

# Built environment impacts diabetes risks

by Tina Peterson

What does diabetes have to do with your local gas station? Plenty, says Sue Trainor, a diabetes nurse educator and president of People Centre'd on Diabetes (PCOD).

Every day Trainor works with people to help them manage their diabetes. She spends 30 minutes with each patient, three or four times a year, to talk about making healthy choices. But as soon as they leave, she knows they're facing a lot of obstacles and temptations, many in the form of cheap and appealing food.

"They've got to go out and confront the 2 for 1 hotdogs at the local gas station," she said. "Daily you're confronted with an environment that makes it hard to make healthy choices."

Diabetes is unique in part because it is a self-managed disease, Trainor said. People with diabetes have to educate themselves about it, and to learn how best to control it

by eating right, exercising, and monitoring their blood sugar. While medical professionals can help, it is ultimately up to the individual to make everyday decisions that impact his or her health, she said.

The vast majority of diabetics have type 2 diabetes, also known as adult-onset diabetes. While this type used to affect primarily people over the age of 40, it is increasingly being diagnosed among children and adolescents, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans and Asian Americans tend to be at higher risk for developing type 2 diabetes.

The top risk factors for everyone are weight and inactivity, according to the Mayo Clinic. Having high levels of fatty tissue in the body and not exercising regularly can cause cells to become resistant to insulin.

see Diabetes, pg. 11



Photo by Kelsey Stratton

Lauren Skoll eats lunch at McDonald's in downtown State College. Fast food and neighborhood development sprawl are two of the many culprits that contribute to type 2 diabetes.

# Centre Region rolls toward bike friendly status

by Tunomukwathi Asino

The Centre Region Bicycle Coalition is working on making the Centre Region the second "Bike Friendly Community" in the state.

Philadelphia is the only certified bicycle city in Pennsylvania, said Brian A. Dempsey, professor of environmental engineering at Penn State and associate director of the Penn State Institutes of the Environment. It was awarded bronze status by the League of American Bicyclists, a national organization based in Washington, D. C. representing 57 million cyclists.

Dempsey, who is also the president of The Centre Region Bicycle Coalition, said The Centre Region Bicycle Coalition (CRBC) was formed in 2000 as an advocacy group for biking and alternative transportation.

He said CRBC is a member of the League of American Bicyclists (LAB). Chuck Anderson, outgoing president of CRBC, is a LAB-certified bicycle safety instructor and

"...Pedestrians and bicyclists are the indicator organisms for quality of life in a community..."

--Brian Dempsey

has been giving classes at Penn State and the community for many years. Many members of CRBC are also individual members of LAB.

CRBC worked with the Borough in submitting a Bicycle-friendly-community application about five years ago and is now working with the Centre Region Council of Governments (COG), with representatives from the six municipalities—State College, College Twp, Patton Twp, Ferguson Twp, Harris Twp, and Halfmoon Twp—on a plan.

"Our main motivation was to maintain and enhance the quality of life in the State College area," Dempsey said. "It's been said that pedestrians and bicyclists are the indicator organisms for quality of life in a community; [that] if you see a lot of pedestrians and bicyclists, in addition to cars, trucks, buses, then that's an indication that the community

is vital and a good place to be."

For a community to apply for the Bicycle Friendly Community designation, there are five standards, or "E's," determined by the League of American Bicyclists.

The first is engineering. A community needs to have a complete, connected and well-maintained bicycling network.

The second is education. There need to be community-wide safe routes to school programs that include bicycling education and courses for adults in the community. In addition the community needs to educate motorists and cyclists on their rights and responsibilities as road users.

Third is encouragement. The community needs to have an up-to-date bicycle map, and a celebration of national bike month with community rides, a Bike to Work Day and a media outreach campaign are pre-

ferred. Alternatively or in conjunction, the community must play host to major cycling events or rides and an active bicycle advocacy group.

Fourth is enforcement: Do law enforcement officers have training on the rights and responsibilities of all road users? Do they use bikes?

The fifth is evaluation. There need to be a specific plan or program to reduce cyclist or motor vehicle crashes. A community needs to have a current comprehensive bicycle plan.

"The Bicycle Friendly Community Program provides incentives, hands-on assistance, and award recognition for communities that actively support bicycling. A Bicycle Friendly Community welcomes cyclists by providing safe accommodation for cycling and encouraging people to bike for transportation and recreation," says the League of American Bicyclists Web site.

see Coalition, pg. 13

## from Diabetes, pg. 10

Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas which helps the body's cells process sugar. If the cells are resistant to it, sugar builds up in the bloodstream. This can lead to type 2 diabetes. Type 1 diabetes, a much less common form of the disease, occurs when the pancreas produces little or no insulin.

