Healthy Home, Healthy Child
Westside Children’s Asthma Partnership

2008-2010
HEALTHY HOME, HEALTHY CHILD
January 19, 2011

The Westside Chicago communities of North Lawndale, Garfield Park and Austin are amongst the hardest hit by asthma in the nation. Approximately 23% of children under age 12, or more than 2,000 North Lawndale children, have asthma. At least half of these children have asthma which is poorly controlled. Making asthma management even more challenging are the economic, social and broader health challenges that many Westside families face.

In response to these challenges, the Sinai Health System, in partnership with local and city-wide organizations and with funding from the Centers for Disease Control, has been implementing Healthy Home, Healthy Child: The Westside Children’s Asthma Partnership (HHHC) since October 2008. The goal of HHHC is to empower families to make the changes necessary to improve their child’s asthma management, and, thereby, the family’s quality of life. HHHC aims to improve asthma management by educating caregivers and children to better address asthma medically while also addressing the environmental asthma triggers within the home. This is being accomplished via a series of home visits conducted by trained Community Health Educators (CHE), Healthy Home Intervention Specialists from Metropolitan Tenants Organization, and attorneys from Health & Disability Advocates. The project is funded through September 2011.

Our accomplishments over the past two plus years have been vast:

- 266 children have been enrolled in and are benefitting from our home-based, individualized approach to improving asthma control via improved medical management and environmental modification;
- Preliminary outcome data suggest that participants are benefiting greatly from participation in the program. To date asthma symptoms have been reduced by an average of 43% and asthma-related Emergency Department visits by 74% following participation in the program (note: this is preliminary data and may change);
- Our program has been awarded two prestigious national awards for our accomplishments, and is a finalist for a third award:
  - Recipient of the 2010 Environmental Protection Agency’s Environmental Leadership in Asthma Management award and the 2010 American Hospital Association’s NOVA Award recognizing community impact;
  - One of six finalists for the Nineteenth Annual Monroe E. Trout Premier Cares Award (the winner will be announced in February 2011);
- Effective relationships have been established with community partners that are ensuring that the diverse needs of our clients are realized. To date we have referred 25% of our clients to the Metropolitan Tenants Organization for assistance with complex housing issues, 42% to Health & Disability Advocates for legal needs, and have assisted 28% with additional case management.

We owe a great deal of gratitude for our achievements to the Healthy Home, Healthy Child Community Advisory Board. It is because of our collaborative work, conducted in partnership, that we have accomplished all that we have. Together we can make the dream of optimal health a reality for children and families living on the Westside of Chicago.

In health,

Gloria Jenkins-Harvey
Co-Chair, HHHC Community Advisory Board
Executive Director
Westside Association for Community Action (WACA)

Carolyn L. Vessel, MSHSA, M-Div., DD
Co-Chair, HHHC Community Advisory Board
CEO/President
I AM ABLE, Center for Family Development

Helen Margellos-Anast, MPH
Project Director, HHHC
Senior Epidemiologist
Sinai Urban Health Institute
Healthy Home, Healthy Child

Timeline 2008-2010

Sinai Pediatric Asthma Programs

Since 2000, the Sinai Urban Health Institute (SUHI) and Sinai Children’s Hospital have been working together to reduce the burden of asthma on disadvantaged communities. A series of four comprehensive asthma interventions have been conducted over the past ten years. The Community Health Educator (CHE) Model is an integral part of each of the interventions. Completed interventions have been associated with significant decreases in asthma-related morbidity and mortality. In September 2008, SUHI was awarded a $1.5 million grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to implement the latest and most comprehensive initiative: Health Home Healthy Child (HHHC). Visits conducted by CHEs focus on improving asthma management by educating caregivers to better manage asthma medically, while also addressing asthma triggers in the home environment. HHHC is a collaboration building on the strengths of partner agencies and receiving guidance from a Community Advisory Board.

