Mo., improved crosswalks near elementary schools, repaired sidewalks and added pedestrian flags and lights activated by push-buttons.*

- **The partnerships led or contributed to education and advocacy that produced 129 new or enhanced policies that support active living near schools, in workplaces and in public spaces.** These included:

- Municipal or county ordinances, policies or guidelines that promote pedestrian and bike movement, such as new design standards for local streets
- Funding for pedestrian and bike enhancements
- Creation of municipal or county boards to advise policy-makers on active living

Examples of such policy changes are:

- *The town council of Chapel Hill, N.C. (the location of the national program office) made GO! Chapel Hill, the Active Living partnership, an official board, charged with recommending capital improvements and reviewing policies related to active living.*
- *Seattle passed a Complete Streets policy, which requires street designers to consider pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users as well as drivers.*
- *Somerville, Mass., passed a bicycle parking ordinance and a bicycle lane policy to make biking and bike parking more visible, accessible, safe and convenient.*

The partnerships also helped spearhead 45 planning documents guiding local decision-making related to active living. Although these are not policy changes, they are “an important milestone in a community change process,” said Strunk.

For example:

— *The City of Buffalo, N.Y., the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus (the Active Living partnership’s lead agency) and two neighborhoods created a master plan for the campus and surrounding neighborhoods that incorporated active living principles.*

- **The partnerships developed 128 new or expanded programs to engage people in physical activity, such as walking clubs and programs to encourage children to walk or bicycle to school.** Other projects, such as bicycle recycling and education, supported active living indirectly.

Examples include:

— *The Square Partnership in Chicago started a 16-week Junior Bike Ambassador program at Kelvyn Park High School.* Students met three times a week to learn about bicycle mechanics and riding safety.

- *Active Louisville started “Get Up, Get Out, Get Moving About” at the Presbyterian Community Center.* Fitness programs included Hip-Hop-ercise, a dance exercise class for women and youth; the Pacesetters walking club for adults; and Golden Gliders, a 15-minute conditioning program for seniors.
- *Active Living in Santa Ana, Calif., started the Downtown Walking Club, which met twice a week to walk from the courthouse to the farmer’s market.*

## Building Active Living Capacity in Communities

- **The partnerships helped leverage more than an additional \$275 million in grants, direct contributions, funded government policies and in-kind contributions for active living programs—beyond the RWJF funding.** Some 252 grants yielded about \$82 million; direct contributions totaled about \$33 million; funded government policies totaled \$160 million; and in-kind contributions were \$492,000.

“The communities leveraged their concentrated efforts and their relationship to RWJF to really reach out and bring in other funders,” said Kraft.

Examples of funds raised:

- *Columbia, Mo., used a \$22 million federal grant for nonmotorized transportation to build 125 miles of networked bikeways, pedways and sidewalks.* Columbia was one of four cities nationwide selected for these funds.

“The federal grant is completely changing the physical and social environment in Columbia,” said Ian Thomas, project director for Bike, Walk and Wheel. “It will address obesity and overweight at a significant level.”

- *Seattle passed a transportation levy in 2006 that will provide about \$7.3 million annually for nine years for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure* “Our voice was essential,” said David Levinger, the original project director for Active Seattle. “As people talked about this levy, more money was added for pedestrian improvement at every step in the process.”
- *Get Active Orlando used a grant from the Blue Foundation for a Healthy Florida (an affiliate of BlueCross BlueShield of Florida) to reduce childhood obesity.* Grant activities include installing mile markers, repairing sidewalks and crosswalks and offering programs on buying and cooking healthy food.

Read more about such fund-raising in [Community Partnerships Use RWJF Funding as a Launching Pad for Active Living](#).

The national program office also secured an additional \$2.32 million by providing technical assistance to active living initiatives started by other organizations, including the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust

Fund, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation and the Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Minnesota Center for Prevention.

- **Active Living by Design nurtured local partners and volunteers as well as national program staff to become leaders of an active living movement.** The program provided training in advocacy and communications, and opportunities to gain exposure for active living work and to expand its scope.

