

Healthier Lake Worth (October 2018 – March 2019)

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Summary:

“Many Heads, Hearts and Hands Working Together for a Healthier Lake Worth”

The Healthier Lake Worth Initiative is currently in the second year of its effort to improve the Behavioral Health of the residents of Lake Worth. With a Mission to improve the cleanliness, environment, and safety of Lake Worth’s neighborhoods and promote healthy behaviors that impact the overall health and well-being of its residents, the Initiative relies on the assets of heads, hearts, and hands from the various neighborhoods and groups that exist in the community. This cannot be accomplished without engaging the neighborhood associations and residents, local churches, partners and existing groups, who are already doing good in their neighborhood. Successfully engaging and collaborating with these key members of the neighborhood will enable us to jointly identify and address the root causes of the health issues that have been identified by the community, while also building trust and a “group” mentality within the community, and increasing capacity.

In the last six months, we've brought together over one hundred community members, including families, school staff and students, partners, stakeholders, city officials and friends, and last, but certainly not least, youth performers from local school and after-school programs, to honor HLW's past year, celebrate our present, and honor and plan for our future. During this celebration, we showcased HLW's "wins" through story-telling and by acknowledging people throughout the community who have devoted countless hours of their valuable time to move the Initiative forward. Via a video montage, the Project Director shared her thoughts on the progress made by the Initiative and Steering Committee and community members told their stories of engagement with HLW, while sharing the challenges of the group decision-making process, how they were able to reach consensus, where HLW was, and the future of HLW. Included in the video montage were key "system" partners: the Captain of our Local PBSO, who spoke about the PBSO's future plans to work hand-in-hand with HLW and the community, as they roll out their upcoming project: "Reducing Violent Crime in the Community," and the Vice-Mayor of Lake Worth, who has been involved in the Initiative from the very beginning.

First Year Accomplishment Event Flyer

First Year Press Release

The attendees at the Celebration engaged in conversations to address the community's challenges and shared solutions. People, who were not engaged with HLW previously, have since shown up to our Steering Committee meetings to observe the progress we are making and identify the right Action Workgroup to match their skills and enable them to best support the Initiative. The attendees at the Celebration showcased a true representation of the diverse cultures that exist in Lake Worth. The event generated momentum for the Initiative, a momentum that will be used to produce even more "wins" in the coming year, and revealed a remarkable community-wide good feeling and sense of connectedness and pride in the room. In particular, these good feelings and engagement were expressed by those attendees who have been engaged with HLW since the beginning.

At the same time...

HLW is opening doors for other Steering Committee members to have an opportunity to manage and lead the Steering Committee and/or lead an Action Workgroup. New Steering Committee members were unanimously nominated and voted for by current members who felt that they were best qualified to serve as Co-Chairs and Action Workgroup Chairs. For example, in November 2018, HLW transitioned the Engagement and Neighborhood Health Action Workgroup Chairs to become the new Steering Committee Co-Chairs. Since the new leaders had already been very active and "hands-on" working in our targeted neighborhoods, they have been instrumental in continuing to build and maintain open lines of communication with resident leaders regarding the changes the leaders want to see and their continuing concerns regarding the health of their neighborhoods. These

conversations led us to the realization that HLW has been able to build capacity, relationships, partnerships, and trust within the Lake Worth community. This was a vital accomplishment as it enabled us to begin to demonstrate our good faith by helping the neighborhoods with financial support and resources to assist them in moving forward with important projects that align with HLW's identified priorities.

As a result, HLW unanimously agreed to push forward with our Sponsorship program which is intended to allow residents, existing local groups, neighborhood associations, stakeholders, partners, and other organizations within the Zip Code 33460, who are working on projects to improve the well-being of the community, to apply for a sponsorship from HLW. Shortly after rolling out the Sponsorship Program, we were able to approve and present our first Sponsorship Check, to cover the cost of a Neighborhood Crime Watch Signage project, at our First Year Accomplishments Celebration in December 2018. Since then, the Steering Committee members have discussed and implemented effective ways to process the sponsorship requests. The group decided on the formation of a Sub-Committee Sponsorship Review team comprised of a couple of members from the Steering Committee, and a community stakeholder and a local business member, who has been engaged with HLW for a while. In January of 2019, we formally created our Sponsorship Review Team.

The neighborhoods are responding...