October-December 2008:
- Hired and trained all staff
- First meeting of the Chicago Westside Partnership for Children’s Asthma Initiative (CWPC-AI), the partnership behind HHHC

January-March 2009:
- Community Leader meeting held to inform the formation of the Community Advisory Board (CAB)
- First participant enrolled into the HHHC Program
- Referrals to Health & Disability Advocates (HDA), the Metropolitan Tenants Organization (MTO), and Sinai Community Institute (SCI) commence
- Safer Pest Control conducts a bed bug training for CHEs, representatives of community based organizations, and community residents
- Began data collection, monitoring and data cleaning (Ongoing)
- Began Project Team meetings (Ongoing)

April –June 2009:
- The first CAB meeting is held at WACA. CAB meets monthly through September, and then begins meeting quarterly
- SUHI officially launches HHHC on World Asthma Day (WAD) via a community forum and media event at Douglas Park Field House
- HHHC receives the National Association of Public Hospitals (NAPH) Honorable mention Award for “Reducing Health Care Disparities”
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July-September 2009:
- HHHC is 25% to its recruitment target!
- Ongoing meetings, home visits, referrals, evaluation and other program activities

October-December 2009:
- HDA Training on 504 Plans
- Report Card Pick-up Day—Program staff visit local elementary schools with the goal of increasing asthma awareness in the community while recruiting participants into HHHC
- HHHC is 50% to its recruitment target!

January-March 2010:
- CAB establishes 4 subcommittees
- Report Card Pick-up Day (see above for details)

April-June 2010:
- HHHC is 75% to its recruitment target!
- SUHI and the Chicago Asthma Consortium co-host an educational program for WAD. Dr. James Krieger, a renowned expert in Healthy Homes Initiatives is the keynote speaker
- The Environmental Protection Agency recognizes SUHI and HHHC with the 2010 National Environmental Leadership in Asthma Management Award

July-December 2010:
- We reached our Project Goal-266 children and their families have been enrolled!
- The American Hospital Association (AHA) present SUHI with the NOVA Award for its hospital-led community effort to educate families and reduce the impact of pediatric asthma on the Westside of Chicago
- SUHI/HHHC notified we are one of six finalists for the Monroe E. Trout Premier Cares Award (the winner will be announced in February 2011)

Looking into the Future...
- Our last participant will complete the 12-Month intervention in August 2011
- Asthma Day Camp to be hosted by CAB in Summer 2011
- Finish all data analysis and prepare Final Report
- Disseminate findings to community partners, stakeholders and residents
- Celebrate release of data in July or August 2011 with large community event
A Personal and Project Milestone:

When Healthy Home, Healthy Child’s (HHHC) Community Health Worker Rhonda Lay met Rosemary McNeal one year ago, Mrs. McNeal had recently started to care for her four grandchildren. She was still adjusting to the change and was having some difficulty managing the care of her nine-year-old grandson, Geoni, who suffers from asthma and epilepsy. As a Community Health Worker, Rhonda was charged with the task of assessing the home environment for possible asthma triggers, referring the family to partnership programs that would benefit them, and educating Mrs. McNeal and Geoni so they could better manage his asthma. Because the HHHC intervention takes place in the participating family’s home, Rhonda and Mrs. McNeal would need to become very open and comfortable with each other in a short period of time. “The protocol is the same for everyone, but each family is different so I have to be flexible in the way I work with each family,” says Rhonda. “My goal for everyone is to get them to understand how serious asthma can be, while also letting them know that a child with asthma can lead a normal life if they manage their condition properly.”

Mrs. McNeal says she knew about asthma before the HHHC program, but that Rhonda “showed me a lot that I didn’t know, quite a few things actually!” Rhonda taught Mrs. McNeal which things in her home were contributing to Geoni’s asthma, how to clean her house with “asthma-friendly” products, and even referred her to a lawyer from the Health and Disability Advocates who is working on getting Geoni disability benefits for his epilepsy. Mrs. McNeal says that Rhonda took the time to explain things to her and that she always felt comfortable having Rhonda in her home. Since the beginning of the intervention, Mrs. McNeal bought all new furniture to replace the potentially harmful cloth furniture (which can harbor dust mites) that she owned, as well as instituted a weekly house-cleaning time with the grandchildren to continually monitor the home for possible asthma triggers. Before they joined HHHC, Mrs. McNeal says Geoni was having monthly asthma attacks that, more than half the time, required a trip to the emergency room. Since meeting with Rhonda, Geoni’s asthma is largely managed at home and he has not had an attack in over three months.

