

TEACHING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO USE DATA TO IDENTIFY CONDITIONS MOST AFFECTING THEIR COMMUNITY

A Success Story from Healthy Northeast Ohio

AT A GLANCE

High school students, from the Mastery School of Hawken, were presented with a challenge by the Healthy Northeast Ohio team to identify the chronic illness or community condition that is most impacting Cuyahoga County, and an evidence-based solution to address it. The students used Healthy Northeast Ohio's 275+ data indicators and Promising Practices database to create compelling visual communications aimed at changing the mind of a target audience about their selected condition. This course provided the students with an opportunity to learn more about public health data and community health improvement strategies.

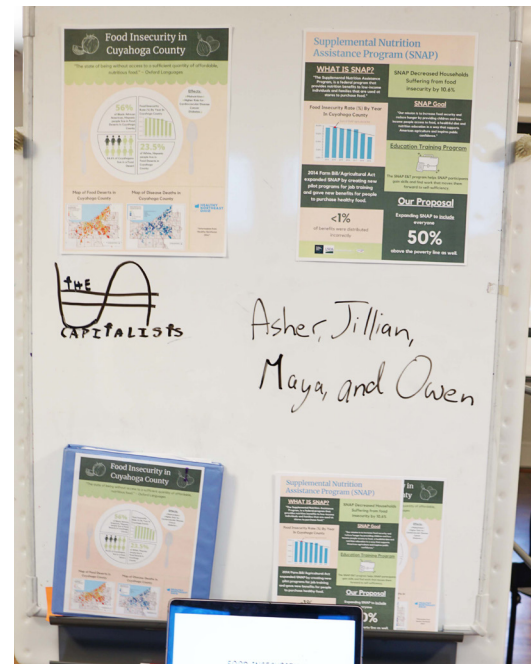
CHALLENGE

Healthy Northeast Ohio partnered with Annie Homan and Tom Waitzman, Founding Faculty, from the [Mastery School of Hawken](#) on a three-week intensive course for high school students called, "How to Change a Mind." This course was designed to provide an opportunity for the students to gain skills in conducting quantitative analyses, communicating about data, and creating visual communications with the goal of changing the mind of a target audience.

The students were presented with the following challenge: What chronic illness or community condition is impacting Cuyahoga County the most, and what evidence-based solution would address it? The students were to use available data to define and understand the community conditions and health outcomes impacting Cuyahoga County. Next, they were tasked with researching possible strategies and solutions to address and improve the condition they felt was most urgent. Lastly, students were to create a final product to demonstrate the issue and strategies to improve it. This included identifying a target audience to direct their message to, and depending on that audience, choosing the most compelling form of visualization.

SOLUTION

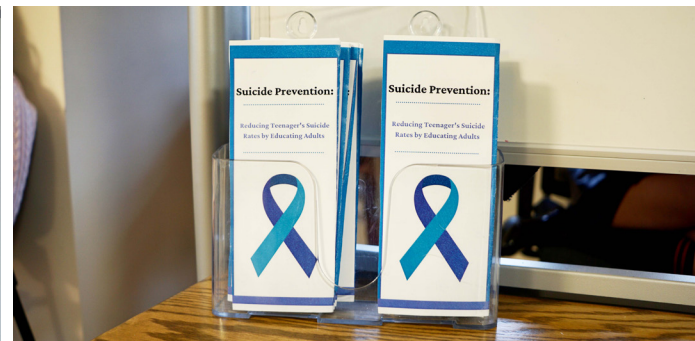
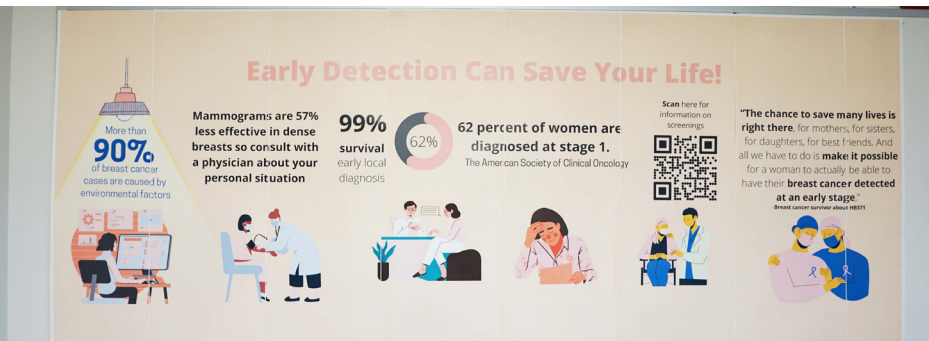
The Healthy Northeast Ohio team provided a workshop for the students enrolled in this intensive course that included an introduction to public health, including an overview of community health assessments and community health improvement plans. This workshop also included a demonstration of the Healthy Northeast Ohio website, as it was to be the key resource for students throughout the course. Working in groups, the students used the 275+ health and quality of life indicators available on Healthy Northeast Ohio to research the issues facing residents in [Cuyahoga County](#). Through [healthyneo.org](#), they were able to download various graphs, maps, and data files to use for their own analyses. The students then used [Healthy Northeast Ohio's Promising Practices](#) database to research documented practices, ranked from good ideas to evidence-based programs, that could be implemented in Cuyahoga County to address the urgent need they identified.



“Healthy Northeast Ohio was a wonderful, comprehensive resource by which to explore public health data, data visualization, and analysis with students,” shared instructors Annie Homan and Tom Waitzman. “Students were able to independently navigate through the data related to chronic illnesses and community conditions as well as download and share graphs with ease. The site was an accessible platform for students with a range of experience working with data, while also providing enough depth to challenge more advanced learners.”

RESULTS

After completing their research, the groups each created visualizations to incorporate their findings. These final products included social media campaigns, a video infographic, traditional infographics, and a pamphlet that focused on topics including breast cancer, diabetes, food insecurity, mental health stigma, suicide prevention, and tobacco cessation. These visualizations were setup in a gallery walk style, where each group gave a brief presentation detailing why their condition is most urgent in Cuyahoga County, why the Promising Practice they chose is effective, and how their visualization aims to change a mind about their chosen condition. The Healthy Northeast Ohio team was impressed by the creativity and presentation skills of each of the groups. This experience exposed the students to using data to drive community health improvement. “The students were able to gain a deeper understanding of the vast complexities of chronic illness and the systemic factors that contribute to their prevalence,” said Homan and Waitzman. “Students explored the opinions, beliefs, and mindsets of various stakeholders and used this knowledge to inform a persuasive visualization strategy.”



ABOUT HEALTHY NORTHEAST OHIO

Healthy Northeast Ohio provides hospitals, public health departments, community-based organizations, philanthropic agencies and other stakeholders with data and resources to support regional and community health improvement activities and strengthen collaboration in the region. Healthy Northeast Ohio serves as a neutral repository of de-identified health information that highlights the collective impact toward positive health outcomes. It allows for easy identification of areas with the highest impact and greatest need. Vetted and verified data comes from more than 30 sources.



Visit us at www.healthyneo.org

Questions? Please contact us to learn more or to share your own success story.

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