



Creating Policy, Systems, Environmental Change: Success Story and Lessons Learned

Title

Utilizing Youth Engagement to Increase Structured Physical Activity Opportunities in South Los Angeles

Intervention Summary

The South Los Angeles community is disproportionately affected by high rates of overweight and obesity at 37.3% and 32.7%, respectively, and is known for high crime rates and lack of safe places to play or recreate¹. In addition, in a survey conducted collaboratively by The California Endowment, Brotherhood Crusade, and WestEd, it was determined that SNAP-Ed eligible students in South Los Angeles were not engaging in the recommended amount of daily physical activity. Findings showed that 48%, 62% and 57% of 7th, 9th and 11th graders engaged in less than 200 minutes of moderate to physical activity per week, and 72%, 65% and 83% spend less than 30 minutes playing during physical education class.² The challenges faced by the South Los Angeles community led Brotherhood Crusade, a subcontractor of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health - Nutrition Education Obesity Prevention (NEOP), to focus on a policy, systems, environmental (PSE) strategy focused on increasing structured physical activity opportunities within South Los Angeles. To do so, the community based organization implemented a youth engagement program utilizing the Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) framework. Through the framework, Brotherhood Crusade recruited a youth team from across South Los Angeles who led efforts in conducting research around the PSE strategy, increasing community knowledge and awareness of the importance of healthy eating and active living, and presenting to stakeholders.

With guidance from Brotherhood Crusade Champions for Change staff, the youth were able to identify a strategy to effectively increase structured physical activity opportunities

¹ Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology. Key Indicators of Health by Service Planning Area; March 2013.

² The California Endowment, WestEd and Brotherhood Crusade. California School Climate, Health and Learning Survey (CAL-SCHLS) System developed for and supported by California Department of Education, 2011.

through Soccer for Success, a free after school program that offers sports based physical activity to children and youth. Youth conducted research on existing Soccer for Success school sites and conducted surveys to determine current participation in the program, other existing physical activity opportunities offered at the school, and student interest in the program. The youth team also conducted research on new potential qualifying school sites with the capacity to host Soccer for Success programming on campus, and the willingness to implement shared joint use agreements for the program. Another key component in advancing the PSE strategy was the partnership development with multiple Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) schools and Beyond the Bell, a long standing after school program offered at the majority of LAUSD schools. Beyond the Bell program components focus on academic tutorial, recreation and enrichment. Brotherhood Crusade was able to facilitate a partnership between Soccer for Success and Beyond the Bell, to ensure structured physical activity is incorporated into Beyond the Bell programming. Moreover, Brotherhood Crusade youth encouraged Beyond the Bell to also incorporate nutrition education into programming as well, making the after school program a more robust, health-minded program.

To encourage participation in after school structured physical activity opportunities, youth provided nutrition education and physical activity promotion to students and community members. Utilizing California Department of Public Health (CDPH) approved resources and recipes, youth conducted presentations as well as healthy food and beverage taste tests to garner community and student support for participating in the aforementioned program. The youth conducted over 40 healthy food and beverage demonstrations at community events, during Soccer for Success programming and after school to encourage participation in Soccer for Success.

Youth were able to increase opportunities for participation in physical activity and expand after school structured physical activity programs to a number of qualifying South Los Angeles school sites including John Muir Middle, Augustus Hawkins High, Menlo Elementary, Budlong Elementary, 52nd Elementary, Danny Bakewell Senior Primary, and Markham Middle. As a result of the widespread promotion and education of the importance of physical activity, Soccer for Success was also implemented as a during school program at Audubon Middle and Lou Danzler. Currently, over 2,500 South Los Angeles SNAP-Ed eligible youth have been reached through the structured physical activity PSE strategy.

Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

A challenge during program implementation was navigating through the processes and systems of the Los Angeles Unified School District, as well as ensuring all entities such as school principals, school administration, and Beyond the Bell were on the same page in moving forward with implementation of the after school physical activity program. In regard to staying true to the YPAR framework, a barrier that surfaced during the summer months was youth participation and engagement. A lesson learned is to ensure participating youth are engaged throughout the entire project, and not provided with tasks that do not resonate with them.

Future Directions/Sustainable Success

Short term goals for the project include:

- Continue working with the youth, key stakeholders, and potential qualifying school sites to ensure structured physical activity opportunities are available to SNAP-Ed eligible students within South Los Angeles.
- Youth will continue to promote the benefits of physical activity to ensure the PSE strategy is sustainable.
- Through a partnership with Community Health Councils - Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH), Brotherhood Crusade plans to expand Soccer for Success physical activity opportunities to four additional schools via shared use agreements, Angeles Mesa Elementary, 59th Street Elementary, Crenshaw High and Washington High. Efforts to support implementation are anticipated to begin in October 2014.
- Continue to utilize RE-AIM Evaluation to track progress and ensure sustainability of the Complete Streets Initiative.

To ensure sustainability for the long term, Brotherhood Crusade was instrumental in incorporating the Soccer for Success program into existing Beyond the Bell programming. As a result, long term goals for the project include:

- Utilizing the Soccer for Success structured physical activity program as a platform for Beyond the Bell programming.
- In collaboration with Community Health Councils and Beyond the Bell, and contingent on parent consent, Brotherhood Crusade hopes to eventually expand the structured physical activity program to incorporate baseline and quarterly assessments (BMI, aerobic capacity, body composition, strength and endurance, etc.) of participants, release of school records to monitor academic performance, and refer youth to counseling and therapy as appropriate. These factors will not only assist in evaluating the program and providing robust data on physical activity interventions, but will also encourage the support and future success of SNAP-Ed eligible youth.

Contact information about this Narrative

Local Health Department Grant Name: Los Angeles County Public Health Department
Grant #: 13-20467

Author's Name: Julie Tolentino, MPH, Dipa Shah-Patel, MPH, RD

Phone: 213-351-7833

Email: dshah@ph.lacounty.gov

This material was produced by the California Department of Public Health's Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch with funding from USDA SNAP-Ed, known in California as CalFresh. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. CalFresh provides assistance to low-income households and can help buy nutritious food for better health. For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit www.CaChampionsForChange.net.



Creating Policy, Systems, Environmental Change: Success Story and Lessons Learned

Title

Creating Healthy Environments in Child Care: Adopting a Healthy Celebrations Policy

Intervention Summary

Head Start and State-funded preschool programs work directly with low-income families, and are therefore strategic partners for promoting healthy eating and active living to SNAP-eligible families of children ages 0-5. However, these programs often lack the financial and personnel resources to prioritize nutrition and physical activity initiatives. After conducting a needs assessment for child care providers utilizing the Self-Assessment Questionnaire in Contra Costa Child Care Council's Best Practices for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Environment manual, ten Head Start and State preschools identified establishing a policy on food served during celebrations and special occasions as a priority area. Training, technical assistance, printed materials, and curricula improving the food that is served during celebrations such as holidays and birthdays were provided to support this project.

Relationship building and buy-in from child care directors and teachers was necessary in the policy development process. Meetings were held with teachers to describe the benefits to health of young children by establishing a policy, and challenges related to implementation were discussed. Teachers were trained on strategies on how to present such a policy and were provided with talking points for use with parents around adopting healthy celebrations in the classroom. Resources such as recipes with healthy recipes and non-food celebration ideas were also provided to teachers and parents.

Childcare directors expressed the need for templates that included sample policy language. Champions for Change Early Childhood staff provided several templates for directors to choose from. The final draft was signed by the child care directors for all Head Start sites and all state preschool sites affiliated with the ABC Unified School District.

With the adoption of a formal written policy on healthy celebrations, coordinators could inform parents of their policy and provide them with healthier alternatives to celebrate birthdays, holidays, and other special occasions. This included either a) more nutritious snack/food items or b) non-food items that could be brought to classrooms. Additionally, the written policy

introduced alternative, non-food activities for teachers to highlight holidays or birthdays such as “show and tell”, reading a child’s favorite book, or crafts. To support the adoption of this policy and increase compliance by parents, Champions for Change Early Childhood staff provided nutrition education presentations and food demonstrations at parent involvement days throughout the school district.

Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

The most significant barrier to the implementation of this project has been scheduling and coordination. Due to limited resources, preschool sites do not have sufficient time to spend on staff development, planning, and meetings with non-school partners. This has been overcome by frequent communication, coordination with our partner’s administrative staff, and meetings/updates with the Director of Child Care. Another barrier to this project was initial buy-in from child care providers. There was some initial hesitation by providers to shift practices from allowing “treat” foods for special occasions to encouraging healthier options or non-food activities. To address this, the Champions for Change Early Childhood Program provided staff with sample policies that outlined allowable foods, non-food party favors, and classroom activity ideas for families and providers. Early Childhood staff were trained on talking points to communicate with parents about the importance of the new policy.

Future Directions/Sustainable Success

Short-term goals:

- Review assessment results to identify additional areas of opportunities to improve the nutrition and physical activity environment
- Monitor policy implementation for quality and sustainability
- Incorporate Champions for Change themes into celebrations (e.g. ReThink Your Drink)
- Assist preschool sites with the implementation of the healthy celebrations policy for staff-specific gatherings
- Enhance health promotion efforts in the classroom by incorporating Champions for Change promotional materials such as posters, handouts, and classroom decorations
- Link families with educational resources on nutrition and physical activity, including nutrition assistance programs
- Utilize RE-AIM evaluation results to continue to make improvements and share positive findings with other Early Childhood partners to encourage their participation.
- Identify additional PSE Projects

Short-term goals will be accomplished by Early Childhood partners continuing to engage in the self-assessment process annually or semi-annually to determine opportunities for expanding work. These efforts will be supported by partnerships with Champions for Change funded agencies and USDA approved resources that are available through the current grant cycle.

Long-term goals:

- Empower Early Childhood sites to continue the healthy celebrations policy work after the completion of this grant cycle
- Build capacity among Early Childhood providers to incorporate nutrition and physical activity promotion as part of regular activities
- Establish relationships with relevant community-based organizations (e.g. academic, social services) to support health promotion activities

Long-term goals will be accomplished by working with site leadership on considerations such as professional development, parent communication, budgeting, and planning to support healthy celebrations and other adopted PSE strategies. Partnerships with other relevant agencies will also ensure that Early Childhood partners identify a source for nutrition education and family assistance programs.

Contact information about this Narrative

Local Health Department Grant Name: Los Angeles County Public Health Department

Grant #: 13-20467

Author's Name: Leyla Marandi, MPH, Dipa Shah-Patel, MPH, RD

Phone: 213-351-7864

Email: dshah@ph.lacounty.gov

This material was produced by the California Department of Public Health's Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch with funding from USDA SNAP-Ed, known in California as CalFresh. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. CalFresh provides assistance to low-income households and can help buy nutritious food for better health. For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit www.CaChampionsForChange.net.



Creating Policy, Systems, Environmental Change

Prioritizing School Wellness: Los Angeles County Office of Education School Wellness Policy Implementation

Intervention Summary

The obesity rate among school-aged children increased from 18.9% in 1999 to 23.0% in 2008 in Los Angeles County¹. While a slight decline was observed in 2011 at 22.4%², addressing the childhood obesity remains a top priority of the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), a subcontractor of Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's Nutrition Education Obesity Prevention (NEOP) grant. As the state's largest office of education that reaches over 2 million students, LACOE committed to implementing and/or expanding existing wellness policies in 18 qualifying school districts in Los Angeles County.

School wellness policies (SWPs) provide an excellent opportunity to create and sustain a healthy school environment, promote student health, and reduce childhood obesity. Studies show that while school districts are required to adopt school wellness policies, additional support is needed for implementation, monitoring, and enforcement³. Results of key informant interviews conducted with LACOE teachers and administrators supported these findings, which found that teachers and administrators lacked the skills, time, and resources to implement SWPs.

A key element of SWP implementation is the enforcement by all district staff, including teachers, food service employees, and administrators. Accordingly, LACOE conducted 15 full and half day trainings to address the major components of school wellness included in the Coordinated School Health Model, including integration of nutrition activities, programs, and policies at both the district and school level. Attended by over 800 teachers and district staff in the summer of 2014, these trainings provided participants with the tools and essential skills to properly incorporate nutrition and physical education both in the classroom and cafeteria. Post-training evaluations administered at the close of each session indicated that participants left with a new sense of empowerment in being able to effectively integrate nutrition and physical activity into the school day and adopting healthier changes at their site, starting with their own classrooms.

While the SWPs being implemented at each of the 18 school districts differ, assessments from returning teachers indicated successful implementation of their policies. An example of this is the El Monte City School District. Through meetings and trainings, LACOE facilitated a productive working relationship between the Director of Food Service and the Director of Curriculum to better promote the link between academic success and student health. The district also benefited from the assistance of student leaders volunteering at the NEOP events (i.e. wellness fairs), which has further enhanced the outreach, promotion, and awareness of

school health to the community at large. The year culminated with the establishment of their first wellness committee, where the new rough draft of an updated wellness policy was showcased. The committee plans to bring the revised policy, which will incorporate Smart Snack Regulations, to the School Board for approval in the FFY2015. The work at El Monte City School District brought national recognition, with their elementary schools being awarded a gold award from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation. This gold-level recognition was one of six awarded throughout the nation for meeting the Alliance's stringent criteria in the categories of school nutrition services and student nutrition education.

Additional noteworthy accomplishments include the newly created ABC Community Health Coalition comprised of district staff from Artesia, Cerritos, and Hawaiian Gardens; Kaiser Permanente; Cerritos Chamber of Commerce; and the YMCA. LACOE is looking forward to leveraging resources with these organizations to strengthen their existing coalition. Furthermore, San Gabriel and Montebello Unified School District's trainings inspired a group of teachers to apply for grants that would award \$2,000 each for an edible garden. These successes speak not only to the process of getting SWPs implemented, but to the follow through and resulting success of implementation in less than one year.

References

1. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology. *Obesity and Related Mortality in Los Angeles County: A Cities and Communities Health Report*; September 2011
2. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology. *Key Indicators of Health by Service Planning Area*; March 2013
3. Chriqui JF, Resnick EA, Schneider L, Schermbeck R, Adcock T, Carrion V, Chaloupka FJ. School District Wellness Policies: Evaluating Progress and Potential for Improving Children's Health Five Years after the Federal Mandate. School Years 2006–07 through 2010-11. Vol. 3. Chicago, IL: Bridging the Gap Program, Health Policy Center, Institute for Health Research and Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2013. Available at: http://www.bridgingthegapresearch.org/research/district_wellness_policies

Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

With the adoption of the new Common Core Standards, district administrators and teachers lacked the hours, support, and resources to address and prioritize the School Wellness Policy requirements. Time limitations and scheduling conflicts created additional barriers for many School Wellness Committees to reconvene or comprehensively assess existing SWPs. On an organization level, LACOE Educational Programs were concurrently going through a restructuring process, which presented an additional complexity to NEOP's objectives; however, a county-level Coordinated School Health Partnership Committee has made a commitment to meet bi-monthly to discuss wellness programs for students and staff.

A solutions-oriented action step to strengthen SWP support amidst competing district priorities will be to better utilize School Food Service staff, who possess great potential in ensuring nutrition standards are being upheld at their respective sites. These important team members interface with children daily during meal times, and provide an ideal pathway to bring direct nutrition education and reinforcement to not only students, but to their supervisors (Food Service Directors). Similarly, expanding the nutrition knowledge base of parents through the existing local PTAs at all NEOP sponsored sites will increase the capacity for school wellness best practices be transferred to the home/family setting as well.