Since October of 2018, HLW leaders and group members have consistently engaged with three targeted neighborhoods in the community. These engagements have either sparked the formation of new neighborhood associations or strengthened already existing ones. As a result, HLW now has a seat in each of those neighborhood association monthly meetings. At these meetings, HLW has an opportunity to not only discuss strategies on how best to engage the residents but, also, to hear the association members discussing strategies and solutions to enhance the quality of their lives by improving the physical and social environment of their neighborhood. During those meetings, HLW has been able to gain insights from the residents and has been afforded the opportunity to inform them of the resources available to them. In addition, we have been able to learn more about the long-time leaders, residents such as former Commissioner Retha Lowe, a community influencer whose voice matters so much to the community.

Over the past six months, HLW has gone from supporting one neighborhood cleanup per month to three. These cleanups are coordinated by each neighborhood association on a certain Saturday per month. HLW supports these efforts not only by creating flyers and providing cleanup supplies and equipment, provided by our partner Solid Waste Authority, water, coffee, and snacks but also by participating in each cleanup. While participant turnouts have varied, there has consistently been a huge amount of trash and recyclable items picked up at each cleanup. Beyond the environmental impact of the actual cleanups, the fact that each neighborhood is consistently holding cleanups has allowed HLW to

garner valuable insights relating to the patterns of streets where trash is more prevalent and how quickly the trash builds back up. By comparing the amount of trash picked up, from month to month, we are able to measure improvement and changes in behavior. Also, other community residents have begun noticing these efforts and that their neighborhoods are looking cleaner. This is fostering a sense of connectedness and generating feelings of gratitude.

Palm Health Foundation: Healthier Lake Worth Cleans Up

Lastly, there have been quite a few “wins” that stem from the cleanups, “wins” such as the identification of permanent solutions and the generation of local system changes over the last six months:

Our local PBSO police office is also engaging in the cleanups by sending patrol cars and officers to address the community’s safety concerns and to offer valuable assistance with the cleanups, themselves. The cleanups are a true community joint effort and we should all be very proud!

Community Clean-Up Event

Over the past six months, one neighborhood was able to get the City of Lake Worth to embrace its first “Adopt a Street” program. Previously, this program did not exist in Lake Worth. There are six churches in that particular neighborhood and the goal is for each church to adopt the street on which they are located and maintain the cleanliness of that street. As of January 2019, two churches have completed the process and have had their signs installed by the City. We anticipate this will have a domino effect by encouraging other churches, schools, and non-profit initiatives to adopt additional streets.

Adopt a Street Sign

At the same time, another Sponsored Project has resulted in the implementation of a Neighborhood Crime Watch project, to address a City of Lake Worth neighborhood’s issue of safety. The HLW Sponsorship enabled the purchase of 18 Neighborhood Crime Watch Signs approved by the local PBSO police. In January 2019, the signs were installed by the City of Lake Worth, at all streets that enter the neighborhood. Now, there is a crime watch and awareness group that meets at the neighborhood association meetings. This “win” resulted from a collaboration between two major local government systems, the residents, and HLW.

Sponsoring Crime Watch

Neighborhood Watch Sign

- Neighborhood associations are now working together on a joint trash and recyclable cans project. As they do the cleanups, the various neighborhoods are identifying areas where the trash and recyclable items are more prevalent. The intent is to place the trash and recyclable bins in those prevalent areas, just as the city has done already in the North-end and the Downtown area of the community. The hope is that people will be more prone to dump their trash and recyclables in those bins. Since this is a collective effort, those neighborhoods plan to use their combined strength to approach the city, the CRA, and HLW to collaborate on the funding to purchase and install those bins.
- Right now, there aren't any campaign signs in the city messaging or promoting keeping Lake Worth clean. The HLW members along with some of the neighborhood members are working on an "Art Contest" project involving the community's youth in various local schools to design arts messaging that will draw people's attention to the effort to keep our streets clean, improve behavior and change the collective mindset towards cleanliness.