### Where the sidewalk ends

Our everyday surroundings—the route we take to work, the workplaces themselves, the grocery store, the billboards and ads we see—can have a big impact on the way we live our lives. Urban planners and public health researchers call this the “built environment.”

Studies on daily life in various communities—big cities, suburbs, and rural areas—suggest that our built environments may affect how much physical activity we engage in on a regular basis. Neighborhoods with plenty of sidewalks

“Raising the awareness is the first part of making the community a healthier place and an easier place for people with diabetes to live.”

--Sue Trainor

and bike paths tend to encourage biking and walking, while neighborhoods with narrow roads and little space for pedestrians tend to make people want to drive more.

Chuck Anderson is very familiar with the bike paths in State College, and how pedestrian-friendly the city is. He teaches classes on bicycling, and cycles 9 miles round-trip to work nearly every day of the year. He is a board member of both the Centre Region Bicycle Coalition and PCOD.

The walk-ability and bike-ability of

neighborhoods in the city can vary widely, he said, though much depends on how much effort a person is willing to make.

“In State College proper, it’s anywhere from impossible to fairly easy to make the choice to walk or bike,” Anderson said. In areas that are farther out, he said, it’s tougher for people to get around without a car. For example, in his cycling classes he gets questions about safe bike routes from people who live in Gray’s Woods.

“State College isn’t the most pedestrian-friendly place,” he said, mentioning crosswalk signals that seem to rush people across quickly to make way for car traffic.

But the biggest challenge is perception, he said. In European cities, more people tend to walk, bike, and take transit to get from point A to point B.

“In this country, you’re born and raised to drive your car everywhere,” Anderson said. Unfortunately, reliance on a car promotes the kind of inactivity that contributes to diabetes risk.

### You want fries with that?

Another aspect of the built environment that influences health is the constant presence of food and advertising that encourages people to eat frequently. Trainor described the challenges her patients face when they have opportunities to snack constantly throughout the day

She listed several places where people are now encouraged to eat, places where food wasn’t available in the past. Gas stations used to sell only gas, but now they offer snacks and large-sized beverages. Big home improvement stores once sold only hardware, but now many have a hot dog stand out front.

Trainor said it’s difficult to fight the impulse to eat when food is available everywhere and advertising constantly encourages us to eat.

“You start to feel hungry, even if you’re

see Diabetes, pg. 13

You  
are  
never  
alone

Centre County

## Women’s Resource Center

Serving victims of domestic violence,  
sexual assault & stalking

- shelter • counseling • advocacy
- safe • free • confidential

**24 HOUR HOTLINE**

**234-5050**

**1-877-234-5050 toll free**



## FRESH, LOCAL, ORGANIC, NUTRITIOUS VEGETABLES



### JADE FAMILY FARM

(John  
and  
Dana  
Eisenstein)

2010 Harvest Share Program  
Certified Organic Produce

Get a boxful of fresh organic vegetables  
every week during the growing season

**Full, Half, or “a la Carte”**

*(you choose only what you want)*

Shares delivered weekly

call 717 527-4719, visit [www.jadefamilyfarm.com](http://www.jadefamilyfarm.com).

Or email [jadefamilyfarm@gmail.com](mailto:jadefamilyfarm@gmail.com).

# Disabilities info expanded at Voicesweb.org

by Joel Solkoff

I learned something 15 years ago when I became unable to walk. Yes, there was the grief over losing a power I had once cherished. I loved to walk. At Columbia, I walked routinely from the 116th Street campus to the Village. In San Francisco, I routinely walked from the top of Telegraph to the Potrero Hill. At Cheltenham High School in Wyncotte PA, I won a varsity letter in cross country—where the standard event was a two-and-one-half mile run.

When I look back excessively, I am at risk of truly living in the past. Especially noteworthy, I learned that thanks to battery-powered mobility devices, known as scooters and power chairs, that I can and have been living a productive and enjoyable life.

How I learned this lesson and how I had the good sense to apply it is a subject for a different Voices medium; namely, our Web page. This column is limited to 800 words and I have much more to say. Bill Eichman, Voice's crafty webmaster, has come up with a solution—From Where I Sit now has online editions. Turn your browsers to [voicesweb.org/joelsolkoff](http://voicesweb.org/joelsolkoff) for these new Online From Where I Sit blogs:

**Blog 1: Appreciation of Helen Keller.** Helen Keller is the hero of the self-help for individuals with physical disabilities movement to which I belong. In 1903 Keller wrote about her experiences taking college examinations, "Just then the proctor informs you that the time is up. With a feeling of intense disgust you kick the mass of rubbish into a corner and go home, your head full of revolutionary schemes to abolish the divine right of professors to ask questions without the consent of the questioned."

