

# Healthier Neighbors Impact Report (April 2017-Sept. 2017)

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Neighborhood: Riviera Beach/northern West Palm Beach

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## Summary:

Healthier Neighbors: Our vision is that individuals are, and the community is, self-reliant and resilient and have/has balance in body, mind, and spirit. The change we want to see is an engaged and empowered community.

## Healthier Neighbors Focus Areas

Based on the results of group residents' surveys and other such stakeholder data, Healthier Neighbors (HN) choose to prioritize efforts and resources on three sectors of behavioral health. These areas include: education and access to healthy foods, identifying the root causes of trauma and violence and engaging faith-based communities.

Subcommittees were then established based on the three priority areas. Each subcommittee is co-chaired by a HN resident and includes both residents and service providers on the committee.

## **Faith-based Takes Off**

Over the past year, and most significantly the last 6 months, one subcommittee has established a swift momentum. Not only in activities, but leadership and innovative solutions as well. The faith-based subcommittee led by volunteer resident, Denise Williams (local business owner and community advocate), has played an instrumental role in the progress of HN. As you may recall from the previous HN impact report, it was not expected for the HN community to select a faith-based effort and most shocking for the community to be as receptive to the idea. During initial community meetings residents expressed their disdain for the lack of community ownership from local churches. Faith-based leaders were present during these conversations and many vowed to become a part of the solution and joined efforts with Healthier Neighbors by declaring their ministry a *Healthier Neighbors Ambassador Site* and designating a member as the Healthier Neighbor's Faith-based Ambassador. Current HN Ambassador Sites include:

1. Ephesus SDA Church, Ambassador- Tania Williams
2. Jesus And You (J.A.Y.) Ministries, Ambassador- Jatelsa Brown
3. Shiloh Family Worship Center, Ambassador- Denise Williams
4. Tabernacle MB Church, Ambassador- Dr. Flo Davis

Other interested ministries include: First SDA Church of Riviera Beach, Peaceful Zion MB Church, Payne Chapel AME, Trinity United Methodist Church, and New Song Church.

## **Why Faith-based?**

In the African American community, many people misunderstand what a mental health condition is and don't talk about this topic. This lack of knowledge leads many to believe that a mental health condition is a personal weakness or some sort of punishment from God.<sup>[1]</sup> Given this information and the expressed concerns of our residents, HN sees value in equipping our faith leaders with the tools and resources needed to support their congregations. These congregations ultimately make up the community or are connected to the community by family, work or leisure.



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/G5dxqgps-Xs>

Statistically, a member of the clergy is the number-one place people go when they seek help for mental illness. So for mental health problems, church leaders are first responders—consciously or unconsciously. Yet many pastors feel underequipped to respond. [2]

The purpose of the HN Ambassador Sites are to equip Pastors/"first responders" and ministry leaders with Mental Health First Aid, promote community dialogue and create safe spaces for conversations which normalize behavioral health concerns. Ultimately leading to a community that is resilient and self-reliant.

[1] <https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Diverse-Communities/African-Americans>

[2] <http://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2016/april-web-exclusives/top-10-resources-for-mental-health-ministry.html>

### Key Partners:

Palm Healthcare Foundations, Community Partners, Children's Home Society of Florida, BRIDGES at Riviera Beach, West Palm Beach Housing Authority, Center of Child Counseling, Northwest Community Consortium Inc., FAU Community Health Center, Mental Health Association, City of West Palm Beach, Riviera Beach CRA, 211, BRIDGES at West Palm Beach, BRIDGES at Northwood, Palm Beach Lakes Community High School, RJ Hendley Christian School, Magellan Complete Care, The Vicker's House, Twin Lakes Housing, Urban Growers, PBC Criminal Justice Commission, Jerome Golden Center, PBC Victim Services, Chrysalis, Ephesus SDA Church, Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church,

Salvation Army- West Palm Beach, The Go-To Therapists, Health Council of Southeast Florida, Cities United-City of West Palm Beach, A Better Way Home Care, West Palm Beach Police Department, Healthier Delray Beach, Healthier Jupiter, Healthier Boynton Beach, Palm Beach County Food Bank, Sickle Cell Foundation of Palm Beach County, Shiloh Family Worship Center, Kafe Hub, City of Riviera Beach Police Department, School District of Palm Beach County, Live Fresh Palm Beach County, Inner City Innovators, St. George Episcopal Church, Councilwoman Lynn Hubbard, Catalyst Miami- Florida Thrives: Community of Practice, Planned Parenthood, Salt 513 Media, Riviera Beach Reentry Center, Palm Beach Atlantic University