Key Partners:

Palm Health Foundation, Community Partners, Community Residents, BRIDGES at Lake Worth, BRIDGES at Highland, Lake Worth CRA, City of Lake Worth, Adopt-A Family, Salem Haitian Lutheran Church, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Lake Worth Library, Guatemala Mayan Center, Caridad Center, The Zoo Gym, The Florida Food and Farm, Pineapple Neighborhood Association, Chrysalis Health, For the Children, 211, Cross Ministries, Health Council of Southeast Florida, Compass, South Grade Elementary, Healthier Boynton Beach, Healthier Delray Beach, Healthier Neighbors, Healthier Jupiter, Healthier Glades, Center for Child Counseling, Digital VibeZ, More Residents, Fitness by Rosa, PBC Parks and Recreation Department. Whispering Palms Neighborhood Association, Lake Worth Sheriff's Office, Java Juice Bar, Arms of Hope Community, Inc., Lake Worth Kiwanis, Aurora's Voice, New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, Royal Poinciana Neighborhood Association, NAMI, Lake Worth Arts Cultural Council, Friends of Lake Worth Parks and Rec, Starbucks Lake Worth, The Book Cellar, Solid Waste Authority

New Partners:

City of Lake Worth Recycling, FAU Pine Jog, Lake Worth Yoga Collective, Mil-Lake Medical Center

Goals:

1. Community Engagement – Increase resident's participation in Healthier Lake Worth's community/neighborhood activities, events, and meetings.

2. Create an awareness campaign to increase awareness of Healthier Lake Worth and its priorities in the Lake Worth community.
3. Develop and initiate a formal Ambassador Program.
4. Distribute funds through our HLW sponsorships to support community projects.
5. Hold a community-wide meeting, at least twice per year.
6. Attend, participate in, and partner with at least four community meetings and or events per month.

Process and Implementation Outcomes:

- Outcome: **Trust is built and nurtured**

Progress:

- Local partners, group initiatives, and city staff are reaching out for HLW support to coordinate their community events with them.
- HLW was invited to speak about HLW's work and how it ties in with Dr. King's "Dream" at an interfaith breakfast event on MLK's birthday.
- HLW was asked by City of Lake Worth officials to serve on the judging panel for the Winter Holiday Parade (It was a lot of fun!).
- City of Lake Worth officials has reached out to HLW to support their effort to survey the multicultural population for their 2020 Census.
- HLW's Facebook Page has increased from 206 followers to 290 followers, reaching an average of 1,200 people per post.

- Outcome: **Quality, meaningful collaboration**

Progress:

- Community groups and partners have asked HLW to join forces in their events, from planning to contributing manpower and sharing resources.
- The neighborhood is supporting one another by attending each other's cleanups.
- Neighborhoods are advertising each other's cleanups on social media and through e-mail.
- Local PBSO is actively collaborating with the neighborhood cleanups to ensure safety for participants.
- HLW worked with For the Children and its Healthy Family Program on their community garden project. HLW collaborated with BRIDGES at Lake Worth and Highland for the community's First Annual Green and Environmental Health Festival.
- HLW collaborated with the City's Recreation Department and For the Children's Healthy Family Program for the annual Let's Move community event. Over 150 families and children attended. HLW collaborated with the City Tree Board as a partner at their Festival of Trees event this year.
- Local organizations and non-profits collaborated with HLW to participate in the annual Let's Move Challenge Contest. This year HLW registered six sub-teams, an increase of three compared to last year. The HLW community logged in 80,000 minutes compared to 30,000 last year.
- Local South Grade Elementary school safety patrol students and parents collaborated with HLW's neighborhood cleanups in return for support from HLW's Sponsorship funding for their annual trip to Washington DC. Fifty Safety Patrol students will be able to attend, the highest number South Grade has ever been able to send.

Associated Media:

- [HLW worked with For the Children and its Healthy Family Program on their community garden project.](#)
[Post]
- [HLW collaborated with the City's Recreation Department and For the Children's Healthy Family Program for the annual Let's Move community event. Over 150 families and children attended.](#)
[Post]



- Outcome: **Community-led process**

Progress:

- In December 2018, HLW celebrated its first year of accomplishments.
- An HLW member organized and emceed the Celebration event.
- HLW nominated and elected new Co-Chairs for 2018-2019
- HLW approved and processed its first sponsorship request, a Neighborhood Crime Watch Signage project.
- A Steering Committee Co-Chair and two Action Workgroup Chairs attended Tamarack Institute's Community Change Festival Conference in Toronto Canada for capacity building.
- HLW presented its first sponsorship check to one of the targeted neighborhoods.
- HLW formed and added the Sponsorship Review Team to its existing Action Workgroups.
- Three HLW and community members stepped up to be trained for Mental Health First Aid in order to bring training back to the community.
- HLW held a strategic planning meeting to work on establishing its Framework.
- HLW held its first Racial Equity workshops in partnership with HBB. Twenty HLW community members attended.
- HLW has supported 17 neighborhood cleanups from October 2018 through April 2019 in the neighborhoods of Whispering Palms, Royal Poinciana, and Pineapple Beach. In total, over 300 residents have been engaged in the cleanup efforts, contributing 1,000+ volunteer hours to-date.