Keller was both blind and unable to hear. She wrote these words in her autobiography *The Story of My Life* on a typewriter. She could not see what she wrote. She had the option of using a Braille device, a process Keller thought too slow and only used the device for making notes. The story of Keller's writing her story has been extensively published. Keller's words themselves are so astoundingly beautiful.

Consider: "Even in the days before my Teacher came, I used to feel along the square stiff hedges, and guided by the sense of smell



would find the first violets and lilies." The described intensity of Keller's need and drive to express herself must be experienced directly. Readers are encouraged to download *The Story of My Life* at the American Foundation for the Blind, [www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org) and especially to comment on my view that Helen Keller is the George Washington of the Disability Rights Movement.

**Blog 2. Association for the Blind in Blair and Clearfield counties** (also including Centre County). I have just been hired as Employment Specialist for the Altoona-based Association for the Blind. Assistive technology for the blind is too astounding to discuss succinctly. In the blog, I plan, among other issues, to describe in detail the technology as well as demographics for the blind in each of the counties we serve.

My director Joseph Fagnani will have me focus most of my attention on two tasks.

1. Helping to find jobs for low-vision clients.
2. Writing funding proposals to get supplies, thus making it easier to obtain contracts and eventually expanding the scope of our services.

I am commuting from State College to Altoona one day and telecommuting the rest of the week. In this blog, I will describe the contrast (as I see it) between State College and Altoona. What a contrast.

**Blog 3. Legal Advice on Social Security Disability.** My attorney and friend Peter Pinnola, whose office is in suburban Philadelphia, answers questions online about Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). Peter is a member of the National Organization of Social Security Claims Representatives. My experience with lawyers not a member of this association is bad. They gave me incorrect information.

A major theme of my column is the notion of having a permanent disability and still being able to work. Peter's advice will also provide details on issues and dangers in getting off SSDI and getting off it properly without risking the option of returning to SSDI if necessary.

Finally, I recognize that my columns put me in danger of coming across as someone who does not see the value of emotional counseling—psychiatrists, psychologists, MSWs, and therapists of various incarnations.

To the contrary, I love all of them (Freudian, Jungian, Adlerian, existential, and feminist therapies). Therapy is often critical in helping people with disabilities find the tools (including emotional tools) to lead meaningful lives. Therapy, however, can never be a substitute



This column is limited to 800 words and I have much more to say. Bill Eichman, Voice's crafty webmaster, has come up with a solution—From Where I Sit now has online editions.

for the right physical tools. My mantra is "durable medical equipment, durable medical equipment."

—Joel Solkoff, author of *The Politics of Food*. Contact him at [jsolkoff@gmail.com](mailto:jsolkoff@gmail.com). See more at Joel's blog: [voicesweb.org/joelsolkoff](http://voicesweb.org/joelsolkoff).

## Voices Progressive of the Year



Photo by Tamara Conrad  
Pictured from left, Barb and Bob Brownlee, Mary Vollero and Mayor Elizabeth Goreham. Voices awarded Mary Vollero with its first Progressive of the Year award at its sixth annual Fun!Raiser March 22. Vollero led the fight for voting machines with a verifiable paper trail. Vollero has served as either a poll worker or poll watcher since 2001 and is a member of the State College Peace Center. More photos at [voicesweb.org](http://voicesweb.org).

from Coalition, pg. 10

The Bike-to-Work-Week will be May 1 to May 8. There will be a street fair in front of Schlow Library on May 1 including information about bicycling, displays of bikes, health and environment-related booths and information, and a bicycle rodeo for kids. The second annual 'Four Townships and a Borough' bicycle ride is on Sunday, May 2.

According to the League of American Bicyclists Web site, encouraging bicycling is a simple way towards improving public health. With more people bicycling, communities experience reduced traffic demands, improved air quality and greater physical fitness.

Bicycle Friendly Communities are viewed as places with a high quality of life, where people want to live, work, and visit. Building such a community can translate into a more connected, physically active, and environmentally sustainable communi-

ty that enjoys increased property values, business growth, increased tourism, and more transportation choices for citizens, according to the League of American Bicyclists.

"I'd have to say that although access by car is also essential, there's sometimes a danger that in the process of building roads and other infrastructure to accommodate cars only, there's a tendency to make the community less attractive for walking and biking, and that's a sign of degradation in the quality of life," Dempsey said.

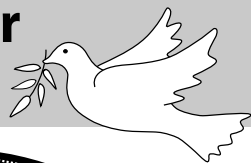
He said there were an increasing number of plans for construction of automobile-centered transit that will make it more difficult for bikers and pedestrians to get around.

