



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

Title

Increasing Salad Bars and Produce in All Schools

Intervention Summary

While partnering with the Team California for Healthy Kids subcommittee in Monterey County, one of our strategies was to fill school children's plates and salad bars with local produce and provide nutrition education lessons. Within this group, we had three main objectives; to encourage consumption of local fruits and vegetables, encourage students to drink water and engage in daily physical activity. The Grower Shipper Foundation, a partner, funded a subcontractor to visit all 25 school district food service directors to complete an assessment survey for more produce in schools. After the survey was completed, it was apparent that many school districts were very interested in attaining a salad bar, receiving training for food service staff on salad bar etiquette, and/or procuring local produce to showcase on the salad bar. We provided technical assistance to schools in helping them acquire grant funding for salad bars. The Grower Shipper Foundation also hosted a fundraiser; where all proceeds went to the purchase of salad bars. Over the past two years, with grant funds or fundraising, over 30 salad bars have been added to the elementary schools in the county. LHD staff and Healthy Eating Lifestyle Principles (HELP) staff have provided trainings and technical assistance to food service staff.

Another strategy of the subcommittee was to encourage local purchasing of produce. Ag Against Hunger, a partner in the subcommittee, was able to offer salad greens free of charge to interested school districts. Working together, we approached our contacts at the school districts. To date, we have five school districts and two afterschool youth programs receiving free salad greens, to be placed in the salad bar, and during the school year there are other produce items that become available free of charge, i.e. strawberries, cabbage, spinach, etc. Over 40,000 pounds of fresh produce have been provided to the participating schools since March 2013.

Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

One of the barriers was funding salad bars in schools that did not already have them. We provided information on grant opportunities to the schools and other partners were able to help with application processes. Also, Grower Shipper hosted a fundraising event to help with purchasing salad bars.

Another barrier was getting the produce to the schools. The group tried to have a company pick up and drop off the produce for free and this worked for about 6 months. However, the company was not able to meet all of the demands and we had to look for other companies. We worked with the schools/afterschool programs and decided there should be a minimal fee to offset the cost. This has been working now for over a year.

Future Directions/Sustainable Success

The goal is to continue to provide the free produce to the schools and afterschool programs for the salad bars. We hope to increase the number of school districts we are providing the produce to and more produce. A long term goal is to spread the free produce in schools to the tri-county area, to include San Benito and Santa Cruz schools that may be interested.

We hope to do this by continuing to meet quarterly with all partner agencies.

Contact information about this Narrative

Local Health Department Grant Name: Monterey County Health Dept.

Grant #: 13-20017

Author's Name: Niaomi Hrepich

Phone: (831)796-2872

Email: hrepichns@co.monterey.ca.us

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.