

Community Conversations



**Healthy
Together**
CLEVELAND

February 2023

Community Conversation Summary

Healthy Together Cleveland held five community conversations in January 2023 and had 117 community members in attendance. The purpose was to introduce the Healthy Together Cleveland coalition, share health data related to nutrition, obesity and physical activity and have conversation to better understand why Cleveland County continues to be one of the least healthy counties in North Carolina, help guide the coalition in creating Community Health Improvement Plans and to gauge interest in supporting Healthy Together Cleveland health initiatives.

The community conversations were open to anyone in Cleveland County and participants were compensated with a \$25 gift card. Healthy Together Cleveland advertised the conversations at each host site, in faith community, chamber of commerce and by steering committee members eblast to networks. Community conversations were hosted in Kings Mountain, Shelby, Boiling Springs, Kingstown, and Fallston. Each of these locations is identified as a food desert. Each community conversation was facilitated by a Healthy Together Cleveland steering committee member and notes were taken by Jordan Frye, Project & Program Coordinator for Healthy Together Cleveland.

All groups shared a feeling of sadness, concern and wanting to help make changes.

Questions for each of the conversations were:

Food Insecurity

- What do you think food insecurity is?
- Have you or someone you know ever experienced food insecurity or not having access to healthy food options?
- What does healthy eating mean to you?
- What are the barriers to accessing healthy food in Cleveland County?

Obesity

- Do you think there is an obesity problem in Cleveland County? Why or Why not?
- What do you believe causes obesity?
- What health problems come from being overweight?
- What can we do to help decrease obesity in Cleveland County?

Physical Activity

- What comes to mind when you hear the words Physical Activity?
- How do you define Physical Activity?
- Are you physically active? Why or why not?
- What would help you get physical activity on a regular basis (150 minutes per week)?

Community Conversation Locations

1. Kings Mountain Senior Center
Thursday, January 19
11:30 a.m.
Facilitator: Crista Brown
Attendance: 38
Zip Codes represented:
 - 28086 (Kings Mountain)
 - 28050, 28152 (Shelby)
 - 28168 (Vale)
 - 28073 (Grover)
2. Holly Oak Parks & Recreation
Thursday, January 19
6 p.m.
Facilitators: Juan Cherry & Jeff Ledford
Attendance: 24
Zip Codes represented:
 - 28150, 28152 (Shelby)
 - 28090 (Lawndale)
 - 28086 (Kings Mountain)
 - 28043 (Forest City)
3. Boiling Springs Community Center (Town Hall)
Tuesday, January 24
6 p.m.
Facilitator: Gina Carter
Attendance: 19
Zip Codes represented:
 - 28114 (Mooresboro)
 - 28150, 28152 (Shelby)
 - 28017 (Boiling Springs)
 - 28020 (Casar)
 - 28073 (Grover)
4. Palmer Grove Baptist Church
Thursday, January 26
6 p.m.
Facilitator: Rev. Frances Webber
Attendance: 19
Zip Codes represented:
 - 28150, 28152 (Shelby)
 - 28021 (Cherryville)
5. Fallston Women's Club
Tuesday, January 31
6 p.m.
Facilitator: Gina Carter
Attendance: 15
Zip codes represented:
 - 28150, 28152 (Shelby)
 - 28090 (Lawndale)
 - 28086 (Kings Mountain)
 - 28020 (Casar)

Community Voice

Below are from the notes/common themes captured from all community conversations.

FOOD INSECURITY

1. What do you think food insecurity is?
 - Not having enough to eat/feed family
 - Not knowing if or where the next meal will come from
 - No access to healthy foods
 - Nothing in cabinets
 - Skipping meals because no money

2. Have you or someone you know ever experienced food insecurity or not having access to healthy food options?
 - Most attendees knew someone who had experienced food insecurity.

3. What does healthy eating mean to you?
 - 3 meals a day and a snack
 - Portions
 - All food groups/Balance
 - Fresh fruits & vegetables
 - Lean meats
 - Baked vs. Fried
 - Not from a can
 - Moderation

4. What are the barriers to accessing healthy food in Cleveland County?
 - Cost = expensive to eat healthy
 - Availability/No access to grocery stores
 - Lack of transportation
 - Farmer's markets have limited shopping times and locations (not convenient)
 - Education of healthy food options, grocery store tours, nutrition label reading
 - Fast food restaurants everywhere/convenient to go to drive-thru
 - Unhealthy foods are less expensive (affordable)
 - Local farmers don't accept EBT/tokens = no card reader
 - Restaurants don't offer healthy options
 - Fixed incomes (Must choose between food and other necessary items (ie: electricity, water, home, medicine))
 - Social behaviors, Culture and mindset, generational habits
 - Marketing of convenient, unhealthy foods (advertising = markets to kids)
 - Don't know how to cook
 - Hard to cook for individuals living alone – cheaper to eat out

OBESITY

1. Do you think there is an obesity problem in Cleveland County? Why or Why not?
 - Yes
 - Fast food
 - Convenience of drive-thru
 - Technology/Electronics
 - Lack of physical activity
 - Cost of unhealthy foods are less expensive

