

Feb. 5, 2014



## **‘Growing Healthy Communities’ symposium to be held in Newtown**

*Event will ‘plant seeds’ to change how residents  
access healthy foods*

SARASOTA COUNTY — Newtown community members are invited to a two-part “Growing Healthy Communities” symposium at Robert L. Taylor Community Complex, 1845 34<sup>th</sup> St., Sarasota, on Friday, Feb. 21, 5:30-7:30 p.m., and on Saturday, Feb. 22, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

The symposium, hosted by the Newtown Community Health Action Team (CHAT), is intended to “plant seeds to change how Newtown residents access healthy foods,” according to the event officials.

The event will showcase various successful community initiatives throughout Florida, including youth-focused activities and programs that link nutrition education, gardening and entrepreneurship.

On Friday, Feb. 21, “Healthy Tasting Stations” will be hosted for youth and family members. The Tallahassee Food Network’s Frenchtown-based youth empowerment and urban agriculture program known as iGrow will be featured. The Robert L. Taylor’s HARD: NOC (Honorable Alliance for Reclaiming Destiny: North Sarasota Original Chapter) youth program, will also present on their experience with container gardening and their interest in civic leadership.

A community engagement workshop on Saturday, Feb. 22, will address the importance of collaborative efforts and cultural relevancy as they relate to food access and nutrition. The workshop will also cover diet-related health issues as well as the impacts of poverty on education. Common themes will be youth leadership, engagement and entrepreneurship.

According to public health officials, the rise in obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and stroke can be partly attributed to the foods consumed by people. People live in a fast-paced society that leaves little room for freshly prepared fruits and vegetables. Instead people have become dependent on fast foods and chain restaurants that offer high-calorie, low-nutrient foods.

The CHAT is a group of residents working on increasing access to healthy foods and promoting a healthier community. This event is a follow-up to last year’s Food Summit, which provided opportunity for community engagement and discussion on the assets, barriers, and solutions to access to healthy foods in the North Sarasota area.

Pre-registration is required. To register, call/text 941-861-2779 or visit [www.newtownfood.com](http://www.newtownfood.com).  
Childcare will be available.

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***MEDIA NOTES:***

**DOH-Sarasota Media Contact:**

Dianne Shipley, 941-861-2852; cell 941-302-1058; [Dianne.Shipley@flhealth.gov](mailto:Dianne.Shipley@flhealth.gov)