Examples of such leaders are:

- ***Diana Straughan, mother of two schoolchildren, helped develop a Safe Routes to School program at six schools in Chapel Hill, N.C.*** She began her work at the school her children attended and then joined the GO! Chapel Hill partnership advisory committee, an official town board. Read more in a profile about [Straughan](#).
- ***Lucy Gomez-Feliciano, health organizer for the Logan Square Neighborhood Association in Chicago, led efforts to create “walking school bus” programs and install bike racks at schools, and to build the Bloomingdale Trail and several parks.*** Read more in a profile about [Gomez-Feliciano](#).
- ***Samina Raja, PhD, associate professor of urban and regional planning and health behavior at the University of Buffalo, helped planners understand how to design communities to provide better access to healthy foods.*** A partner in the Active Living by Design and Healthy Eating by Design initiative in Buffalo, Raja wrote *Transforming Food Environments, Building Healthy Communities* (American Planning Association).<sup>10</sup> Read more in a profile about [Raja](#).

- **The partnerships engaged neighborhoods and community members in planning, advocating for and participating in active living.** Examples include:

- ***In Honolulu, thousands of residents from schoolchildren to senior citizens are getting exercise as a result of their work transforming an unused, overgrown state park 10 minutes from downtown into the Ho’oulu ’Aina Nature Preserve.*** “It’s a spectacularly beautiful place, and there’s a real hunger to be engaged in something like this,” said David D. Derauf, MD, MPH, project director.

The nature preserve includes a community farm for raising healthy food, hiking trails and a renovated caretaker’s cottage, which is being used for programs on active living, healthy eating and the environment.

- ***Active Living Lents helped residents of the Portland, Ore., neighborhood—which had few sidewalks and bike lanes, and an eight-lane freeway splitting it in two—advocate for infrastructure funds to support active living.*** Results included new parks, a more walkable town center and miles of new bike lanes and sidewalks.

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<sup>10</sup> Only available for purchase from the American Planning Association. Order [online](#).

- *The Isanti County Active Living by Design partnership created and promoted an environment that encouraged people in the Minnesota county's three primary cities—Cambridge, Isanti and Braham—to walk, run and bike.*

The partnership created Walk the Town maps for each city and special bicycling and running/walking events, and even added a walk to Braham's annual pie day. "We were trying to show people how easy it is to use their own community to get physical activity every day," said Lisa Perlick, project coordinator.

Read more about engaging residents and neighborhoods in [Community Partnerships Engage People in Active Living](#).

## Expanding the Reach of Active Living

- **Active living has become a key component of planning for land use, transportation and parks in some communities.** Examples of such institutionalization efforts:
  - *The Orlando City Council approved an updated downtown transportation plan that included chapters on pedestrian improvements, bicycle transportation and public transit.* Get Active Orlando led efforts to collect data and mapped conditions for walking and bicycling.
  - *The Santa Ana Parks, Recreation and Community Services Agency, a key member of the partnership, changed its mission statement to incorporate fitness and active living.*
  - *Somerville, Mass., funded a permanent bicycle/pedestrian coordinator in the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development.* Shape Up Somerville introduced the position by funding it for a year.
- **Partnerships in low-income communities helped residents become more active; in some communities, this included helping them to overcome challenges such as staying safe.** Examples of work in low-income communities:
  - *The South Bronx (NY) Active Living Campaign helped leverage funding that led to the development of the Hunts Point Riverside Park and Barretto Point Park.* The parks became part of the South Bronx Greenway linking Hunts Point, Port Morris and the waterfront, giving residents of the dense and heavily industrial neighborhoods safe places to walk, bicycle and play.

The partnership encouraged residents to use the new parks through "Now Playing in the South Bronx," a campaign that included ads on buses and billboards, postcards mailed to homes and community-building events such as block parties.
  - *Active Louisville in Kentucky created a rap video to persuade young people to ride their bikes and posted it on YouTube.* Mr. Theo, a bus mechanic by day and a musician by night, leads the rap, which teaches viewers how to use the bike

racks on city buses. Dancers in the video are bus drivers. Use of the bicycle racks spiked with the launch of the video, and ridership reached all-time highs. The video appears on [YouTube](#) and had close to 74,000 views as of August 2011.

- *In Oakland, Calif., concerns about gangs and adults drinking, smoking and gambling kept people away from the few open spaces, so the partnership focused on making schoolyards safe places for kids to be active outdoors.*

Improvements at Garfield Elementary School, for example, included resurfacing the schoolyard and installing new basketball and tetherball courts. The city also installed new “countdown” lights at two intersections near the school and added a crossing guard.