The self-empowering techniques taught by Rhonda have paid off in many ways. Recently, after the final 12-month meeting had taken place, Rhonda had to stop by Mrs. McNeal’s home to collect some paperwork. Mrs. McNeal told Rhonda that during her weekly house inspection she discovered bed bugs, a topic which Rhonda discussed with her. Mrs. McNeal said she was so thankful that she was able to handle the situation. She immediately purchased new beds, laundered all her linens, contacted her landlord, received products to rid the home of the pests, and put the mattress and pillow covers Rhonda had given her on her new mattresses. This was just the sort of proactive reaction Rhonda had hoped for. “I felt really happy that even after the program ended she was able to talk to me about a problem, but mostly I was happy that she had the tools to handle the problem largely on her own.”

“I felt really happy that even after the program ended she was able to talk to me about a problem, but mostly I was happy that she had the tools to handle the problem largely on her own.” Rhonda Lay

Rhonda Lay
Community Health Worker

Westside Children’s Asthma Partnership:

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A Report from the Field: Surviving Landlord Retaliation
By Lorraine Targus, Metropolitan Tenants Organization

As the seasons change and children head back to school, sniffles and coughs are shared among school children nearly as quickly as the leaves change color and fall away with the coming of winter. It was this kind of weather that caused Trinity, now age 7, to encounter a strange problem. Marlene, her mother, told me that one particularly bad attack had recently landed her daughter back into the emergency room. This time, a staff member mentioned that she would be referring Trinity to an asthma program. Marlene agreed. If they could help Trinity, she decided it was worth it to participate in the program.

When her community health educator, Pat Perkins, came for the first home visit, Marlene listened. “I didn’t like that Trinity had to take medication,” Pat began to explain proper management of asthma and answer Marlene’s concerns about the medication, and Trinity made a complete turn around. She made fewer visits to the hospital and gained back much of the youthful energy that her breathing difficulties had taken from her.

Pat explained that a common trigger for asthma symptoms is the presence of cockroaches. Marlene had just moved into the apartment a few months before and shortly after moving in, noticed problems the landlord had not informed her about, including roaches. When she was referred to the Metropolitan Tenants Organization (MTO) in 2009, Marlene also talked about the “carpet bugs” that were plaguing her family. Up until recently, people had only heard of bed bugs in old nursery school rhymes. Marlene had never imagined that bed bugs were actually real. She told me her son’s neighbors decided to call the bugs not long after the family had moved in last 2009. He tried to keep the roaches and bed bugs away with regular spraying but it wasn’t working as well as she had hoped. The fumes from the spray bothered her and her family. Raising her to choose between the fumes or the bugs.

We scheduled a home visit. There, we talked about a different, safer, and more effective approach to pest control: integrated pest management (IPM). To control the roaches, we used borax and roach bait. There were no fumes to aggravate Trinity’s asthma, and soon Marlene reported that the roaches were gone. The bed bugs were more difficult and in addition to IPM, Marlene still had to use some pesticides. But after four long months, she’s gotten rid of the bed bugs all without her landlord’s cooperation. We again discussed her rights as a tenant. After a few visits with no response, Marlene wrote a letter to the landlord explaining the problems she was dealing with. She also called 311 to report the conditions in her apartment.

By September, conditions were better in Marlene’s home. The roaches and bed bugs were gone. Trinity’s asthma had improved a great deal. In October when Marlene’s husband tried to pay the landlord his rent, the landlord told him to “keep the rent, you’ll need it to find someplace else to live. Your wife called the city and I was finshed.” Not long after, her family opened the door to find the sheriff standing outside. The landlord was having her served with eviction papers. I reminded Marlene of the Chicago Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance (CRLTO) (CH 15-1310) which states:

A tenant has the right to complain or testify in good faith about their tenancy to governmental agencies or officials, police, media, community groups, tenant unions or the landlord. A landlord is prohibited from retaliating by terminating or threatening to terminate a tenancy, increasing rent, decreasing services, bringing or threatening to bring an eviction action, or refusing to renew a lease agreement.

