



kchealthykids™



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## Reshaping Our Region for a Brighter Future

We rally the people in our community to improve access to affordable fresh food and safe places to walk and play. To make a lasting impact, we shape policies that improve our food system and physical surroundings, and, ultimately, the places where we live, work, learn, and play.



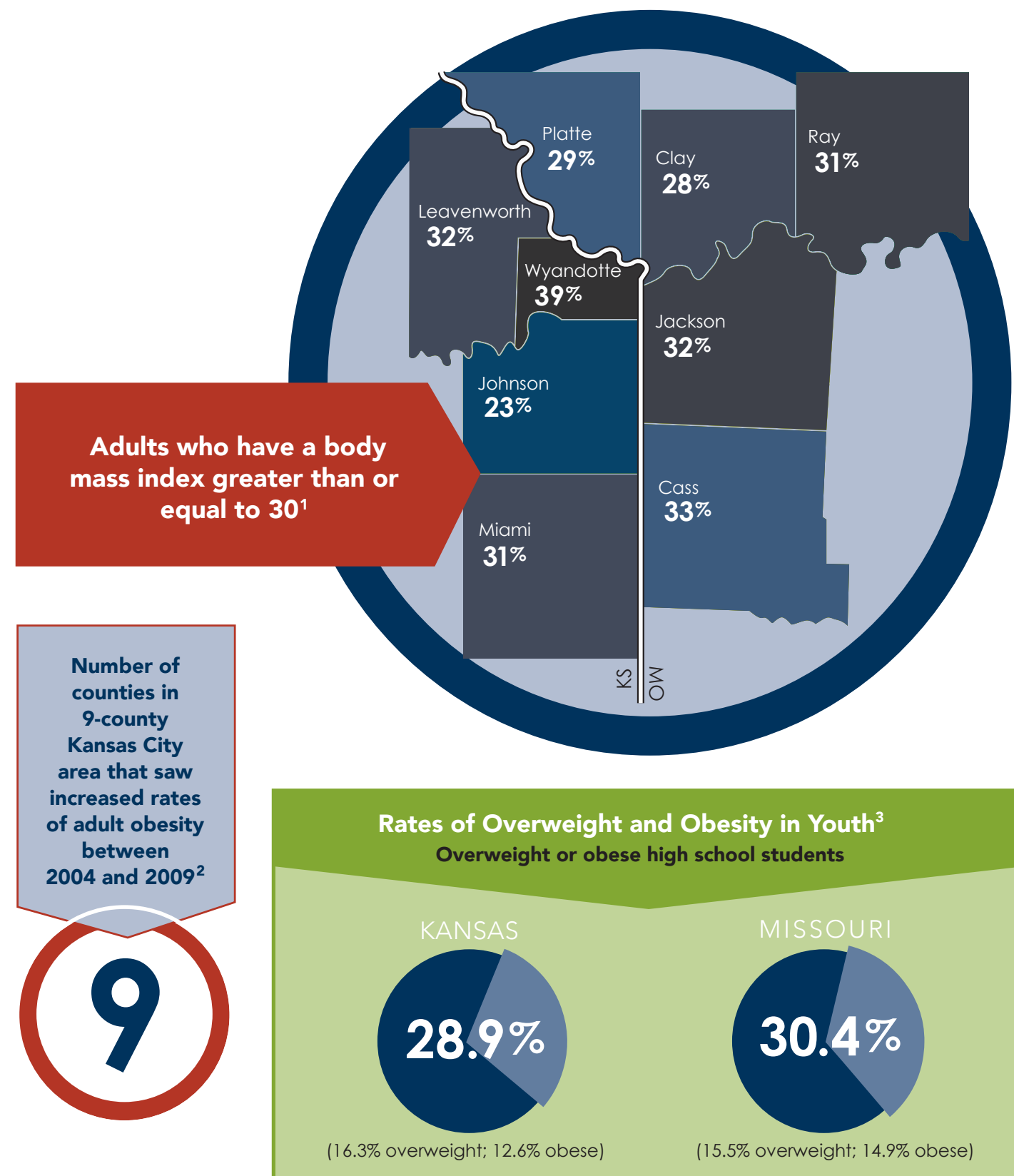
# Everyone Wants a Great Place to Live

Healthy neighborhoods make strong communities.



# The Numbers

Where we live affects our health.



<sup>1</sup> County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, 2014. [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org). Accessed on July 22, 2014.  
<sup>2</sup> 2013 Kansas City Regional Health Assessment Report, prepared by Mid-America Regional Council for the REACH Healthcare Foundation.  
<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 1991-2013 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data. Available at <http://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/>. Accessed on July 22, 2014.