"We have several areas that are examples of that now. For example, think about the intersection of University [Drive] and College [Avenue]. It's a very dangerous place to get across for bikes or pedestrians," Dempsey said.



Mayor Elizabeth Goreham leads the "Four Townships & a Borough" bike ride in 2009. Bike-To-Work-Week runs May 1 to May 8 this year. Photo by Travis Preeble

**State College Peace Center**  
[www.scpeacecenter.org](http://www.scpeacecenter.org)



**April 22: Hearts and Minds (1974)**

**Peter Davis' landmark documentary unflinchingly confronts the United States' involvement in Vietnam. Hearts and Minds is an overwhelming emotional experience and the controversial winner of the 1974 Academy Award for Best Documentary.**

*All films at 7:30 PM, State College Municipal Building, 243 South Allen Street, Room 201*

**STAND FOR PEACE**  
**in State College**  
 at the Allen Street Gates  
 College Ave. and Allen Streets  
 Wednesdays 5:00-6:00  
 and Saturdays 1:30-2:30

Sponsored by



from Diabetes, pg. 11

not," she said. Along with inactivity, being overweight can contribute to diabetes risk.

**A diabetes tsunami**

Trainor began working as a diabetes nurse educator for Centre Medical and Surgical Associates seven years ago. She said she quickly realized that the community's need for diabetes care and education was growing rapidly. She cited statistics that nearly 10 percent of the population already has diabetes, and one in four people in the U.S. is considered pre-diabetic.

Concern about what she calls the oncoming "tsunami" of new diabetes cases is part of what led her, Anderson, and colleagues to establish PCOD. The primary mission of the organization is empowerment of the community through awareness of diabetes risks. Trainor and Anderson in particular want people to understand how behavior such as healthy dietary choices and regular physical activity can positively impact health.

"Raising the awareness is the first part of making the community a healthier place and an easier place for people with diabetes to live," Trainor said.

**GEMINI**  
 ENTERPRISES • TAMR INC

**www.geminitime.com**  
**601 W. College Ave State College**

**Specializing In: Mercedes Benz, Porsche, BMW, Volvo, VW, Audi, and Complete European Auto Repair**

**Bosch Car Service**

**814-234-0312**  
**M-F 9AM to 7PM**

# ReStore provides low-priced building supplies

photos and text  
by Lace Abel-Bey

ReStore recently celebrated its third anniversary serving Centre County. This photo essay offers a new look inside ReStore's location in Bellefonte.

ReStore sells donated new and used building materials at affordable prices to the public. Proceeds support Habitat for Humanity of Greater Centre County.

Families like the Braleys pictured below sometimes travel long distances to purchase building materials at discounted

prices to renovate their homes, businesses or organizations.

ReStore accepts building materials and furniture in good working order. Donations are tax deductible and provide low-cost materials for families on tight budgets while significantly reducing landfill waste. Construction waste is the single largest material in landfills.

ReStore is located at 1155 Zion Road in Bellefonte and open to the public from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday.

For more information visit:  
<http://www.habitatgcc.org/ReStore.html>.



The entrance to the ReStore building is visible from Zion Road and includes a loading dock. ReStore accepts large donations of new and used building materials and sells them at affordable prices.



ReStore offers replacement windows as well as doors and plumbing fixtures.



A volunteer assists Bill Braley (left) dry wall for his family's ministry.



ReStore also sells used donated items ranging from dishwashers to tiles.



A volunteer helps Kristen Braley load her truck with merchandise for a renovation.

**The STATE THEATRE**  
130 W. College Ave.  
Downtown State College  
814-272-0606

Sign up for email updates at [StateTickets.org](http://StateTickets.org)

check us out on  

**ECHO & the BUNNYMEN**  
with special guest Hatcham Social  
Wed, Apr 28  
8 pm


sponsored by 

**Freddy Cole**  
Fri, Apr 30  
8 pm

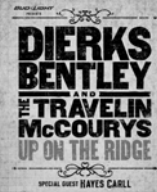
sponsored by 

**Dierks Bentley and The Travelin McCourys**  
with special guest Hayes Carl

Mon, May 17  
8 pm

media sponsor 

**John Hiatt and the Combo**  
Fri, May 14  
8 pm

# Huh?

What did you say?  
Could you repeat that?

**Albrecht Audiology**




Judith Albrecht Janyce K. Mose  
Certified/Licensed Audiologists

- Cell Phone Ear Pieces
- Custom Hearing Protectors (music, motor sports, shooting)
- TV/telephone amplifiers
- Latest Hearing Aids

814-867-HEAR (4327)  
[www.albrechtaudiology.com](http://www.albrechtaudiology.com)  
Parkway Medical Center • State College