In court, Marlene wisely asked for a continuance so that she could have time to find an attorney. She then called me and was quickly referred to the Law office of a community or tenant housing attorney. Marlene’s case was brought before the court. During the long months of the trial, Marlene found her family a new apartment with a much more reasonable landlord. By April, she had won her court case. Marlene had proven successfully that the landlord retaliated, an action explicitly prohibited in the Chicago RUTO.

Marlene has advice for tenants struggling with their housing situation: “If you feel afraid, call someone to help you. Reach out for help. It’s there. Never retaliate. Write a certified letter, keep receipts and paperwork.” Marlene wants to be an advocate for people who are afraid. “So many buildings are messed up. People are afraid to say something to the landlord and it’s not good for our kids.”
My name is Eva Long and I have 14 children with Asthma. Jen is 11 years old and we couldn’t control her asthma. Everytime she would have symptoms she would take quick release medicine so the symptoms would stop right away. It was a long road but things have been looking up. We had started to get things under control. She has been taking her Theater and Singular as prescribed daily and a tablet of DH before bedtime. She hasn’t used her quick release medicine (Albuterol) for quite a while. She no longer needs to take her medicine without the reminder. She has been taking her medicine. Her medicine is to help her some sticky mucus yellow, pink, and blue. Her yellow is for the throat and the pink is for asthma. She needs to take her every half hour. The blue is the reminder. She goes quick to get treatments to take when she needs. Ms. Pat has been helping me and my family in so many ways. Thank you very much, she has also helped my children. I do not use healthy cleaning products in my home that is safe, clean air, and lots of love. Simple things until you can use such as vinegar, borax, water, clean, and disinfected.

Eva Long

(The names have been changed to preserve anonymity)
HEALTHY HOME, HEALTHY CHILD

Case Story

Imani Payne, 3 years old

Kiara and Demetrius Payne have strived to stay as well informed and proactive as possible since their 3-year-old daughter, Imani, started to suffer from respiratory problems as an infant. However, they feel that they’ve learned a lot since joining forces with Healthy Home, Healthy Child: The Westside Children’s Asthma Partnership (HHHC).

Kiara suffered from asthma when she was younger, and Demetrius from bronchitis, although Imani’s teenage brother has been symptom free. Imani’s condition was misdiagnosed as pneumonia at the age of 6 months. It wasn’t until she was one year old that Imani was correctly diagnosed with asthma and began to see a pediatric asthma specialist.

Kiara was encouraged to contact the Sinai Urban Health Institute (where HHHC program staff are based) by a friend from church. She is so glad that she did! Kiara welcomes and appreciates all of the consistent feedback and ongoing suggestions from the HHHC team and their numerous partners via the Westside Children’s Asthma Partnership.

Demetrius and Kiara recently moved, relocating from a damp basement apartment with carpeting that could have been a source of mold into an above-ground residence with hardwood floors. Kiara describes the two visits the HHHC experts have made to the new Payne household, as being “very detailed and very good with follow-up.” She also learned to switch to more natural cleaning products that are less likely to cause Imani problems.

The team also suggested a change in the type of masks and tubing the Paynes were using that have made home treatments more effective and helped them obtain needed new equipment.

Kiara admits that she had some reservations at first about the notion of community health educators making home visits and was not really comfortable letting strangers into her home. However, the team was so “extremely professional and nonjudgmental that it was like having my aunts visit my home.” She adds, “This program is great to have in the community, and I would recommend it others.”
HEALTHY HOME, HEALTHY CHILD

Letter of appreciation from our HHHC Participant

July 27th, 2010

Sinai Pediatric Asthma Program
Sinai Children's Hospital
1500 S. California Ave.
Chicago, IL 60608

To Whom It May Concern:

For many years my son, Jori Matthews, has suffered from uncontrolled asthma. Back in December of 2009, Jori had such a bad asthma attack that he was hospitalized. He was seen at Sinai Children’s Hospital and before he left, Ms. Gloria Sells came to teach me about the asthma medications that had been prescribed to Jori. She also told me about a free asthma program at Sinai Children’s Hospital. A few weeks later Jori and I met with Pat Perkins, our Asthma Community Health Educator. Ms. Perkins came to our home and taught both Jori and me about asthma and how to properly use the asthma devices and how the medications work.

