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August 2026
Future HCC Meetings and Events

Future Membership Gatherings

- Wednesday, October 7th, 12:00 Noon - 1:00pm. Martens Center, 1515 N. Market St., Champaign
- Wednesday, November4th, 12:00 Noon - 1:00pm. Martens Center, 1515 N. Market St., Champaign
- Wednesday, December 2nd, 12:00 Noon - 1:00pm. Martens Center, 1515 N. Market St., Champaign

Next Board Meetings

- Wednesday, September 30th, 8:30 - 9:30am at the United Way of Champaign County, 5 Dunlap Ct, Savoy
- Wednesday, October 28th, 8:30 - 9:30am at the United Way of Champaign County, 5 Dunlap Ct, Savoy
- No November Board Meeting
- Wednesday, December 9th, 8:30 - 9:30am at the United Way of Champaign County, 5 Dunlap Ct, Savoy

Zoom Access for Board Meetings is HERE.

Coming Events and Opportunities with Participating Organizations

Editor's Note: Given the number of events and announcements flyers promoting events have been collected and stored on Google Drive. If an event has such a flyer, you will find a hyperlinked FILE next to the announcement that will take you to the specific flyer or announcement.

HCC Board Member Openings - Is it time for you to consider stepping up to a leadership role in HCC? If you have been coming to meetings and find the work we are doing interesting, or even fun, perhaps you might give the idea of joining the Board of Directors for a two year term of office. More about the roles and duties of board members is HERE. And of course you can also ask any of the current board members.

Feeding Champaign County Food Summit - The summary report for the 2026 Feeding Champaign County Food Summit has been released. The report is full of details and ideas from the 2026 Food Summit. You can download your copy HERE. And, make a note that the 2027 Feeding Champaign Food Summit will be March 31st!

Morrissey Park parkrun - Saturdays at 9:00 a.m. at Morrissey Park, 1209 Harrington Dr., Champaign. Parkrun is a fun and friendly 5K event. Walk, jog, run, roll, volunteer, or come to cheer on participants. Parkrun is free, but please REGISTER before you first come along. Volunteers are encouraged, send an email to morrisseypark@parkrun.com to learn more.

HCC Reading Circle - Interested in joining an informal group that would meet occasionally to review and discuss new books, research, and opinion essays? Several folks have suggested that articles in our ***News From Around the World*** section (below), and other sources, warrant further consideration and engagement by like-minded folks, If you would be interested in such an activity, send an email to HealthyChampaignCounty2016@gmail.com and we will get you connected.

NeighborFood Bucks is CHANGING! - The Land Connection's no-questions-asked farmers market benefit program is

changing so they can preserve limited funding and better support our community members who need it most. Starting October 1st TLC will require a NeighborFood Bucks voucher to be presented at the market information and benefits table in order for a shopper to receive the $15 in emergency food access tokens. These vouchers will only be available through partner organizations. If you have received flyers/vouchers from us in the past for NeighborFood Bucks or are thinking "wow I work with some folks who could use $15 in emergency market tokens to spend on local food products" then contact Ian Nutting at ian@thelandconnection.org and get registered today! It costs nothing but your precious time. You talk with Ian, he'll bring you vouchers, and then you get to distribute farmers market benefits to folks you work with.

Socktober - The Vineyard Church of Central Illinois will again lead the Socktober Community Outreach during the entire month of October. The goal is to collect 14,000 pairs of new, warm socks. The socks will be distributed to local homeless shelters, schools, transitional housing facilities, and other local agencies serving those in need in East Central Illinois. This small act of kindness can make a big difference as we approach the colder months of the year. You can drop off socks at several locations throughout Champaign, Urbana and Decatur. Collection sites and more details are HERE. FLYER

Champaign Parks Fall Family Pickleball Extravaganza - Bring the whole family out for a fun-filled afternoon at John Street Courts! Each team must consist of one child (ages 7–14) and one participant age 15 or older. Prizes for top finishers, Unlimited Kona Ice, Complimentary Pickleball Starter Pack (while supplies last) and Post-tournament Kids Skill competition at 2pm featuring fun pickleball challenges for top performers. Saturday October 10th, 12:30 - 1:30pm. Register HERE, the deadline is September 28th.

Introduction to the Home Illinois FY27-29 Strategic Plan - The Illinois Office to Prevent and End Homelessness is hosting a public webinar on the new Home Illinois FY27–29 Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness on Friday September 25th, from 9:00 to 10:00 am. The Plan outlines the coordinated strategies Illinois will use to expand housing access, strengthen prevention, improve health outcomes, and support long-term stability. Register for the webinar HERE.

Cottage Food Solutions: Wholesale and Shared Kitchens - Is your farm or business experiencing challenges with cottage food policy? Join Illinois Stewardship Alliance on Monday, September 21st at 12pm to help shape solutions! One of the biggest challenges is that these businesses want to scale up, but wholesale opportunities don't exist and commercial kitchen options are limited. ISA has researched solutions in other states, talked to public health stakeholders, and pulled together policy ideas to move forward-- but they need to hear from you! On September 21st we'll be bringing ISA members and cottage food stakeholders together to determine the best policy proposals to move forward with regards to scaling up. Register for the Zoom session HERE.