Detailed Narrative:

In all community engagement work, we know that there cannot be successes without challenges; no wins without struggles. HLW has had its share of both, yet we still have so much to learn about the diverse, complex and hard to reach a community that is Lake Worth. Though HLW continues to struggle with the recruitment of Ambassadors, a lack of commitment and enough heads to provide the energy needed to generate momentum for the influx of ideas coming from the Steering Committee and the community, a significant amount of work has been accomplished over the last six months.

As we continue to build awareness, trust, and stronger relationships within the community, we strive to understand and answer to the needs of the community. We consistently reflect on best practices to engage the residents, particularly the ones who shared so much with us during the conversations held during the formative stages of the Initiative. One thing was clear from these conversations: The success of the Initiative requires ongoing involvement by the community. Despite this clear message from the community, we are struggling to find ways to motivate these individuals to continue to share their gifts of hearts and hands.

Reflecting on this challenge has led us to realize that while we have focused on and been successful with addressing the various neighborhoods' distinct needs, we have not been as effective in communicating the message of what HLW does and represents. We need to do better at building awareness of the Initiative and getting people to understand what we are here to do and why it is important that they get involved.

By realization...

- The Community Engagement/Marketing Action Workgroup has been leading the effort to create and develop our marketing message, not only to include it in our awareness brochures but, also, to share it on social media and in other promotional materials. Since this is uncharted territory for most of the group, the members asked if the communication team at Palm Health Foundation could assist us by doing a capacity building workshop that covers messaging and social media and also provides us with some quality, trusted marketing agencies used by PHF or the Healthier Together communities. Since then, the group has made great progress in selecting and retaining a Marketing Agency and now we have the capacity needed to create an HLW message that will resonate with the community and embody their Vision of us.
- HLW aspires to impact the overall well-being of the residents of LW by addressing issues related to their behavioral health; issues such as: neighborhood and environmental health, safety, recreation, and how important it is to educate the community on the basics of mental health, including how to recognize the signs of mental health issues and how to help someone in crisis. With the support of the grant that PHF received from Florida Blue, to sponsor Mental Health Education in the Healthier Together communities, three HLW members stepped up to attend the MHFA's 3-day "Train the Trainer" training in order to start implementing MHFA training in the community.
- Twenty HLW members, including residents, stakeholders, and partners, attended our first two- day Racial Equity Workshop. These types of educational sessions are a crucial step as we strive to disrupt the inequality, poverty, and segregation prevalent in the community, and advocate for system change at a local level.



As part of an effort to create a supportive environment for all ages, including programming that supports thriving youth, HLW has partnered with South Grade Elementary Safety Patrol students and parents to encourage their participation in HLW's activities and events. In return, HLW provided an opportunity for all the Safety Patrol kids to attend a trip to Washington DC through the Sponsorship Funding Program. HLW presented a \$3,900 check to South Grade for this purpose. As a result of the sponsorship, fifty students will be able to attend the trip this year.

