

7th Annual ARCC Community-Engaged Research Partnership Award Recipient: *Cooking Up Health: Docs & Kids in the Kitchen*

The [Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities](#) (ARCC), a program of the [Center for Community Health](#) serving the Northwestern University's [Institute for Public Health and Medicine](#) and [Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute](#), developed the [Community Engaged Research Partnership Award](#) to recognize research partnerships that exemplify strong collaborative research principles and are working to impact the health of their community.



The 2018 award acknowledges the efforts of ***Cooking Up Health: Docs & Kids in the Kitchen***, the exemplary partnership between lead community partner, Stephanie Folkens of [Common Threads](#), a community organization fighting childhood obesity through cooking and nutritional education, and lead academic partner, Northwestern's [Melinda Ring, MD](#) of the [Osher Center for Integrative Medicine](#).

Cooking Up Health grew out of the recognition that solving the obesity epidemic and its downstream health consequences depends on preventative efforts at the individual, community, and public health level. A 2013 analysis of childhood obesity in Chicago revealed an overall overweight/obesity prevalence of 43.3% among public school students. Additionally, although physicians are at the frontline of assessing and advising patients on nutrition and weight, only 27% of medical schools teach the recommended 25 hours of nutrition, and fewer than 14% of practicing physicians believe they were adequately trained in nutritional counseling.

In 2016, an [ARCC seed grant](#) award enabled the strong partnership foundation to address these issues and foster the development of a sustainable program for the delivery of cooking and nutrition education in the community by future physicians. The unique ***Cooking Up Health*** elective teaches Northwestern medical students about nutrition through the lens of culinary medicine and community health and hands-on cooking. The medical students then deliver the healthy habit messages to [Chicago Public Schools](#) elementary school children in underserved communities.

The partnership has yielded several concrete positive outcomes so far including: 1) development of a scalable and innovative curriculum; 2) measurable impact on Northwestern medical students' and Chicago Public Schools students' health and nutrition behavior and attitudes; and 3) multiple presentations at scientific and community forums. ***Cooking Up Health*** recently received a [NUCATS](#) Dissemination [Pilot Grant](#) to support implementation efforts including hosting a Train-the-Trainer workshop this Fall to help spread *Cooking Up Health* to other community-academic partnerships across the country.



Partner members and award reviewers praised the partnership's strong commitment to collaboration, creativity, and innovation and attributed the success of the partnership in part to the time that the ARCC partnership grant allowed the partners to dedicate to fully understand and appreciate the missions, capacity and resources of their respective programs.

Further information about the partnership and award can be found at www.ARCCOnline.net