



## **Kane County Health Department**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Fit Kids Grants are the next step in reversing childhood obesity epidemic**

The Making Kane County Fit for Kids Funders Consortium is pleased to announce the award of 17 grants to local agencies and community groups. The grants, ranging in amount from \$500 to \$10,000, will be used to reverse the rising tide of childhood obesity in our county through a variety of programs designed to promote active lifestyles and increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Grant recipients were chosen by the Consortium based on their proposals to implement strategies that are contained in the Fit Kids 2020 Plan.

“This is the next step in our struggle to end childhood obesity and help reach our vision of ensuring that Kane County residents are the healthiest in Illinois by 2030,” said County Board Chairman Karen McConaughay. “We did not get ourselves into this predicament overnight, and we will not dig ourselves out through the use of quick fixes. The strategies identified in the Fit Kids 2020 Plan offer a solid structure that will allow us to take specific actions and provide a healthier future for our children.”

The grants announced today are focused on promoting changes in community conditions that will foster active lifestyles and increase access to healthy food. Some of the recipients will use the grants to increase the presence of the successful community garden program in the county. Other recipients are looking to expand and improve community playgrounds and recreational facilities.

The grants will also make it possible to use Link cards at Farmer’s Markets. Anyone approved to receive cash assistance or SNAP (Food Stamps) benefits will be issued an Illinois Link card. The Illinois Link card is a plastic card that looks and works like a debit card. Not only will this initiative allow lower income residents greater opportunity to purchase healthy foods, it also provides an economic boost to the local growers of the area by increasing their customer base.

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The Fit Kids 2020 Plan was developed by parents, physicians, engineers, educators, planners, public health professionals, transportation experts, faith leaders, local policy makers and many, many more. They all dedicated their time to contribute to this important initiative because they see the value in multiple sectors working together to make substantial change. Kane County Health Department Executive Director Paul Kuehnert states, “The Fit Kids 2020 Plan provides the framework to make the systems, environmental and policy changes needed to accomplish the goal by 2020.”

The volunteers collaborated in nine sector-specific workgroups: Built and Natural Environment, Economic Strength, Faith Community, Family, Culture and Community, Food Policy, Healthcare and Medicine, Mobility, Recreation and Lifestyle, and Schools and Recreation. Each workgroup developed strategies that: develop land use, planning and other public policies that foster and support physical activity for all in our community; support a culture of wellness and health promotion in our workplaces, schools and other institutions; assure that fresh fruits and vegetables are affordable and accessible to all families in our community; and provide parents & children with reliable, up-to-date information in multiple settings regarding healthy physical activity and eating habits.

To access a copy of the Fit Kids 2020 Plan, please visit:

[www.makingkanefitforkids.org/site/data/FFK\\_2020\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.makingkanefitforkids.org/site/data/FFK_2020_Plan.pdf).

The Funders Consortium’s members are: the Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley, the United Way of Elgin, the Forest Preserve District of Kane County, the Kane County Regional Office of Education and the Kane County Departments of Health, Development and Community Services, and Transportation.

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