# Connect



I AM HERE

I Am Here

Empower youth to speak out for healthy communities. Our I Am Here Youth Advocacy program supports Greater Kansas City teachers as they teach students how their surroundings impact their health and how to create change through advocacy.



KC FOOD POLICY COALITION

KC Food Policy Coalition

Strengthen our local food system to provide healthy, affordable food for everyone in Greater Kansas City. Our food policy coalition includes influencers from all critical segments of our regional food system.



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

Healthy Communities

Transform your community for healthy living with affordable fresh food and safe places to walk and play. In our framework, people in the communities lead the process, so changes are in keeping with their cultures, traditions and priorities.



FARM TO SCHOOL ACADEMY

Farm to School Academy

Help your school buy and serve more locally grown foods. Our Farm to School Academy teaches school communities about the local food system and helps them bring fresh, local food to their cafeterias and classrooms.



WALK KC

Walk KC

Make walking and other active modes of transportation safer and more convenient. Help us link national and regional programs to reshape our region with vibrant, walkable communities.



CARROT GOLD

Carrot Gold

Set the standard for local, sustainable food service in Kansas City. This customizable program lets restaurants, hospitals, colleges and corporations “start where they are” and move their operations toward their own ideal level of excellence in local food sourcing, sustainable kitchen practices and healthy eating.



# Locking Arms in the Fight for Healthy Kids

More than a decade ago, Dr. Frederick Hartwig, a Kansas City physician, was paying attention to the national conversation about childhood obesity as a growing public health crisis.

The number of kids affected had risen dramatically from 5% in 1980 to 17% in 2004 according to the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey published in 2006.



## OBESITY ROBS KIDS OF THEIR CHILDHOOD



Because it creates grown-up health problems—heart disease, high blood pressure and Type 2 diabetes—in young people, obesity effectively robs kids of their childhood. Even more alarming, the disease disproportionately affects minorities and low-income populations.

So Dr. Hartwig called on two of his most trusted colleagues, David Ross, a local funder, and Randy Carlson, an attorney from Carlson Kort LLC (now Swanson Midgley LLC), to take steps toward making a difference. Ross brought Gretchen Kunkel, a nonprofit consultant, and Brenda Kumm, a public health advocate and independent consultant on board, and the team formed a plan for making lasting changes that would stop the rise of childhood obesity in our region.

*“We knew the goal was lofty, but we were confident a nationwide trend was on the horizon and we wanted our bi-state region to be a leader, not a follower,” said Kumm, our first president who now serves on the board of directors.*

The small group kept a running list of big barriers—a broken industrial food complex, a powerful fast food industry, entrenched food deserts, too much screen time for kids, drastically reduced P.E. time in schools and crumbling sidewalks—to the healthy changes they sought as they formed a new nonprofit.

But our founders were hopeful because a number of organizations had already begun working separately on solutions.

*“We realized our greatest impact would be in fostering collaboration and creating strategic partnerships rather than working on our own,” said Gretchen Kunkel, KC Healthy Kids’ president.*

The team formed a small virtual agency and maximized its impact by connecting the dots, by positioning itself as the “go to,” behind-the-scenes, backbone agency for organizations that had begun working to change their communities. They connected local growers with hospitals, and health insurers with school food service staff.

They asked:  
“What do you need?”  
“How can we help?”  
“What can we do to promote your efforts?”

The answers came back loud and clear:  
“We need funding.”  
“Champion our cause.”  
“Help us reach decision makers in our cities, counties and states.”

In doing this, it turns out, our founders had poured rocket fuel on the flames that were already burning, accelerating the work that had already begun.

They brought together farmers, health care providers, elected officials, school administrators and other nonprofits to strengthen our regional food system through what became the Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition.

“It was one of our first, major collaborative accomplishments and we continue to house and support this important effort,” Kunkel said. She and her team raised money to support neighborhoods on both sides of the state line in grassroots makeovers that brought farmers



## COMMUNITIES CREATING CHANGE



markets and community gardens into food deserts, and more sidewalks, bike lanes and transit options where few residents own vehicles. Today, Ivanhoe in KCMO and Rosedale in KCK look very different than they did 10 years ago.

Since 2005, KC Healthy Kids has helped countless organizations thrive and show the nation what can be done. And yet we stay focused on the future.

*“If we are truly going to reshape our region for a brighter future, we need to educate and prepare a new generation of advocates for healthy eating and active living.”*

GRETCHEN KUNKEL



# Reshaping Our Region for a Brighter Future

There isn't just one way to help kids be healthier. From cooking classes and organic foods, soccer teams and fitness classes at the gym, there are at least a hundred or more. But not every family can afford heirloom tomatoes or soccer shoes. In fact, many families in our area struggle just to put any food on the table, and their kids can't safely walk to school or play outside.

