



# California Healthy Cities and Communities: A Legacy of Accomplishments

In recognition of the 20th anniversary of the California Healthy Cities and Communities (CHCC) Program, we congratulate the 70 plus communities that have participated in the program. They have worked tirelessly creating more livable and healthier places for all. Their collective accomplishments are impressive.

This publication gives a brief history on the Center for Civic Partnerships, the CHCC Program, and highlights the continued progress of several early CHCC participants.



## California Healthy Cities and Communities

What began in 1988 as a vision of bringing the World Health Organization’s Healthy Cities model to California, has grown and flourished to become the largest and longest running statewide program of its kind in the nation. Local accomplishments have been impressive, with over \$43 million leveraged (ROI of 8:1) and many programs winning state and national acclaim.

The CHCC Program assists local leaders with developing, implementing and evaluating inclusionary, community-driven programs, policies and plans which address the environmental, social and economic determinants of health. Participants have improved their communities in the areas of safety, youth and leadership development, healthy aging, cross-cultural understanding, nutrition and physical activity, quality of life measurement and others. The CHCC program has received several national and state awards.



## Berkeley

Fifteen years after its designation as a California Healthy City, Berkeley is finding that the broad, institutional, policy and environmental approach of their healthy cities work in several key areas continues to positively influence the community.

As the first California city to adopt a citywide “Food and Nutrition Policy”, Berkeley has recently revived the policy developed as part of their healthy cities initiative and is applying it to climate change efforts. They are discovering how to use the food policy’s guiding principles to promote locally and sustainably grown food, as well as urban agriculture practices such as public spaces for orchards and roof-top and backyard gardens.

According to Kate Clayton, Chief of the Health Promotion Section of Berkeley’s Public Health Division, participation in CHCC created opportunities to form partnerships with others in the community who were



Children share locally grown vegetables from a community garden.

working on food access and community organizing. “Without Healthy Cities it would have taken us much longer to establish relationships with folks in the community doing this broad, system-based work,” stated Clayton.

Clayton is especially appreciative

of the flexibility afforded by the Healthy Cities funding, which allowed Berkeley to broadly interpret the scope of nutrition and physical activity efforts. “Bureaucracies are hard to move, so if you start with a broad vision it makes it so much easier than if you start narrow and want to expand,” she commented. According to Clayton, this same principle applies to the City’s commitment of General Funds to community health improvement, “Membership in Healthy Cities raised awareness of the role of the City and once that institutional commitment was established, it has continued.”

### Sustaining Progress

Cities that have made Healthy Cities philosophy part of the “way we do business” seem to share some common elements.

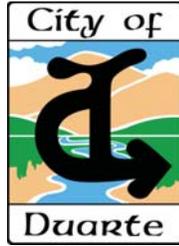
- **Participatory Structure** – All of the cities placed high value on their initial Healthy Cities committee and have maintained an inclusive, collaborative group focused on improving livability.
- **Collaborative Process** – Periodic assessments of needs and resources, prioritization of issues and development of responsive policies and programs is a well established mechanism involving diverse community sectors.
- **Community Building Approach** – An understanding that the Healthy Cities model is not about delivering services, but about creating and working towards a shared vision of health for all in its broadest meaning.
- **Long Term Perspective** – An emphasis on the Healthy Cities philosophy advances the view that they are in it for the long haul, rather than focusing on the completion of a specific project or program cycle.



## Chino Hills: A Great Place to Be

The City of Chino Hills has approached its 14 years as a California Healthy City with a long-term perspective. That perspective has translated into the continuation of all five programs originally launched under the formal Healthy Cities designation. “The beauty of our program and the reason it has and continues to be successful is because the programs were designed from the beginning to have long-term value to our community,” commented Ben Montgomery, Neighborhood Services Manager. Those programs include juvenile offender diversion and mentoring, intergenerational senior companionship and support, neighborhood leadership training, and a multi-use trails program that emphasizes social interaction as well as physical activity.

Unlike many collaboratives that are hurriedly assembled to meet grant funding requirements, Chino Hills’ Healthy Cities Steering Committee was established with the intention of developing valuable programs that met long-term needs. The programs are kept alive and well by the Steering Committee that meets quarterly to oversee and evaluate their continued effectiveness. The city also committed itself financially with General Funds to support programming and city staff for ongoing administrative support. As Montgomery noted, “Every single program that came from Healthy Cities required an ongoing commitment of resources and the grant was the catalyst for that commitment.”