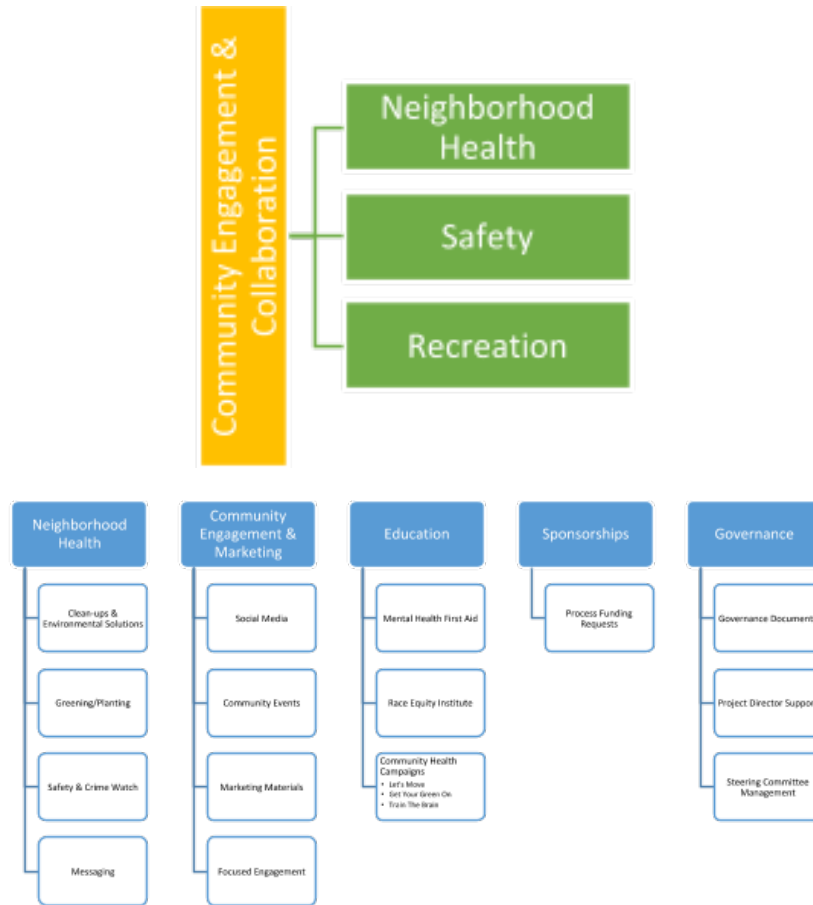






- More Sponsorship requests – Many groups, partners, and community organizations have been doing work related to improving the well-being and lives of families and children in the community. As word spreads of the potential for sponsorships, HLW has begun to receive applications for help in expanding these efforts. To-date HLW has received seven sponsorship applications; all projects are related to improving the well-being of residents in our target area, neighborhoods in zip code 33460. The Sponsorship Review Team has been very busy.

- As we move towards the third year of the Initiative and build upon the successes and challenges of the work that has been done since last year, our Governance Team, including the Project Director and the PHF, have gotten together to begin establishing our framework and the responsibilities of each Action Workgroup. Though this is a work in process, below is a preliminary look at where we're heading.



**Reflections of Steering Committee Co-Chair / Chair of Neighborhood Health
John Burns:**

We are soon to proudly present a check to the South Grade Elementary Safety Patrol in support of their Washington D.C. scholastic field trip in May. There were ten official cleanups available to the Safety Patrol (plus a community event and two unofficial cleanups). In total, the Patrol accumulated just under 200 community service hours, earning approximately \$3,900.

At the program level: of the 50 Safety Patrol students, 38 participated in at least one event, equating to a student participation rate of 76%. At the individual event level, turnout ranged from as little as 2 up to as many as 46. Typical cleanup turnout was in the general range of approximately 10 students, or 20% (10 out of 50). When counting parents (and various other relatives), event turnout was typically well in excess of 20 participants.

Turnout at the cleanups varied widely by neighborhood. Walkability appears to be a partial

explanation for the variance. The Pineapple Beach cleanups, held at South Grade Elementary, benefitted from the participation of students from both Pineapple Beach as well as the adjacent neighborhood of Downtown Jewel.

Safety Patrol turnout was very low at the Whispering Palms cleanups, each held in the far south end of Lake Worth. No South Grade Safety Patrol lives in Whispering Palms (which feeds into Barton Elementary). The lack of neighborhood ties and the transportation necessity appear to explain the turnout.

Low turnout in Royal Poinciana is more difficult to diagnose. The neighborhood feeds South Grade and is home to many students. However, we don't know (though we did request) the number of Safety Patrol living in the neighborhood. We do know that one of the two cleanup dates in Royal Poinciana conflicted with a school fair. Beyond that, no conclusion is drawn as to the low student turnout.

A primary goal of the initiative was to help send as many of the 50 Safety Patrol participants to Washington D.C. as possible. On April 22nd, South Grade Safety Patrol administrators informed us that all 50 students are funded for the May scholastic field trip. Congratulations to Paul Hamilton, Francis Arbesfeld and the rest of the South Grade staff who went above and beyond to make it happen!

There are various measures of the impact of the Safety Patrol cleanups on the neighborhoods. A great deal of trash was collected, yes. We can measure that in pounds bagged, bins filled, participants signed in, etc... Beyond that, in the Pineapple Beach neighborhood, the lingering effect of the cleanups is the feeling of a neighborhood leaving its littered past behind. The streets appear cleaner, the green spaces greener. Vast swaths of the neighborhood are more attractive now than before the Initiative. The neighborhood now need simply be maintained, not transformed. Litter consciousness within the neighborhood has risen through repetition of message and cleanup (thank you, Pam and Wally Bergsma!). We seek to build on this and extend these gains to other neighborhoods in need.