At KC Healthy Kids, we are empowering communities, including kids in school, to create a world where healthy habits happen naturally.



A region where children and families are healthy and reaching their fullest potential.

## Reshaping our schools.

More than a half million people in our six-county region go to schools to work, learn and play—and they are there for at least 30-40 hours a week. With this large, captive audience, schools are a great place to set a standard for good health.



### More Local Food

- School gardens help kids explore new flavors and understand how food is grown
- Farmers get an income boost when local food is purchased and served for meals and snacks
- Kids who enjoy local foods at school eat more fruits and vegetables and ask for them at home
- Farm to school programs can improve students' behavior and academic performance



### More Physical Activity

- Exercise improves memory, concentration and positive outlook in kids
- Action-based learning keeps students focused and makes lessons more memorable
- When kids have recess before lunch, they eat better, waste less food and are better behaved in the lunchroom
- Active recess programs increase students' activity while reducing behavior problems on the playground



### Walking School Bus

- Kids get regular exercise outside of school hours
- Students arrive at school on time and ready to learn
- Pedestrian safety and air quality improve when vehicle traffic is reduced
- Kids become more independent and more aware of their surroundings



### Youth Advocacy

- Students' self-esteem and feelings of empowerment improve
- Marginalized students have an opportunity to be heard.
- When students speak out, decision makers are more likely to listen and act



## Reshaping our streets.

In urban and rural areas, streets must be safe and welcoming for people of all abilities using any mode of travel. Active transportation makes our region more vibrant, our people more healthy.



### Complete Streets

- Provide safe, active modes of transportation including walking, biking and public transit
- Allow people of all abilities and incomes to more easily get to school, work, shops and parks
- Improve air quality by reducing automobile exhaust emissions
- Revitalize urban and rural communities
- Reduce crime as we get to know our neighbors and pay more attention to our surroundings

## Reshaping our spaces.

Kids are more active when they have clean, safe parks and playgrounds nearby. In Johnson, Wyandotte and Jackson counties, more than 50% of people live within a half mile of a park. Those parks must be clean, safe and attractive. If families can walk to them, that's even better.



### Safe Places to Be Active Outdoors

- Allow more people to enjoy walking, biking and being outdoors
- Strengthen relationships for families who exercise or play together
- Reduce crime and increases property values in those places
- Beautify the neighborhood by transforming vacant lots

### Community Use Agreements

- Make school facilities available to people in the community
- Provide safe, accessible and affordable places for kids and families to be active
- Increase community involvement with schools

## Reshaping our plates.

In a healthy food system, families don't have to look very far to find affordable, locally grown food. They find it at community gardens and farmers markets in their neighborhoods. They find it at grocery stores, restaurants and even in hospital and company cafeterias.



### Community Gardens & Urban Farms

- Provide healthy, affordable food in food deserts
- Reduce crime and increase community involvement and pride
- Provide safe outdoor gathering places for families and friends
- Beautify the neighborhood by transforming overgrown and littered vacant properties
- Offer a setting for teaching kids about food, physical activity, and working together



### Farmers Markets

- Provide income to urban farmers and community gardeners
- Make it easier to get healthy, affordable, locally grown food
- Markets that accept SNAP benefits make that food even more affordable
- Bring life into blighted urban areas.



### Grocery Stores & Corner Stores in Food Deserts

- Make it easier for people to get healthy, affordable food
- Create quality jobs for residents and stimulate the local economy
- Corner stores can provide fresh produce and healthy staples
- Revitalize urban and rural communities

### Farm to Institution

- Improve access to healthy, affordable food by rethinking menus and engaging with the local food system
- Increase knowledge about healthy options by offering information in serving lines
- Provide income for local farmers and strengthen the economy by serving locally grown food



### Locally Grown Food

- Tastes better and provides optimal health benefits because it's picked when it's perfectly ripe
- Provides income for local farmers and strengthens the economy
- Reduces carbon emissions because it travels shorter distances from the field to your plate







# Strong

## What It’s Like to Be 10 Years Old

Our wish for Kansas City’s kids.

KC Healthy Kids is turning 10 along with more than four million babies born in 2005.

If you don’t have a 10-year-old in your life, let us paint a picture for you. Ten-year-olds walk a thin line between their childhood and teen years. One minute they are poised, thoughtful and well-spoken. The next they are unintelligible, laughing about bodily functions and generally being annoying. On purpose.

Their parents, who would love to send them outside to play, often keep them indoors for “safety reasons.” And even though they have piles of toys and games within arms’ reach, they gravitate toward anything with a glowing screen—TV, computer, mobile phone or tablets—sometimes using two at once (or even three!). Their schools are administering more national tests while cutting back on recess, PE and health classes to allow more time for teaching to the test.

