BHF staff and a community partner traveled to Denver over the summer to represent Wallowa County at the 2012 National All-American Cities Conference and Awards Ceremony. Sponsored by the National Civic League, the All-American Cities Award recognizes ten communities each year for outstanding civic accomplishments. To win, each community must demonstrate innovation, inclusiveness, civic engagement, and cross sector collaboration by describing successful efforts to address pressing local challenges.

This year's challenge focused on grade level reading, specifically, what communities are doing to collaboratively address successful 3rd grade reading scores. Continuing a long standing relationship with the schools, BHF began collaborating with districts and community partners on this project early in the Fall of 2011, gather data, unifying objectives and focusing on effective programming. After an initial Letter of Intent, Wallowa County was invited to submit a full proposal, which included a Community Solutions Action Plan detailing how we would align programming efforts to address three key areas: Summer Learning Loss, After-School Programming and Chronic Absences. Wallowa County was selected by panel of peer reviewers as one of 31 finalists from a pool of 169 communities! While we did not win the award, we shone as a rural community and were praised for being a leader in our collaborative efforts! We are extremely proud of all the agencies, schools, business and families that make Wallowa County not only a fabulous place to raise a reader, but a nationally recognized community that supports the growth and success of all children and families!

Your Kids are Hungry.....For YOU!!!!!

Good food, great conversations and loads of laughs— that's what family dinners are made of! Whether you're cooking a meal or going to your favorite restaurant, what your kids really want at the dinner table is YOU! If busy schedules are making it hard for your family to pencil in regular family meals, take a "time out" to consider all the benefits of gathering around the dinner table. Family dinners are about more than just sharing a meal. Did you know that eating dinner frequently with your children reduces their risk of substance abuse?

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Hungry for YOU!!!!

Research by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University consistently finds that the more often children eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use other drugs. Family meals are the perfect time to talk to your kids and to listen to what’s on their mind.

CASA Columbia’s 2011 family dinners report finds that compared to teens who have frequent family dinners (five to seven per week), those who have infrequent family dinners (fewer than three per week) are almost four times likelier to use tobacco; more than twice as likely to use alcohol; two-and-a-half times likelier to use marijuana; and almost four times likelier to say they expect to try drugs in the future. “YOU are the more potent and underutilized tool to prevent your children from using substances and engaging in risky behavior.” ~Joseph A. Califano, Jr.

September 24, 2012 is National Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children.

Watch your child’s backpack this month for a flyer containing a list of local restaurants giving family discounts on that day for families looking to share a meal together!

Call the Wallowa County Prevention Collaborative at Building Healthy Families for more information! 541-426-9411.