May 2026

Future HCC Meetings and Events

Future Membership Gatherings

Wednesday, June 3rd, 12:00 Noon - 1:00pm. Martens Center, 1515 N. Market St., Champaign
Wednesday, August 5th, 12:00 Noon - 1:00pm. Martens Center, 1515 N. Market St., Champaign

Next Board Meetings

Wednesday, May 27th, 8:30am - 10:00am. at Community Foundation, 307 W. University Avenue, Champaign
Wednesday, June 24th, 8:30 - 9:30 am at United Way of Champaign County, 5 Dunlap Ct, Savoy
Zoom Access for Board Meetings is HERE.

HCC Happy Hour

We've had a busy spring with the 4th Feeding Champaign County Food Summit in March, the Illinois Race Weekend Charity Run Partnership in April, and the inaugural Active Living Week earlier this month. So, before the rush of summer takes over, join Healthy Champaign County for an evening of networking and good company. Let's talk about our summer plans, our gardens, the amazing things our kids accomplished this year in school. Thursday, June 4th 4:00 - 6:00 pm at Riggs Beer Company, 1901 S. High Cross Road, Urbana. German Food Truck will be there and Moonbaths will provide live music starting at 6:00 pm. *Flyer*

THANK YOU!

Active Living Week a Grand Success - More than 250 individuals took part in Healthy Champaign County's first annual Active Living Week! Active Living Week highlighted existing activities in the community that provide opportunities for physical activity. With featured daily events, raffle prizes, and swag bags, Active Living Week sparked excitement around movement and helped connect community members with organizations providing free and low-cost opportunities for active living.

A big thanks to the partnering organizations that hosted Active Living Week events – Morrissey Park parkrun, Urbana Park District, University of Illinois Campus Recreation Ice Arena, Iyengar Yoga CU, Illinois Extension, CU Girls Who

Walk, and OSF Healthcare.
Thank you to our sponsors who supported HCC's Active Living Week with donated raffle prizes and swag bag items – Body N' Sole Sports, Perspire Sauna Studio, Dick's House of Sport, Champaign Park District, Urbana Park District, University of Illinois Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism, Niemann Harvest Market, OSF Healthcare, and Illinois Extension. You can view photos from the various events HERE.

Illinois Race Weekend Team - Thank you to everyone who raised funds, donated, raced, or volunteered on behalf of Healthy Champaign County during this year's Christie Clinic Illinois Race Weekend. As a charity run partner, HCC raised $1,021.53 with over 20 unique donors! 13 individuals filled 14 volunteer roles throughout the weekend, and 9 people raced for Team HCC. Thank you all for your contributions to active living in Champaign County!

Coming Events and Opportunities with Participating Organizations

Editor's Note: Given the number of events and announcements, and to experiment with the newsletter format, flyers promoting events have been collected and stored on Google Drive. If an event has such a flyer, you will find an icon 💼 next to the announcement. The icon has a link that will take you to the specific flyer or announcement. Let me know what you think of this innovation. Ric

Food Access Coordination in Champaign County - The Champaign City Council has announced that at its Tuesday, May 19th meeting it will be convening a Study Session (typically to consider a staff recommendation for action) to explore a food security partnership with the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District. A key element of this partnership would include financial support to sustain the C-UPHD Food Access Specialist position and related program functions. The proposal under consideration is available from the City of Champaign website HERE and HERE as a PDF..

This is an important development in the 3 year effort lead by the HCC Feeding Champaign County Food Summits to design, find a home, and fund a position with Champaign County-wide responsibilities of working directly with those engaged in food security and nutrition programming for our neighbors struggling to access sufficient food for themselves and their families. Our vision of this role has been to build upon the network of programs we have convened at the Summits, finding common ways to enhance our collective capacity to serve and sustain the work so many of you are doing.

The presentation of the proposal and Council discussion about its features will take place following the regular Council meeting on Tuesday 5/19. Council meetings are at 7:00pm in the City Building at 102 N Neil Street. The meeting is open to the public and there will be opportunity for the public to express support, ask questions, and learn more about this idea being suggested. Following the meeting and study session city staff will review public and Council comments and formalize a plan to be presented to Council for final approval at a future meeting this summer.

Many have been party to these conversations. Please consider attending the meeting and speaking up on the proposal. Come to the meeting and connect the Food Access Specialist role to the ideas at its foundation - ideas that took shape at our Food Summits - from the perspective you represent on the Summit Planning Committee and as a leader in our efforts to see that fewer of our neighbors go hungry. To learn more about the addressing Champaign City Council, including how to contact members privately, details are available HERE.

Volunteer at the Champaign Farmers Market! - Do you like helping food and farm businesses? Do you like talking to people about local food? Do you like packing 100 portions for meal kits going to straight to kids and/or handing out those kits? Well, you're not going to believe this, but The Land Connection can make all of those dreams come true. Sign up to volunteer HERE or send an email to market@thelandconnection.org to get started.

