

Seneca Towns Engaging People for Solutions (STEPS) mini-grants for health promotion projects have been awarded in Covert, Lodi, Ovid and Romulus!

The purpose of these neighborhood-based projects is to bring people together to promote health and wellbeing. Local residents design and carry out small scale projects that take advantage of the resources of the community. Residents in any of the four STEPS towns are invited to participate in any of the projects. Below are a few examples of resident projects.

Ovid Community Garden: A garden club is currently being formed to oversee the development of a community garden that will be located in Ovid Middle & High School. The idea for this garden was shared by a woman new to the area and who, due to a disability, cannot drive. Like her, transportation is a barrier that many residents face. In addition to the other community gardens in Romulus and Lodi, the community garden will offer fresh produce and reduce healthy food access barriers. We are extremely excited to see where this new project will lead as residents of all ages, from students to seniors at Verona Village, come together to build this garden! If you would like to get involved in the planning stages or simply want more information, contact the STEPS's office at (607) 403-0069.

Book Boxes: An initiative to promote literacy and the joy of reading all throughout South Seneca has turned into a reality as free little libraries have sprung up across the county in the form of book boxes. South Seneca and Romulus art students designed and painted the boxes that are placed throughout the STEPS Neighborhood. Residents can go to any of the book boxes and retrieve books or donate books of their own. The boxes are in Ovid Park by the Three Bears, in Willard at the Episcopal Church, and in Lodi by the Post Office. Romulus's boxes are located in Ovid inside Mark's Pizzeria, in Romulus at the Presbyterian Church, and in Trumansburg at the Dollar General.

The Berry Fun Run/Walk 5k: Twenty parents and fifteen students organized a 5k walk/run during the annual Strawberry Festival on June 18, 2016. The 7th grade class met and determined that this was a project they wanted to raise money for their class trip and to help the community. Due to the cost of their class trip, many students would not be able to go if they had to pay the entire amount. This fundraiser not only alleviated that financial burden, but it brought families and friends together in a way that promoted physical activity and health.

Swinging: Congratulations to Michele B. Vangalio and Brian Kuhlman for being awarded a STEPS (Seneca Towns Engaging People for Solutions) mini-grant for their "Swinging Project!" This wonderful proposal has brought in two new swing sets to Ovid Park. The swings are ADA adaptive and feature a 5-point safety harness which adds further stability and security for children using them. This addition is important to the community because it caters to families with younger children and children with disabilities.

For more information on other Resident Health Promotion Programs go to the STEPS website www.senecasteps.org