## New Partners:

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First SDA Church of Riviera Beach, Palm Beach County Youth Services, Riviera Beach Heights Community Garden, New Song Church Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies, J.A.Y. Ministries, Trindy Gourmet, Southeastern Conference of Seventh-Day Adventist, Peaceful Zion MB Church, Payne Chapel AME, Trinity United Methodist Church, New Song Church, Kiwanis Club of Riviera Beach, School District of Palm Beach County-Healthcorps, Feeding South Florida, US-1 Health Impact Assessment, Bloomberg Mayor's Challenge 2017, Dare to be a Girl, City of West Palm Beach Mayor's Village Initiative, Roosevelt Middle School, Chair Pro Tem Davis Johnson

## Goals:

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1. Increasing number of organizations to fill gaps people can't do themselves
2. Increasing media visibility of Healthier Neighbors Ambassador Sites and partners
3. Establish Memorandums of Understanding with each ministry

## Process and Implementation Outcomes:

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- Outcome: **Necessary Resources are in Place**

Progress:

Healthier Neighbors has linked community need with resources. Healthier Neighbors has also been asked to serve on various city/county-wide committees designed to effect change.

Associated Attachments:

[Download File "cjc.jpg"](#)

- Outcome: **Community-led process**

Progress:

Healthier Neighbors Steering Committee has adopted in the Governance Documents to have equal representation of residents and service providers on the committee. In addition, each subcommittee will be co-chaired by a resident. Currently the Healthy Foods, Community Engagement and Faith-Based subcommittees are co-chaired by residents.

Associated Attachments:

[Download File "IMG\\_8502.jpg"](#)

- Outcome: **Focused on long-term sustainability**

Progress:

Direct engagement with group-residents on the steering committee, subcommittees, during community meetings and feedback from events aids in community ownership of the HN project. Once community ownership is established group-residents are most likely to feel connected and work toward sustainability.

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

Progress:

Trust is being rebuilt in the HN community between faith-based organizations and group-residents. Community residents are now asking for events to be held at the local churches.

Associated Attachments:

[Download File "community-meeting-9.26.jpg"](#)

- Outcome: **Quality, meaningful collaboration**

Progress:

Over the last six months Healthier Neighbors has become a more common name within the community. This is due to a myriad of intentional efforts including Steering Committee members connecting HN to efforts aligned with HN's focus areas. Secondly, would be the HN marketing campaign on social media platforms. More individuals are "liking" and "sharing" HN resources. Lastly, word of mouth by neighbors. We appreciate each neighbor who leaves an HN meeting or event and shares that experience with their neighbor.

Detailed Narrative:

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Behavioral Health, the Healthier Neighbors Way

