



*Parklet at MN Eis*

*New mural on the Nuvera building downtown*

*Billboard promoting responsible drinking*

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 2020-22 (available at [www.heartofnewulm.com](http://www.heartofnewulm.com)), HONU in 2022 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 2022!

## Downtown Action Team

- Moved the **Saturday farmers market to German Park**, bringing more foot traffic to downtown businesses.
- Installed a **public parklet in front of MN Eis**, encouraging people to stay and enjoy the downtown area.
- Worked with private business donors to bring **Charles Marohn from Strong Towns** back to New Ulm to provide additional insight and knowledge on ways to strengthen and revitalize New Ulm.
- Contracted an artist to create a **mural on the exterior of the Nuvera building** in the city's historic downtown at 1st North and North Minnesota Streets, which was completed in the fall of 2022. The mural brought many tourists and community members downtown to take pictures and increased social media engagement.

## Food Environment Action Team

- Partnered with local vendors to offer a **Power of Produce (POP) day** at the New Ulm farmers market, which empowers children to make healthful food choices, increases family participation at farmers markets and builds a healthier community.
- Partnered with the Worksite Wellness Action Team to offer worksite wellness leaders a **presentation about herb basics** and tips for creating a successful herb garden at the workplace.

## Brown County Chemical Health Action Team

- Created a **billboard to promote responsible drinking**, which went up in September in New Ulm and Springfield.
- Provided a **list of addiction services and sober activity information** to 50 community members at National Night Out in New Ulm.
- Promoted the drug-use prevention campaign called **Red Ribbon Week** in October and sponsored an essay contest with 2 student winners and a coloring contest that accepted entries from 40 community members.

## Worksite Wellness Action Team

- Hosted **quarterly worksite wellness networking and training events** for 88 attendees in January, April, June and October, with two of the trainings focused on mental wellness by attendees' request.
- Sponsored the annual **Poker Walk** in partnership with the Chamber and Ameriprise Financial to promote physical wellness.
- Offered the annual **Holiday Trimmings program** with 225 participants; 91.5% of participants stated they found the program and messages helpful and 97.85% stated they would participate in the program again if it was offered.



Billboard promoting new 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Care bags with resources for local farmers

Safety Traffic Playground

## Mental Health Action Team

- In partnership with the Worksite Wellness Action Team, continued to offer **The People Project** program in the spring of 2022 and reached approximately 266 employees at five worksites to help them build resiliency through fun, evidence-based mental well-being strategies.
- Developed a **mental health flow chart/resource guide** to make it easier for community members to figure out where to start when they are struggling with mental health issues. The guide is designed to help reduce inappropriate use of higher levels of care and is the #1 downloaded document on the HONU website with nearly 200 downloads.
- Created a **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline billboard** in partnership with Brown County Yellow Ribbon that went up in the fall of 2022. The Lifeline connects individuals to caring support from a trained crisis counselor.
- Created 100 **care bags for local farmers** that were packed by New Ulm High School FCCLA students and distributed in the spring of 2022. The bags were created with the recognition that farming is a stressful career and farmers don't always have the resources readily available or know where to find them.
- Offered a free **QPR training** to 30 participants from local worksites in October 2022 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** — to help save a life.
- Offered multiple **presentations about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Resiliency** in partnership with the Families First Collaborative of Brown County as a first step in assuring a trauma-informed foundation for schools, communities, organizations and systems. A trauma-informed foundation recognizes and responds to the signs, symptoms and risks of trauma to better support the needs of students, employees and community members.

## Safe Routes to School Action Team

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

- Completed the **Traffic Safety Playground** outside New Ulm Middle School in August with the help of volunteers who spent more than 200 hours painting the pavement. The mini-street painted play space provides children and families a fun space to practice safe walking, bicycling and scooting skills away from traffic.
- Conducted two **Walk to School Days**, with 27 students participating in May and 32 in October. The goal of this day is to raise awareness and support for the health, community and environmental benefits of regularly walking or biking to school.
- Began work in September to reestablish a long-term vision and **community-wide active transportation plan** focused on improving safety for people walking, biking and rolling in New Ulm and increasing the number who do so. The plan will identify new solutions, policies and funding sources to address various barriers.

## Maximizing Resources and Impact

HONU and its volunteer teams aim to maximize resources and in 2022 successfully brought in significant additional financial resources to support the work in New Ulm:

- **Traffic Safety Playground:** \$14,500 grant from MnDOT's SRTS Boost funding initiative
- **Active Transportation Planning:** \$21,000 grant from MnDOT's Active Transportation Program
- **Safety Demonstration Project at 1st and Garden Streets (2023 project):** Technical assistance and materials valued at up to \$25,000 from MnDOT's Active Transportation Program Demonstration Project Technical Assistance Program

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