# New Castle, IN: Community-Based Research Partnership

## The Main Idea
Collaborative effort to improve health in New Castle, Indiana, a rural community experiencing economic hardship.

## The Project
In the mid-1990s, the multi-stakeholder Healthy Cities Committee (HCC) partnered with the Indiana University School of Nursing to bring about policy changes to improve health in the community. Their goal was to craft a study and follow-up action agenda that would help ‘make the healthy choice the easy choice,’ in part by getting City decision-makers and the general public to think about the potential health impacts of any policies or programs being considered.

**Project sponsor:** W.K. Kellogg Foundation

## Impact
HCC identified priority health issues and took action:
- To reduce smoking, HCC led a successful effort to get indoor smoking banned from public buildings.
- HCC mobilized 1,200 residents to replace deteriorating play structures in parks to promote children’s exercise.
- A “web of trails” was created to encourage walking and biking (image above). The partnership raised more than $1.3 million in grant funds to support the trails initiative. Through HCC, town residents planted 5,000 trees along the trails to help improve air quality and promote outdoor activity.
- Moreover, researchers found evidence of sustainable change long after the formal partnership had ended.

## Community Role
HCC partners, representing health and social services, government, local business, the arts, transportation, environmental orgs and private citizens, helped design surveys that were distributed door-to-door to 1,000 residents.

Findings were presented at town hall meetings, where the community provided input on the significance of survey results.

Focus groups and a statewide workshop were held to disseminate study findings.

**More Info on People-Focused Research:** Participatory Action Research in Canarsie, Flatlands and Flatbush (2018)


The Healthy Cities Committee was later renamed Healthy Communities of Henry County (HCHC).

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For information on community-based research projects, please see https://www.communityvoicesforhealth.org/tools-resources. These materials were created by Altarum, a nonprofit health solutions company, working in partnership with Public Agenda, and supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Please send any corrections or suggestions for improvement to Sabah at Sabah.bhatnagar@altarum.org.