Read more about engaging people in low-income neighborhoods in [Community Partnerships to Mobilize Low-Income Communities Around Active Living](#).

- Partnerships received 2,710 media hits in newspapers and on television and radio, and many partnerships became sources for local and national media. Examples of such coverage:
  - *In Isanti County, Minn., KBEK radio interviewed the active living project director six times on the value of physical activity and on community events.* Newspaper articles also publicized the events.
  - Honolulu’s weekly newsletter named the active living partnership’s bicycle repair program “The Best Place to Learn How to Fix Your Bike Yourself” and published a short article on it, spurring more donations to the partnership.

## Communications Results

National program staff:

- **Created a website with resources, tools and links to support the partnerships and others engaged in active living work nationwide.** The website also includes profiles, case studies and other information on each partnership.
- **Worked with Transtria (St. Louis), the main evaluator of *Active Living by Design*, on a supplement on best practices from the program published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.**<sup>11</sup> National program staff and the evaluator expect to publish another journal supplement on evaluation results in the winter of 2011–2012.
- **Published 22 articles in journals such as the *American Journal of Health Promotion*, *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, *Journal of Health Policy Analysis and Debate* and *Journal of the American Medical Association*.**

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<sup>11</sup>*American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 37(6)(Suppl. 2): 309–462, 2009. Abstracts of some articles are available [online](#).

- **Made nearly 200 presentations at local, regional and national meetings.** Examples include the annual meetings of the American Public Health Association, the Society for Behavioral Medicine and the U.S. Conference of Mayors; conferences on childhood obesity sponsored by the National Institute of Environmental Health; and a health promotion conference sponsored by the CDC.

See the [Bibliography](#) for more information.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROGRAM**

*Active Living by Design* helped spearhead a movement promoting the importance of community design in improving public health, according to Sarah L. Strunk, MHA, national program director.

“Ten years ago if you had said “active living,” people would have looked at you, and said, ‘What are you talking about’? A true movement has taken over and will change generations to come,” agreed RWJF’s Bussel.

### **Designing Communities That Support Active Living**

*Active Living by Design* made discussions of the link between health and the built environment mainstream, and brought the right people—including mayors, legislators, city planners, residents and advocates—together. The program showed the impact on the health of the public of zoning, transportation and land use, and launched a cadre of leaders collaborating across disciplines.

“You’d see people in their ties and their biking shorts sitting at the same table. *Active Living by Design* broke down the barriers for people to feel like they had common ground and equal opportunity to voice a solution,” said Killingsworth.

### **Training a New Field of Urban Planners**

The program had a profound impact on city planners, according to Killingsworth. In August 2003, the University of North Carolina established a master’s degree program in health behavior and city planning, and demand for graduates among state agencies and large municipalities has been strong. By 2010, more than a dozen universities offered similar programs.

### **Providing Models of Active Living**

Participating communities with multidisciplinary partnerships showed that those partnerships can make policy and environmental changes to support active living in a reasonable amount of time. *Active Living by Design* has provided “a set of communities that see physical activity and health as an important community issue rather than an individual issue,” said Kraft. “Active living as a concept has been widely successful.”

The spread of active living beyond the RWJF-funded program is one measure of its accomplishments. Hundreds of communities are now engaged in active living initiatives supported by the funders in the examples below as well as the CDC, Kaiser Permanente and other private and government sources. For example:

- Through W.K. Kellogg Foundation’s Food & Fitness initiative, collaboratives in nine communities are expanding access to affordable, healthy, locally grown food and creating safe and inviting places for physical activity and play.
- The North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund’s Fit Community program has supported efforts to promote physical activity and healthy eating and to prevent tobacco use in 38 communities.<sup>12</sup>
- Through Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Minnesota’s Active Living Minnesota, eight communities are implementing a comprehensive approach to support active living, including environmental and policy change.

Overall, “*Active Living by Design* has quickly grown into a broader movement and a philosophy that millions of people believe can contribute to improved health, better quality of life and safer, more vibrant communities,” Strunk said.

## SELECTED LESSONS LEARNED

For a full collection of the lessons, visit the program’s [website](#).

