



## Creating Healthier Communities with Non-traditional Partners

### Intervention Summary

The Airport neighborhood is located on the southeast end of Modesto, the largest city in Stanislaus County. The LHD staff has been working within the neighborhood for a number of years with the goal of increasing access to affordable fresh fruits and vegetables. This neighborhood has been surveyed as a CX<sup>3</sup> site, and based on need, has been selected as a PSE intervention site for promoting healthy food access. Furthermore, this neighborhood has been identified as a food desert due to the community's lack of a supermarket and limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables. This past year, the LHD formed a new partnership with Interfaith Ministries, and collaborated with Orville Wright Healthy Start and Tuolumne River Trust, to establish a free farmers market within the Airport neighborhood. Interfaith Ministries is a faith-based organization located within the Airport Neighborhood that functions as a local food pantry primarily serving residents from the city of Modesto. Interfaith Ministries has been instrumental in supporting this PSE intervention via their Feed Modesto Project which is a free mobile farmers market that provides fresh produce to low-income neighborhoods like Airport. The market began in February 2015 and is held monthly at the local community center. LHD staff conducts outreach during the market and provides healthy recipes as well.

### Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

This PSE initially was to work with the local small stores within the Airport neighborhood and provide them with technical assistance so that they could bring in affordable fresh fruits and vegetable to sell. However, after several forums with parents and Airport residents, LHD staff learned that most of these stores were unsafe and really catered to those seeking to purchase alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Residents clearly stated that they would not go to these stores even if they sold produce. As a result of these

conversations, the alternative idea of starting a school based farm stand was formed. LHD staff then learned about the services Interfaith Ministries was providing and met with them to identify strategies and form a partnership. The one concern Interfaith Ministries had is not having funding for space/rental fees on a monthly basis. The Airport Healthy Start was able to secure an agreement with the school and the community center that enabled Interfaith Ministries to utilize the community center free of charge.

The free mobile farmers market began February 2015 and has served an average of 75 families per month.

## **Future Directions/Sustainable Success**

The Short-term goal is continue the free mobile farmers market on a monthly basis in collaboration with Interfaith Ministries, Airport Healthy Start and Tuolumne River Trust.

The Long-term goal is to increase access to the free mobile farmers market to twice a month in the Airport neighborhood. Once the community center's industrial kitchen is completed in 2016, classes and food demonstrations may be able to be offered in conjunction with the farmers market.

Additionally, Interfaith Ministries Food Pantry is transitioning to a "Healthy Pantry" by increasing the amount of fresh produce they provide in their emergency groceries package. In an effort to support this transition, as well as the mobile farmers market, LHD has partnered with them to facilitate the IOE and conduct nutrition education classes at their site for SNAP-Ed eligible clients. LHD will use their classroom facilities to teach these classes at no charge. Furthermore, Interfaith Ministries has agreed to provide food incentives for IOE participants upon completion of the workshop series. Currently, Interfaith Ministries serves over 2 million meals a year which includes more than 36 thousand children. This newly formed partnership is very strong and viable with the possibilities to expand not only the farmer's markets but also community education.

## **Contact information about this Narrative**

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