



Dayton receives food literacy grant from U.S. Conference of Mayors

"Dayton Sprouts" will teach kids about healthy, sustainable choices

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Contact: Toni Bankston, Communications and Public Affairs, 937-333-3614

The City of Dayton will offer a food literacy program for youth at its recreation centers, with the support of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the American Beverage Foundation for a Healthy America.

Dayton was granted a \$50,000 Childhood Obesity Prevention/Environmental Health and Sustainability Award to create the new Dayton Sprouts program, with a goal of teaching healthy and sustainable choices to children ages 6 to 17 enrolled in summer camps. Dayton is one of nine cities to receive the award nationally.

Dayton Sprouts will present weekly themes to young summer campers, who will receive a booklet featuring various activities around food literacy and sustainability. The booklets can also be used to get campers' families engaged and will be available online for families not involved with summer camp. The program also supports goals of Strategy for a Sustainable Dayton, the City's comprehensive green plan.

In 2017, 50% of Dayton youth were either overweight or obese. Moreover, in 2020, Ohio was ranked 10th for states with the highest food insecurity (limited access to sources of healthy foods).

"While parents are generally the ones purchasing food, we are hopeful that this program will show children how they can grow their own food and make sustainable and healthy choices at home and inspire behavioral change within the family," said Mayor Nan Whaley. "The program is a great addition to our community as we collectively tackle the food crises. We are excited to be an example for other cities on how to engage children in conversations around food and sustainable living."

"We are extremely grateful and excited to present this opportunity through our recreation centers," added Recreation and Youth Services Director Robin Williams. "We hope this program gives children a positive experience with food and sustainability and continues to aid in the fight of food insecurity for the region."

Tom Cochran, U.S. Conference of Mayors CEO and executive director, explained the importance of food security and wellness to cities: "Through the generosity of ABFHA, the awards will enable us to provide greater levels of sorely needed support to more cities and to encourage more innovative and comprehensive approaches to improving quality of life for our residents in greatest need."

"The quality of public health and the environment in a city is essential to a vibrant community, so addressing these issues in a cohesive manner supports mayors' efforts to deliver even greater impact for their citizens," added Katherine Lugar, president of the American Beverage

Foundation for a Healthy America board of directors and president and CEO of the American Beverage Association.

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