October 2026
Future HCC Meetings and Events

Future Membership Gatherings

- 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, 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.

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.

Wesley Food Pantry Celebrates 20 Years of Feeding the Community - Wesley Food Pantry is celebrating 20 years of serving the community with a special anniversary campaign, "20 Birthdays for 20 Years," running October 18 through November 6. For two decades, Wesley Food Pantry has worked to help address food insecurity in the community. The anniversary celebration will honor the pantry's history, recognize the volunteers and supporters who have made its work possible, and look ahead to the next 20 years of service.
As part of the celebration, Wesley Food Pantry is inviting businesses, organizations, and individuals to participate in a series of events—and, of course, enjoy some birthday cake along the way. The pantry has set a goal of raising $20,000 during the anniversary campaign. Supporters can "sponsor a birthday" with a $1,000 commitment representing one of the pantry's 20 years, or make a gift of any amount. The first $2,500 raised will be matched, helping the pantry reach its anniversary goal. More details are HERE.
Coming events include:

- **Halloween Reverse Trick or Treat Food Drive -** Wesley Food Pantry will look back to the early 2010s, when ghosts and ghouls filled Wesley's halls during a haunted house fundraiser for the pantry. On Friday, October 30, Wesley will partner with UIUC student organization Illini Fighting Hunger for a Reverse Trick or Treat food and fund drive on Green Street from 3:00-5:00 p.m. The event will raise awareness about student food insecurity while collecting canned goods and financial support for those experiencing hunger. Donations can be dropped off during the event or anytime during regular business hours.

- **Birthday Cake on Green Street** - The anniversary celebration will conclude on November 6 with a community birthday celebration at our Urbana pantry location, 1203 W. Green St. Guests are invited to join Wesley Food Pantry for cake and refreshments in the Green Street courtyard from 1:00pm-3:00pm, weather permitting, as the community celebrates 20 years of service.

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

Community-Academic Scholars Program - The IHSI CAS program matches University faculty with undergraduate research assistants who receive training, guidance, and a stipend to support their success. The program supports community-engaged research while creating opportunities for student learning, mentorship, and community collaboration. CAS staff work closely with mentors to match an ideal student for each project, identifying those whose experiences or interests align closely with the populations a project serves and/or its methodologies. For Summer 2027, CAS seeks community-engaged research projects addressing the many dimensions and determinants of human health and well-being, including projects focused specifically on substance use and mental health through I-SUMMER (Illinois Substance Use and Mental Health Mentored Experience and Research). More information and registration for a virtual information session is HERE.

Coat and Winter Items Drive - Immigrant Services of Champaign-Urbana is organizing a Coat and Winter Items Drive for their clients most in need. In addition to winter coats, they are looking for hand warmers, gloves, scarves, and blankets. An a few space heaters might be helpful too. To make donations, coordinate with ISCU staff by sending an email to ISCU@ISC-U.org. FLYER.

Winter Coat Giveaway - The Salvation Army is hosting its annual Winter Coat Giveaway on October 21 & 22 between 10:00 am - 1:00pm at their 2212 N. Market St, Champaign location. FLYER.

Champaign-Urbana Winter Farmers Market: Vendor Applications Now Open - CU Winter Farmers Market vendor applications are now open! The indoor farmers market is a great way to share information about your programs and services with folks coming to market in search of locally grown foods, and it is a fun way to grown your network of contact in the community with like-minded neighbors! More details are HERE.

Medicare Open Enrollment for Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D - If you have Medicare or work with

those who do Champaign County Health Care Consumers is here to help! Medicare Open Enrollment for Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D (prescription drug plans) takes place every year from October 15 through December 7, for the following year. To learn about CCHCC's Medicare Open Enrollment Center and what they've got available for you visit HERE.

Community Kitchen Liaison - The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District is seeking a full-time Community Kitchen Liaison. The Liaison will provides thoughtful onboarding, training, and day-to-day assistance to kitchen partners; coordinate scheduling and safe use of the kitchen; and foster an inclusive environment where all feel welcomed and respected. The role is primarily relational and facilitative, ensuring that partners have the guidance, resources, and hospitality needed to prepare and serve nutritious meals or conduct programming in the space. This role also supports staff, interns, and volunteers whose work contributes to successful community use of the kitchen. The Liaison embodies the district's mission and values, demonstrating compassion, humility, teamwork, and a collaborative mindset. A flexible work schedule is essential to meet the diverse needs and schedules of community users. More details and application instructions are HERE and HERE.

RCP Head Start Programs - The Champaign County Regional Planning Commission Early Childhood Education Programs are welcoming income-eligible children ages 6 weeks to 5 years into their 2026-2027 Head Start programs. FLYER.

