



# Healthy Communities

The Public Health Institute is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting health, well-being and quality of life throughout California, across the nation and around the world.

When it comes to health, where you live matters: Neighborhoods can create opportunities for—or barriers to—health. In fact, zip code is a better predictor of health than genetic code.

PHI works within and alongside communities to build health—with a particular emphasis on reducing health disparities by amplifying local leadership, dismantling structural barriers and addressing the social determinants of health.

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# Our Approach

**We work collaboratively to increase access to safe opportunities for physical activity, improve the built environment, reduce exposure to hazards in the environment and expand the availability of affordable, healthful foods.**



Build the capacity of local leaders, organizations and health departments to promote health



Research communities' exposure to environmental hazards, local disease prevalence and more



Advocate for policies that improve the health of local community environments



Develop partnerships across sectors to advance policy and environmental change strategies to improve health and equity outcomes

# Our Priority



## Building Health Equity

In 2016, Cultiva La Salud and Ceres Partnership for Healthy Children established a shared-use agreement which opened school space to residents in Ceres, a rural town in California's Central Valley where nearly 70% of residents are obese or overweight. Today, 23,000 Latinos living nearby have increased their physical activity by participating in Bailoterapia, a form of aerobic dance akin to Zumba.



**Trainings provided by PHI's Project LEAN bolstered efforts of parents and advocates in Chula Vista, CA to change their school district's policy—removing chocolate milk from cafeterias**

**and providing healthier food and vending options overall. In total, this impacted 29,000 students in 45 school districts, ensuring healthier school food environments throughout the districts.**

For more examples of our work, visit [phi.org](http://phi.org).

# Our Work

## Promoting Safe Physical Activity Opportunities

— CA4Health worked with 100 schools to implement Safe Routes to School (SRTS). The program is locally driven and built around critical infrastructure repairs, parent-organized “walking school buses,” regular “walk to school” days, safety education, school zone traffic enforcement and more. As a result, nearly **5,000 more California kids were able to walk and bike to school safely.**

## Teaching about Nutrition and Staying Active

— The Children's Power Play! Campaign from PHI's Network for a Healthy California (now the Center for Wellness and Nutrition) **reached 500,000 low-income California children a year** with information about healthy eating. Today, the Center for Wellness and Nutrition provides trainings around the country on how to implement effective nutrition and physical activity strategies.

## Harnessing Data to Drive Change

PHI's Build Healthy Places Network (BHPN) catalyzes and supports collaboration across the health and community development sectors to improve health in low-income communities. MeasureUp, a **microsite of resources and tools** curated by BHPN, helps practitioners make the case for the impact of neighborhood investments on community health and well-being.

## Supporting Healthy Options

— PHI research, evaluation and media advocacy played a key role in the passage of new taxes on sugary beverages around the country in 2016, which will **raise millions to support children and healthier communities.** Research by Dr. Lynn Silver, as well as PHI's Berkeley Media Studies Group, evaluated existing soda taxes, helped counter misleading messages from the soda industry and framed the conversation around public health.