

BLUE SUMMER 2008 CORNERSTONESM



SUPPORTING IMPROVEMENT IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Important Funding Changes

Due to the Foundation's significant support toward disaster relief efforts, the timeline for the second 2008 community responsive grant cycle has been modified.

Letters of Interest (LOIs) are now due on **September 23, 2008**. Please see the back cover on page 8 for a revised timeline as well as page 7 for additional details. All up-to-date information is also found on the Foundation's Web site at www.wellmark.com/foundation.

THE WELLMARK FOUNDATION DIRECTS \$1 MILLION TO STATEWIDE DISASTER RELIEF

The Wellmark Foundation board of directors has approved a \$1 million pledge to the newly established Embrace Iowa 2008 Iowa Disaster Fund, housed and administered by the Greater Des Moines Community Foundation on behalf of statewide disaster recovery and relief from flooding and tornadoes.

Announcement of the donation was made by John Forsyth, chair of The Wellmark Foundation Board of Directors. **"Rebuilding the lives and lost or damaged property in the wake of these devastating disasters will take a long-term commitment and many resources. Iowans are strong, resilient, and caring, and can exhibit the can-do spirit needed for this recovery. The Wellmark Foundation is pleased to make this pledge of support and I encourage Iowa businesses, individuals, and other interested parties to contribute to these efforts as they are able,"** Forsyth says.

The Embrace Iowa 2008 Iowa Disaster Fund will manage a statewide private fundraising effort for Iowans affected by 2008 storms and flooding, and will help with and distribute funds to community efforts developing across the state. Civic and business leaders Barry Griswell and Fred Hubbell, at the request of Governor Chet Culver, are spearheading the effort and have formed the 2008 Iowa Disaster Collaborative along with other community leaders across the state. Aegon USA CEO Pat Baird, Rockwell Collins CEO Clay Jones, and University of Iowa President Sally Mason will represent Eastern Iowa in this unprecedented statewide private fundraising initiative designed to help victims of this year's severe weather and historic flooding.

To learn more about or donate to the Embrace Iowa 2008 Iowa Disaster Fund, please see www.embraceiowa.org.

THE WELLMARK FOUNDATION FUNDS 15 HEALTH IMPROVEMENT IN IOWA AND SOUTH DAKOTA



The Wellmark Foundation funded 15 health improvement grants in Iowa and South Dakota totaling \$1,739,233 at its recent board of directors meeting. In 2008, The Wellmark Foundation's funding efforts will seek to facilitate programs targeting childhood obesity prevention, and community-based wellness and prevention. Organizations receiving grants in these designated health priority areas are listed below. All awards are two-year grants unless otherwise noted.

CHILDHOOD OBESITY PREVENTION

- Des Moines Public Schools will use a \$46,991 one-year grant to combat childhood obesity by creating a fitness arcade designed to increase physical activity of students at Merrill Middle School. The fitness arcade will use technology-driven games that require students to be physically active in order to play. Although the arcade will be available to all students, the program will reach out to targeted high-risk students and their families.
- Healthy Henry County Communities in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, received a \$135,500 grant to enhance a childhood obesity prevention program targeting children in kindergarten through eighth grade. The program continues an ongoing wellness initiative to improve childhood weight issues in the county, which has been supported by previous Wellmark Foundation grants. The new programming will include unique outreach and services to engage Hispanic children.
- A \$64,428 grant will allow the Iowa Department of Public Health in Des Moines to develop a new body mass index (BMI) surveillance system for elementary students across the state. The system will provide consistent and standardized data on children's weight status so that effective strategies to improve overweight in children can be implemented and monitored.
- A \$105,000 grant will allow the Iowa Health Foundation in Des Moines to pilot a national childhood obesity prevention program in after-school programs in the West Des Moines and Perry Community School Districts. The grant will implement work planned through a previous Wellmark Foundation capacity-building grant received in 2007.
- Iowa State University in Ames will use a \$148,909 grant to impact healthy food choices in schools. A nutrition program designed to identify best practice nutrition guidelines for foods sold outside of school meals will be piloted in six communities. Based on these findings, a model will be developed to assist schools when implementing these nutrition guidelines.