2. What do you believe causes obesity?
 - Unhealthy eating
 - Sedentary lifestyles
 - No interest in exercise
 - Busy lifestyles/Chaotic lifestyles = no time to cook
 - Supplemental “extras” at schools – children eat extra’s first and waste lunch
 - Overeating (large portions) = culture/mindset “you must eat everything on plate”
 - Electronics/technology
 - Cost of providers/medical expert to give guidance

3. What health problems come from being overweight?
 - High blood pressure
 - Cardiac
 - Diabetes
 - Depression/mental health

4. What can we do to help decrease obesity in Cleveland County?
 - Model behaviors/change attitude
 - Best opportunity is to educate children (impressionable & influence)
 - Offer workplace health incentives
 - Teach meal prep/cooking
 - Get moving -
 - Education (nutrition/physical activity)

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

1. What comes to mind when you hear the words Physical Activity?
 - Movement
 - Chair exercises
 - Walking
 - Get moving
 - Sweat
 - Fun
2. How do you define Physical Activity?
 - Structured activities
 - Getting out of bed/off couch
 - Going to gym
 - Silver sneakers
 - Swimming
 - Elevate heart rate
3. Are you physically active? Why or why not?
 - Can't get motivated
 - Don't want to/lazy
 - High cost to join gym/YMCA, etc.
 - Physical limitations/disability
 - Senior Center in Shelby doesn't offer physical activities any longer (covid)
 - No insurance – if I get injured, I can't pay for doctor and I can't miss work
 - No sidewalks - safety
4. What would help you get physical activity on a regular basis (150 minutes per week)?
 - Having an accountability partner
 - Safe opportunities close to home (sidewalks)
 - Walking clubs at parks
 - Satellite YMCA location at Belwood
 - Lighted track = safe place to walk
 - Education about opportunities
 - Additional parks & recreational centers, parks, fields, tracks
 - Helping others with outside projects (faith/youth groups)
 - Mindset – making it a priority, scheduling time to move (smart watch, fit bit, Apps etc.)
 - Engaging with family, friends, neighbors, social groups = building community

IDEAS

Nutrition

- Mobile markets = fresh options (like book mobile)
- Cooking classes (community & schools)
- Community gardens/gardening classes
- Educate on healthy options at fast food restaurants
- Educate on food preparation (meal prep)
- Map of food banks/emergency foods throughout county
- Tasting of fresh fruits & vegetables
- Leverage assets/resources to get grocery store (Fallston)
- Restaurants who offer healthy options
- Farmers markets – offer incentives for growers to offer markets at more locations (convenience)
- Grocery Store Tours
- Nutrition label reading classes
- Farmer’s market in Boiling Springs
- Farmer’s market in Kings Mountain
- Eliminate sodas/junk (vending machines) in high schools
- Advertisements featuring healthy food options
- Healthy options at check-out counters
- Healthy/fresh options at convenient stores
- Neighborhood grocery stores = options for all
- Tasting healthy prepared foods with recipe cards @ farmers markets, grocery stores, cooperative extension
- Package healthy options in “fun”, appealing way
- Healthy cooking competitions (County wide - use 4 high schools)
- How and when to purchase fresh fruits & vegetables and at best cost
- Involve schools (PTO/PTA)

Physical Activity

- Community Center/Senior Center in Boiling Springs
- Safe sidewalks (widening and/or getting)
- Walking/Physical Activity map with opportunities throughout county (Inventory of resources)
- Group activities
- Walking Challenge/Competition (County wide – use 4 high schools)
- Lifelong sports (pickleball)
- YMCA classes at satellite locations (churches)
- Involve schools

Include

- Faith Community Health Ministries
- Divine 9 Sorority/Fraternity
- Minority Health Council
- Patrick Senior Center

Community Conversation Flyers

Healthy Together

CLEVELAND

Community Conversations

- Tell us what you think about our community's health.
- First 50 people will receive a \$25 gift card.
- Meal provided.

19
JAN.

11:30 AM

Patrick Senior Life & Conference Center
909 E. King Street | Kings Mountain, NC
Must RSVP by Jan. 12 at 704-734-0447

19
JAN.

6:00 PM

Holly Oak Parks & Rec Center
809 Holly Oak Road | Shelby, NC
Must RSVP by Jan. 12 at 704-484-6824

24
JAN.

6:00 PM

Boiling Springs Town Hall
1014 E. College Ave. | Boiling Springs, NC
Must RSVP by Jan. 17:
Healthytogethercleveland@atriumhealth.org

Healthy Together

CLEVELAND

Community Conversations

- Tell us what you think about our community's health.
- Seating limited to 50.
- Meal provided.
- First 50 attendees will receive a \$25 gift card.

26
JAN.

Palmer Grove Baptist Church
1606 Kingston Road | Kingstown, NC

6:00 PM

31
JAN.

Fallston Women's Club
4908 Fallston Road | Lawndale, NC

6:00 PM

You must RSVP by Jan. 24
healthytogethercleveland@atriumhealth.org