Future Directions/Sustainable Success

Short-term goals

- Continue collaboration across both internal LACOE divisions and district departments to gain support for SWP and reconvene wellness committees if necessary
- Identify additional “champion” administrators to provide feedback and backing to achieve SWP goals and objectives
- Assist with the scheduling of district/school wellness committee meetings and establish a protected time for ongoing meetings
- Provide continued training and technical assistance to district wellness committee on approved assessment tools
- Define roles and responsibilities of Committee members and use assessment results to develop an action plan for SWP implementation and/or expansion
- Evaluate and monitor progress of SWP implementation and provide updates to parents, students, school staff, and community members
- Provide appropriate information and training to parents on the adoption of healthy behaviors/behavior modeling at home
- Report the results/outcomes of any new activities initiated, grants applied for, or recognitions awarded
- Encourage schools to apply for the HealthierUS School Challenge

Long-term Goals

- Seek additional funding (or allocate general LACOE funds to districts) for the hiring of staff dedicated to on-site monitoring of SWP implementation
- Adopt district-wide sustainable mandates such as healthy classroom parties and non-food fundraisers
- Work with Nutrition Services to enhance cafeteria-based nutrition education and identify funding for the fruit and vegetable taste testing program in the classroom
- Identify free, sequential, evidenced-based nutrition education materials aligned with Common Core standards
- Promote consistent nutrition messaging to all participating schools and create a continuum with afterschool programming
- Receive additional recognition and awards from the Alliance or other national programs

Contact information about this Narrative

Local Health Department Grant Name: LA County Department of Public Health

Grant #: Los Angeles County Office of Education

Author’s Name: Gabriella Warner, MS, RD, Laura Magallanes, MPP, Dipa Shah-Patel, MPH, RD

Phone: 213-351-7864

Email: dshah@ph.lacounty.gov

This material was produced by the California Department of Public Health’s Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch with funding from USDA SNAP-Ed, known in California as CalFresh. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. CalFresh provides assistance to low-income households and can help buy nutritious food for better health. For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit www.CaChampionsForChange.net.



Creating Policy, Systems, Environmental Change: Success Story and Lessons Learned

Title

Transforming the Food Environment: The Role of Market Makeovers in Increasing Access to Fresh Produce

Intervention Summary

Historic Filipinotown is a community in the City of Los Angeles where the availability of and access to fresh produce is limited. There are twenty-five food retail locations in Historic Filipinotown, seventeen of which are small stores that offer no fresh produce¹. Don Baratón is a small convenience store located in this geographic area and is situated across the street from Belmont High School, a school where 74% of the student body participates in the Free and Reduced Meal Program. Over 60% of the population lives at or below <185% of the Federal Poverty Level².

In 2014, youth from Belmont High School in the FRESH Space Summer Program of the Asian Pacific Islander Obesity Prevention Alliance (APIOPA) conducted a needs assessment of Historic Filipinotown. Youth conducted walkability assessments of strategic areas in Historic Filipinotown collecting data regarding local businesses such as food retail stores as well as restaurants and bakeries. Youth then mapped the data that was collected to determine the current state of the food environment in this geographic area. APIOPA is a nonprofit agency that received grant funding through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Community Transformation Grant to increase access to fresh produce in Historic Filipinotown. Based on the results of this youth-led needs assessment, community members and stakeholders identified Don Baratón as a store that could be primed to participate in a market makeover.

¹ APIOPA FSS Historic Filipinotown WikiMap on HealthyCity.Org:
<http://www.healthycity.org/wikimap/vm/HiFi>

² U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey. American Community Survey 2008-2012 (All Races <185%), 2014.

In cultivating a relationship with Don Baratón, APIOPA requested the Champions for Change Retail Program to be a strategic partner to work towards transforming this store into a “healthy” retailer, as both programs shared the mutual goal to increase access and availability of fresh produce in markets located in low-income neighborhoods.

To enhance the findings of the FRESH Space Summer Program needs assessments, the Retail Program conducted the CX3 Food Availability and Marketing Survey to develop a nutrition scorecard for this store and identify areas of improvement. The most significant finding was that this store did not offer any fresh produce items. One of the challenges identified by the store owner was the lack of knowledge and funds to store fresh produce. To address these issues, APIOPA purchased an energy-efficient refrigeration unit to properly store fresh produce and provided basket displays to highlight the fresh produce that was brought into the store. The Retail Program provided technical assistance by offering training on proper produce storage techniques as well as creating visually appealing produce displays. Nutrition education materials, which included Champions for Change posters, price signage, and recipe card holders were displayed in the store to educate customers on the importance of consuming the daily recommended amount of fruits and vegetables.

This project began in December 2013 and the grand reopening event was held on April 5, 2014. During this event, customers and community residents received a store tour and were introduced to the new items available at the store. Additionally, Don Baratón was recognized by Los Angeles City Councilmember Mitch O’ Farrell’s office (CD13) as a healthy retailer that is striving to improve the health and wellbeing of the community. Customers received nutrition education while at the event and were given a “Flavors of My Kitchen” healthy recipe book that taught them a variety ways they can use the newly available fresh produce. Upon the completion of phase one of this transformation project, the store continues to sell 6-10 varieties of fresh produce that is available to students at the adjacent high school as well as to members of the community.

Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

At the beginning of the project, the store owner was unsure which fresh produce items she wanted to make available to customers. She also voiced concerns about the cost and price of the produce. APIOPA worked with the store owner to identify culturally - relevant foods that would appeal to the community. The Champions for Change Retail Program built a relationship with Sustainable Economic Enterprises Los Angeles (SEE-LA), who manages a nearby Echo Park Farmers’ Market, in order to establish a method of procuring locally sourced, fresh produce for the store owner. The store owner is now able to connect directly with farmers at the Echo Park Farmers’ Market to purchase fresh produce at discounted rates for sale at Don Baratón. Another barrier that was encountered was that of finding adequate space for the refrigeration unit. A visible and easily accessible space was found within the store for the unit. Existing products located in this space were moved and the location was cleaned. After the refrigeration unit was delivered, the unit did not fit in the designated area because the wheels of the unit were

not taken into account, which added extra inches to the height of the unit. Los Angeles County Health and Safety Codes require certain refrigeration units, such as the refrigeration unit being installed at Don Baratón, remain six inches above the ground. In order to address this issue, APIOPA and the NEOP Retail Program removed several shelves located in the desired area and additional space above the unit was created so that the refrigeration unit could be installed. All involved parties worked with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Environmental Health Division in order to ensure that the installment of the refrigerator, as planned, followed all pertinent Health and Safety Codes. The unit was placed in a high-traffic, visible area where it now carries several varieties of locally grown fresh produce. Staple produce items include oranges, apples, bananas, peppers, onions, potatoes, garlic, limes, and cilantro.

Future Directions/Sustainable Success

Short-term goals include:

- Ensuring that the partner store offers a variety of fresh produce on a consistent basis.
- Engaging students from Belmont High School in the project to educate them about the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables and cultivate their skills in healthy food advocacy.
- Identifying strategies to make fresh produce appealing to the students, so they purchase it as a healthy snack.

Long-term goals include:

- Facilitating a relationship with partner agencies to assist the store to apply to become a WIC vendor.
- Increasing the variety of fresh produce available.
- Highlighting this store as a model for the sixteen other stores located in this community.
- Cultivating partnerships with other stores in the Historic Filipinotown community to work on additional market makeovers.
- Utilizing RE-AIM data to identify further refine the Retail Program to create positive impact in low-income communities throughout Los Angeles County.

Contact information about this Narrative

Local Health Department Grant Name: Los Angeles County Public Health Department
Grant #: 13-20467

Author's Name: Brenda Smith, Ana Goins-Ramirez, MA, Dipa Shah-Patel, MPH, RD

Phone: 213-351-7864

Email: dshah@ph.lacounty.gov

This material was produced by the California Department of Public Health's Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch with funding from USDA SNAP-Ed, known in California as CalFresh. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. CalFresh provides assistance to low-income households and can help buy nutritious food for better health. For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit www.CaChampionsForChange.net.