### Building Capacity, Communication and Leadership

1. **Strengthen a partnership’s capacity by distributing resources among participants.** Lead agencies of *Active Living by Design* initiatives often retained a significant portion of the grant funds, and dedicated them to a staff position to help coordinate a partnership. That put pressure on partners expected to contribute significant in-kind support without much financial support. Lead agencies should carefully assess their partners’ needs early on, and ensure that they have the capacity to meet a project’s demands. (National Program Office)
2. **Effective communication between lead agencies and partners is critical.** Lead active living agencies sometimes believed that partners did not communicate their ideas, needs or progress clearly. Partners, in turn, sometimes felt that lead agencies did not invite ideas, feedback or involvement, or did not respond well to input. Leaders of partnerships need to make effective communication a consistent expectation, and model it. (National Program Office)

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<sup>12</sup> The Health and Wellness Trust Fund was abolished by the NC General Assembly as of July 1, 2011, due to budgetary constraints.

3. **The most productive partnerships had leaders or key staff with strong project management skills who were empowered to follow through on a complex work plan.** The leaders of the most effective partnerships:

- Developed a consensus vision and goals to generate broad-based ownership and fair distribution of responsibilities and benefits
- Made efficient use of partners' assets and sought to institutionalize their contributions
- Understood the need to be flexible and plan for changing conditions and members
- Remained personally open to feedback and midcourse corrections
- Energized the partnership by recognizing and rewarding contributions and celebrating success
- Nurtured effective leadership throughout the partnership by establishing a culture of mutual accountability

(National Program Office)

4. **Successful policy advocacy efforts, even when they begin at the grassroots level, almost always require a strong elected or appointed local official, school principal or business leader to act as a champion.** Emerging coalitions and potential champions should seek each other out and keep each other on task.

(National Program Office)

5. **Use learning networks to help partnerships succeed.** Local leaders emphasized the importance of:

- Training and technical assistance
- Opportunities to discuss the work openly with their colleagues, experts and partners
- Opportunities to learn about new tools, resources, opportunities and best practices

(National Program Office)

### **Building Local Ownership and Commitment**

6. **Engage residents as strategic partners before investing in long-term environmental and policy solutions.** Successful change requires eliciting residents' perceptions and preferences, and pilot-testing initiatives. Partnerships that did not engage residents or seek their feedback sometimes missed the mark. (National Program Office)

7. **To secure broad-based buy-in for an active living agenda, promote shared ownership by developing grassroots leaders and organizing residents.**

Communities with strong existing coalitions and organizing efforts had an advantage in sustaining improvements and outlasting resistance to change. (National Program Office)

8. **Changing the social milieu along with the physical environment is essential to spurring active living.** Some active living partnerships found it difficult to engage partners and raise money when crime and safety, economic development, affordable housing, public education, environmental justice and access to health care were urgent priorities. Leaders need to link active living tactics to such critical concerns in low-income communities, such as by providing safe places for children to play. (National Program Office)

9. **Risks to personal security have a major impact on residents' willingness to engage in outdoor physical activity.** Improving opportunities for walking and bicycling may fall short if the threat of violent crime deters people from using them. For example, a redesigned and mapped route for children to travel to school will not work if gang members begin to hang out along the route and parents are fearful or unavailable to escort their children.

Most distressed communities began to overcome this barrier by engaging with gangs, working with law enforcement, activating citizen leaders and improving the built environment. Leaders in distressed communities should test perceptions of crime early, work with partners who can help address public safety and develop and implement strategies for preventing crime. (National Program Office)

10. **Use good stories—not just data—to make a persuasive argument.** Stories helped decision-makers, especially elected officials, understand the impact on their constituents of challenges to active living or opportunities to foster it. (National Program Office)

## Building Sustainability

11. **Although an active living program can be expensive and difficult to sustain, it is possible to do so.** Partnerships achieved sustainability by:

- Institutionalizing new programs and practices within partner agencies, worksites and schools, such as sports, recreation or public health programs
- Completing targeted, small-scale infrastructure projects
- Changing policies governing future development patterns to make them more conducive to routine physical activity
- Educating and inspiring existing leaders and decision-makers
- Establishing self-sustaining promotional events
- Finding a permanent home within a stable institution

(National Program Office)

**12. School facilities and grounds are important active living assets, especially in resource-poor communities.** In communities with severe shortages of open space, recreational facilities or civic space, school playgrounds, fields, gyms and parking lots served as important locations for physical activity.