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Mental Health First Aid

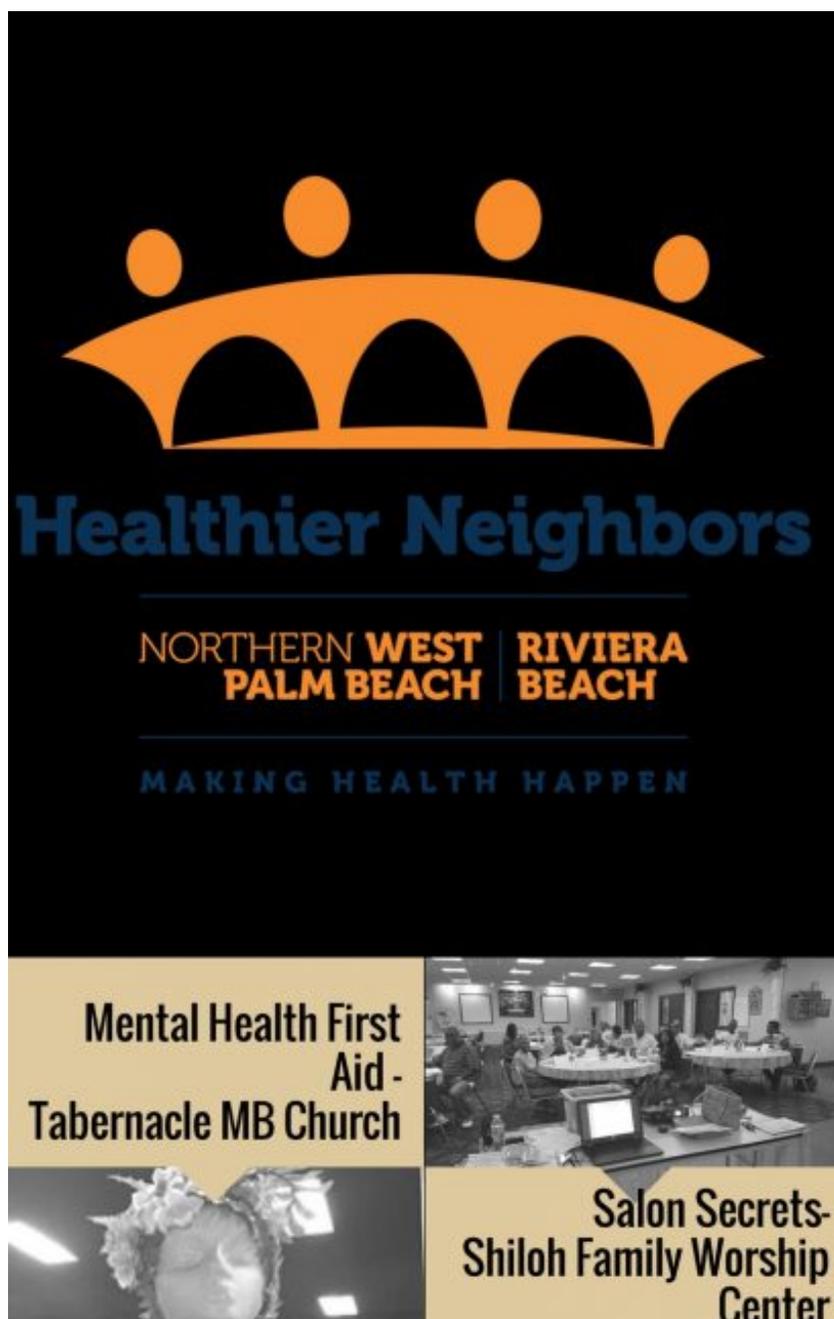
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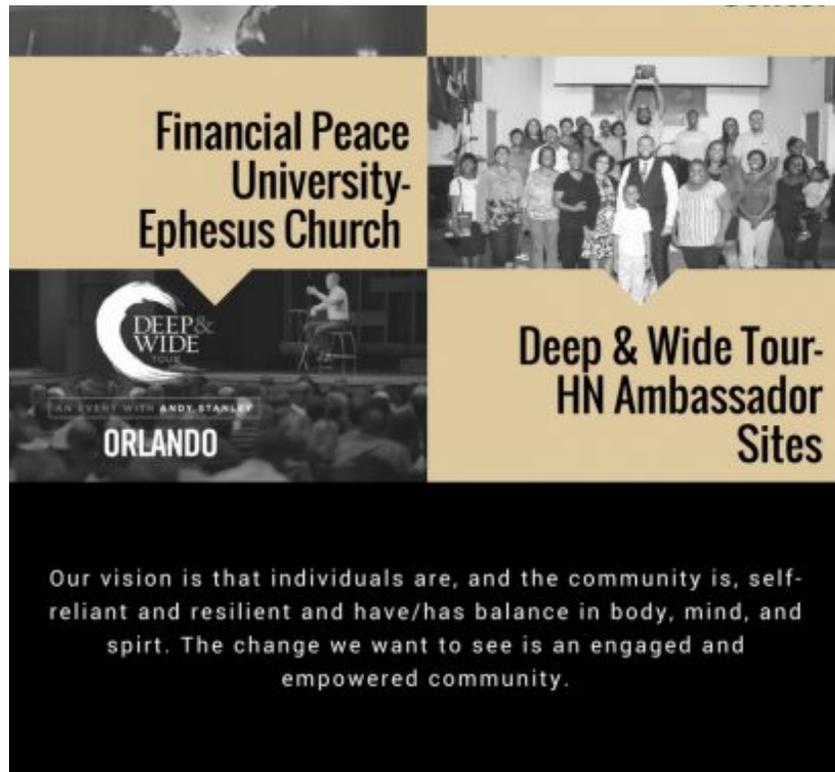
Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church has led the way with implementing Mental Health First Aid for congregants, service providers and group residents alike. Over 60% of participants certified in Mental Health First Aid through the sponsorship of Healthier Neighbors have verified their proficiency in providing relevant resources to those in need as a result of the training. Under the facilitation of HN Ambassador, Dr. Florenzia Davis, over 60 ministry leaders, service providers, and group residents have been trained at Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church.

## Salon Secrets

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Under the leadership of First Lady, Charlotte Wright and HN Ambassador, Denise Williams, Healthier Neighbors





co-sponsored *Salon Secrets*, held at Shiloh Family Worship Center. This brunch-time affair hosted over 75 ladies for an intimate discussion on the variety of relationships women encounter throughout their life. Our Moderator- Delphine Gervais, LCSW-QS, led a panel of four women who spoke candidly about being a grandparent and caregiver the second time around, marrying someone who is terminally ill, blended families, and also introducing step/bonus-parents into the picture. Delphine led a lively discussion that left most empowered and questioning the next *Salon Secrets* gathering. Not to mention, just on the other side of *Salon Secrets*, the men were participating in *Barber Shop Talk* led by local service providers and Pastor A.J. Wright.

