



Creating Policy, Systems, Environmental Change: CX3 Success Story and Lessons Learned

Champion Moms Successfully Advocate for a School-Based Produce Stand

Intervention Summary

In Spring 2012, Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) Nutrition Services staff trained parents from the two Chavez Campus Elementary Schools in East Oakland (International Community School – 95%FRM and Think College Now – 90%FRM) to conduct CX3 surveys in their neighborhood where over 56% of the population were at or below the 185% poverty level. The following year, CX3 results showed that out of the 9 small markets and 9 fast food outlets surveyed, 0% offered healthy options. ACPHD staff and parent leaders convened a forum with other parents to discuss the results. Parents were in agreement with the survey results that showed that the neighborhood small stores offered limited selections of poor quality fruits and vegetables. The parents were determined to find a way to increase the availability of healthy and fresh food within their neighborhood. A parent shared with others that some Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) schools have ongoing school-based produce stands. The group decided to explore the possibility of establishing a produce stand at the Chavez campus to benefit the school families and the neighborhood.

Parent Leaders met with the two school principals to share their concerns and offer their solution. The principals worked with ACPHD and OUSD Nutrition Services to understand requirements to start a produce stand.

Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

A barrier to start the produce stand was OUSD's requirement that the school pay the salary of the produce stand manager. With a decrease in school funding, the cost was

prohibitive. Another barrier identified was the requirement for the district purchase of a large refrigerator for food storage.

At that time, OUSD Nutrition Services was considering a partnership with Mandela Marketplace to pilot a school-based produce stand. Mandela is a local West Oakland store that already had 3 small produce markets within the community but never considered a school-based location. Since Chavez parents and the principals were interested, OUSD and Mandela decided to move forward with the pilot project. To reduce the cost for the schools & OUSD, Mandela agreed to pay the manager salary. Mandela also had the capacity to store the produce, so there was no need to purchase the refrigerator. Chavez parents surveyed other parents to gauge interest in the market and determine the best day & time to hold the market.

It took over a year for OUSD and Mandela to finalize their MOU to establish the produce stand at Chavez. In November of 2014, the weekly produce stand opened with great success. Parents and community members were able to access the produce during the school year to purchase locally sourced, excellent quality produce at reasonable prices. Mandela also employed Martha Vega, one of the Chavez Champion Moms to work at the stand where she also provides healthy recipes and HOTM resources to customers. Martha & Mandela staff have also provided nutrition education to some the Chavez students.

Although the stand was up & running, a new barrier was identified: they were unable to accept EBT. The produce stand couldn't easily qualify as an EBT retailer since it is not considered a store or a traditional farmers market.

Future Directions/Sustainable Success

- Mandela extended their contract with OUSD and reopened in September 2015.
- In September 2015, Mandela qualified to accept EBT.
- At the request of parents, Mandela is working on the ability to accept WIC vouchers.
- Mandela staff will be providing expanded nutrition education and food demos at the produce stand.
- Mandela is planning to expand to another OUSD school in a low income neighborhood.

Contact information about this Narrative

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