Jori’s asthma was very severe and he was often in the emergency room due to his asthma. I was very scared and therefore I would not allow him out of the house for fear that something bad would happen to him. I know it did not make him happy to sit at home and watch TV all day, but I didn’t know what else to do. He started to gain weight and that also worried me.

When Pat came to the home she changed everything. Not only did she educate me about asthma, how to use the asthma devices, the importance of taking the medication as prescribed, and what triggers to avoid, she taught Jori how to manage his asthma. Pat gave me the confidence I needed to believe that I could help my child live a healthier life. She also showed Jori that he could participate in activities just like the other children. Jori is now riding bikes, swimming, and is even on the wrestling team at school.

I can’t thank Pat and the Sinai Pediatric Asthma Program enough for giving the confidence I needed to help my child. Since I am not as fearful of losing Jori because of asthma, I am also less stressed and feel that I am better able to take care of all my children. This program did not only help Jori, it helped my entire family, including me.

I believe the Sinai Pediatric Asthma Program is deserving of this award, because of the difference it has made in my life and Jori’s life and all the other families who have children with asthma.

Sincerely,

Jenny Matthews

(The names have been changed to preserve anonymity)
To whom it may concern, I would like to show my appreciation to Miss Perkins for helping become motivated and telling me that one of the symptoms to asthma is dust, and I can do more activities and help with more things around the home.

Sincerely,

[Name]

Age: 11

When I first met Miss Perkins, I didn’t do anything but sit at home and watch TV, but now I can ride bikes outside and go swimming and wrestle and many other things. When Miss Perkins helped me, I see that my life has changed.

(The names have been changed to preserve anonymity)
Case Story

Asia Boyd, 9 years old

Nine-year-old Asia Boyd lives with her mother Alexus Rogers and two siblings, none of whom suffer from asthma or related respiratory problems. When Asia landed in an emergency room at the age of 2, doctors first thought she had pneumonia. Her condition was subsequently diagnosed as asthma and eventually became so serious that she was hospitalized for three days in 2005.

Because Asia’s condition continued to be severe, Sinai Urban Health Institute staff who were familiar with the case encouraged Alexus to participate in the Healthy Home, Healthy Child (HHHC) program to eliminate environmental asthma triggers in the home.

Since being enrolled, Asia has had over 20 home visits due to the complexity of her case. In addition to providing critical asthma management advice about needed medications and equipment, the community health educators brought recommended cleaning products to replace those with too many chemicals that the family had been using and showed the family the best ways to use them in order to help improve their daughter’s condition. They also advised on the dangers of second-hand smoke from extended family members currently sharing the home with Alexus and her children.

The Metropolitan Tenants Organization, part of the Westside Children’s Asthma Partnership, became involved in Asia’s case because of serious housing problems that included a broken door and lack of heat during winter months, a hole in the kitchen floor that allowed mice access to the home, the presence of other pests, old carpeting that contained dust mites and possibly mold, and a lack of smoke detectors. The group helped confront the landlord with these issues and advised Alexus when the landlord retaliated with a threat of eviction. Intervention by the Metropolitan Tenants Organization is now helping to resolve the problems that have plagued Alexus and the buildings’ other tenants.

HHHC is helping Alexus and her family find a new home with fewer issues to deal with, as well as advising her on her search for employment.

According to Alexus, her daughter’s condition has improved greatly, with fewer periods of sickness and reduced need to see her specialist. “The program means a lot to me in many ways,” she says.

