



Maine Network of Healthy Communities

Member Profile: River Valley Healthy Communities Coalition

Our mission: To achieve measurable improvement in the quality of life in the River Valley towns of Northern Oxford County through coordinated, on going community health promotion.

Chair: Richard Lovejoy

Geographical area: Northern Oxford County (towns of Andover, Byron, Canton, Dixfield, Hanover, Mexico, Peru, Roxbury, Rumford)

Our accomplishments:

- *Convening a Community Forum:* Each year since 1998 we have convened our community to discuss broad based topics and focused topics such as youth issues and elder issues.
- *Building the Partnership and Leadership Development:* We hold an annual Board Retreat and recruit community members on an ongoing basis to key committees such as our Grant Advisory Committee, Future Committee, Elder Issues Task Force, etc.
- *Developing Community Structure.* We manage Project Now, the Healthy Maine Partnership in our region, and we are currently conducting strategic planning, with a goal of the sustainability of our coalition. We receive strong support from the municipalities in our region.
- *Community Health and Quality of Life Assessment:* We published the *River Valley Community Healthy Report* in 1999 and are currently seeking funding to up-date the report. We are in the process of conducting a survey and assessment of arts and cultural resources in the region.
- *Community Action for Health and Quality of Life.* Our accomplishments include running a free summer camp program, co-sponsoring, with the Rumford Hospital, four Health Expos, a lead poison prevention program, SUDS (stop underage drinkers), a dental sealant program for second-graders, and an education program for the American Lung Association. In addition, we have facilitated a Portland Symphony performance and organized two family arts festivals, and co-sponsored Work Camp 2000, a home-repair program staffed by teen-aged volunteers from across the country.

- *Community-wide Planning:* We hold monthly Planning meetings where individuals and local organizations get together to share and discuss local and future programs in the River Valley.
- *Providing Data-based Information to Policy Makers:* We are active in writing letters and e-mails on key issues, holding legislative breakfasts, and participating in Hall of Flags events.