Creating Policy, Systems, Environmental Change: Success Story and Lessons Learned

Title

Harnessing the Power of Local Experts: Strategies to Effectively Implement Communities of Excellence in Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Prevention (CX³)

Intervention Summary

Over the last twenty years, obesity rates have increased exponentially across California. This surge in obesity is exemplified by the adult and childhood obesity rates experienced in Los Angeles County over the last decade. According to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, from 1997 to 2007 adult obesity rates in Los Angeles County increased from 13.6% to 22.2% while childhood obesity rates climbed from 18.9% in 1999 to 23% in 2008¹. While adult and childhood obesity has increased in Los Angeles County, research has demonstrated that it disproportionately affects low-income neighborhoods at higher rates since these communities have limited environmental supports that encourage healthy behaviors such as safe, green spaces to play and access to fresh, affordable produce. This is particularly alarming when in 2011; 2.6 million or 27% of Los Angeles County residents were living in poverty as measured by the Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality and the Public Policy Institute of California².

Communities of Excellence in Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Prevention (CX³) is an important framework that allows the residents of an identified community to be actively involved in the data gathering, advocacy, and policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) change efforts within a geographic area to make improvements in the nutrition and physical activity environment. As part of the Los Angeles County local health department model, NEOP implemented CX³ through agencies that were contracted by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH) and granted USDA funds to complete NEOP objectives in low-income neighborhoods

¹ Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology. Obesity and Related Mortality in Los Angeles County: A Cities and Communities Health Report; September 2011.

² The Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality and the Public Policy Institute of California. The California Poverty Measure: A Portrait of Poverty within California Counties and Demographic Groups; October 2013. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on October 7, 2014 from http://web.stanford.edu/group/scspi/poverty/cpm/CPMBrief_CPI.pdf.

throughout Los Angeles County. The local health department model, which began during the 2012-2013 fiscal year, allowed the local health department to become the lead local agency for SNAP-Ed funding in Los Angeles. This enabled LACDPH to fund local organizations with content expertise in nutrition and physical activity as well as a practical experience in community engagement and mobilization to conduct NEOP programming. LACDPH funded agencies include faith-based institutions, youth engagement and peer to peer organizations, as well as schools. These funded agencies have many years of experience working in the communities they serve and are viewed as an integral part of the social fabric of these neighborhoods. They have built important relationships with the residents of these communities and serve as trusted sources of information for these individuals. LACDPH strategically harnessed the expertise of these organizations and leveraged their existing relationships with community members by embedding the CX³ framework into the scope of work of these agencies. These agencies were tasked with working with community members recruited to participate in NEOP programming to draw community boundaries and join the CX³ data collection process. This innovative strategic plan for CX³ implementation addressed crucial elements that are key components to the successful completion of an on-going project by building in a sustainability plan, community engagement component, and staff/community support. By partnering with these local institutions, LACDPH addressed these factors and created a model whereby PSE efforts could continue in these communities via these embedded entities even after NEOP funding ceases. The CX³ framework has built capacity among community members and trained local organizations to lead these types of projects that are founded in community-level data and driven by community residents.

During the 2013-2014 fiscal year, LACDPH has identified twenty-two neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles County where CX³ will be implemented. To date, LACDPH has completed data collection for seventeen neighborhoods with the remaining five neighborhoods nearing completion. LACDPH has partnered with eleven funded agencies (five faith-based, three youth engagement and two peer to peer, as well as one school-based organization) in addition to interns, the NEOP Retail Program, and LACDPH service planning area nurses to accomplish this goal. Overall, there were over 100 volunteers that participated in the CX³ data collection process and CX³ designated neighborhoods are located in five of the six service planning areas in Los Angeles County. By utilizing this strategic approach, LACDPH was able to assess a wide variety of communities that span a large geographic area within Los Angeles County. LACDPH is now poised to share CX³ data results with partner agencies that are eager to embark upon PSE projects that address the gaps in nutrition and physical activity that were identified in these data sets. All funded agencies have exhibited readiness to begin community mobilization efforts as a result of the time, effort, and resources they have invested in this project and the commitment they have to the communities they serve.

Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

There are several challenges that LACDPH has encountered with the implementation of this model such as the time constraints and capacity of funded agencies, engagement of agencies during data processing, safety for engaged community members while conducting assessments, maintenance of connection with LACDPH during assessment process, and interest in utilizing a customized approach by funded agencies to support NEOP efforts. To address these challenges, LACDPH took a thoughtful, inclusive approach to developing solutions to these issues. LACDPH consulted with funded agencies and incorporated their feedback into these solutions. When enlisting funded agencies to assist with CX³ efforts, LACDPH needed to be considerate of their differing capacities to conduct these assessments and their time constraints in completing other NEOP required activities as well as year-end reporting. It is essential that a dedicated liaison at LACDPH be made available to funded agencies to provide technical assistance, streamline the assessment process, drive CX³ activities, as well as provide the appropriate training to engaged staff. It was also imperative to assign a LACDPH liaison to the project so that this staff member could continue to engage funded agencies during the data processing timeframe since CX³ activities stall during this period. Safety was another concern for funded agencies particularly those working with youth so LACDPH ensured that NEOP adult allies were with youths at all times and all staff and volunteers worked in pairs while conducting on-the-ground assessments. Funded agencies were also interested in utilizing a customized approach to CX³ in order to enhance other NEOP programming, therefore LACDPH created an adapted CX³ model where funded agencies could use select CX³ assessments to collect community-level data to inform their NEOP efforts. This adapted model was used by funded agencies above and beyond implementing CX³ as a standalone framework in identified low-income neighborhoods.

Future Directions/Sustainable Success

Short-term goals include:

- Preparing CX³ data results for dissemination to funded agencies, community stakeholders, and residents
- Identifying PSE projects from CX³ data that address community interests
- Assisting funded agencies with the community mobilization process
- Developing a community mobilization plan for each funded agency that addresses the unique needs and target populations of each community
- Recruiting community members to serve as community voices to advocate for PSE projects
- Preparing residents to engage community stakeholders in and garner their support for PSE projects
- Continuing to provide on-going technical assistance to funded agencies to realize PSE projects
- Exploring opportunities to partner with non-USDA funded organizations to leverage resources for PSE projects

- Empowering funded agencies to tie CX³ data to PSE efforts

Long-term goals include:

- Reevaluating CX³ neighborhoods to document changes that have occurred by the end of funding cycle
- Preparing funded agencies to continue community-driven PSE work under CX³ framework in subsequent years without USDA funding
- Cultivating new community leaders by building capacity among youth and adult residents to claim ownership over the CX³ framework and apply it to other, low-income areas of interest
- Measuring effectiveness of completed PSEs with the support of CX³ data

Contact information about this Narrative

Local Health Department Grant Name: Los Angeles County Public Health Department
Grant #: 13-20467

Author's Name: Ana Goins-Ramirez, MA, Dipa Shah-Patel, MPH, RD

Phone: 213-351-7864

Email: dshah@ph.lacounty.gov

This material was produced by the California Department of Public Health's Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch with funding from USDA SNAP-Ed, known in California as CalFresh. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. CalFresh provides assistance to low-income households and can help buy nutritious food for better health. For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit www.CaChampionsForChange.net.



Creating Policy, Systems, Environmental Change: Success Story and Lessons Learned

Title

Utilizing Youth Engagement to Increase Structured Physical Activity Opportunities in South Los Angeles

Intervention Summary

The South Los Angeles community is disproportionately affected by high rates of overweight and obesity at 37.3% and 32.7%, respectively, and is known for high crime rates and lack of safe places to play or recreate¹. In addition, in a survey conducted collaboratively by The California Endowment, Brotherhood Crusade, and WestEd, it was determined that SNAP-Ed eligible students in South Los Angeles were not engaging in the recommended amount of daily physical activity. Findings showed that 48%, 62% and 57% of 7th, 9th and 11th graders engaged in less than 200 minutes of moderate to physical activity per week, and 72%, 65% and 83% spend less than 30 minutes playing during physical education class.² The challenges faced by the South Los Angeles community led Brotherhood Crusade, a subcontractor of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health - Nutrition Education Obesity Prevention (NEOP), to focus on a policy, systems, environmental (PSE) strategy focused on increasing structured physical activity opportunities within South Los Angeles. To do so, the community based organization implemented a youth engagement program utilizing the Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) framework. Through the framework, Brotherhood Crusade recruited a youth team from across South Los Angeles who led efforts in conducting research around the PSE strategy, increasing community knowledge and awareness of the importance of healthy eating and active living, and presenting to stakeholders.