Food for Seniors - As the weather changes it can become more difficult for our senior neighbors to source their essential foods. Family Service of Champaign County and the Marajen Stevick Foundation Food for Seniors program is an income- and age-based offering. Contact the Stevick Senior Center at 217-359-6500 to learn more. Volunteers welcome too! FLYER

Gather and Give Market - CLU-W Hygiene Pantry of Champaign County and Amy's Place have organized this community event for vendors sharing baked goods, pet treats, crafts, and more. Folks are asked to bring hygiene products for the pantry as a entry gift. FLYER.

HCC Partners in the News

The Land Connection Lands Tomas Delgrado - Tomas Delgado, an HCC board member, has joined The Land Connection as Program Director. Tomas is a longtime Urbana resident whose work sits at the intersection of food, agriculture, conservation, and community. Before joining The Land Connection, he spent several years at the National Farm to School Network, where he led national programs connecting farmers with schools and communities, expanding market opportunities for producers, and building partnerships across the food system. His work has taken him from farms and school cafeterias to Tribal communities and food systems gatherings across the country, but he is especially excited to bring those experiences back home to Illinois. Tomas is also the founder of Nurtured in Nature, an initiative focused on breaking down barriers between communities and the outdoors through environmental education and hands-on experiences. FLYER

Common Ground Round Up For Good Organizations for 2027 - The Common Ground Owners have voted to select 10 participants in the 2027 Round Up for Good program. Many wonderful organizations submitted project proposals for the Round Up For Good Grant, those selected for 2027 include: Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, Eastern Illinois Foodbank, Immigrant Services of Champaign Urbana, Crisis Nursery, Sola Gratia Farm to School, Planned Parenthood of Illinois, Prairie Rivers Network, Books to Prisoners, Champaign County Humane Society, and Rape Advocacy, Counseling and Educational Services. Learn more about these programs and their grant proposals HERE.

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.

Black Farm Boys: The Untold Story of the New Farmers of America.- 2025 Food Summit keynote speaker Dr. Bobby J. Smith II won't let New Farmers of America be forgotten - he has written a new book to reclaim their legacy. His pioneering text details the forgotten history of a major national organization with annual membership of 55,000 that spanned 18 states—and its hushed erasure. Black Farm Boys tells the entire story: the origins of the NFA and the Black Farm Movement (a term coined by Smith) and through the growth, success, joy, education, and vanishment.

The story has been highlighted by *Smile Politely* and the UIUC Advancement publication *Storied*.

News from Around the World

Charitable Trust Stabilization Fund Food and Economic & Workforce Development - The Charitable Trust Stabilization Fund is an Illinois grant program that helps small nonprofit organizations provide charitable services in communities across the state. The program is authorized by the Illinois General Assembly and administered by the Office of the Illinois State Treasurer. Since its launch, the Charitable Trust Grant Program has awarded $5.4 million through 271 grants to 215 charitable organizations in 77 cities across Illinois. The fund is supported by fees paid by larger nonprofit corporations when they file annual reports with the Illinois Secretary of State, not by personal or property tax dollars. They will be seeking proposals for Food and Economic & Workforce Development activities beginning January 1, 2027. Read more details HERE.

Many Americans Are Struggling to Afford Basic Necessities - According to the Pew Research Center, a majority of Americans (60%) say they don't have enough income for the kind of life they want. And one-in-five or more say they've had trouble paying for medical care, daily transportation, rent or mortgage, or food sometime in the past year. Read the report HERE.

Healthy School Meals for All: A Proven Strategy for Better Nutrition and Student Well-Being - Join the Food Research Action Center on October 29th at 2 p.m. for a discussion exploring the growing movement for Healthy School Meals for All, and how school nutrition programs have evolved, the impact of nutritious school meals on children's diets, and how expanding access can reduce stigma, administrative burden, and meal debt while supporting higher-quality meal service. Additional information and registration is HERE. To learn more about Champaign School District's decision to cut its school meals program HERE.

Rethinking How We Talk About Public Health and Democracy - Public health relies on a functioning, inclusive, and participatory democracy. And healthy people are better able to participate in voting, civil dialogue, and ongoing involvement. The values and core elements of a healthy democracy are widely embraced across political ideologies, giving us a powerful starting point to make the case for public health and bring more people into the coalition. Join the American Public Health Association to learn how to use an effective pro-democracy and public health narrative grounded in extensive research and testing and shaped with public health leaders. Join the one hour talk on Tuesday, October 20th, at 12:00 Noon. More information and registration 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