

# **2011 Minority Health Mini-Grant Awardees Share Their Success Stories**

## **Health Care Access/Health Literacy**

### **Columbia-St. Mary's Chronic Disease Management Program**

It was a spring day in 2011 that started as usual for Barbara, with a favorite radio program. An interview of Columbia St. Mary's (CSM) Parish Nurse Julia Means caught her ear. Means spoke of hypertension and diabetes among African-Americans—and the grand opening of a CSM Community-based Chronic Disease Management clinic near Barbara's home. It was a summons for Barbara, who had been showing signs of diabetes for months.

Barbara's blood-sugar level of 500 (100 would be normal) alarmed Means, who asked Barbara to go to a hospital for emergency care. Barbara refused, as she was 60, too young for Medicare, and had no insurance or resources. But Means was able to get medication to begin her treatment for diabetes. Soon Barbara began to feel better. For her, it was a truly grand opening—and the start of a commitment to treat her newly discovered disease.

Barbara is just one of many people in central-city Milwaukee who have benefited from screening and management of chronic disease through the program. CCDM brings care to people in places where they are comfortable and already receive services, such as churches and food pantries. The program is highly successful in controlling chronic disease--and preventing complications that cause disability and early death.

## **Health Literacy/Social Cohesion/Nutrition**

### **Dane County Parent Council Healthy Families/Healthy Communities Project**

The Healthy Families / Healthy Communities Project provided interactive health education sessions at twelve sites across Madison. Parents, children and staff at six sites were inspired to plant a "Family Gardens" on the playground of their Head Start / Early Head Start Center as a way to continue building community among families while learning about nutrition. The Healthy Families team supported Center staff and families in designing and planting their garden. Now, children and families have the opportunity every year to learn how food grows, try new fresh produce and gain hands-on experience preparing the food they grow. The Healthy Families program planted the seeds for a community asset that continues to grow! The Family Gardens will be cultivated annually with the possibility of planting more gardens at other Head Start sites. The "Family Gardens" are connecting families to the food choices they make and to one another.

Talina, a Healthy Families participant and Head Start parent, shared, "My children love the garden project because they get so excited to eat what they planted. And because they grew it, my kids are more willing to try new vegetables. And they actually really like them!" While she doesn't have a place to grow her own garden at her apartment, her children have become more involved helping her in the kitchen. Her four-year-old son loves to cut tomatoes, peppers and cilantro with the plastic knife she now gives him. Her older daughter helps plan meals and makes sure to include all of the five food groups she and her mom learned about in the Healthy Families program. To bring the idea of the family garden into her own home next spring, Talina is planning to grow a pot with tomatoes on her balcony.