With guidance from Brotherhood Crusade Champions for Change staff, the youth were able to identify a strategy to effectively increase structured physical activity opportunities

¹ Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology. Key Indicators of Health by Service Planning Area; March 2013.

² The California Endowment, WestEd and Brotherhood Crusade. California School Climate, Health and Learning Survey (CAL-SCHLS) System developed for and supported by California Department of Education, 2011.

through Soccer for Success, a free after school program that offers sports based physical activity to children and youth. Youth conducted research on existing Soccer for Success school sites and conducted surveys to determine current participation in the program, other existing physical activity opportunities offered at the school, and student interest in the program. The youth team also conducted research on new potential qualifying school sites with the capacity to host Soccer for Success programming on campus, and the willingness to implement shared joint use agreements for the program. Another key component in advancing the PSE strategy was the partnership development with multiple Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) schools and Beyond the Bell, a long standing after school program offered at the majority of LAUSD schools. Beyond the Bell program components focus on academic tutorial, recreation and enrichment. Brotherhood Crusade was able to facilitate a partnership between Soccer for Success and Beyond the Bell, to ensure structured physical activity is incorporated into Beyond the Bell programming. Moreover, Brotherhood Crusade youth encouraged Beyond the Bell to also incorporate nutrition education into programming as well, making the after school program a more robust, health-minded program.

To encourage participation in after school structured physical activity opportunities, youth provided nutrition education and physical activity promotion to students and community members. Utilizing California Department of Public Health (CDPH) approved resources and recipes, youth conducted presentations as well as healthy food and beverage taste tests to garner community and student support for participating in the aforementioned program. The youth conducted over 40 healthy food and beverage demonstrations at community events, during Soccer for Success programming and after school to encourage participation in Soccer for Success.

Youth were able to increase opportunities for participation in physical activity and expand after school structured physical activity programs to a number of qualifying South Los Angeles school sites including John Muir Middle, Augustus Hawkins High, Menlo Elementary, Budlong Elementary, 52nd Elementary, Danny Bakewell Senior Primary, and Markham Middle. As a result of the widespread promotion and education of the importance of physical activity, Soccer for Success was also implemented as a during school program at Audubon Middle and Lou Danztler. Currently, over 2,500 South Los Angeles SNAP-Ed eligible youth have been reached through the structured physical activity PSE strategy.

Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

A challenge during program implementation was navigating through the processes and systems of the Los Angeles Unified School District, as well as ensuring all entities such as school principals, school administration, and Beyond the Bell were on the same page in moving forward with implementation of the after school physical activity program. In regard to staying true to the YPAR framework, a barrier that surfaced during the summer months was youth participation and engagement. A lesson learned is to ensure participating youth are engaged throughout the entire project, and not provided with tasks that do not resonate with them.

Future Directions/Sustainable Success

Short-term goals for the project include:

- Continue working with the youth, key stakeholders, and potential qualifying school sites to ensure structured physical activity opportunities are available to SNAP-Ed eligible students within South Los Angeles.
- Youth will continue to promote the benefits of physical activity to ensure the PSE strategy is sustainable.
- Through a partnership with Community Health Councils - Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH), Brotherhood Crusade plans to expand Soccer for Success physical activity opportunities to four additional schools via shared use agreements, Angeles Mesa Elementary, 59th Street Elementary, Crenshaw High and Washington High. Efforts to support implementation are anticipated to begin in October 2014.
- Continue to utilize RE-AIM Evaluation to track progress and ensure sustainability of the Complete Streets Initiative.

To ensure sustainability for the long term, Brotherhood Crusade was instrumental in incorporating the Soccer for Success program into existing Beyond the Bell programming. As a result, long-term goals for the project include:

- Utilizing the Soccer for Success structured physical activity program as a platform for Beyond the Bell programming.
- In collaboration with Community Health Councils and Beyond the Bell, and contingent on parent consent, Brotherhood Crusade hopes to eventually expand the structured physical activity program to incorporate baseline and quarterly assessments (BMI, aerobic capacity, body composition, strength and endurance, etc.) of participants, release of school records to monitor academic performance, and refer youth to counseling and therapy as appropriate. These factors will not only assist in evaluating the program and providing robust data on physical activity interventions, but will also encourage the support and future success of SNAP-Ed eligible youth.

Contact information about this Narrative

Local Health Department Grant Name: Los Angeles County Public Health Department
Grant #: 13-20467

Author's Name: Julie Tolentino, MPH, Dipa Shah-Patel, MPH, RD

Phone: 213-351-7864

Email: dshah@ph.lacounty.gov

This material was produced by the California Department of Public Health's Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch with funding from USDA SNAP-Ed, known in California as CalFresh. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. CalFresh provides assistance to low-income households and can help buy nutritious food for better health. For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit www.CaChampionsForChange.net.



Creating Policy, Systems, Environmental Change: Success Story and Lessons Learned

Title

Increasing Availability of Fresh Produce in Low-Income Housing Projects

Intervention Summary

The South Los Angeles community disproportionately bears the burden of high obesity rates (36.7% of adults) and limited availability of fresh produce. Esperanza Community Housing Corporation (EHC), one of five subcontractors funded in the peer to peer education category, operates an affordable housing site. Villa Esperanza, located in South Los Angeles, is home to 132 SNAP-eligible residents. Focused on the goal of addressing obesity with a community driven approach, EHC recruited residents and began conducting nutrition education classes using a peer to peer model at Villa Esperanza in the spring of 2014. The classes were accompanied by a series of resident engagement meetings, which allowed tenants to share their concerns regarding the health of their families and develop potential solutions to facilitate healthier lifestyles. As a result of these meetings, a committed group of residents emerged as champions for creating an on-site edible garden. In collaboration with the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE), EHC educated residents on the health benefits of seasonal produce, techniques for planting and harvesting, and maintenance needs for the garden. As of August 2014, residents have planted a variety of edible plants including tomatoes, green beans, radishes, strawberries, and cilantro, all of which are now available to all residents of Villa Esperanza. With the complementary approach of delivering nutrition education in conjunction with advancing an environmental change strategy to increase fresh produce access, EHC has empowered residents to improve their own diets and serve as advocates for broader food systems change in their community.

Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

An early barrier to success was maintaining momentum as residents expressed interest in developing an edible garden. EHC encountered challenges with coordinating times for UCCE workshops and convening residents at times that were convenient for all who signed on as garden build participants. Given conflicting schedules, EHC chose to utilize the first UCCE workshop as a train the trainer opportunity. This allowed staff to meet with smaller resident groups in accordance with their schedules, to conduct garden workshops and to assist with planting. Another early roadblock was a restriction imposed by Villa Esperanza management,

requiring the garden to be mobile, since the outdoor space may need to be shared by other projects in the future. Initially this posed a challenge, but residents quickly developed the solution of high raised beds that could easily be moved within the available space. This garden bed structure has proven to be beneficial, as it can be harvested while standing, making the gardening project less physically taxing for older residents.

Future Directions/Sustainable Success

Short-term goals:

- Add new produce varieties to the Villa Esperanza edible garden.
- Continue resident-driven garden maintenance and harvesting.
- Select new nutrition education curricula and continue on-site classes.
- Empower identified leaders of the Villa Esperanza edible garden project to be catalysts for a garden at a second affordable housing site where residents have expressed interest.
- Create a written produce distribution policy to ensure equitable distribution to all residents.

Long-term goals:

- Develop a sustainability plan for program operation and PSE maintenance beyond 2016.
- Continue resident engagement meetings at each housing site to determine other community needs and to advance selected PSE strategies.
- Utilize RE-AIM to evaluate garden implementation and to identify gaps in order to ensure long-term sustainability.

