



Rancho Cucamonga, CA

▲ Community Example from Chapter 1 of “Lessons for Leaders:”
Lessons in Community Capacity Building

Community Background

In Rancho Cucamonga, people of color represent a significant proportion of the residents, with Latinos being the highest (more than one-third). Socioeconomic differences and health disparities bisect the city into northern and southern sections with the former being more affluent. To address the diverse needs of this city, which is located in the largest county in the nation, Rancho Cucamonga initiated Healthy RC in 2008 as a city-community partnership to create “healthy minds, healthy bodies, and a clean, sustainable earth.” The Healthy RC model takes a comprehensive Healthy Cities approach and builds leadership from within multiple sectors—community members, professional and partner organizations, city staff and elected officials.

Community Action

To help sustain Healthy RC, the City Manager created three staff positions in his office. Healthy RC staff serve as key facilitators among community members, city staff and elected officials, and they have developed trust with all parties. Healthy RC staff also share current information and make recommendations about healthy community strategies to city leaders and officials. They seek opportunities for these leaders to connect to local, regional and national networks to tell their stories about healthy community change and learn from others in the movement. One success from these efforts is *the transformation of Mayor L. Dennis Michael* into a champion for the *Let’s Move! Cities, Towns and Counties* initiative.

City officials and leaders view themselves as conveners and stewards, and citizens view themselves as partners and change agents. In this approach, community members identify important issues and determine how to address them, and the city responds with resources and support. This type of authentic partnership is achieved by intentionally developing relationships, offering capacity-building training and resources for adults (Campeones para la Comunidad) and youth (Healthy RC Youth Leaders), and ongoing engagement through council workshops and neighborhood meetings.

Both groups have led healthy policy change efforts by connecting learning to action. The Campeones para la Comunidad residents used advocacy strategies, such as community assessments and focus groups in Spanish, that resulted in a successful \$797,000 Safe Routes to School grant award and the adoption of the city’s farmers’ markets and community garden ordinances. The Healthy RC Youth Leaders conducted a park assessment project utilizing Photovoice and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) skills and technology, and assessments to monitor compliance with a healthy vending policy.

This multi-level engagement and partnership continued during the development of *The Road Map for a Healthy Future in Rancho Cucamonga*. Hundreds of community members dedicated thousands of hours to establish the priorities and strategic directions to inform this document. Adopted by a unanimous vote of the city council in March 2014, it will serve as Healthy RC’s strategic plan with specific roles for city and community members to fill through the implementation and sustainability of the plan.