Agreements that permit public use of school facilities, or that allow schools to use adjacent public facilities, enabled communities to make the most efficient use of existing assets. Schools and local governments should look for opportunities to share facilities and cut overall costs. (National Program Office)

## AFTERWARD

Many *Active Living by Design* partnerships are still in place; some have expanded or modified their focus, according to Strunk. In communities where the partnership has disbanded, new policies, infrastructure and social norms continue to foster physical activity. The national program office also maintains the *Active Living by Design* [website](#).

### *Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities*

In 2008, RWJF launched *Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities*, a \$33.4 million initiative to expand local opportunities for physical activity and access to healthy, affordable foods for children and families. The program focuses on children who are at highest risk of obesity based on race/ethnicity, income or geographic location.

*Active Living by Design* inspired *Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities*, which similarly relies on local multidisciplinary partnerships, strong technical assistance and a robust learning network, according to RWJF Program Officer Bussel. The program began with nine communities, which served as leading sites for the 41 communities selected to receive grants in 2009. Six of the leading sites also participated in *Active Living by Design*:

- Chicago
- Columbia, Mo.
- Louisville, Ky.
- Seattle
- Somerville, Mass.
- Oakland, Calif.

The leading sites received grants of \$400,000 for up to four years, ending in December 2012. The other sites received grants of up to \$360,000 for up to four years, ending in

December 2013. (For a list of all sites, see the [communities](#) page of the *Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities* website.) Strunk and her team are managing the program.

*Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities* is part of RWJF’s \$500 million commitment to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic in the United States by 2015.

“*Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities* will be a cornerstone of our work into the next decade,” said Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, MD, MBA, RWJF president and CEO. “This is one of the largest community-action programs ever supported by the Foundation, and one that holds great potential for changing many people’s lives.”

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**Prepared by: Lori De Milto**

Reviewed by: Sandra Hackman and Molly McKaughan

Program officers: M. Katherine Kraft, Terry Bazzarre, Dwayne Proctor and Jamie B. Bussel

Grant ID#: PAC

Program area: Childhood Obesity

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## APPENDIX 1

### The 5P Strategies of the Community Action Model

#### ***Preparation (P1)***

Preparation is the deliberate process of getting ready for action, including:

- Developing and maintaining a community partnership to work collectively
- Collecting relevant data to inform program planning
- Pursuing financial and other resources

#### ***Promotions (P2)***

The project connects with the public through communications. Messages include the benefits of active living and the importance of community environments in promoting healthy living. Promotions should help ensure the success of other policy, programmatic and infrastructure goals. They should be evaluated to see whether they reach the intended audiences.

#### ***Programs (P3)***

Programs consist of organized ongoing activities that engage individuals in physical activity, directly or indirectly. Active living programs:

- Provide direct access to physical activity opportunities, such as through walking clubs and bicycle recycle initiatives.
- Reward individuals for adopting more active habits through incentives or other encouragements, such as benefits for employees or students who walk or bicycle to work or school

#### ***Policies (P4)***

Policy development is the key to institutionalizing environments that support active living. Partnerships should identify and attempt to influence changes in public policies and standards as well as organizational practices. Efforts include:

- Advocacy
- Relationship building with policy-makers
- Presentations to policy boards
- Influencing employer or school policies

Educating citizens, professionals and advocates as well as policy-makers about the need for local environments that support active living is an essential part of this strategy. In general, policy tactics end with a policy change (e.g., pedestrian-friendly street design guidelines).

### **Physical Projects (P5)**

Physical projects directly affect built environments, removing barriers to physical activity and enhancing safety (e.g., trails and pedestrian improvements at intersections).

Partnerships should look for opportunities to improve physical spaces that do not rely on a policy decision. Physical projects range from community trails to sidewalks to signs about taking the stairs.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Active Living by Design Community Partnerships**

#### **East Bay Asian Youth Center (Oakland, Calif.)**

##### **Healthy Eating and Active Living Initiative**

ID# 49731 (November 2003–October 2008) \$200,000

ID# 55568 (November 2005–October 2007) \$30,000

ID# 65282 (November 2008–December 2009) \$30,000

##### **Project Director**

David Kakishiba

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[junji@ebayc.org](mailto:junji@ebayc.org)

#### **WalkSacramento (Sacramento, Calif.)**

##### **Partnership for Active Communities**

ID# 49748 (November 2003–November 2008) \$200,000

ID# 55573 (November 2005–June 2007) \$32,500

ID# 65356 (November 2008–October 2009) \$45,000

##### **Project Director**

Anne B. Geraghty (no longer with the organization)