Contact information about this Narrative

Local Health Department Grant Name: Los Angeles County Public Health Department

Grant #: 13-20467

Author's Name: Veena Raghavan, MPH, Dipa Shah-Patel, MPH, RD

Phone: 213-351-7864

Email: dshah@ph.lacounty.gov

This material was produced by the California Department of Public Health's Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch with funding from USDA SNAP-Ed, known in California as CalFresh. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. CalFresh provides assistance to low-income households and can help buy nutritious food for better health. For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit www.CaChampionsForChange.net.



Creating Policy, Systems, Environmental Change: Success Story and Lessons Learned

Title

Utilizing a Multi-Pronged Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change Approach to Create a Healthy Worksite

Intervention Summary

Employees are faced with on-the-job challenges on a daily basis that range from safety and health hazards to the absence of nutritious foods. As a result, unhealthy workers may increase absenteeism rates, health care and disability insurance costs, as well as worker's compensation claims while reducing productivity, earnings, and business competitiveness. The burden of these costs is increasingly borne by California's employers, and more than 75% of medical care costs are attributable to chronic diseases that in large part are preventable (ex. diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol)¹. Employers and business owners can help prevent this undue burden by creating healthy work environments that make it easier for employees to make healthy choices. The California Fit Business Toolkit (CFBK) is a resource that can help employers create a work environment that encourages and supports healthy behaviors by employees.

The Worksite Program's current partnership with *Cardenas CARES*, a wellness program for Cardenas Market employees, aims to create awareness among and provide resources to Cardenas employees by offering educational sessions and preventive health screenings. There are currently 28 store locations participating in this wellness program, three of which are located in Los Angeles County. These three locations have adopted the CFBK and are implementing several of the wellness tools at these worksites, which include the Check for Health (pre and post assessment), establishing a wellness committee, and encouraging the availability of potable water on-the-job. Additionally, these CFBK tools are being promoted as part of Cardenas CARES

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2004). Chronic disease overview. Retrieved October 10, 2014, from <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/overview.htm>.

wellness program initiatives. The administration of the Check for Health assessment has allowed Champions for Change Worksite Program staff to identify areas of focus for Cardenas to make wellness improvements. As a result, Cardenas created a wellness committee that consisted of Cardenas human resources staff, Worksite Program staff from partnering local health departments (LHDs) (Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Riverside) and representatives from the insurance companies offering benefits to Cardenas employees to develop a strategic wellness plan for the benefit of Cardenas employees. The committee meets on a monthly basis at Cardenas headquarters to discuss the program's progress to date and share innovative ideas for future implementation. Currently, the wellness committee has adopted the Go for H2O tool that encourages employees to stay hydrated with water throughout the day. Cardenas has placed water containers in break rooms and select store departments to increase access to water by employees. These wellness efforts have resulted in significant gains in Cardenas CARES program employee participation rates. Though the Cardenas CARES program is only in its second year, participation rates at all 28 sites have nearly doubled from 355 in 2013 to 634 in 2014 partly due to the support and promotion on behalf of the partnering Worksite Programs. In addition to Worksite Program efforts to implement CFBK tools at Cardenas sites, the Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside County LHDs also support Cardenas wellness efforts by providing nutrition education and physical activity sessions at their affiliated store locations.

Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

Barriers that were encountered by the Champions for Change Worksite Program include securing sufficient time to interact with employees during the workday and finding the appropriate time to visit each store when the store is well-staffed and not too busy. It can be difficult to identify these times, therefore it is imperative to coordinate these wellness activities with human resources staff and each store manager. However, it may be difficult to contact these individuals due to their heavy work load so identifying other key people at each store and in the corporate office may streamline the approval process for wellness activities. It is important to build rapport with management-level staff in order to implement a successful and fully functional wellness program. Identifying employees that have a vested interest in wellness can allow the Champions for Change Worksite Program to harness their enthusiasm to promote buy-in from their fellow coworkers and act as advocates for the program. Staff and personnel changes are also very common in the retail sector and may cause a delay in the implementation of CFBK tools. Additionally, change can be difficult for larger companies to set in motion which requires that Champions for Change Worksite Program staff be persistent, transparent, and patient in implementing CFBK tools at worksites.

Future Directions/Sustainable Success

Short-term goals include:

- Scheduling nutrition and physical activity classes for the new FFY 2014.
- Continuing to provide on-going technical support for worksite wellness activities.

- Exploring the implementation of new CFBK tools such as lactation accommodation, physical activity integration, and healthy meetings.
- Maintaining attendance at wellness committee meetings in an effort to develop a strategic plan that will allow this program to be realized at its fullest potential.
- Discussing future iterations of the Cardenas CARES Program and how to integrate pre and post anonymized biometric data collection/evaluation.
- Inviting partner organizations such as Health Net, the American Heart Association, and the American Diabetes Association to provide information and resources at these worksites.

Long-term goals include:

- Increasing wellness activity participation rates in the three Los Angeles County locations with the help of the human resources staff, store managers, and employee wellness champions.
- Continuing with the collection and evaluation of anonymized biometric data to compare yearly outcomes.
- Coordinating efforts with partnering LHD's to offer similar services and share lessons learned.
- Utilizing RE-AIM evaluation findings to continue to make improvements and share positive findings with other worksites to encourage their participation.

Contact information about this Narrative

Local Health Department Grant Name: Los Angeles County Public Health Department
Grant #: 13-20467

Author's Name: Xochitl Valdivia, MS, RD, Ana Goins-Ramirez, MA, Dipa Shah-Patel, MPH, RD

Phone: 213-351-7864

Email: dshah@ph.lacounty.gov

This material was produced by the California Department of Public Health's Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch with funding from USDA SNAP-Ed, known in California as CalFresh. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. CalFresh provides assistance to low-income households and can help buy nutritious food for better health. For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit www.CaChampionsForChange.net.



Creating Policy, Systems, Environmental Change: Success Story and Lessons Learned

Title

Promoting Active Transportation and Improving Access to Safe Streets in El Monte:
A Youth Participatory Action Research Project

Intervention Summary

The El Monte Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) project focuses on safer, active streets through a Complete Streets Initiative and Bicycle Parking Ordinance in the City of El Monte, which is approximately ten miles east of Downtown Los Angeles. The project is led by Day One, one of five subcontractors focusing on youth engagement. Day One recruited youth from Mountain View High School, a local El Monte school where 96.7% of students participate in the Free or Reduced Price Meal Program. The Complete Streets Initiative will positively affect over 115,000 residents in El Monte, whose population has an adult obesity prevalence at 27.9%, and child obesity prevalence at 28.3%¹. Both rates exceed the Los Angeles County obesity rate at 23.9% and 23%, respectively. The intended outcomes for a Complete Streets Initiative include: creating a safer environment that encourages active transportation, reducing congestion and motorized traffic, improving street connectivity and multi-modal transportation infrastructure, and providing sustainable bicycle and pedestrian accommodations to support daily physical activity. There are various public health benefits that result from these outcomes such as decreasing barriers to active transportation, especially to/from schools; increasing opportunities for students to be physically active in their community and promoting active lifestyles to decrease likelihood of chronic diseases. Throughout the project, community organizations and SNAP-Ed eligible residents were continuously engaged through surveys, community events, presentations, and youth-led multi-platform social media marketing.

¹ Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology. *Obesity and Related Mortality in Los Angeles County: A Cities and Communities Health Report*, September 2011.

A multi-effort approach was used to accomplish the goals of the YPAR project, which included nutrition education, physical activity promotion, project plan and program development, and strategic planning. The following activities were conducted in SNAP-Ed eligible communities and all contributed to achieving the goals:

- Youth conducted research by identifying local stakeholders, elected officials, and community residents to interview about current city infrastructure.
- Youth and community members conducted bicycle and walkability street assessments, in qualifying census tracts, developed by Bike San Gabriel Valley (BikeSGV), to closely examine the current conditions of the streets, and determine policy and project recommendations.
- From the assessments, reoccurring examples emerged that displayed the need for a Complete Streets Policy such as lack of bicycle friendly infrastructure (signage, protected lanes, bicycle parking), and under maintained roads and sidewalks. Ultimately, findings showed the streets were unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclists, displaying a high need for better city infrastructure.
- Youth led and conducted a photovoice project, raising awareness around major local infrastructure deficiencies while also learning about how the built environment affects behavior.
- Following the YPAR framework, youth developed a survey, community outreach plan for qualifying census tracts, and presented to local stakeholders to build support for the Complete Streets initiative. Youth also led healthy food and beverage demonstrations for the SNAP-Ed eligible community to assist with building momentum in the community for their project.
- Partnership development with community groups, such as BikeSGV, El Monte/South El Monte Best Start, El Monte/South El Monte Chamber of Commerce, Los Angeles County Office of Education, and other organizations to promote active transportation, improve health outcomes, and support multi-modal transportation planning.
- Frequent participation in qualifying community events with youth, networking, building relationships, and disseminating relevant project information.