Play Days in the Park - Coming to the Urbana Park District. Play Days in the Park are neighborhood celebrations where the fun comes to you! Play Days feature Kona Ice, DJ Fireproof, Wild Style face painting and glitter tattoos, bike repairs, and so much more. Best part, everything is free! Learn more HERE and 💼

* June 11, 5:30-7 pm, Victory Park
* June 25, 5:30-7 pm, Blair Park
* July 9, 5:30-7 pm, King Park
* July 23, 5:30-7 pm, Larson Park
* August 6, 5:30-7 pm, Crestview Park

Walk & Talks - Join U of I Extension and The Land Connection for a Walk and Talk Series on Tuesdays in June. Explore Champaign-Urbana Parks with paved paths while engaging in lively discussion on a variety of topics. The Land Connection's Food Access Manager, Ian Nutting, will join Extension on these talks to discuss the importance of eating local. Registration is required so we are able to contact you for where we will meet. Learn more and register HERE or 217-333-7672. In case of bad weather, the walk will be held indoors at the Urbana Health and Wellness

Center at 2002 E Washington Street

June 9, 2:00-3 pm, West Side Park
June 16, 2:00-3:00 pm, Crystal Lake Park
June 23, 2:00-3:00 pm, Champaign Farmers Market
June 30, 2:00-3:00 pm, Meadowbrook Park

Community Resilience: Integrating Health, Education, and Economy in Outdoor Recreation - Resilient Communities Webinar on Tuesday, May 26 from 12:00 pm-1:00pm. Illinois's natural landscapes are an economic engine driving public health and high-impact youth development. Join this webinar to explore how investing in outdoor recreation creates a strategic 'win-win-win' for regional resilience, vitality, and prosperity. Experts Dr. Brooke Jacobs, Dr. Katie Dudley, and Dr. Evan Coulson will connect the dots among wellness, workforce, and economic resilience. Reframing outdoor recreation as essential infrastructure rather than a discretionary amenity, this presentation positions public lands as integrated systems that drive public health, workforce development, and economic resilience. To participate, you will need to register HERE. (Source: Prairie Rivers Network)

CU Community Care Fest - The HCC community is invited to be part of the first CU Community Care Fest, a community event hosted by the CLU-W Hygiene Pantry. Community Care Fest will take place on Saturday, August 1st from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm at the Brookens Center in Urbana. It will to bring together local organizations to build something meaningful for our community, creating a space to share resources, connect with families, and collaborate with other partners.

The day will also serve as a Back-to-School Bash, focused on helping local children and families prepare for the upcoming school year. Organizations are encouraged to get involved by hosting a booth to share information about their programs and services, offering school-related incentives or giveaways, or participating in a back-to-school supply drive. We would love to have you host a booth and highlight your programs and services. It's a great opportunity to engage directly with the community while supporting families during an important time of year. If you're interested in sponsoring, hosting a booth, or providing services contact Tracy Bowden 💼

Eat Move Groove Podcast - What if eating, moving, and grooving (supporting personal well-being) wasn't so complicated? What if we took the science supporting optimizing nutrition, exercise, and well-being and developed a doable plan that's easy to put into practice every day? What if we made eating, moving, and grooving accessible, fun, and enjoyable within a simple framework without taking a lot of time or costing a lot of money?

That's how Eat Move Groove emerged. Solid science. Experts in the fields of eating, moving, and grooving. Fun. Simple. Easy to implement. So grab a cup of coffee, your favorite glass of wine, or the beverage of your choice and take a moment to learn more about simple, positive wellness with Susie and her guests. The Eat Move Groove Podcast is available on YouTube and wherever you get your podcasts.

HCC Partners in the News

Illinois Online Resources for Households on Federal Food Assistance - As Illinois braces for the impact of H.R. 1's expanded time limits, the state has launched two new websites aimed at providing work, training, and volunteer hours to households who may be impacted. An estimated 150,000 Illinois households could lose access to SNAP because of the time limits. Learn more HERE. (Source: Capital News Illinois)

Wee CU Food Pantry for Kids - Mobile youth pantry aims to 'give back and give hope. As a case manager at the Strides homeless shelter, Jerell Leeks spends a lot of time working with some of Champaign County's most vulnerable residents. "When you take a step back, your lens changes," he said. "... Maybe some of these adults didn't get what they needed as a child." This thought inspired Leeks to create a mobile pantry that provides food and other needed items to kids in Champaign County. The Wee CU Food Pantry for Kids had its first pop-up event at the Country Brook Apartments on April 18. 103 families and 129 children were served during the event. Learn more HERE. (Source: The News Gazette)