(916)-446-9255

#### **Young Men's Christian Association of Orange County (YMCA) (Tustin, Calif.)**

##### **Active Living in Santa Ana**

ID# 49759 (November 2003–November 2008) \$180,202

ID# 55577 (November 2005–April 2008) \$47,905

ID# 65287 (November 2008–December 2009) \$44,995

**Project Director**

Kristen Thompson (no longer with the organization)

(714) 852-6008

**Friends of the Colorado Center for Human Nutrition (Lakewood, Co.)**

[Active Living Partnership of Greater Stapleton](#)

ID# 49759 04973 (November 2003–October 2008) \$200,000

ID# 55561 (November 2005–October 2007) \$45,600

ID# 65275 (November 2008–April 2010) \$42,123

**Project Director**

Helen C. Thompson (retired)

(303) 315-9045

**City of Orlando (Orlando, Fla.)**

[Get Active Orlando](#)

ID# 49734 (November 2003–October 2008) \$200,000

ID# 55571 (November 2005–October 2007) \$35,000

ID# 65342 (November 2008–April 2010) \$45,000

**Project Director**

Dean Grandin, MA

(407) 246-2120

[dean.grandin@cityoforlando.net](mailto:dean.grandin@cityoforlando.net)

**Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services (Honolulu, Hawaii)**

[Kalihi Valley Active Living Program](#)

ID# 49745 (November 2003–October 2008) \$200,000

ID# 55564 (November 2005–October 2007) \$27,250

ID# 64849 (November 2008–November 2009) \$39,173

**Project Director**

Cynthia Sturdevant

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**Illinois Health Education Consortium (Chicago)**

[Active Living Logan Square](#)

ID# 49762 (November 2003–October 2008) \$200,000

ID# 55556 (November 2005–October 2007) \$20,000

ID# 65281 (November 2008–April 2010) \$45,000

**Project Director**

Virginia Warren (no longer with the organization)

(312) 996-6927

**Louisville Metro Housing Authority (Louisville, Ky.)**

[ACTIVE Louisville](#)

ID# 49752 (November 2003–October 2008) \$200,000

ID# 65286 (November 2008–April 2010) \$44,335

<http://activelivingbydesign.org/communities/profiles/chicago-il>

ID# 55567 (November 2005–October 2007) \$43,300

**Project Director**

Jennifer Clark (no longer with the organization)

(502) 819-7881

**City of Somerville Health Department (Somerville, Mass.)**

[Shape-up Somerville](#)

ID# 49742 (November 2003–October 2008) \$200,000

ID# 55554 (January 2006–October 2007) \$45,700

ID# 65357 (November 2008–October 2009) \$45,000

**Project Director**

Noreen Burke (no longer with the organization)

(617) 625-6600

**Michigan Physical Fitness, Health and Sports Foundation dba Michigan Fitness Foundation (Lansing, Mich.)**

Walkable Communities Task Force

ID# 49746 (November 2003–October 2008) \$200,000

ID# 55566 (November 2005–October 2007) \$48,600

**Project Director**

Risa Wilkerson, MA (no longer with the organization)

(919) 843-3519

### **Isanti County (Cambridge, Minn.)**

#### [Isanti County Active Living](#)

ID# 49761 (November 2003–November 2008) \$199,938

ID# 55565 (November 2005–October 2007) \$20,000

ID# 65230 (November 2008–February 2010) \$45,000

#### **Project Director**

William A. Carlson

(763) 689-1442

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### **PedNet Coalition, Inc. (Columbia, Mo.)**

#### [Bike, Walk and Wheel](#)

ID# 49753 (November 2003–November 2008) \$199,903

ID# 55560 (November 2005–October 2007) \$56,700

ID# 65269 (November 2008–April 2010) \$45,000

#### **Project Director**

Ian M. Thomas, PhD, MEd, MSc

(573) 239-7916

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### **Town of Chapel Hill (Chapel Hill, N.C.)**

#### [GO! Chapel Hill](#) [GO! Chapel Hill](#)

ID# 49757 (November 2003–October 2008) \$200,000

ID# 55584 (November 2005–October 2007) \$15,000

ID#65274 (November 2008–April 2010) \$39,290

#### **Project Director**

David C. Bonk

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[dbonk@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:dbonk@townofchapelhill.org)