## Financial Peace University

For nine consecutive weeks over 50 families met each Monday night from 6:30PM - 8:30PM at the Ephesus Church for Financial Peace University. Facilitated by Pastor Keith Albury and using a “baby steps” approach, participants learned the value of paying of debt, saving for the future, and making a great financial team with their spouse/household. Healthier Neighbors partnered with local Bridges sites and provided scholarships to families who were ready to break cycles of negative financial habits and begin to see their assets grow. Each family was challenged to start an emergency account with a minimum of \$1000. Not only did the group meet the goal, they surpassed it by over \$5000.

## Deep and Wide Tour

In the HN Oct 2016-March 2017 Impact Report readers were informed that In March of

2017 Healthier Neighbors was selected as one of eight organizations to participate in Catalyst Miami, Florida Thrives: Community of Practice. The Miami Thrives: Community of Practice is a performance-driven, challenge-centric professional development and capacity building program designed for executive leaders committed to community change. Healthier Neighbors selected the following as the challenge statement:

*Between May 2017 to May 2018 under the leadership of group residents, Healthier Neighbors will facilitate a shift within 6 faith-based organizations from an institutional component to a wider community purpose. Increasing the “unchurched” population participation by 10% inclusive of Healthier Neighbors Ambassadors stationed in each institution with media visibility.*

On November 9, 2017 Healthier Neighbors along with ministry leaders and ambassadors from each site will be attending the Deep and Wide Tour- Orlando. This trip is being sponsored by Healthier Neighbors. Each HN Ambassador Site is thrilled about the opportunity and the resources they can bring back to the community. The Deep and Wide Tour provides attendees with an in-depth look at a strategy for creating churches unchurched people absolutely love to attend. Attendees will learn how to:

- Expand the influence of the Church in your community and throughout culture.
- Lead your Church to become more concerned with who you are reaching than who you are keeping.
- Equip your congregation to be the change your community needs.[1]

It is vital to bridge the gap that has divided church and community for some time. The Healthier Neighbors community is filled with churches willing to help but unsure of where to start and on the other spectrum there are group-residents in need but unsure of resources. Healthier Neighbors hopes to serve as a conduit; bridging community conversations, resources, and ultimately growth.

## Making Health Happen

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### Healthier Neighbors in the Garden

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On Saturday July 29<sup>th</sup> under the leadership of the Healthy Foods Subcommittee Resident Co-chair, Antonio Osborne, HN partnered with the Riviera Beach Heights Community Garden, Riviera Beach CDC, The City of the Riviera Beach- Chair Pro Tem Davis-Johnson, and Riviera Beach CRA to present Healthier Neighbors in the Garden. This event included a healthy foods demonstration by Trindy Gourmet along with take home ingredients for families. The event also introduced participants to the variety of fruits and vegetables available at the Community Garden at no cost. Children enjoyed a scavenger hunt through the Garden led by a volunteer parent. Five families were gifted with growing beds for one

season. These families with work together to tend their garden and also learn the benefits of crop sharing. A special thanks to the garden Manager, Dennis Reichel for his upkeep of the garden and willingness to share his agricultural knowledge.



## Get Your Green On

As a part of the Get Your Green On Campaign, Healthier Neighbors worked alongside City of Riviera Beach, Chair Pro Tem Davis Johnson and Mayor Masters, proclaiming May, 2017 Mental health Awareness and Trauma Informed Care Month. Riviera Beach was among countless cities and organizations who took a stand for prioritizing Mental Health Awareness and Trauma Informed Care.



GET YOUR GREEN ON  
HEALTHIER NEIGHBORS



[1] <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/deep-and-wide-orlando-tickets-33017375860>

## Lessons Learned:

1. It is important to remind ourselves of the “Wins”! This work is tedious and slow paced however much has been accomplished during our early years so we have much to celebrate.
2. Healthier Neighbors cannot solve the problems but rather work as a conduit, bringing problem solvers together to combat the issues collectively.

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

1. The ownership faith-based organizations have taken for the community. They are willing to be a part of the solution.
2. Faith-based organization's willingness to create safe places to have uncomfortable conversations.

3. Service providers having a clearer understanding of the purpose of Healthier Neighbors and including Healthier Neighbors at the table for decision making.

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

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1. Disecting the root causes of trauma and violence focus area with the community. It is a loaded focus and has taken quite a bit of time to dissect.
2. Gathering solution-based data from the community once an issue is no longer a "hot topic".
3. Defining Healthier Neighbors and it's contribution to the community. Having group-residents identify HN as a project and not a program.

## Next Steps:

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- Over the next six months Healthier Neighbors plans to re-engage the HN Student Ambassadors and expand to new school sites within the community
- HN subcommittees are currently planning events for the new year which will include HN sponsorship and greater visibility of resident leadership
- HN looks to expand faith-based ambassador sites
- HN will facilitate a planning session for a yearly faith-based behavioral health seminar
- Continue conversations about root causes of trauma and violence and solutions
- Expand the next Healthy Foods event to include additional vendors and healthy lifestyle education