



Downtown holiday art on vacant windows

Power of Produce Day

Strong Towns presentation / downtown walking tour

The Heart of New Ulm (HONU) aims to improve the health, well-being and quality of life of all New Ulm-area residents through education, available resources, initiatives and partnerships that empower people of all ages to take responsibility for their own health in a supportive environment.

Working off its three-year action plan for 2020-2022 (available at [www.heartofnewulm.com](http://www.heartofnewulm.com)), HONU in 2021 continued its focus on four key areas: 1) healthy lifestyles, 2) mental health, 3) addiction and risky use of substances, and 4) health equity. Thank you to the many community volunteers who served on the HONU leadership and action teams in 2021!

## Leadership Team

- Developed a health equity fact sheet and shared it with key decision makers to help them understand how the decisions they make can impact individuals who may not have access to the same resources as others in New Ulm or Brown County.
- Connected with various community partners to successfully raise financial support to continue the work of HONU into 2022.

## Downtown Action Team

- Completed the design of nine tabletop wraps downtown to help tell the history of New Ulm.
- Started work to create an installation of a large public art mural on the Nuvera building at 1st North and Minnesota Street.
- Worked with the City of New Ulm to approve a parklet program for some of the downtown streets.
- Painted some of the windows in vacant buildings downtown in time for the holidays to help make the downtown more festive.
- Brought the president of Strong Towns to New Ulm to give three presentations on how to improve prosperity in the downtown New Ulm area.

## Food Environment Action Team

- Partnered with local vendors to offer a *Power of Produce (POP)* day at the farmers market, which empowers children to make healthful food choices, increases family participation at farmers markets and builds a healthier community.
- Continued to provide education through *Wellness the NU Way* campaign and social media messages to encourage eating healthier snacks, minimizing screen time and eating more fruits and veggies.

## Brown County Chemical Health Action Team

- Offered Naloxone training to community, which is a medicine that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose in an emergency situation.
- Created and offered a scavenger hunt in New Ulm, Sleepy Eye and Springfield and included a handout with statistics and resources for those who may be struggling with addiction.

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## Worksite Wellness Action Team

- Offered four worksite wellness networking and training events with focuses on stress management and healthy eating.
- Partnered with the Chamber and Ameriprise Financial to sponsor the annual Poker Walk and conducted the annual Holiday Trimmings program.

## Mental Health Action Team

- In partnership with the Worksite Wellness Action Team, partnered with three local worksites on a well-being project promoting health through happiness called *The People Project*. A total of 700 employees participated in monthly evidence-based well-being activities that were themed with simple, fun and intentional practices.
- Hosted four trainings for community participants during Suicide Prevention Awareness month to help people learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to use three simple steps — **Question, Persuade and Refer (QPR)** — to help save a life.
- Created and offered a 30-day self-care challenge during Mental Health Awareness Month in the spring and again in the fall to encourage people to start practicing good self-care habits.
- Selected two New Ulm Middle School students to do a summer internship with the *Change to Chill* program to help roll it out at the middle school. *Change to Chill* is a free, online mental well-being program offered by Allina Health that aims to help teens identify what stress is, what causes it, and, most importantly, how to manage it. Since 2019, five local schools — New Ulm High School, Sleepy Eye Public School, Springfield Public School, Red Rock Central and New Ulm Middle School — have participated in the Change to Chill School Partnership.

## Safe Routes to School Action Team

- Worked with the city to install an enhanced crosswalk at 4th South and Broadway and install curb extensions at 5th North and North Washington Streets to make it safer for people to walk and bicycle to and from school and work or play. A curb extension decreases the amount of time a person is in the lane of traffic and also slows traffic, making it much safer.
- Created and promoted a second *SEE.SAFE.SMART.* campaign to remind people to SEE people biking or walking, act SAFE, and be SMART.
- Implemented a Community Crosswalk Flag program at three locations to make crossing the street safer.

## Coalition for Active, Safe and Healthy Streets (CASHS)

- Collaborated with The New Ulm Bike Group and the City of New Ulm to submit a renewal application to the League of American Bicyclists for Bicycle Friendly Community status and was once again recognized at the Bronze level (communities must re-apply every four years).
- Purchased a pedestrian and bicycle counter system to evaluate the work of the team and to help justify further safety improvements throughout the community.
- Worked with the City of New Ulm to apply for grant funding to install a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (a pedestrian-activated light) at 4th South and South Broadway Street.
- Continued to review and discuss possible traffic calming measures that residents have identified as barriers to safe walking and bicycling.

**For more information on the work of the Heart of New Ulm's action teams, visit [www.heartofnewulm.com](http://www.heartofnewulm.com)**