

# HealthVisions Update

*HealthVisions Midwest, Inc.—Lake County, IN  
Health Ministry – St. Joseph, Marshall, Elkhart County, IN  
HealthVisions Fort Wayne—Allen County, IN  
Healthy Communities of LaPorte County, IN  
HealthVisions East St. Louis, IL*

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This issue features: HealthVisions Fort Wayne, IN



## DID YOU KNOW?

**1998** - Opened the first office of HealthVisions at 515 W. Wayne Street, Fort Wayne with Tina Leatherman as director.

**1999** - Healthy Homes Coalition – focuses on indoor air quality and safety.

**2000** - Hired Renetta H. Williams, as the Director of Outreach Services and expanded Chapter Two Outreach services to the South side of Fort Wayne with Jolene Bowers as Fitness Instructor,

**2001** -Developed “Managing your Diabetes” in collaboration with National Diabetes month.

**2002** - Received Grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to fund Faith in Action - Fort Wayne. **Joan Baines** became the new Program Coordinator

**2003** - Started the Allen County Health Disparity Coalition.

**2004** - Grant from the Indiana Department of Health for \$9,776.00 for a gardening project with children and adults.

## HealthVisions Fort Wayne Celebrates 10 years

HealthVisions Fort Wayne in Allen County, IN was organized in 1998 at the same time as the beginning of HealthVisions Midwest in Lake County.

HealthVisions of Fort Wayne rolled out its first health disparity program, addressing inner city children, the **Childhood Lead Poisoning Program** led by Tina Leatherman, Executive Director. The focus was on educating the community on lead poisoning and the impact it has on young children. Children mostly impacted, were those living in older homes built before 1978. This program soon grew to be the “**Healthy Homes Coalition**”. The purpose of the coalition was to eliminate environmental health hazards in the home. Poor indoor air quality can be associated with asthma, allergies, lead poisoning, and carbon monoxide poisoning. Partnerships were developed and identified potential funding for the project.

**The Dental Health Program** was directed by Sister Loretta Schleper, PHJC. The dental program collaborated with the Indiana –Purdue Fort Wayne Dental Education Department, Matthew 25 Health and Dental Clinic, local dental hygienists, Chapter Two Outreach sites, and transitional houses. The goal of the program was to provide dental education and promote good oral health behavior among adults, 18 and older. The program provided a standardized dental teaching plan, promoting healthy behaviors: brushing, flossing, regular checks ups and proper nutrition. It also educated participants on the effects of smoking and tobacco use on oral health.



**Fort Wayne office**

were established to offer the services. There are three programs currently in the community.

In 2000, Renetta Williams was hired as the Director of Outreach Services. **The Chapter Two Program** expanded to the medically underserved community, specifically the Central and South sides of Fort Wayne. The Chapter Two Program was a comprehensive exercise, nutrition, and health education program for adults 40 and over. Over five hundred individuals were served yearly. In collaboration

with community partners, training programs

In late 2002, Renetta Williams was promoted to Executive Director. Her first project was to move the organization into the medically underserved area. The Allen County Library, Community Action of Northeast Indiana, and the Fort Wayne Urban League were building a campus environment in the area. In 2005 we moved into a new office in the Urban League building.

**2005** – Collaborated with Focus on Health to bring preventative health screenings to the Southeast side of Fort Wayne.

**2006:** Received a contract with the Indiana Minority Health Coalition and hired **Zenaida Velez** to do outreach services in the Hispanic Community.

**2007:** Initiated Town Hall Meetings on Health Disparities in the Minority Community with discussions on Mental Health, Health, Nutrition, Culture, Language, and Diabetes.

**2008:** First Annual Meeting of the Allen County Health Disparity Coalition and annual Faith in Action Fundraiser, “Heart to Heart Valentine Breakfast”



Renetta Williams has successfully developed HVFW into a thriving organization that is working to reduce health disparities in Allen County.

She exemplifies our values in action by the way she works within the community always looking out for those most in need. →



Renetta Williams

# Health Visions Fort Wayne TODAY

## The Allen County Health Disparity Coalition

The mission is to eliminate health disparities in Allen County. A contract with the Indiana Minority Health Coalition provides minority programs and services in Allen County. HVFW collaborated with Indiana Purdue University to bring the Area Health Education Center (AHEC) to this region and advocated for the center to be located in the medically underserved area. HealthVisions recently won the “AHEC Partnership Matters Award” for the Northeast Region of Indiana.



Joan, Renetta, Peggy, Zenaida

## Health and Nutrition Program

This project started in collaboration with Purdue Extension Service and the Junior Master Gardener National Program. This project is part of HealthVisions “Kids Health Initiative” improving the health habits of minority and low-income youth and adults in the Allen County. The goals are to increase consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables, raise self-esteem and increase physical activity. There are three community gardens in the area. With this program, fresh vegetables are provided to food pantries and homebound seniors.

## Parish Health: Faith in Action- Fort Wayne

Faith in Action is Fort Wayne’s Parish Health Program begun by Sr. Loretta Schleper, PHJC and continues under the leadership of **Peggy Hayes**. The goal of the program is to collaborate with interfaith congregations and community organizations in providing supportive services to individuals who are homebound, frail, elderly, or who are affected by long-term health conditions. The program uses the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s “Faith-In- Action” model. Currently 6 churches, 56 clients, and 50 volunteers are working in this program.

## Management of Organizations

HVFW selected two organizations in the community to build community capacity and partnerships in the area of management; they are Genesis Outreach Services, Inc. and Fort Wayne African American Cancer Alliance, Inc. These organizations were selected because their mission and visions are similar to HealthVisions. They serve the poor and underserved populations. We provide technical assistance, managing receivables, payables, budget, finances, and taxes.

In **2003** Renetta was selected to the top 50 Most Influential African Americans in Northeast Indiana. She always recognizes that the good she does is accomplished with the help and loyalty of others. Renetta is dedicated to the values and spirit of Catherine Kasper.



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