The food industry is spending more than \$1.75 billion to market junk food to these 10-year-olds (compared to \$280 million to market healthy food). Beverage companies are pouring out millions to reach them too.

In the year before they were born, Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona called attention to a growing epidemic that would impact these 10-year-olds directly.

“Because of the increasing rates of obesity, unhealthy eating habits and physical inactivity,” he said, “we may see the first generation that will be less healthy and have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.”

In Kansas City, we know life expectancy varies according to zip code. A 10-year-old in Blue Hills could live to see 2074, but her cousin in Shoal Creek could make it to 2088.

That’s a 14-year difference. It’s long enough to see the grand kids grow up. Long enough to meet a great-grandbaby. We won’t even mention the possibility of flying cars.

Why the discrepancy? The answer lies in disparity. Healthy People 2020 defines a health disparity as “a particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic and/or environmental disadvantage.”

We absolutely see it in our region, where healthy amenities vary greatly from county to county. Johnson County has 634 miles of fitness trails; Clay County has 114. Leavenworth County has one farmers market for every 50,000 residents; Platte County has one for every 20,000.

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*KC Healthy Kids is addressing these disparities by empowering people in communities and kids in schools to transform their surroundings with sidewalks, farmers markets, grocery stores, fitness trails, local food in schools and more safe places to play.*

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This year’s 10-year-olds will graduate high school in 2022. When they look around their neighborhoods, we want them to see a city that supports walking, biking and healthy eating in every neighborhood rather than a city divided between the healthy and not, between the 69-year-olds and the 83-year-olds.

With your help, we can make sure they get to ride in that flying car.



# Access to Healthy Amenities Varies by County

## Core Values

Every child has a right to affordable healthy food and safe places to walk and play.

Policies relating to food and the built environment should be just and equitable.

The diversity of people and the communities in which they live should be celebrated.

Information, resources, and infrastructure empower individuals and communities to make healthy choices.

Effective and efficient leadership, multi-sectoral collaboration and communication are the keys to success.

Responsibility and integrity are intrinsic to our mission.

	Kansas				Missouri				
	Johnson	Leavenworth	Miami	Wyandotte	Cass	Clay	Jackson	Platte	Ray
Population <sup>1</sup>	544,179	76,227	32,787	157,505	99,478	221,939	674,158	89,322	23,494
Farmers Markets <sup>2</sup>	1 for every 50,000 residents	1 for every 50,000 residents	1 for every 25,000 residents	1 for every 33,333 residents	1 for every 20,000 residents	1 for every 25,000 residents	1 for every 25,000 residents	1 for every 20,000 residents	1 for every 20,000 residents
Grocery Stores <sup>3</sup>	1 for every 7,353 residents	1 for every 12,706 residents	1 for every 10,929 residents	1 for every 6,301 residents	1 for every 9,950 residents	1 for every 7,158 residents	1 for every 6,127 residents	1 for every 8,123 residents	1 for every 11,751 residents
Fast Food Restaurants <sup>3</sup>	1 for every 1,271 residents	1 for every 2,178 residents	1 for every 2,186 residents	1 for every 1,514 residents	1 for every 1,950 residents	1 for every 1,480 residents	1 for every 1,330 residents	1 for every 1,624 residents	1 for every 3,357 residents
Recreation and Fitness Facilities <sup>3</sup>	1 for every 6,803 residents	1 for every 15,244 residents	1 for every 16,393 residents	1 for every 26,247 residents	1 for every 16,584 residents	1 for every 10,091 residents	1 for every 12,034 residents	1 for every 6,382 residents	1 for every 11,751 residents
Park Access Percent of population living within a half mile of a park <sup>4</sup>	54%	28%	17%	55%	18%	33%	59%	22%	26%
Miles of Fitness Trails <sup>5</sup>	634	61	42	51	23	114	560	37	Data Not Available

<sup>1</sup> US Census Bureau 2010.  
<sup>2</sup> USDA, Economic Research Service, Food Environment Atlas.  
<sup>3</sup> US Census Bureau, County Business Patterns: 2012. Additional data analysis by CARES. Source geography: County.  
<sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network: 2010.  
<sup>5</sup> Mid-America Regional Council, Research Services Department.





### **Mission**

To advance children's health by increasing opportunities for healthy eating and active living.

### **Vision**

Healthy communities where children and families thrive.







**kchealthykids<sup>TM</sup>**

650 Minnesota Avenue, Kansas City, Kansas 66101  
[kchealthykids.org](http://kchealthykids.org)