PROJECTS

- The South Dakota Department of Health in Pierre received a \$150,000 grant to develop a childhood obesity prevention program targeting children 2-5 years of age in child care settings. The South Dakota Departments of Health, Social Services, and Education will collaborate to assist more than 200 child care environments across the state to increase vegetable intake and exercise in this target population.
- The Trinity Health Foundation in Fort Dodge, Iowa, received a \$145,500 grant to develop a school-based wellness and obesity prevention program targeting students in kindergarten through eighth grade. This multi-faceted program will include curriculum enhancements, daily physical education classes, a walking initiative, and an after-school swimming program provided in collaboration with the local YMCA.
- The University of Iowa Foundation in Iowa City received a \$87,278 grant to implement a school-based nutrition improvement project designed to prevent childhood obesity through improved concession stand offerings at sporting events. The 18-month project will evaluate current food offerings, identify barriers to healthy options, implement new offerings, and evaluate the sales and profitability of new offerings. A how-to guide based on findings will be created and distributed to other community groups.

COMMUNITY-BASED WELLNESS AND PREVENTION

- Communities in Schools of Cedar Valley, Inc. in Waterloo, Iowa, received an \$88,974 grant to enhance a successful school-based health education program designed to prevent teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, and to increase self esteem among youth ages 12-19 years. Identified disparities in African American girls will be addressed by creating a Youth of Color coalition and offering a culturally appropriate summer health education program.
- A \$149,833 grant was awarded to the Elderbridge Agency on Aging in Mason City, Iowa, to expand a wellness program for older adults to 24 congregate meal sites. The program incorporates balance, flexibility, and strength training, as well as nutrition and health education segments to promote healthy aging. The project replicates an initiative originally launched at one congregate meal site in 2007 through support of a Wellmark Foundation mini-grant.
- A \$150,000 grant to the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation in Des Moines will support construction of a 25-mile paved trail in central Iowa. This funding intends to promote community wellness by increasing options for exercise and healthy lifestyle choices. Efforts to encourage use of the trail for health improvement will also be implemented.
- Mercy Medical Center Foundation in Sioux City, Iowa, received a \$100,504 grant to implement an awareness program focused on improving access to colorectal cancer screenings. Strategies include working with physician clinics to identify and contact persons who have not undergone recommended colorectal cancer screenings, a community-wide social marketing campaign, and an educational exhibit including a 40-foot long fiberglass colon display.
- A \$105,000 grant will allow the Polk County Agricultural Extension District in Des Moines, Iowa, to improve community wellness through a nutrition improvement project focused on vending machines. A nationally recognized survey instrument will be modified to examine the nutritional value of offerings in vending environments. After piloting in six communities, a community report card process and online reporting mechanism will be created.
- Sanford Research/USD in Sioux Falls, S.D., received a \$141,316 grant to expand a wellness and health education project to additional elementary schools in South Dakota. A 2007 Wellmark Foundation grant funded the initial project, which created and piloted a coordinated health education curriculum for students in kindergarten through fifth grade.
- The South Dakota Department of Health in Pierre will use a \$120,000 grant to implement a project through the *All Women Count!* program that will provide breast cancer screenings for low-income and underinsured South Dakota women who are not served by other funding sources. Dedicated outreach to Native American women will be initiated to address documented health disparities.

The Wellmark Foundation has provided nearly \$14.7 million to fund 406 health-related grants in Iowa and South Dakota since 1997, including \$1,739,233 this cycle. Visit The Wellmark Foundation's Web site at www.wellmark.com/foundation for further information.

CHILDHOOD OBESITY PREVENTION

Preschoolers BENEFIT from daycare program to prevent obesity

A preschool-based intervention program helped prevent early trends toward obesity and instilled healthy eating habits in multi-ethnic 2- to 5-year-olds, according to a report presented at the March 2008 American Heart Association's Conference on Nutrition, Physical Activity and Metabolism.

