

CONNECTIONS

IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF OUR REGIONAL COMMUNITY



June 2023

CHIP supports marathon program as it reaches milestone

This fall will mark the 20th anniversary since Dana Kossow started a program at Meadowlark Ridge Elementary School where students set out to complete a marathon (26.2 miles) over a six-week period. Parents and teachers around the community immediately saw the value of the effort's attempt to inspire lifelong habits for healthy living and the importance of setting and attaining goals.

Other Salina elementary schools started replicating the program. In 2011 the School Marathon Foundation was created to support the effort. Over time the Salina Regional Health Foundation's Community Health Investment Program became the funding source for the program and has extended a \$40,000 grant to fund the program again this year.

"We've been humbled that CHIP continues to support this program," Kossow said. "It also doesn't happen without support from school staff members, parents and volunteers.

"It's been touching to see over the years how this program not only affects students, but entire families," Kossow said. "You often see parents, grandparents, siblings, school staff members and others also get involved in the program before school, after school and at special events."

Schools track student progress toward completing the marathon and a new tracking system that uses a smart phone scanner/computer system was implemented last year to streamline the process. Last year 2,890 students participated in the program and 2,310 met their goal of completion. Students receive special incentives as they reach milestones along the way.

The health benefits of running and physical activity help combat childhood obesity, which is a major public health concern. Increased physical activity also has been shown to help students focus in the classroom.



Students at St. Mary's Grade School celebrated completing a marathon over the course of six weeks last fall. All 11 public and private grade schools in Salina participate in the program, which receives CHIP funding through the Salina Regional Health Foundation.

Grant helps radiation oncology implement exam chairs

Hopping onto an exam table will soon be a thing of the past for radiation oncology patients at the Tammy Walker Cancer Center. A recent \$21,000 Salina Regional Health Foundation grant is allowing the department to replace its standard exam tables with state-of-the-art exam chairs to better facilitate patient care.

Many radiation oncology patients have metastatic disease that has spread to the bones and spine, which limits mobility. So having patients climb onto a traditional exam table with the use of a stool poses a safety risk for both patients and staff. The new exam chairs start out as a traditional chair, but can be raised and reclined as needed for a patient examination.



“Many of our patients are seniors too, so mobility is a common safety concern,” said Kimberly Potter, radiation oncology manager at the Tammy Walker Cancer Center. “We think adding the chairs will make patients more comfortable. If they prove to be well-received there may be other care settings throughout our health system that might pursue them.”

The chairs are expected to arrive mid-summer and the Foundation’s grant allowed the department to expedite the process for acquisition, which usually requires going through a budgetary process.

“The Foundation has been phenomenal to work with and saw how beneficial this could be for our patients,” Potter said. “Their support allows implementation to happen quickly.”

CHIP supports new YMCA river trail, other health initiatives

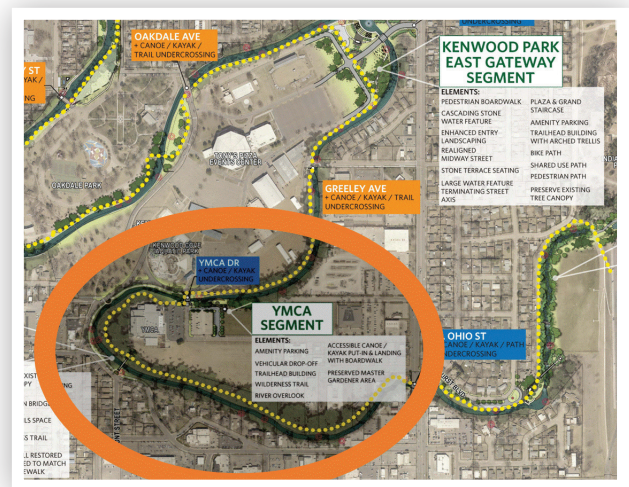
The Salina Regional Health Foundation’s Community Health Investment Program (CHIP) Committee recently awarded a \$10,000 grant to support the YMCA Trail, which will be included as part of the city’s extensive Smoky Hill River Renewal Project.

The half-mile concrete trail will be located along the river, which winds around the YMCA and also is adjacent to Kenwood Nursing Home and Central Kansas Mental Health. After the trail is completed later this year it will be open to the public and heavily utilized by YMCA daycare and after-school program children as a place to walk and run when it’s muddy.

“We’re excited to see this first construction project completed and it will ultimately become part of a larger trail system that connects with Indian Rock Park and the levee trails,” said Jane Anderson with the Friends of the River Foundation. “This is just a first step of many things to come.”

Other grants awarded by CHIP include:

- \$10,000 to the Salina Education Foundation to support a variety of programs and initiatives for the 2023-24 academic year including Sudden Opportunity Grants, Nurse Emergency Funds, Heartland Weekend Meals and Social Worker Fund.
- \$10,000 North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging, Inc. to support the 2023 Sunflower Senior Fair and Sunflower “Seniors Got Talent” showcase at the Stiefel Theatre.
- \$2,500 to the Smoky Hill Education Foundation for Educator Recharge Retreats.



The YMCA Trail along the Smoky Hill River channel received CHIP support and will be the first step of construction planned as part of Salina’s extensive River Renewal Project when it gets underway this summer.

Peer mentor improves access to addiction treatment

CKF Addiction Treatment continues to look for innovative ways to reach people suffering from the chronic disease of addiction. One new effort is placing a peer mentor on site with community partners who can normalize conversations around addiction and easily access resources for help.

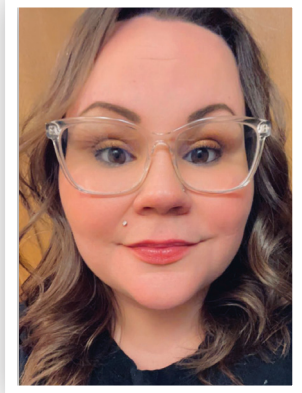
A \$25,000 Community Health Investment Program (CHIP) grant helped support CKF in the hire of Kailea Longacre who works on site with at-risk individuals at the Salina Rescue Mission, Salina Grace and Central Kansas Mental Health Center. Longacre, who is in long-term recovery herself, brings a unique perspective when visiting with peers.

“We’ve seen evidence that integrating peers into settings with community partners could make a huge impact,” said Jessica Eckels, chief operating officer at CKF. “Support from CHIP helps make this possible.”

CKF recently expanded its services to have staff on site in primary care settings who can quickly provide consultation, care coordination and treatment to patients who screen positive for addiction issues as part of their regular doctor’s appointments. This effort also was supported by CHIP.

Last year Salina Family Healthcare Center patients who were referred to a specialist on site had a 43% conversion rate for connecting them with or accessing addiction services.

“Breaking through barriers for access to care is a key to improving our services and getting more people into recovery,” Eckels said.



Kailea Longacre
Peer Mentor



Featuring a new route that starts and finishes at the Tammy Walker Cancer Center!

Fe for a Cure
5K Race/Walk



SCAN ME

- Race starts at 9 a.m.
- Special Cancer Survivor and Memorial Recognition
- Corporate Challenge
- Post race medals, food and fun!
- 100% of registrations support patients at the Tammy Walker Cancer Center



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