

SALISHAN COMMUNITY HEALTH ADVOCATES

YEAR IN REVIEW 2013

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The Salishan Community Health Advocates began their work in 2011 with the goal of improving the health of their neighborhood from within. In 2012-13, a second cohort joined the group, expanding the base of Advocates to 19. They work with their friends, neighbors, and family members in Salishan to improve individual and community health. Advocates help make it the norm for people to be physically active, eat healthy food, connect with their neighbors, and advocate for change in the systems and policies that affect their community.



Salishan's 19 Advocates live and work in the neighborhood. Just like their neighbors, they are Vietnamese, Latino, Cambodian, African-American, and Caucasian, and they span multiple generations, from teenagers to grandparents. They are trusted sources of social support and authentic, two-way communication resources for residents and organizations alike, which helps create the conditions at the neighborhood-level to transform the health and well-being of the community.

Advocates complete a 3-month introductory training to equip them with skills in community outreach and engagement, coordinating with community resources, and supporting others in making healthy lifestyle changes. They receive additional training throughout the year. In 2013, Advocates received an average of 20 hours of ongoing training in topics like measuring blood pressure, Motivational Interviewing, nutrition, domestic violence, advocacy for the community, and assisting people with health care enrollment. Advocates also receive specialized training in topics such as nutrition and diabetes, working with seniors, or gardening.

OUR MEMBERS



"Trust is the conduit of influence."

Amy Cuddy,
social psychologist



foundation for
healthy generations

CREATING ENDURING HEALTH EQUITY

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN HEALTH IMPROVEMENTS

Advocates help neighborhoods become healthier from within through efforts like:

- **Direct Services.** The personal development of Salishan’s CHAs has strengthened their ability to effectively model positive behavior change to their neighbors and friends. This supports their work to help their neighbors gain a better understanding of health-related issues, and how to use the services available to them. This includes enrolling their neighbors into health insurance, opening conversations about health and connecting their peers to local community clinics or other resources, such as smoking cessation and prenatal care information, domestic violence advocacy, and legal services.
- **CHW Collaborative.** The Community Health Worker (CHW) Collaborative is a group of local community health workers, patient navigators, parish nurses, UW-Tacoma Nursing faculty, public health professionals, and others interested in forwarding the efforts of CHWs in Pierce County. The Collaborative focuses on building capacity and regularly comes together to network, train and discuss new and important issues for CHW knowledge building and advocacy.
- **Community Kitchens.** Neighbors are learning how to prepare nutritious food while they connect with other families. Community Kitchen participants learned to work with healthy foods such as kale, asparagus, Brussels sprouts, brown rice, and ground turkey. This inspired youth in the community to ask for their own kitchen, so the Advocates will launch a youth-specific community kitchen in 2014.
- **Community Garden.** Neighbors learn how to grow healthy food in the community garden’s 44 plots. Initially, the gardeners were exclusively members of one ethnic group, and other residents didn’t feel welcome. The Advocates helped make this a place for all neighbors – now there is more demand for garden plots than the garden can accommodate.
- **Senior Bingo.** Bingo is offered once a month at each of the senior buildings. This social activity helps people get out of their rooms and make social connections while learning a healthy living skill.

During Bingo, an Advocate makes a short presentation on a health issue, including topics like the short- and long-term effects of smoking, signs of heart attack for women, signs of stroke, exercising with tension bands, strength exercises, and fall prevention.

- **Youth Bike Club.** At the request of Salishan youth, Advocates worked with a local business, philanthropy, an association, and volunteers to organize a Bike Club for youth. The business repaired over 50 broken bicycles owned by Salishan youth. 10 mountain bikes were purchased for a bike sharing program, the association provided secure storage, and a group of volunteers organized a bike rally and weekend bike rides for Salishan youth.
- **Outreach.** Advocates introduced health topics in community settings. They made learning about nutrition fun and engaging by providing samples of vegetables and fruit that many residents had never tasted and conducting a contest where residents guessed how many teaspoons of sugar were in various food and beverages. The Advocates have also reached out to the community through their Facebook page, the Tacoma Housing Authority website, an electronic message board, and regular office hours at the Community Health Care’s clinic.

2013 HEALTHY OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED & NEIGHBORS REACHED

Activity	Number of People served
Direct Service to Individuals	94
Bike Club	28
Bingo	36
Community Kitchen	191
CHW Collaborative	36
Community Garden	44
Tai Chi	10
Events/outreach	490
Total	929



EVALUATION FINDINGS: TRUSTED COMMUNICATORS

Community Members Trust the Advocates.

Advocates identify themselves as fellow Salishan residents, and members of their ethnic group trust them to communicate clearly and truthfully on a range of topics, from explaining housing authority communications to providing health-related information. When asked why they think others feel comfortable coming to them, one Advocate responded, “I think they trust me because I live here. I talk to them and I tell them the truth.” This observation was echoed by one agency staff member who said, “I saw this from sitting with them for a

residents on policy issues including proposed cuts to bus service, land use, and policy changes within the housing authority. An agency partner who worked with the Advocates on a proposed change to the housing authority’s tobacco policy said, “I think that they [the Advocates] were critical, a fundamental part of the survey collection. They knew how to communicate with community members.”