"Nobody would dispute that we are experiencing an epidemic of obesity in this country," said Ruby Natale, Ph.D., Psy.D., author of the study and assistant professor of clinical pediatrics at the University of Miami, Miller School of Medicine in Miami, Fla. "Children as young as 7 years old are experiencing health consequences of being overweight, suggesting that intervention must occur as early as possible and involve the entire family.

"Inner-city minority children spend many hours of the day in preschool, making it a significant influence in many aspects of their lives. Children depend on their parents for nutrition and physical activity choices at this age, so the home environment must be accounted for as well."

Natale and colleagues studied 2- to 5-year-old children from ethnically diverse, low-income families in eight subsidized childcare centers in Miami Dade County, Fla. The intervention group received a six-month home- and school-based obesity prevention program with two tiers.

The classroom-based (tier one) program included menu modifications and education:

- The menu promoted water as the primary beverage for staff and children; offered only skim or 1 percent milk; limited juices and other sweetened beverages; and incorporated fruits and vegetables in snacks as much as possible.
- Classroom teachers were educated weekly about how to incorporate nutrition and physical activity curriculums and how to better understand and overcome children's cognitive, cultural and environmental barriers to implementing a healthy low-fat, high-fiber diet.

The family-based (tier two) program reinforced what the children learned at childcare, including:

- Monthly parent dinners to educate parents about food labels, the food guide pyramid and portion sizes.
- Newsletters focusing on topics such as picky eaters, healthy cooking tips, healthy fast food options and recipes for healthy snacks.
- At-home activities such as sampling different vegetables and various types of lower-fat milks.

Comparing data from the intervention group to a control group of children, researchers found that intervention is an effective obesity prevention strategy.

"While 68.4 percent of children were at normal weight at the start of the study, this increased to 73 percent at follow-up," said Sarah E. Messiah, Ph.D., M.P.H., lead author of the study and research assistant professor in the Division of Pediatric Clinical Research, University of Miami, Miller School of Medicine. "Also, the percentage of children who were at risk for overweight decreased from 16 percent to 12 percent."

From the beginning to the end of the intervention, children changed the amounts and types of foods they ate. Those at two intervention sites ate less junk food, more fresh fruits and vegetables, and drank less juice and more 1 percent milk compared to those at control sites.

Specifically, on average in the intervention groups:

- Chip consumption decreased from daily to no consumption.
- Cookie consumption decreased 50 percent.
- Fresh fruit and vegetable consumption increased 25 percent.
- Juice consumption decreased 50 percent and was replaced with a 20 percent increase in water consumption.
- One percent milk consumption increased 20 percent.

"In the control sites, cake and cookie consumption actually increased 35 percent and 75 percent, respectively, while average fresh fruit and water consumption decreased," Messiah said. "We are hoping that our study will impact policy around the country leading to healthier standards for meals served at childcare centers. If we are successful in improving attitudes toward nutrition and physical activity in early childhood, we can potentially influence adult behavior and begin to hope that the public health epidemic of obesity can be ended."



Reprinted with Permission. www.americanheart.org ©2008, American Heart Association, Inc.

Disclaimer: Statements and conclusions of abstract authors that are presented at American Heart Association/American Stroke Association scientific meetings are solely those of the abstract authors and do not necessarily reflect association policy or position. The associations make no representation or warranty as to their accuracy or reliability.

We Can! Program Seeks to PREVENT Childhood Obesity

As communities seek to adopt strategies to prevent childhood obesity, it is helpful to look to evidence-based national models to guide these decisions. The Wellmark Foundation has not endorsed any particular model, but will periodically provide information on various options for your consideration as you plan ways to impact your community's health.

We Can! (*Ways to Enhance Children's Activity and Nutrition*) is a national childhood overweight and obesity prevention initiative led by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). *We Can!* is an evidence-based and researched program that is culturally sensitive and written at the appropriate health literacy level for both parents and children. *We Can!* focuses on three important behaviors, including improving food choices, increasing physical activity, and reducing screen time.