## Duarte: The City of Health

With its motto, “The City of Health”, Duarte felt a natural fit with the California Healthy Cities Project and became one of the program’s original ten participants. Over the years the city has engaged in a wide variety of healthy cities activities, including, bicycle and pedestrian safety, intergenerational mentoring, improving nutrition and increasing physical activity, among others.

The Mentor Mom program is one that Councilmember Margaret Finlay points to as having made a difference in the lives of Duarte’s youth. The program aims to reduce teen pregnancies by pairing teen parents with adult mothers and fathers. “You really see this program works, when kids who were involved as teens have gone on to graduate and now are coming back to volunteer. They’ve told me it transformed their future and now they want to give back to their community!”

**“Every decision we make we keep in mind, what is the “healthiest” way to pursue whatever path we’re on?”**

– Margaret Finlay,  
Councilmember,  
City of Duarte

According to Donna Georgino, Director of Parks and Recreation, one of the greatest benefits of Duarte’s participation has been the ability to leverage additional grant funding to continue programs

started with small amounts of seed money from the statewide program. In addition to program continuation, Duarte’s healthy cities collaborative has taken on a life of its own, continuing to meet on a regular basis to review needs, identify resources and develop programs to meet community priorities.

Healthy Cities has been much more than a program to the City of Duarte. “What we’ve always had with Healthy Cities is an overriding philosophy,” commented Councilmember Margaret Finlay; “We’ve stuck with it for 19 years because it works! 🌈



## Escondido: The City of Choice

In the 16 years since the City of Escondido became a California Healthy City, “it has become a philosophy of how we do things, not just a program,” according to Jerry Van Leeuwen, Director of Community Services.

An extensive network of neighborhood groups, primarily in under-resourced areas of Escondido, has been organized to address issues of concern to residents. Original apprehension that these groups would create demands on city resources that couldn’t be met, has been transformed into a view of the groups as partners for accomplishing city goals such as recycling, water conservation, public safety, beautification, code enforcement and others. Funded from the city’s Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, the neighborhood groups

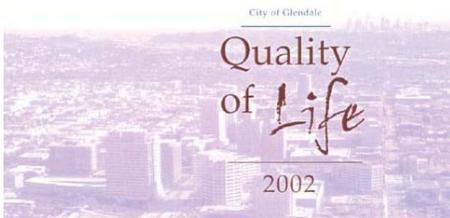
have become fertile ground for developing indigenous leaders, which the city is supporting with an upcoming Neighborhood Leadership Conference to train youth and adults.

As Van Leeuwen commented, “the philosophy of civic participation and community problem solving is solidly in place...that’s the most substantive benefit to emerge from Escondido’s Healthy Cities participation.” 🌿



## Glendale: Come Home to Glendale

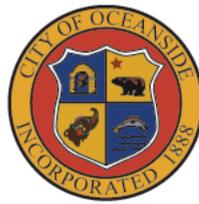
Twelve years after Glendale was designated a California Healthy City, the program’s principles and structure are “embedded in what we do,” according to Sam Engel, Neighborhood Services Administrator. The City of Glendale’s Quality of Life Indicators project, a five-year undertaking, established a common framework for all sectors of the community to identify the benchmarks of a “Healthier Glendale” and to work collaboratively towards achieving and sustaining their vision.



Following the Healthy Cities model and using the indicators as a guide, annually the Healthier Glendale Coalition conducts a mini-assessment, prioritizes the issues, selects a focus and develops responsive programs and policies. With over 75 participating agencies, a formalized structure (officers, by-laws, etc.), rotating

leadership, and staff and resources for selected projects provided by member agencies, the Healthier Glendale Coalition has become an influential force in improving Glendale’s quality of life.

Engel offers this advice for new cities considering joining this movement, “The best part is the periodic assessment of what’s going on and Healthy Cities provides you the discipline for doing that.” 🌿



## Oceanside: Classic California

The City of Oceanside’s 14-year participation in the California Healthy Cities and Communities program has produced a wide range of benefits for residents, neighborhoods and the community at large. Taking healthy cities principles to heart, Oceanside has emphasized civic engagement and resident empowerment in its neighborhood revitalization efforts. Starting with its initial *Community Begins with Me!* graffiti abatement program, Oceanside took its message of community responsibility along with a broad definition of health to multiple distressed neighborhoods throughout the city.

