



*New Community Collage downtown*

*New location for the market*

*Awareness billboard around social hosting*

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 2023-25 (available at [www.heartofnewulm.com](http://www.heartofnewulm.com)), HONU in 2024 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 2024!

## Downtown Action Team

- **Helped facilitate a move for the New Ulm Farmers Market to a new location downtown that provides more visibility than the previous location.** The team reached out to various community groups to add a variety of additional activities, such as working with ProKinship For Kids to offer a variety of games.
- **Worked with a professional photographer to capture photographs of more than 400 individuals and groups and create a new Community Collage** to showcase a snapshot of New Ulm that celebrates the heritage of all community members.

## Food Environment Action Team

- **Partnered with local vendors to offer Power of Produce (POP) days at the farmers market for 100 families and senior citizen households,** which aim to empower them to make healthful food choices, increase family participation at the market and build a healthier community.
- **Worked with the New Ulm Area Chamber of Commerce to launch the EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer card) option at the market,** which allows SNAP-eligible community members with low incomes to shop at the market and access locally grown fruits and vegetables. Growers also benefit by reaching more community members who may otherwise not have access.

- **Launched Healthy Eats Around the World** to encourage community members to embrace global cultures, cuisines and inclusivity. Pop-up food was available monthly at Ulm Sweet Ulm featuring food from the Caribbean, France and Italy.

## Brown County Chemical Health Action Team

- **Continued development of a proposed Social Host Ordinance for Brown County** and created an informational brief to share with local leaders and community members. Studies indicate that social host laws are among the most effective and recommended ways to reduce underage drinking. CHAT worked on the ordinance as a participant in The Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Prevention of Underage Drinking's (ICCPUD) 2023-2024 Policy Academy for Implementing Community-Level Policies to Prevent Alcohol Misuse (Policy Academy). The team was one of only 14 teams selected from 100 applicants nationwide.
- **Created a billboard to highlight the message that dangerous consequences can result when adults provide alcohol to youth under age 18.** The billboards were installed in Springfield and near Essig.

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Well-being activity at North Park

Adult Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training for community members

Story Stroll

## Worksite Wellness Action Team

- Hosted quarterly worksite wellness networking and training events for 64 attendees.
- Offered the Embrace Wellness resiliency program to five area employers in partnership with the Brown County Mental Health and Wellness Action Team. The program helps employees build resiliency through fun, evidence-based mental well-being strategies that result in better connected, happier people.
- Co-sponsored the annual Poker Walk in June in partnership with the New Ulm Area Chamber of Commerce and Ameriprise Financial to promote physical wellness. The walk had 16 participating businesses for the walk, which attracted 119 walkers throughout the four-week event.

## Mental Health Action Team

- Welcomed 200 attendees to a sold-out inaugural South-Central Minnesota Mental Health and Wellness Conference hosted in partnership with Brown County Public Health and a variety of local sponsors. By providing resources, raising awareness, and bringing people together, the conference aimed to help break down the stigma of mental health and create lasting conversations to help area communities grow in wellness.
- Hosted a VA S.A.V.E. Training in partnership with the Minneapolis VA Health Care System, where 17 attendees, including veterans, their families and community members, learned how to act with care and compassion if they encounter a Veteran who is in crisis or experiencing suicidal thoughts.
- Supported the HONU Leadership team as it launched the *Move This Way* activity at North Park. The popular activity provided a creative opportunity for people of all ages to be active, talk, think and learn about topics related to their physical, mental and social well-being.
- Partnered with 2B CONTINUED and New Ulm Medical Center to host a National Council for Mental Wellbeing Adult Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training for community members. The training

welcomed a dedicated group of new MHFA First Aiders, including staff from Martin Luther College, New Ulm Medical Center, other local agencies, and engaged community members.

## Safe Routes to School Action Team (SRTS) and Coalition for Active, Safe and Healthy Streets (CASHS)

- Partnered with local schools to host a Story Stroll in January and February in celebration of I Love to Read Month and Winter Walk to School Day. The pages of children's books were displayed for a week on walking routes around the outside at NUACS and on the Jefferson / Middle School campus and teachers took students on walks during school hours to read the book together. Children and families also enjoyed the Story Stroll during non-school hours.
- Conducted two Walk, Bike and Roll to School Days in May and October for four different schools to encourage walking or bicycling to school, with adult volunteers accompanying the kids.
- Installed temporary curb extensions (bump-outs) at the intersection of 1st North St. and Garden St. in July in partnership with the City of New Ulm, building on the success of the same demonstration project conducted in Summer 2023. Curb extensions help slow traffic and make it safer for all who use Harman Park and walk or bike in the area. The goal is for these to become permanent when this location is scheduled for major street work, which will significantly reduce the cost.
- Helped secure a grant from MnDot's Safe Routes to School program for a bike maintenance/technician curriculum through a competitive application process. The grant for \$24,476 will fund Project Bike Tech classes to be offered at Ulm Sweet Ulm by Lykke Communities, a local nonprofit organization.

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