

STEPS is looking for healthy ideas

January 14, 2014



What do you think your community needs to make it a better and healthier place to live? That is exactly what Seneca Towns Engaging People for Solutions (STEPS) is asking the residents in the towns of Covert, Lodi, Ovid and Romulus.

This past December, when the S2AY Rural Health Network, a not for profit regional health network housed in Corning, N.Y. announced that the Greater Rochester Health Foundation had awarded the southern end of Seneca County a Neighborhood Health Improvement Grant, staff for the project was hired, and they, along with the previously formed Steering Committee, hit the ground running.

Since then, Theresa Lahr and Eileen Schmidt, coordinators for the project, have been busy implementing the first phase of the grant project which includes fine tuning a list of community assets, along with encouraging residents to apply for one of five (5) Resident Health Promotion Project (RHPP) Mini Grants of up to \$1,000 each to help improve the physical, social, or economic health of the neighborhood.

Lahr says, "We are taking a multifaceted approach to find out what the residents know, can do, and care about in the neighborhood. As part of this approach, we are talking with as many groups of people as possible. We are also designing a survey for residents to complete that will help identify and address the strengths and challenges of the neighborhood."

"There have been a lot of great ideas tossed around by members of the community already," Lahr added.

Schmidt stated, "Ideas include a community garden project, the installation of a bike rack, and resident training opportunities. The important thing now is to get people to put their ideas on paper by filling out the RHPP applications and then submit them for consideration."

The RHPP mini grant application is simple to fill out and residents can opt to attach supporting documentation. The deadline for submissions is 5 p.m. on Feb. 28, 2014.

Applications for the RHPP mini grants can be filled out and printed from the S2AY Rural Health Network website at <http://s2aynetwork.org/>. Residents can mail their applications to STEPS, P.O. Box 902, Ovid, N.Y. 14521, or hand deliver them to the STEPS office located in the Finger Lakes Community Health Center at 7150 N. Main St., Ovid, N.Y. 14521.

Averell Bauder, a Town of Romulus resident and Jean Currie, a Town of Ovid resident, co-chair the steering committee that was formed to help oversee this resident driven project.

Bauder and Currie both volunteer their time to STEPS and they agree it is a great way to help the community.

"I hope that the residents of our four towns realize what a tremendous impact the STEPS Project can and will have on our southern Seneca County community. Mapping our strengths is crucial this first year, and the mini grants are just a small taste of what is in store if we all work together," said Bauder.

The Greater Rochester Health Foundation is hosting Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) training for community residents on Feb. 15. Any resident interested in attending this training should contact the STEPS staff before the Jan. 31 signup deadline.

Members of the neighborhood are encouraged to attend the next STEPS meeting which is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Jan. 21 at the Romulus Town Hall in Willard. For more information, contact Theresa Lahr by calling (315) 651-9919 or Eileen Schmidt by calling (607) 403-0069.

Pictured, from left, is STEPS Outreach Coordinator, Eileen Schmidt; STEPS Steering Committee Co-Chair, Jean Currie; and STEPS Project Assessment Coordinator, M. Theresa Lahr.

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