Event turnout is a hot topic within Healthier Lake Worth at present and the success of our ongoing cleanups hinges largely on turnout. We continue to explore/discuss different methods of engagement. Incentives, like the monetary reward provided by the Safety Patrol initiative, can be an effective way to turn out event participants. Where incentives are in place, participant turnout is often, though not always, good. Where no tangible reward is offered, participant turnout often, though not always, lags.

The opportunity cost associated with incentives may determine what is structured in the future. What's the most effective use of a dollar in Lake Worth? The greatest good for the greatest number of people is one potential standard by which we can measure the relative

value of competing uses of dollars. Evaluating the alternative opportunities should make for healthy debate.

Going forward, we're seeking solutions beyond just picking up litter. We're flirting with various initiatives intended to address our waste before it becomes trash on the ground. There might be a signage/messaging campaign designed to promote neighborhood pride and to discourage littering. Many of our neighborhoods need a few more trash cans.

A few observations might inform the path forward. When a neighborhood has been thoroughly (albeit temporarily) cleaned, the pattern of trash accumulation can then be readily observed. These observations inform us as to where to deploy the trash cans, where to hang the signage. For example, there are spots that draw trash due to pedestrian patterns. The first open lot along the path from the convenience store is where the cups drop. That's where the trash can belongs. Similarly, the patch of unclaimed land just short of the stop sign is where the bottle is aimed. That's where the sign should hang. These and other ideas will help us clean our City and make our neighborhoods better places to live.

A fairly remarkable recent experience, shared at the most recent Steering Committee meeting, speaks to our group's ever-increasing ability to effect positive change. A cleanup was held this past month in Whispering Palms. We came across an alleyway that was something beyond a public health nuisance. By leveraging connections nurtured within Whispering Palms over the past six months, specifically former Commissioner Retha Lowe, we quickly engaged the City to remove a quantity of bulk trash (including approximately 20 mosquitoes infested, abandoned tires) that none of us individually or in mass could have addressed. The transformation was so dramatic, so unexpected and so welcome that multiple neighborhood residents took time to introduce themselves and express gratitude. We have every expectation that the pace of transformational change in neighborhood health will only accelerate.

Lessons Learned:

- The community efforts and collaboration that took place working with the South Grade Safety Patrol students to help them support the goal of their annual trip to DC is a perfect example that, community members want young people to grow into responsible citizens capable of contributing to their community, and school professionals want to be effective in their work.
- Find our advocates or influencers and spend time building relationships, developing their trust is vital because they can often communicate with their networks and residents in ways we can't. Though it has proven to be a slow process, HLW is beginning to make some strides in our targeted neighborhoods.

- Rome was not built in one day, therefore there isn't a quick fix to our community's neighborhoods health issues. So if we want to see behavior change, it is important to develop relationships, make commitments, and show good-faith and consistency to the neighborhoods.

Top three things you are proud to have accomplished through your work with Healthier Together:

1. Planning the HLW's first year accomplishments celebration and creating a way for all involved to digitally tell their engagement story.
2. Building and strengthening relationships, and aligning HLW with the leaders of major local systems; PBSO, School District, and City of Lake Worth Beach.
3. Community collaboration and efforts in engaging the South Grade Elementary Safety Patrol students in HLW event and cleanup activities which resulted in HLW sponsoring part of their DC trip.

Top three challenges you have faced with your work with Healthier Together:

1. Finding the right people to serve as Ambassadors to commit to the time and activities remains a challenge. HLW's is committed to continue to work on finding meaningful strategies to engage and recruit Ambassadors.
2. Ensuring that community members whose voices were heard are actively engaged with HLW.
3. Lack of capacity to attend or engage – My plate is already full.

Next Steps:

Healthier Lake Worth will be entering its third year with excitements and an established:

- Framework
- Establish Action Workgroups based on Framework
- Hire a VISTA volunteer
- Continue to refine sponsorship guidelines and application and process
- Best practices to engage families and youth (High school students)
- Expand the Safety Patrol Sponsorship to other local elementary schools
- Create HLW's marketing message for brochure
- Continue to work on strategies to engage the multi-cultural population
- Mental Health First Aid education
- Hosting Cross-Neighborhood dinner/conversations
- Implement clean neighborhood messaging through " Youth Art Poster Contest "

- Community gatherings – hosting community celebrations – acknowledging and honoring the Do-Gooders in the community
- Community awareness campaign event