Empty Bowls Fundraiser for Daily Bread Soup Kitchen - Sponsored by the C-U Potter's Club and Common Ground all proceeds will go to the Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, which serves over 400 hot meals to the hungry seven days a week. Bowls made by the club and other local potters will be available for purchase, as well as bowl cozies and Empty Bowls T-shirts. There will also be throwing demonstrations by local potters and an opportunity for attendees to paint a small bowl or saucer with Laura Billimack from The Pottery Place. October 10th from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm at Lincoln Square Mall in the hallway adjacent to Common Ground Food Co-op. More information is HERE.

Values-Driven Partnerships: Creating Lasting Community Impact Through Research - Values-driven partnerships intentionally align every phase of the work around shared values like mutual aid, deep belonging, and community self-determination to build transformative relationships that shift power and meet community priorities. On Thursday, September 24th, from 8:30 -10:30 am, a panel will explore how values-driven partnerships create meaningful and sustainable impact. Panelists include: Tracy Dace, Founder and Executive Director DREAAM, Shardé Smith, African American Family (AAFam) Stress and Resiliency Lab, UIUC College of ACES, Rachel Charters, C-UPHD Great START Program, and Catalina Alzate, Critical Anatomies Lab, UIUC College of Fine and Applied Arts. More details and registration are HERE.

Fostering Meaningful Campus-Community Partnerships - What does it take to build campus-community partnerships that are meaningful, reciprocal, and sustainable? Join the University of Illinois School of Social Work

Engagement Office and the Campus-Community Compact for a community conversation at the Champaign Public Library on Friday, September 25th, 1:00-2:30pm to explore how we can strengthen relationships between the University of Illinois and the communities in which we live. Register HERE.

Champaign County Community Quality Council - The purpose of the CQC is to strengthen collaboration between Family Community Resource Centers (FCRCs) and community stakeholders who support individuals and families accessing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. The CQC provides a dedicated forum for FCRCs and community partners to connect, share information, identify challenges, and work together to improve access to services and support for community members. Together, we can identify opportunities to better support SNAP participants, strengthen service coordination, and ensure community members are connected to the resources they need. Next meeting is Tuesday, September 22nd beginning at 10:00 am at the Champaign Public Library on Green St.. To help with planning and meeting logistics, please confirm your attendance by emailing pwafula2@illinois.edu. You are also welcome to contact Patrobas with any questions, accommodation needs, or concerns before the meeting.

Central Illinois Bat Festival - Join Urbana Park District at the third annual Central Illinois Bat Festival — a free two-part celebration of bats, bugs, and science! This year, they're celebrating backyard bugs and bats! Kicking off Saturday September 26th at 1pm at Anita Purves Nature Center, explore vendor booths, food trucks, kids art activities, face painting, and thrilling talks from top bat experts. Then, flap over to Crystal Lake Park at 5:30 kick things off with our costume contest of epic proportions for all ages. And when the sun sets, witness a live demonstration of bats' echolocation, on a live bat acoustic walk to hear and see real bats hunting for bugs under the stars! More details HERE and a FLYER too!

HCC Partners in the News

Medicaid Rules Will Be Changing Beginning in October - A new federal law is changing who qualifies for Medicaid and how often some customers may need to renew their coverage. Some changes take effect as soon as October 2026 and others will begin January 1, 2027. Find out what you need to do to keep your coverage, in Spanish and English HERE.

Public Service Announcements on WEFT 90.1 FM - If your organization has a public service announcement you'd like to get on WEFT, let them know at least two weeks in advance. Announcements should fit on a 3 x 5 card and take less than a minute to read. You can email those announcements to psa@weft.org or send via post to WEFT, P.O. Box 1223, Champaign, IL 61824. Learn more HERE.

Champaign Unit 4 school district backs away from free meals for all - The Champaign Unit 4 School District has brought back income restrictions on free meals at its high schools. During and following the COVID-19 pandemic, the district offered breakfast and lunch for free to all students. But now that federal COVID relief has run out and the district is tight on money again, high schoolers have to qualify for free or reduced-price meals based on their family income. Superintendent Geovanny Ponce said at Monday's school board meeting, families should email him if they cannot afford to pay for those meals. Listen to the Illinois Public Media report HERE.

Leading with Impact - Several friends of HCC were recognized in a *News Gazette* opinion piece by Peter T. Tomaras for their leadership and contributions to the well-being of our neighbors in Champaign County - Traci Barkley at Sola Gratia Farm, Sarah Sandquist at the Champaign Park District, and Rachel Lenz at the Urbana Park District, Read more HERE.

Living the DREAAM - A UI doctoral student spends the summer with DREAAM working at the City of Champaign Township's Prosperity Gardens project. Learn how deeply working alongside a community organization and local youth at Prosperity Gardens in Champaign would reshape his understanding of community work, sustainable development projects, youth leadership, intergenerational mentorship and human connection. Johnson Opeyemi Adegbola tells his story in *The News-Gazette*, read it HERE or HERE.