We Can! provides resources for health care organizations, community organizations, and schools to implement and evaluate evidence-based interventions targeted to parents and children in order to combat childhood obesity. These tools have demonstrated that progress can be made in changing children's eating and activity habits.

Information on the *We Can!* Program can be found at <http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov>. Organizations that sign up as partners receive a free starter kit and sample materials, as well as technical assistance, program updates, recognition on the national *We Can!* Web site, access to a variety of NIH science-based resources, and networking opportunities through listservs, social networking sites, e-newsletters, training sessions, and teleconferences.

Organizations may sign-up online at:
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/get-involved/>.

Source: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/whats-we-can/>.

USDA Releases New Menu Planner to HELP PUBLIC Build Better Diets

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has released the *MyPyramid Menu Planner*, the latest in a series of state-of-the-art, on-line nutrition guidance tools developed to help individuals plan healthier menus.

According to Dr. Brian Wansink, executive director of the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP), the new *MyPyramid Menu Planner* is based on recommendations of the *MyPyramid* food guidance system and the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The planner is provided free of charge and can help motivate consumers to make healthier food choices. Wansink says that *MyPyramid* has three benefits. "Based on the information you provide, it interactively shows whether your diet is balanced, and allows you to track it. It gives you an easy way to know if you are losing or gaining weight based on what you plan to eat. And it helps you plan upcoming meals," says Wansink.

MyPyramid will be useful to individuals interested in healthful and nutritious diets, and also to high school and middle school classes, dietitians, health professionals, and nutrition educators for use in counseling and educational programming.

To use the planner, go to www.MyPyramid.gov and click on the *MyPyramid Menu Planner* link. The planner requires each individual to enter his or her age, sex, height, weight, and physical activity level, as well as food items and typical amounts consumed each day. The menu planner displays visual feedback as each item is added, and can generate various reports, including daily, weekly, or family menus, breakdown by food item, and goal setting worksheets.

Source: <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/News-Media/News3-11-08.pdf>



STATEWIDE CAMPAIGN ENCOURAGES IMPROVED HEALTH CARE COMMUNICATION



With support from The Wellmark Foundation, a statewide campaign is encouraging Iowans to communicate more effectively with their health care professionals.

The **Know it. Show it. Tell it.** Campaign seeks to improve health care communication by providing MedCards to all Iowans. MedCards are pocket-sized cards for recording a list of medications, directions, and other health information. Patients are encouraged to regularly update this information, keep their MedCard with other important documents such as insurance or Medicare cards, and to show their MedCard at each health care visit. MedCards can be folded to easily fit in a billfold or wallet, and plastic sleeves are available to protect the cards.

The **Know it. Show it. Tell it.** Campaign and MedCard Initiative are cooperative efforts of the Iowa Healthcare Collaborative, Iowa Foundation for Medical Care, Iowa Hospital Association, Iowa Medical Society, and the Iowa Pharmacy Association. These partners are promoting the use of MedCards, and educating patients and health care providers to use MedCards during every interaction. “By creating a strategic partnership with key stakeholders, more than 100,000 MedCards have been distributed throughout Iowa,” states Gerd Claybaugh, director of operations for the Iowa Healthcare Collaborative. “This low-tech intervention is serving as a catalyst to improve communications, which we believe improves medication use and patient safety.”

The MedCard was funded by The Wellmark Foundation in 2007 under its former funding priority area of health literacy. Use of MedCards could align with initiatives supporting the Foundation’s current funding priority of prevention and wellness. For example, MedCards might be used to identify medications that increase the risk of falling as part of a project seeking to prevent falls.

MedCards are available in English and Spanish versions. For more information, including free downloads of MedCards, instructions, a poster, and other materials, please visit the Iowa Healthcare Collaborative Web site at <http://www.ihconline.org/toolkits/medicationbrochureandwalletcard.cfm>.