Mini pantries aim to lower food insecurity, waste - When walking around town, you may have seen miniature pantries scattered throughout Champaign-Urbana. Often appearing as miniature houses with colorful exteriors, these pantries are home to various food products and toiletries, always open to those in need. Learn more HERE. (Source: Daily Illini)

Pesticides detected hundreds of feet away from parks and playgrounds in Champaign - Eighteen different pesticide compounds were detected in public parks and playgrounds at 10 sites across Illinois last summer, including some agrichemicals that drifted at least 3,700 feet from the nearest spray site. The new research, conducted by the

Champaign-based nonprofit Prairie Rivers Network, comes days after the defeat of a state bill that would have required pesticide applicators to notify nearby schools and parks before spraying. Learn more HERE. (Source: Investigate Midwest)

News from Around the USA

Minneapolis Farm Turns Front Yards Into Mutual Aid - The Black Radish Farm converts ornamental lawns and unused yard spaces in Minneapolis into food gardens. Participating homeowners receive a weekly share of produce. Learn the story HERE. (Source: Civil Eats)

House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee Holds Hearing on Food Oversight Legislation - On April 29, the House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee held a hearing entitled, "Healthier America: Legislative Proposals on the Regulation and Oversight of Food" covering a variety of legislative proposals to improve food regulation. The hearing reflected the bipartisan agreement that the current federal food safety system needs to be modernized. There remains disagreement over how to achieve this goal. Witnesses described a system already under strain, with state and local agencies absorbing an increasing share of inspection and response work with more limited federal capacity. The 28 bills under consideration during this hearing address a wide range of issues including infant formula safety and supply chain resilience, chemical safety oversight, contaminants in baby food and other products, and FDA research and workforce capacity. Several Members of Congress raised concerns about recent FDA staffing reductions, including the loss of 89 staff from the Human Foods Program with expertise in nutrition, infant formula, and food chemical safety. One of the witnesses, Scott Faber, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs at the Environmental Working Group, argued that dedicated funding is necessary for FDA to conduct chemical safety reviews and effectively manage recalls.

One of the witnesses, Steven Mandernach, Executive Director of the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO), testified that local and state inspectors conduct 100% of retail food inspections and nearly 90% of all food processing inspections nationwide. Mandernach brought up the ByHeart infant formula recall in which local agencies waited up to five days for the FDA to share product distribution lists, which left recalled formula on shelves in 7% of stores checked during the first week. State and local food safety officials along with FDA inspectors performed more than 4,000 spot-checks of retail stores. H.R. 8430, the Federal and State Food Safety Information Sharing Act would authorize faster data sharing between FDA and local partners. " (Source: NACCHO News from Washington)

School Gardens Help Students Learn Science and Connect With Agriculture, But Making Them Happen Isn't Easy - Through gardening, students can gain an appreciation for farmers and their food supply. Getting outside and doing hands-on learning is more engaging than sitting in a classroom passively learning by lecture, because active learning engages more regions of the brain, resulting in better understanding and retention of concepts. Active learning also allows students to follow their own curiosity, which motivates them to learn and remember concepts. A study showed that allowing more individual freedom in gardens led to an increase in positive attitudes toward school. Children involved in school gardening are also more active outside of school hours. While working in a garden, students are involved with science and nature, and that involvement leads to more science literacy and positive attitudes toward science and the environment. However, establishing and maintaining a school garden program isn't easy. Read the whole story HERE. (Source: Morning Ag Clips)

Federal Public Comments: What Are They and Why Do They Matter? - Public comments are a powerful way for advocates, organizations, and community members to influence federal policies that affect nutrition and food security. Federal agencies are legally required to seek and consider public input on proposed rules, research requests, and information collection activities through processes outlined in laws like the Administrative Procedure Act. Comments submitted can help shape final policies, strengthen protections for programs like SNAP and school meals, and even stop harmful proposals from moving forward. A FRAC blog from Senior SNAP Policy Analyst Dory Thrasher explains how the public comment process works, why it matters, and how strong, evidence-based comments from impacted people and experts can make a real difference in protecting anti-hunger programs. (Source: Food Research and Action Center)

Illinoisans lose federal food aid, independent grocers face debt, closure - As households across Illinois brace to lose their federal food assistance this month, grocery stores, especially independent grocers across the state, are preparing for the devastating effects of decreased spending. Read the story HERE. (Source: The News Gazette)

Moms, coaches, doctors, entrepreneurs: Who are America's health and wellness influencers? - Four-in-ten U.S. adults, including half of those under 50, say they get health and wellness information from social media influencers and podcasts. In recent Pew Research Center study of nearly 7,000 wellness influencers, we found that 41% describe themselves as health care professionals, 31% are coaches and 28% are entrepreneurs. Learn more HERE. (Source: Pew Research Center)

Newsletter Publication Schedule: We aspire to publish this newsletter on the 3rd Wednesday 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.