Lettuce Talk About Food Safety: Consumer Responses to Recent Outbreaks - Over the last month, it has been hard to miss the news of outbreaks and recalls. Cyclospora-contaminated iceberg lettuce sickened over 11,000 across 20 states and led to a recall in mid-July of the product in both food service settings and retail stores across a larger set of

states. Salmonella-contaminated eggs has sickened 134 across 18 states and led to a recall near the end of July. E. coli-contaminated frozen blueberries sickened 17 cases across Florida and Georgia and led to multiple recalls in July. Salmonella-contaminated jalapeños sickened 431 across 32 states and led to a recall at the beginning of August. And recently, an investigation of both E. coli and salmonella in sprouts began, with 55 current cases across 15 states and a recall announced on August 22. Investigations of these outbreaks are ongoing. farmdocDAILY reports on a deep drive by Illinois and Purdue Agricultural Economic professors exploring how consumers are responding to these outbreaks. Read about it HERE.

2026 ATHENA Young Professional Award Recipient - Friend of HCC is recognized by the Executive Club of Champaign County. Tracy Williams serves as Hope Center & Community Outreach Director at The Vineyard Church in Urbana. In this role, she leads community outreach initiatives addressing food insecurity, develops partnerships with local organizations, connects individuals and families with vital resources, and coordinates volunteer engagement. Read more about Tracy and the Athena Awards HERE.

News from Around the World

DHS Issues New Guidance on Public Charge Determinations - This new guidance depart significantly from current law and indicate that receipt of WIC benefits after September 18, 2026 may be considered as part of the totality of the circumstances in a public charge determination. Such determinations will be made at the discretion of individual immigration officers. It is important to note that many immigrants are not subject to the public charge test, and that the test looks at the totality of an immigrant's circumstances, including receipt of other means-tested benefits, health status, employment, support from a sponsor, and other factors. NWA recommends reviewing the materials developed by the Protecting Immigrant Families (PIF) coalition.

Rural Americans Feel the Sting of Sweeping Federal Food Aid Restrictions - The Trump administration and Congress have made sweeping changes to SNAP that affect nearly every aspect of the program. Federal officials say the measures will help cut waste and fraud or make the program healthier. But food and hunger experts say the changes are resulting in fewer people being able to afford groceries. That's especially a concern in rural areas, where SNAP participation is higher than in cities. Rural residents often have higher poverty rates, fewer job opportunities and less transportation options. Learn more from Harvest Public Media HERE.

Study Finds Link Between Food Insecurity and Chronic Illness - Study find that food insecurity is a major factor fueling the chronic illness problem in rural Texas. The data showed that food insecurity is a baseline problem in 149 rural Texas census tracts. More than 80% of Texas' rural populations live in areas highly vulnerable to life-threatening chronic diseases, with limited options for care. Researchers said food insecurity is one of the elements that leads to higher vulnerability to those diseases. Read the story published by The Daily Yonder HERE.

Identifying Households at Risk for Food Insecurity - Access to healthy food options in African American neighborhoods has been shaped by social and economic structures that include historical segregation and inequities in neighborhood development and investment. Residents of these neighborhoods must navigate a food environment with many barriers (distant grocery stores, inadequate public transportation, fast-food options) to gain access to a diet they consider healthy. In a new paper titled "I don't say food desert, I say food apartheid" scholars used community-engaged research to better understand food insecurity. Read the paper HERE.

Millions of Older Americans Don't Have Enough to Eat - Inflation in food prices can hit even harder for people in their 60s and older as they also juggle fixed incomes, health problems and changes in federal law. Experts say the age group is a "forgotten population" when it comes to food insecurity. Read more from Harvest Public Media HERE.

What Do Black Americans Think of the Country's Food System? - The majority of Black Americans feel at least somewhat insecure about whether the food they buy is safe to eat, according to a new report The report draws from a recent survey of 1,249 Black Americans. While the majority (77 percent) of respondents agreed they have easy access to the food they want to eat, over 60 percent said they are insecure about the country's food safety, and 46 percent said they strongly agree that U.S. food contributes to diet-related disease. The report was published by Word In Black, a national news outlet and research lab focused on the Black experience. PDF is HERE.

Frontline Grocery Workers Know Why Donatable Food Ends Up in the Trash - Grocery retailers donate more food than any other sector, but frontline workers sometimes face challenges in deciding what to donate versus what to compost or throw away. A research team convened 10 frontline “Champions" from four stores and interviewed grocery retail workers, members of corporate leadership, and partners from local food banks and pantries to identify barriers to donation and to co-design strategies to address them. Read about it HERE.

Newsletter Publication Schedule: We aspire to publish this newsletter on the 15th of every month. Send submissions, and corrections, to HealthyChampaignCounty2016@gmail.com.

This information has been provided by **Healthy Champaign County** (HCC), a coalition of organizations and community members working to ensure opportunities for active living and accessible, nutritional food for all our neighbors in Champaign County.

Learn more about Health Champaign County

If you wish to be added or removed from this mailing list, send a message to HealthyChampaignCounty2016@gmail.com.