### **Our Healthy Community Partnership (Omaha, Neb.)**

#### [Act!vate Omaha](#)

ID# 49754 (November 2003–October 2008) \$200,000

ID# 55569 (November 2005–April 2007) \$53,700

ID# 65273 (November 2008–April 2010) \$45,000

**Project Director**

Kerri R. Peterson, MS

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[kpeterson@livewellomaha.org](mailto:kpeterson@livewellomaha.org)

**Ho-Chunk Development Corp. (Walthill, Neb.)**

[Winnebago Active Living by Design](#)

ID# 49732 (November 2003–October 2008) \$200,000

ID# 55595 (November 2005–April 2007) \$15,000

**Project Director**

Joy Johnson

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**1000 Friends of New Mexico (Albuquerque, N.M.)**

[Albuquerque Alliance for Active Living](#)

ID# 49740 (November 2003–October 2008) \$199,910

ID# 55576 (December 2005–May 2008) \$39,250

ID# 65527 (December 2008–March 2010) \$45,000

**Project Director**

Joanne McEntire (no longer with the organization)

(505) 400-1645

**Sustainable South Bronx (Bronx, N.Y.)**

[South Bronx Active Living Campaign](#)

ID# 49747 (November 2003–October 2008) \$200,000

ID# 55581 (November 2005–October 2007) \$35,000

**Project Director**

Majora J. Carter (no longer with the organization)

(718) 617-4668

**Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, Inc. (Buffalo, NY)**

[Healthy Communities Initiative](#)

ID# 49736 (November 2003–October 2008) \$200,000

ID# 55582 (November 2005–October 2007) \$50,000

ID# 65284 (November 2008–April 2010) \$45,000

**Project Director**

Michael J. Ball, A.I.C.P.  
(716) 881-8922  
[mball@bnmc.org](mailto:mball@bnmc.org)

**Slavic Village Development (Cleveland, Ohio)**

[The Broadway: a community on the move](#)

ID# 49751 (November 2003–October 2008) \$200,000

ID# 55559 (November 2005–October 2008) \$51,400

ID# 65280 (November 2008–October 2009) \$45,000

**Project Director**

Emily K. Miller  
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**Oregon Public Health Institute (formerly called the Community Health Partnership) (Portland, Ore.)**

[Healthy Active Lents](#)

ID# 59270 (December 2006–November 2008) \$47,590

ID# 65271 (November 2008–April 2010) \$45,000

**Project Director**

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**American Heart Association Inc., Pacific Mountain Affiliate (Seattle, Wash.)**

ID# 49744 (November 2003–November 2008)

**Project Director**

Minot Cleveland, MD (Oregon Coalition for Promotion of Physical Activity)  
(530) 806-2007  
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**Feet First (Seattle, Wash.)**

[Active Seattle](#)

ID# 49756 (November 2003–October 2008) \$200,000

ID# 55583 ((November 2005–September 2008) \$41,500

ID# 65272 (November 2008–April) 2010 \$45,000

**Project Director**

Rebecca C. Deehr (no longer with the organization)  
(206) 652-2310

**Maternal and Family Health Services, Inc. (Wilkes-Barre, Pa.)**

[Wyoming Valley Wellness Trails Partnership](#)

ID# 49760 (November 2003–October 2008) \$200,000

ID# 55553 (November 2005–July 2008) \$20,000

ID# 65227 (November 2008–April 2010) \$18,340

**Project Director**

Cynthia A. Lombard (no longer with the organization)  
(570) 759-9465

**Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments (North Charleston, S.C.)**

[Lowcountry Connections Partnership](#)

ID# 49741 (November 2003–January 2009) \$192,115

ID# 55585 (November 2005–January 2009) \$47,000

**Project Director**

Yvonne A. Gilreath  
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**Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County (Nashville, Tenn.)**

[Music City Moves! Partnership](#)

ID# 49758 (December 2003–November 2008) \$200,000

ID# 55550 (November 2005–October 2007) \$35,500

ID# 65343 (November 2008–November 2009) \$12,618

**Project Director**

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**Upper Valley Trails Alliance, Inc. (Norwich, Vt.)**

[Upper Valley Trails for Life](#)

ID# 49750 (November 2003–October 2008) \$200,000

ID# 55552 (November 2005–October 2007) \$42,200

ID# 65228 (November 2008–April 2010) \$45,000

## **Project Director**

Russell Hirschler

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## **APPENDIX 3**

### ***Active Living by Design National Advisory Committee (as of December 2007, when the committee's role ended)***

#### **Tyler Norris (Chair)**

Founding President and CEO  
Community Initiatives, Inc.  
Boulder, Colo.