(The names have been changed to preserve anonymity)
To whom this may concern,

My name is Debra Davis, and my daughter's name is Chio. McNeal. We were in your asthma study program. The program is a very good teaching source for people who have asthma. Patricia Perkins is a very good teacher. We have learned a lot from her. Since we been in the program, my child has learned how to control and treat herself for asthma. The people in the program are a great group of people. They are very helpful. They didn't just help me with asthma, they also helped me with things like when my flight was out. I'm kind of bad at keeping my 12 months all up. I really enjoyed that and everyone else in the program. Thank you all for all the support and help with the asthma education.

Sincerely,
[Signature]

(Dates: 1-2-94)
HHHC Holiday Blessing was spearheaded by HHHC Intervention Coordinator, Gloria Seals. Gloria, and our Community Health Educators (CHE) Aisha Barnes (left), Rhonda Lay (Bottom left) and Patricia Perkins were able to present 70 of our participants with Holiday Food Baskets along with Christmas gifts for their children.

HHHC Holiday Blessing given to Ishalnicka Sloan and Linda Capshaw (Aisha Barnes CHE is in the center)

Rhonda Lay (CHE) and Janice Thompson
HEALTHY HOME, HEALTHY CHILD

NAPH Safety Net Honorable Mention Award—May 5, 2009

July 24, 2010 the American Hospital Association (AHA) presented the Sinai Urban Health Institute and HHHC program with that NOVA Award for its hospital-lead community effort to educate families and reduce the impact of pediatric asthma on the west side of Chicago.

HHHC Project Team (Alphabetically)

Jeanette Avila, Research Assistant
Aisha Barnes, Community Health Educator
Jamie Campbell, Research Assistant
Alan Channing, CEO of Sinai Health Systems
DeShuna Dickens, Education Coordinator
Sheena Freeman, Research Assistant II

Melissa A. Gutierrez, Epidemiologist
Rhonda Lay, Community Health Educator
Helen Margellos-Anast, Project Director
Patricia Perkins, Community Health Educator
Gloria Seals, Intervention Coordinator
Steve Whitman, Director of Sinai Urban Health Institute
Special Thanks to the Community Advisory Board

CAB Chairs
- Rev. Dr. Carolyn Vessel, I AM ABLE Center for Family Development
- Mrs. Gloria Jenkins-Harvey, WACA

CAB Members
- Ms. Ellen Baker, WACA
- Dr. Phalese Binion, Westside Ministers Coalition
- Dr. Thomas Bockle, Lawndale Christian Health Center
- Ms. Melva Brownlee, Chief of Staff for Commissioner Robert Steele
- Ms. Marian Byrd, Erie Family Health Organization
- Ms. Jeanette Darrough
- Ms. Linda Edwards, Greater Westside Early Intervention
- Ms. Kristen Ellensohn, PCC Community Wellness Center
- Ms. Shirley Fitzgerald, Erie Family Health Organization
- Rev. Dr. Lewis Flowers, Westside Ministers Coalition
- Mr. Darrell Greenfield, Walgreens
- Ms. Linda Henderson
- Senator Ricky Hendon, Illinois Senator for the 5th District
- Ms. Lisa Kenner, Legacy Charter School
- Mr. Leo McCord
- Ms. Alexis Mims, Cook County District 2
- Ms. Kimberly Sanders, WACA
- State Representative Arthur Turner, Illinois House of Representatives, 9th District
- Ms. Dorothy Walker
- Ms. Cynthia Williams, Austin Peoples Action Center

And to our Partners
- Dennis Vickers, Sinai Health System, Medical Advisor
- Debra Wesley-Freeman, Sinai Community Institute, President/CEO
- Ms. Myra Nash Johnson, Sinai Community Institute, Consultant
- Joel Massel, Chicago Asthma Consortium, Executive Director
- Amy Zimmerman, Health & Disability Advocates, Legal Coordinator
- Stephanie Altman, Health & Disability Advocates, Program and Policy Director
- Julie Justicz, Health & Disability Advocates, Director of Development
- John Bartlett, Metropolitan Tenants Organization, Executive Director
- Shirley Johnson, Metropolitan Tenants Organization
- Loreen Targos, Metropolitan Tenants Organization, Housing Advocate