

# Grants provided for reducing barriers to obtaining healthy food

November, 2014 – Solutions for reducing barriers that keep some of our neighbors from obtaining healthy food are in our own backyards. Bloomington Public Health, through Tri-City Partners for Healthy Communities, offered mini grants so those with solutions could take action.



Above, Minnesota Life College students use food preparation skills supported by their mini grant. Other grant recipients include Christ the King Church, Loaves and Fishes, Potter's House of Jesus Christ, St. Bonaventure and VEAP/Garden Gleaning Project.

## Targeting cost and transportation offer greatest opportunity for improvement

Last year, the Bloomington, Edina and Richfield Community Food Partnership conducted a community food assessment to discover opportunities for improving healthy food access. They found opportunities in tackling the barriers of cost for low-income residents and of safety and transportation for people with mobility challenges, particularly seniors.

## Grants awarded for community meals, food donations, skills and resource awareness

Grant recipients are making healthy food more affordable and available in a number of ways to our neighbors who lack resources for them. Examples include creating a process for increasing healthy food donations, adding community meals and supporting healthy food guidelines for community meals. One grant recipient, Minnesota Life College, is using its funds to update their curriculum to support students in obtaining affordable, healthy food.

Minnesota Life College is a three-year, postsecondary, life-skills training program for young adults with autism spectrum disorders and learning differences. Through the mini grant project, all students that graduate from Minnesota Life College will learn about, visit, and prepare healthy foods they obtain from local community food programs. Students will look at the financial benefits to using these community food programs, figure out transportation options and learn how to prepare healthy meals with the food they purchase.

“Our students are easily intimidated with trying new things, so there was some anxiety connected to this project,” said Annette White, independent living skills specialist. “Once they actually used the community food programs, they felt very comfortable and found the programs very easy to use. It was a good experience for the students and they felt more connected to a community that offers them options.”

When everyone in our community has easy access to healthy food, we are closer to creating a healthy community where everyone has the chance to live a long and healthy life. These grant recipients show us the solutions are as close as where we live.