In the Calle Montecito neighborhood, a comprehensive revitalization effort guided by healthy cities principles brought in a new health clinic on city-owned land, a Boys & Girls Club, 20 homes constructed by Habitat for Humanity, a career center and park improvements, such as

lighting and public art. Reflecting the importance of residents’ perceptions, “one of the key measures of our success, is that pizza companies are now willing to deliver to this neighborhood!” stated Margery Pierce, Neighborhood Services Director.

**“I’ve learned to think in a much broader way about the meaning of health – physical, of course, but also educational, economic, mental and environmental.”**

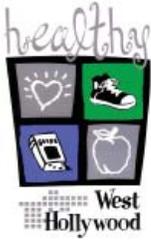
*–Margery Pierce,  
Neighborhood Services Director,  
City of Oceanside*

Another early CHCC project has had long-term policy impacts in Oceanside. Tobacco – I’m Not Buying It, focused on reducing youth tobacco use and countering pro-tobacco influences in the community. Oceanside extended this initial focus on youth to a citywide smoking ban in all city parks and beaches.

In addition, Oceanside was the first California city to build an outdoor and indoor smoke-free mixed use project with affordable housing and commercial space. Ms. Pierce stated, “This was my recommendation based on my healthy cities involvement and the Housing Commission and City Council agreed. Healthy cities has become part of Oceanside’s culture. It’s a philosophy that is reflected in whatever we do.”



California Healthy Cities  
and Communities



# West Hollywood: The Creative City

The City of West Hollywood was only 4 years old when the CHCC Program was founded. According to Daphne Dennis, Social Services Manager, “We had the luxury of being new just when California’s Healthy Cities Program was new.” This made the decision to become one of the ten original California Healthy Cities an easy one.

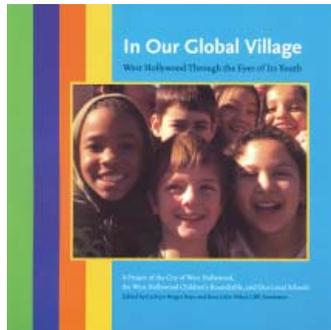
Over the years, West Hollywood continued its commitment to the Healthy Cities philosophy by engaging its very diverse population of gays and lesbians, seniors, Russian-speaking immigrants and families with children in a wide variety of planning, policy and program activities that promote health and wellness. The city’s commitment includes an annual multimillion-dollar budget for community health and social services and a Healthy West Hollywood month-long promotion and celebration of health every October.

**“People who are interested in Healthy Cities are captivated by potential. That’s what this is, so why wouldn’t you want to maximize it?”**

**– Daphne Dennis,  
Social Services Manager,  
City of West Hollywood**

One project that exemplifies Healthy West Hollywood is *In Our Global Village: West Hollywood Through the Eyes of Its Youth*. The

project grew out of a group formed to engage city government and the schools in a “get to know each other” dialogue. Fifteen years later, the West Hollywood Children’s Roundtable is still meeting and most recently published a book



written collaboratively with school children telling about their city. “*In Our Global Village* exemplifies the Healthy Cities principle of bringing disparate people with common interests together across disciplines to look broadly at what the term health means,” stated Dennis. *In Our Global Village* can be viewed at [http://issuu.com/wkcd/docs/in\\_our\\_global\\_village](http://issuu.com/wkcd/docs/in_our_global_village).

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To learn more about the CHCC Program, see our 20th anniversary publication, “Celebrating 20 Years - Laying the Foundation, Leading the Way” at [www.civicpartnerships.org](http://www.civicpartnerships.org).



## Center for Civic Partnerships

The Center for Civic Partnerships, based in Sacramento, California, is a support organization that strengthens individuals, organizations, and communities by facilitating learning, leadership development, and networking. The Center has extensive experience, having provided technical support to over 170 cities, communities, and organizations in California and across the nation. In addition, the Center sponsors educational programs and develops resource materials for funders, local policy-makers and government administrators, nonprofit organizations, and community members. The Center’s main areas of focus are community-building and organizational development with a cross-cutting emphasis on sustainability. The Center’s parent organization is the Public Health Institute (PHI) based in Oakland, California.

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