

Photo exhibit focuses on neighborhood health needs

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Movin' for Life Photovoice Project participant Cynthia Atkins stands with her bike at a park near her home. The city-run park offers activities such as water aerobics, swimming, biking and a walking trail. (Photo from the Tulane Prevention Research Center)

Empty streets, community gardens and abandoned buildings were some perspectives captured by 25 New Orleans residents participating in the Photovoice Project led by the [Tulane Prevention Research Center](#) (PRC).

The photo project is part of PRC's [Movin' for LIFE](#) (Lasting Improvements for Fitness and Energy) campaign, during which local residents in the Upper and Lower Ninth Wards and New Orleans East met in small groups to discuss the needs of their community.

Each meeting focused on a health topic, and participants were given assignments to document what helps them to be healthy, as well as challenges they have faced in leading a healthy lifestyle.

Participant Brian Washington photographed an empty street.

"There's no children playing outside because it's not safe to be outside sometimes," said Washington. "We have to make a safer environment for the children."

Helen Robinson photographed her neighbor in his garden.

"Mr. Franklin tends to his garden, even after having surgery and he grows many different types of vegetables like mustard greens, and shares them with his neighbors," said Robinson. "I want to be more like Mr. Franklin."

Another participant, Cynthia Atkins, photographed herself with a bike at a nearby park.

“The park has activities to help stay fit, such as water aerobics, swimming, biking and a walking trail,” said Atkins. “It helps our neighborhood grow and stay healthy.”

Jeanette Gustat, a clinical associate professor of epidemiology at the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and investigator at the Tulane PRC, said the goal of the project is “to gain a deeper understanding of how neighborhoods influence residents’ health.”

“We also want to help share their ideas and suggestions with the broader community, including decision-makers, so their voice is amplified.”

On Thursday, Oct. 26, from 5–8 p.m. the photographers will showcase their work during a free, public exhibit at the NORDC Sanchez Multi-Purpose Center, 1616 Caffin Ave.

For information, visit movin4life.org.