JULY 21 Teleconference Will Discuss Funding Opportunities

Please join The Wellmark Foundation for a prospective grant applicant teleconference on Monday, July 21, 2008, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (CST). Participation in this toll-free call is voluntary and is not a grant application prerequisite. It is not necessary to register in advance for the teleconference. To participate, please use the following teleconference information.

Teleconference Call-in Number: 888-454-6808

Participant Pass Code: 7825751

The teleconference provides a convenient option for individuals interested in learning more about making a grant application. Please consider joining the teleconference to hear more about our application process, learn about projects funded and lessons learned during our first 2008 funding cycle, and ask general questions about our review and selection process. Presentation materials will be available on our Web site (www.wellmark.com/foundation) before and after the teleconference.

Foundation Staff Offers TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE in South Dakota

Please join Foundation staff to learn more about our funding opportunities and to garner feedback on your proposal ideas. During August, staff will be in the following South Dakota locations. A group presentation with a question and answer session will be provided at the time designated below.

SIoux FALLS

Monday, August 11, 2008 – 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. (CST)
Siouxland Libraries – Oak View Branch Library Meeting Room
3700 East 3rd Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57103

PIERRE *

Tuesday, August 12, 2008 – 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (CST)
Pierre Area Chamber of Commerce (Chamber Community Room)
800 West Dakota Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

** Though separate from our meeting, please note this is planned the afternoon before the 4th Annual South Dakota Grant Writer Workshop at Ramkota RiverCentre (www.stmarysfoundation.com).*

We encourage you to consider attending both events if your schedule allows.

RAPID CITY

Tuesday, August 19, 2008 – 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. (MST)
Rapid City Public Library – Downtown (Hoyt Room)
610 Quincy Street
Rapid City, SD 57701

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | Dana McNeill
Des Moines, Iowa

MANAGING EDITOR | Gary Peterson
515.245.4980
PetersonGM@wellmark.com

EDITOR | Amy Smith

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
PRODUCTION | Susan Anderson-Smith
Julie Whitaker

Blue Cornerstone is published
three times a year by
The Wellmark Foundation
636 Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50306-9232

THE 2008
WELLMARK
FOUNDATION
BOARD OF
DIRECTORS | John D. Forsyth, Chair
Des Moines, Iowa
Mary Ann Abrams, M.D., M.P.H.
Johnston, Iowa
Theodore J. Boesen, Jr.
Des Moines, Iowa
Kay Jorgensen
Spearfish, S.D.
Eldon E. Huston
Johnston, Iowa
Ruth Litchfield, Ph.D., R.D., L.D.
Ames, Iowa
Edward R. Lynn
Council Bluffs, Iowa
Robert E. O'Connell
Sioux Falls, S.D.
Robert J. Richard
Independence, Iowa
Roberta Wattleworth, D.O.
Story City, Iowa

The Wellmark Foundation is
an independent licensee of the
Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

REVISED Timelines — 2008 Foundation Grant Cycle 2

Due to the Foundation's significant support toward disaster relief efforts, the timeline for the second 2008 community responsive grant cycle has been modified. Letters of Interest (LOIs) are now due on September 23, 2008. Please delete the previously communicated LOI due date of August 21, 2008, from your calendar. Mark your calendar with the revised dates indicated below.

Letters of Interest (LOI) for grant cycle 2 are due on September 23, 2008. Applicants with an LOI selected for further development will receive an invitation to submit a full grant proposal and additional application guidance. Only those applications invited to the full proposal round will be reviewed at the full proposal deadline. For more information, please contact The Wellmark Foundation at 515-245-4819, 515-245-4997, or wmfoundation@wellmark.com.

REVISED 2008 COMMUNITY RESPONSIVE GRANT CYCLE 2

July 21, 2008	Prospective grant applicant conference call
September 23, 2008*	Letters of Interest due
October 10, 2008*	Invitations to submit a full proposal are issued
November 20, 2008*	Full proposals due – by invitation only
March 1, 2009*	Initial project funding released/start of grant period

* Signifies a new and revised timeframe.



636 Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50306-9232

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
DES MOINES IA
PERMIT NO 2798