



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

Title

Quenching Thirst with Water: One Hydration Station at a time

Intervention Summary

The Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation draws its drinking water from the Trinity River. The water is then treated in a plant and distributed throughout the Valley to Hoopa Valley residents. During our initial assessment of water access in the schools in 2013, we discovered that the perceived taste of the water at school was a barrier for high school age youth. In 2014, the Humboldt County SNAP-Ed program joined forces with the CA4Health Program to support increased drinking water access at Hoopa Valley High School (HVHS). CA4Health purchased a hydration station for the school and the SNAP-Ed program taught the Rethink your Drink High School Curriculum to the science classes at the high school. The Humboldt County SNAP-Ed program also worked with the principals to familiarize them with the National Policy and Legal Analysis Network Model Wellness Policy Language for Water Access in Schools.

Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

When the station was initially installed it was located in the school cafeteria. The school cafeteria is locked periodically throughout the day. This limited the hours of the school day that students and staff had access to the hydration station. The hydration station at Hoopa Valley High School was moved to a new location at the beginning of the 2014/15 school year in order to improve access to fresh chilled drinking water. The station was relocated to the school's main entry foyer right outside of the cafeteria door. When the station was relocated, it also provided ADA water access. At the new location students have access to free chilled drinking water during school hours as well as during after school activities.

Water bottles and drinking containers continue to be a barrier. After the initial installation of the hydration station, the cafeteria staff provided single use cups at the hydration station for thirsty students and staff to use. After the cost of the drinking cups became prohibitive, cafeteria staff discontinued providing them in 2014.

SNAP-Ed staff have provided free water bottles (purchased with an outside funding source) to the student body on two occasions. Students continue to misplace, lose or break their personal water bottles thus hindering access to large thirst quenching portions of water that can be taken to class and after school activities.

Another challenge on adding water promotion language to the school wellness policy has been the turnover of high school principals at HVHS. In the past two years Hoopa Halley High School had three principals. Humboldt County SNAP-Ed staff has provided technical assistance and training to one principal. He left the following year. He was replaced with a second principal who was also provided with technical assistance. The 2015/16 school year is here and there is another new principal. Humboldt County SNAP-Ed staff will work on setting up a meeting with the new principal.

Future Directions/Sustainable Success

The short term goal for Humboldt SNAP-Ed program is to provide technical support to the Hoopa Valley Elementary School (HVES). The HVES Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) contacted SNAP-Ed program staff in 2014 requesting assistance in ordering a hydration station for the Elementary School. The PTO raised the funds and purchased a hydration station which was installed in 2014. Unfortunately the station was installed in a building that is currently under construction. Our SNAP-Ed goal for 2015 is to provide assistance for the school to purchase and install a second station on the campus. SNAP-Ed staff will also work on setting up nutrition education and drinking water promotion at the HV Elementary School once the stations are reopened. A longer term goal for Humboldt LHD NEOP staff is to continue to build relations with the Klamath Trinity School District principals, administrators and offer them technical assistance for updating their school wellness policy to include drinking water promotion language.

Contact information about this Narrative

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