As a result of this project, the El Monte youth team was provided with nutrition education and project-based learning experiences through participation in the youth-led project. The youth learned about MyPlate, the importance of physical activity, and more importantly, the necessary leadership skills to carry out positive change within their communities. YPAR was especially effective in generating involvement from a larger cross section of youth, as well as mobilizing adults to understand what issues youth are passionate about. Furthermore, it catalyzed the youth to become more engaged in civic engagement activities once they saw how much community organizations, policymakers, and others valued their input. As champions for better health, they are now able to think more critically about their city, are empowered to become community advocates, and some have even reported interest in pursuing health related careers. Furthermore, youth have had the opportunity to connect with local stakeholders, community and family members through presentations, meetings and community

events. Needless to say, the YPAR project has positively steered their interests towards adopting healthier and more active lifestyles.

The community impact as a result of the initiative will be determined in the upcoming fiscal year after implementation. However, from research and health impact reports based on Complete Streets Initiatives in other communities, the potential positive impacts are:

- Increased physical activity: research has shown that the presence of sidewalks, bike lanes, and safe open spaces to recreate has a positive impact on daily physical activity.
- Improved traffic safety, as the policy will reduce the negative impact of injury and perceived danger with additional bike lanes and infrastructure.
- Provide enhanced connectivity: coupled with the partnership with BikeSGV who has been working on Bicycle Master Plan efforts in El Monte, the policy would promote the positive impact of physical activity and access to healthy food.

Although the City of El Monte has yet to adopt a Complete Streets Policy or Bicycle Parking Ordinance, this past year has yielded significant results in adopting the policy as early as November 2014. Key highlights thus far include:

- YPAR efforts in SNAP-Ed eligible communities with youth from Mountain View High School.
- Staff participation in the Community Advisory Group for the Metro Fastrak Reinvestment Toll Lane Grant resulted in recommending El Monte's Santa Anita Active Transportation Project for funding, as well as BikeSGV's Active Commute, Healthy Communities Project. Both projects aim to create a more bike-friendly El Monte, with the Santa Anita project featuring 'Complete Streets' infrastructure components.
- In partnership with BikeSGV, assistance in developing a *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)* with El Monte for Fletcher Park. The premise of the MOU is to use Fletcher Park as a satellite site to conduct physical activity and bicycle-related education and programs in the City of El Monte.
- Support for adopting a Complete Streets Policy from El Monte City Manager and Councilmember Victoria Martinez.
- Submission of a draft Complete Streets Policy and Bicycle Parking language to City staff.

Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

One of the challenges for the program has been providing participating youth with reoccurring incentives for all the hard work they dedicated to the project. To address this challenge, field trips and nutrition education reinforcement items related to what the youth liked to do, and what they were interested in, were coordinated throughout the year to prevent attrition in the student group. However, it has been difficult to

continuously engage youth without providing incentives. Another barrier to success has been El Monte's city staff reorganization. Some essential city staff that are required in moving the initiative forward are in the process of being hired during the course of our project work. The El Monte City Manager stated he wanted the incoming Public Works Director to be a part of accomplishing this objective; however the Public Works Director will not be starting his position until October 2014. Staff will plan on meeting with new City of El Monte staff when hired, in order to move the Complete Streets project forward.

Future Directions/Sustainable Success

Short-term goals for the Complete Streets project include:

- Continue working with the youth, key stakeholders, and the city to ensure the policy is adopted by November 2014.
- Youth will continue to educate the community on the importance of active living to ensure the community supports the policy, systems, and environmental change strategy.
- Continue to utilize RE-AIM Evaluation to track progress and ensure sustainability of the Complete Streets Initiative.

Long-term goals and sustainable success include:

- Due to several federal bills and local policies, such as AB 32 (Greenhouse Gas Emissions), SB 375 (Sustainable Communities), the Complete Streets Act of 2008, and Metro's future policy (2016) requiring cities to adopt at the very minimum a Complete Streets Resolution, the sustainability of the intervention will have long-term impacts on the design and planning of future city infrastructure. The Complete Streets Policy will make the transportation system more sustainable, create a "green" environment, and ensure benefits for mobility, community, and the environment.
- The Complete Streets Initiative will ensure positive long-term impact on public health outcomes related to individual health.

Contact information about this Narrative

Local Health Department Grant Name: Los Angeles County Public Health Department

Grant #: 13-20467

Author's Name: Julie Tolentino, MPH, Dipa Shah-Patel, MPH, RD

Phone: 213-351-7864

Email: dshah@ph.lacounty.gov

This material was produced by the California Department of Public Health's Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch with funding from USDA SNAP-Ed, known in California as CalFresh. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. CalFresh provides assistance to low-income households and can help buy nutritious food for better health. For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit www.CaChampionsForChange.net.



Creating Policy, Systems, Environmental Change: Success Story and Lessons Learned

Title

Increasing Access to Fresh, Seasonal Produce through Development of an EBT Accessible Farmers' Market

Intervention Summary

Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles (SEE-LA) is one of five subcontractors in the peer to peer education funded category. SEE-LA strives to create structures that support sustainable food systems while promoting health and well-being for low-income residents of Los Angeles County. For several years, SEE-LA has focused primarily on establishing farmers' markets in disadvantaged communities in order to increase fresh produce access and bolster business for small to mid-size California farms.

During a series of community meetings held between October 2011 and April 2012, residents of Glassell Park expressed concern regarding the limited availability of fresh fruits and vegetables through local food retail outlets. Residents subsequently proposed a weekly Glassell Park farmers' market. In partnership with community stakeholders and LA City Council District 13 (CD 13), SEE-LA approached Goodwill Industries Community Enrichment Center, which agreed to serve as the host site for a weekly market. The selected site is in a predominantly low-income community, with 54.3% of the population falling below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level. With SNAP-Ed funding and support, the USDA Farmers' Market Promotion Program and CD 13, SEE-LA opened the Glassell Park Farmers' Market (GPFM) with eight certified producers on May 1, 2014. The market aims to reach between 200 and 500 individuals per week, providing a source of fresh, locally-produced fruits and vegetables to the community, particularly for individuals and families eligible for federal nutrition assistance programs. Through a partnership with the Ecology Center, SEE-LA received guidance on updated protocols for implementing farmers' market EBT access. Prior to the market opening, SEE-LA applied for a point-of-sale EBT device through the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. The GPFM is now equipped with a centralized system that allows SNAP recipients to visit the market operator's booth and exchange EBT dollars for tokens accepted by all market produce stands.

In addition to accepting EBT, the GPFM will be receiving funding through the Seeds of Change Foundation to operate a Market Match healthy incentive program beginning in October 2014, which will increase the fresh produce buying power of CalFresh and WIC customers.

Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

Given staff time constraints, SEE-LA had hoped that the GPFM would thrive as an evening weekday market, but after 14 weeks of operation and consulting with Goodwill Industries, CD 13, and community supporters, market hours have been changed to mid-day on Saturdays. Four weeks of market sales and customer feedback data support the change in day and time as having a positive impact on customer satisfaction and vendor sales. Early on, identifying a space for the farmers' market posed a challenge, as the city had reservations about closing streets to accommodate the market. Through community meetings and local partnership development, SEE-LA was able to secure an in-kind space offered by Goodwill Industries.