#### **Tim Blumenthal**

President  
Bikes Belong Coalition  
Boulder, Colo.

#### **Susan Handy, PhD**

Professor of Environmental Science and Policy  
Department of Environmental Science and  
Policy  
University of California, Davis  
Davis, Calif.

#### **Maxine Hayes, MD, MPH**

State Health Officer  
Washington State Department of Health  
Seattle, Wash.

#### **James H. Johnson, PhD**

William R. Kenan Jr. Distinguished Professor  
of Strategy and Entrepreneurship

Kenan-Flagler Business School  
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill  
Chapel Hill, NC

#### **Michael O'Donnell, PhD, MBA**

Director of Health and Wellness  
Cleveland Clinic  
Editor in Chief and President  
*American Journal of Health Promotion*  
Cleveland, Ohio

#### **Daniel Rodriguez, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Department of City and Regional Planning  
Adjunct Associate Professor  
Department of Epidemiology  
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill  
Chapel Hill, N.C.

#### **Howell Weschler, EdD, MPH**

Director  
Division of School and Adolescent Health  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Atlanta, Ga.

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- “The Active Living by Design: National Program Office Community Initiatives and Lessons Learned.” Bors P, Dessauer M, Bell R, Wilkerson R, Lee J and Strunk S, S313–S321.
- “Bike, Walk, and Wheel: A Way of Life in Columbia, Missouri.” Thomas IM, Sayers SP, Godon JL, Stacia R and Reilly SR, S322–S328.
- “Project U-Turn: Increasing Active Transportation in Jackson, Michigan.” TenBrink DS, McMunn R and Panken S, S329–S335.
- “Promoting and Developing a Trail Network Across Suburban, Rural, and Urban Communities.” Schasberger MG, Hussa CS, Polgar MF, McMonagle JA, et al., S336–S344.
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- “Leveraging Neighborhood-Scale Change for Policy and Program Reform in Buffalo, New York.” Raja S, Ball M, Booth J, Haberstro P, et al., S352–S360.

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- “ACTIVE Louisville: Incorporating Active Living Principles into Planning and Design.” Walfoort NL, Clark JJ, Marigny J, Bostock MJ and O’Neil K, S368–S376.
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- “Establishing Best Practices for Changing the Built Environment to Promote Physical Activity” (commentary). Simon PA and Fielding JE, S448–S449.
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### **Chapters**

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## Meetings & Conferences

### Testimony

Richard Killingsworth, “Promoting Public Health Through the Built Environment and Transportation,” at the U.S. Senate Briefing on Physical Activity, June 16, 2003, Washington. Written request from Congressman Jim Oberstar.

Richard Killingsworth, “The Importance of Transportation in Public Health: Why Safe Routes to Schools are Needed,” to the United States House of Representatives Subcommittee on Highways and Transit of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, July 25, 2002, Washington. Written request from Clyde Woodle.

## Communications & Advocacy

### Grantee Profiles

Community Profiles are available on the Active Living by Design [website](#). Just click on the location on the map to get to each Community Profile. Each profile includes the following sections: “About,” “Our Story,” “Opportunities” and “Accomplishments.”

### Grantee Website

[www.activelivingbydesign.org](http://www.activelivingbydesign.org). Includes resources, tools and links to support community partnerships and others engaged in active living work nationwide, and profiles and other information on each partnership. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina.

## SIDEBAR LIST

- **Community Partnerships Use RWJF Funding as a Launching Pad for Active Living.** Covers Columbia, Mo., Seattle, Santa Ana, Calif., and Orlando, Fla.
- **Community Partnerships Engage People in Active Living.** Covers Honolulu, Santa Ana, Calif., Portland, Ore., and Isanti County, Minn.
- **Community Partnerships to Mobilize Low-Income Communities Around Active Living.** Covers South Bronx, N.Y., Oakland, Calif., Louisville, Ky., and Cleveland.

## **PROFILE LIST**

- Diana Straughan, Chapel Hill, N.C.
- Lucy Gomez-Feliciano, Chicago
- Samina Raja, Ph.D., Buffalo, N.Y.