

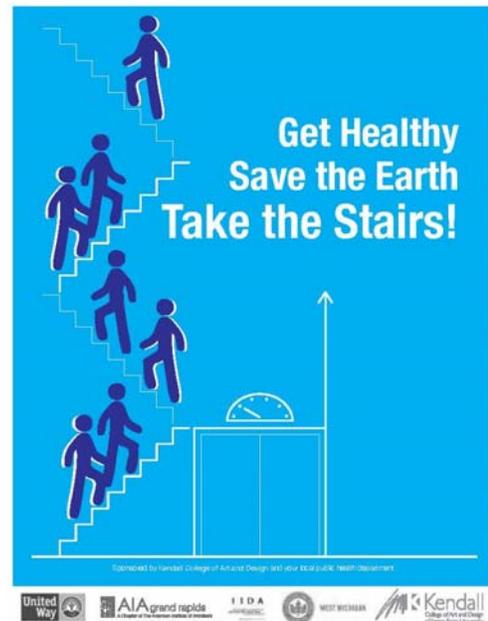
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Contacts:

Dori Peters, BS - Public Health Muskegon County –  
231.724.1292

Kristina Wieghmink, M.Ed. - Ottawa County Department of  
Public Health – 616.494.5597

Lisa LaPlante – Kent County Health Department –  
616.632.7182



## **Partnership Urges Public to *Get Healthy, Save the Earth, Take the Stairs!***

Escalators and elevators make our lives a little easier, but at what cost? America is dealing with an obesity epidemic, and inactivity is a contributing factor. Taking the stairs is one way to be more physically active. Choosing the stairs instead of the elevator is a simple way for people to add physical activity to their day in addition to saving on energy costs to run expensive elevators and escalators. This September 3-6 is **Take the Stairs Week** in West Michigan. We are asking all people who are able, to take the stairs. This practice also allows those who have physical needs access to elevators and ramps.

Graphic designs promoting healthy behavior have been shown to motivate stair users, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Kendall College of Art and Design of Ferris State University (KCAD) created signage to promote active living in West Michigan. The message in the signage, **“Get Healthy, Save the Earth, Take the Stairs!”** also points to a greener option, the stairs, over energy consuming elevators.

“Stair posters at the point of decision are environmental design cues that will also reduce carbon footprints,” said Joyce Lee, FAIA, LEED AP, founder of Stair Week. “The US Green Building Council has recently taken the lead to introduce a LEED pilot credit called Design for Active Occupants.”

National studies promoting physical activity and health say that signs at prominent locations are an effective tool in encouraging people to choose using the stairs over taking the elevators. “The built environment is important in giving people a means to include physical activity into their daily lives,” said Ken Kraus, Director of Public Health Muskegon County. “Take the Stairs Week encourages people to make use of what is readily available in the internal environment.” Stairs and ramps are equally encouraged in buildings to accommodate people of all abilities – an important element in inclusive design.

“The Take the Stairs campaign is an opportunity for three different County Health Departments to work together,” Lisa Stefanovsky, Ottawa County Health Officer, added. “We know we all have the same health challenges and want to promote healthy lifestyles throughout all of West Michigan.”

Numerous agencies and organizations are working together to promote **Take the Stairs Week**:

**The American Institute of Architects, Grand Rapids Chapter** - [www.aiagr.org](http://www.aiagr.org)  
**International Interior Design Association, Michigan Chapter** - [www.michiganiida.org](http://www.michiganiida.org)  
**U.S. Green Building Council, West Michigan Chapter** - [www.usgbcwm.org](http://www.usgbcwm.org)  
**Heart of West Michigan United Way** - [www.hwmuw.org](http://www.hwmuw.org)  
**Greater Ottawa County United Way** - [www.ottawaunitedway.org](http://www.ottawaunitedway.org)  
**United Way of the Lakeshore** - [www.unitedwaylakeshore.org](http://www.unitedwaylakeshore.org)  
**Kent County Health Department** - [www.accesskent.com/Health](http://www.accesskent.com/Health)  
**Ottawa County Department of Public Health** - [www.miottawa.org/ochd](http://www.miottawa.org/ochd)  
**Muskegon County Public Health** - [www.muskegonhealth.net](http://www.muskegonhealth.net)  
**Kendall College of Art & Design of Ferris State University** - [www.kcad.edu](http://www.kcad.edu)

“We applaud the promotion of **Take the Stairs Week** by all of the organizations involved,” said Adam London, Administrative Health Officer of the Kent County Health Department. “Sometimes, a gentle reminder can make it easier to select the healthier option. Taking the right steps during **Take the Stairs Week** could lead to people making it a habit that goes well beyond September 6.”

Free color signs are available to businesses and organizations with escalators or elevators, while supplies last, through the Heart of West Michigan United Way. Funds for the signs were provided by Stair Week partners. Business with fewer than 50 full-time staff members may request up to two signs free of charge. The 8.5” x 11” signs can be mounted on walls near elevator call buttons, in waiting areas, by stair doors and/or other visually prominent locations.

We have also provided comments from several partners digitally for your use; these can be found at <http://youtu.be/d8aVolYJfbo>. The complete media toolkit on **Take the Stairs Week** can be found at <http://ow.ly/mOa1U>.

## **MEDIA INFORMATION ONLY:**

The partners invite members of the media to a kick-off breakfast for Take the Stairs Week. The event will be held at the Grand Rapids Art Museum, 101 Monroe Center, on Tuesday, September 3, 2012, at 8:30 a.m. Representatives from the various organizations will be available for one-on-one interviews. Please come by, enjoy breakfast and get photos/B-roll of the event. Questions regarding the media breakfast can be sent to [Lisa.LaPlante@kentcountymi.gov](mailto:Lisa.LaPlante@kentcountymi.gov) or call 616.632.7182.