Future Directions/Sustainable Success

Short-Term Goals:

- Increase community outreach efforts at schools, DPSS offices, WIC offices, and community centers to help promote the farmers' market and use of Market Match dollars for SNAP recipients.
- Begin conducting weekly nutrition education classes at the GPFM.
- Conduct farmers' market tours periodically.
- Support market operation and success with NEOP funding and supplemental funding through CD 13.

Long-Term Goals:

- Increase market size to 25-30 vendors (including at least 20 farmers) resulting in higher weekly vendor sales. Note: If 25 vendors sell an average of \$300 in produce per market day, the market will be financially self-sustaining.
- Develop a sustainability plan to support Market Match operation in future years.
- Monitor market growth and sustainability using the RE-AIM framework.

Contact information about this Narrative

Local Health Department Grant Name: Los Angeles County Public Health Department

Grant #: 13-20467

Author's Name: Veena Raghavan, MPH, Dipa Shah-Patel, MPH, RD

Phone: 213-351-7864

Email: dshah@ph.lacounty.gov

This material was produced by the California Department of Public Health's Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch with funding from USDA SNAP-Ed, known in California as CalFresh. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. CalFresh provides assistance to low-income households and can help buy nutritious food for better health. For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit www.CaChampionsForChange.net.



Creating Policy, Systems, Environmental Change: Healthy Food and Beverage Policies

Title

Improving the Food Environment in Low-Income Communities through Church Healthy Food and Beverage Policies

Intervention Summary

In Los Angeles County, the prevalence of adult obesity increased from 13.6% in 1997 to 23.6% in 2011. The increase was larger among Latinos (99%) than whites (50%) and African-Americans (43%)¹. In 2011, the obesity rate was highest among Latinos (31.6%) and African-Americans (31.0%)². These disparities highlight the need for focused, culturally tailored nutrition education and physical activity promotional activities. Such educational and promotional efforts must be coupled with policy, systems, and environmental changes that improve access to affordable healthy foods and beverages, reduce the availability of low-nutrient dense foods, and increase opportunities for physical activity.

The church often serves as the center of the community, particularly in the African-American and Latino communities, and can play an important role in promoting health and engaging families and communities that are disproportionately impacted with high rates of overweight and obesity.

Demonstrating the church's potential reach for improving community health is the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, a subcontractor of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health- Nutrition Education Obesity Prevention (NEOP). The efforts were initiated by the Diocese Bishop who, after receiving a life-threatening cancer diagnosis, realized the wide range of obesity and diet-related chronic diseases within his very own community and among his parishioners. Having already created a program that feeds the hungry and undernourished parishioners through over 70 food pantries, the Bishop also recognized the importance of educating people and changing the systems in place to help create healthier church environments. Additionally, after

conducting a community-level assessment confirming a substantial lack of fresh produce availability around some of the surrounding neighborhoods of their churches, the Bishop and other health ministry leaders agreed that the establishment of organizational policy was a critical first step to improve the health of the church community. As a result, The Diocesan Healthy Food and Beverage policy was created and adopted in December 2013 that focused on foods served, sold, and distributed in and by fifteen of the 200 Diocesan churches throughout Los Angeles.

Miraculously, the Bishop successfully overcame cancer, but his commitment to improving the health of the Diocesan church community remained strong. As part of the process to implement the health policies and programs, Pastors from participating churches were sent letters introducing the Champions for Change program inviting participation. The Episcopal staff held meetings with church leadership to provide details about the program, classes, gardens, and policy changes. The Food Justice Team from the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles conducted nutrition and physical activity education classes in 15 identified intervention sites serving the SNAP-Ed target audience throughout Los Angeles County, reaching approximately 3,000 individuals per year. The team conducted 10-12 classes per week, each of which included a cooking demonstration utilizing standardized recipes and healthy ingredients to provide food samples for approximately 270 people per week. Additionally, class attendance at each intervention site has increased, and participants are bringing their friends and family, and parishioners have expressed their need for healthier food choices, and have taken it upon themselves to bring healthy items to be served at church functions. The Food Justice Team is also working with clinics and medical professionals to identify further obesity prevention strategies.

In addition to the educational and promotional efforts, the healthy food and beverage standards policy are in place at each of the fifteen churches, including the policy on display inside each church, with future plans to implement the policy at all 200 Diocesan churches. It is estimated that 150 people per day of the year at each church will participate in events and activities such as food pantry distribution, coffee hours, meetings and fundraisers where healthy foods and beverages will be offered. The intended outcome is for all these members of the Episcopalian church and the communities they serve, be provided with healthy foods that include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and unsweetened beverages. To do this, the Food Justice Team also partnered with Food Forward to get on-demand fruits and vegetables, and distribute the items to different churches almost every day of the week for use in cooking classes, and for distribution at over 70 food pantries. Additionally, to date, 16 edible gardens have been built on the church grounds, with harvested produce distributed through the food pantries.

References

1. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology, Trends in Obesity: Adult Obesity Continues to Rise, September 2012.
2. Ibid.

Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

One barrier identified thus far includes the time it took for complete adoption of the food policy at all 15 churches due to lack of communication with church leadership. For instance, the schedule of church leadership varies at each site, with most working part-time and during non-traditional working hours. As most of the Rectors do not use e-mail as a means to communicate, clear communication with church leadership during the implementation of the policy also proved difficult. To mitigate the communication issue, Food Justice Team decided to host monthly in-person faith leadership coalition meetings exclusively for the Rector at each church location.

Some of the church leadership informed the team of clergy and members resistance toward a food policy - warning the team that it would be difficult to change habits that have been consistent for many years. The Food Justice team began by adding fruits and vegetables as opposed to removing items from coffee hour, which provided parishioners with opportunities to select healthier food options.

Additionally, other challenges faced were a lack of resources and cold storage units available to distribute healthy items to either parishioners or food bank participants. Partnering with Food Forward, the Food Justice team was able to get on-demand fruit and vegetables, and bring the healthier items to different churches almost every day of the week, and distribute the items to those in need.

Future Directions/Sustainable Success

Short term goals include:

- Improve layout or display of food at church events to offer healthy alternatives, in addition to foods already being offered.
- Changing the menu by including a larger variety of healthy food options of higher quality.
- Make improvements to the taste, quality, and smell of free water offered at church events by using the *ReThink Your Drink* recipes.
- Build edible gardens to support having fresh foods on-demand, and readily available at each church location.
- Encourage church Health Committees at each church to create rules on use of food as rewards, or foods served in meetings/classrooms.
- Work with food banks on food distribution to offer 100% whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, and foods with no trans fats.
- Disseminate Champions for Changes cookbooks and recipes to the church community.
- Encourage congregation to reduce portions sizes by choosing smaller plates.
- Conducting taste testing of fruits and vegetables and providing recipe ideas to class participants.
- Conducting nutrition education classes in the church community and promote seasonal availability of fruits and vegetables using approved cookbooks.

- Placing healthy food signage throughout churches to promote fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods and beverages.

Long term goals include:

- To ensure sustainability of the environmental changes, provide ongoing awards of recognition to the healthiest churches to motivate and encourage positive behavior of serving and eating healthy foods.
- Complete adoption of the Healthy Food and Beverage Policy in 200 Episcopalian churches.
- Replicable organizational policies; Implementation at all churches in Los Angeles will hopefully serve as a leading church establishment and motivate/encourage other institutions to do the same.
- Utilize Re-AIM evaluation findings to continue to make improvements and share positive findings with other stores to encourage their participation.

Contact information about this Narrative

Local Health Department Grant Name: Los Angeles County Public Health Department
Grant #: 13-20467

Author's Name: Tanishia Wright, Laura Magallanes, MPP, Dipa Shah-Patel, MPH, RD

Phone: 213-351-7864

Email: dshah@ph.lacounty.gov

This material was produced by the California Department of Public Health's Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch with funding from USDA SNAP-Ed, known in California as CalFresh. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. CalFresh provides assistance to low-income households and can help buy nutritious food for better health. For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit www.CaChampionsForChange.net.