“I think they trust me because I live here. I talk to them and I tell them the truth.”

~Advocate

day. The other residents trust them and they go to them for help. I could sense that the residents felt a sense of safety and trust around them.”

Organizations Trust the Advocates.

Salishan governing bodies and service organizations acknowledge and value the Advocates work and knowledge. Over the past year the housing authority, community association, public health department, city council, community health clinic, and Metro Parks have turned to the Advocates for strategic advice and to get feedback from

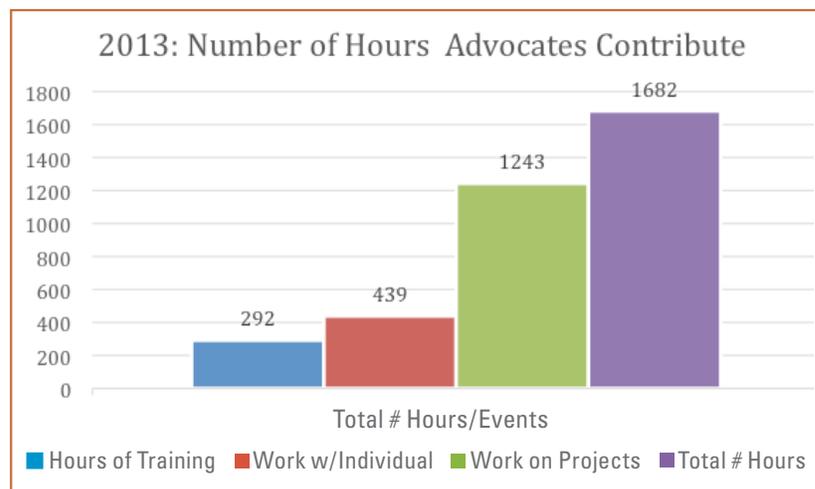
Trust and Credibility Lead to Systems Change. The evaluation indicates that arenas where the Advocates influenced systemic change include:

- Tacoma Pierce County Public Health and Tacoma Housing Authority had been unsuccessful in their efforts to get feedback on a proposed no-smoking policy. They asked the Advocates for

help. The Advocates attended strategy meetings, suggested ways to reach residents, and helped to get surveys out and returned. The feedback they received from residents helped the housing authority commissioners adopt a no-smoking policy.

- Tacoma Housing Authority sought advice from the Advocates on how to communicate a methamphetamine testing program in a way that would be responsive to residents. The

continued



YEAR IN REVIEW

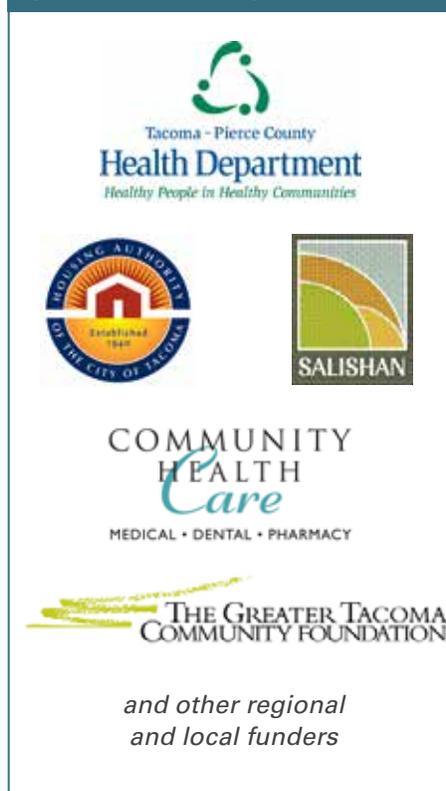
Trusted Communicators *continued*

Advocates gave advice to the housing authority, reached out to other residents with accurate information, and wrote letters to the editor explaining how the policy promoted the health of the community.

- The Salishan Community Association valued the Advocates work enough to create a community builder position. They worked with the Foundation for Healthy Generations to develop the job description, then recruited and hired an Advocate to fill the position.
- Community Health Care reached out to the Advocates and offered to provide them with an onsite office. This site elevates the visibility and credibility of the project and makes it more accessible to residents. The Advocates and clinic staff now work together to enroll residents in health insurance and other benefit programs
- A Tacoma City Council member sought and received feedback from the Advocates on proposed transportation cuts and had the Advocates testify on the issue for the Council.



Special thanks to key collaborators:



For the past 40 years, the Foundation for Healthy Generations has been working to create enduring health equity.

Our strategic focus is to create the conditions for health at the local grassroots level by uniting community wisdom, effective policy, and proven and emergent practices. One expression of this focus is the Salishan Community Health Advocates Program, which we implemented in 2011 in partnership with The Housing Authority of the City of Tacoma, Tacoma-Pierce Health Department, and the Salishan Community Association.

Foundation for Healthy Generations

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