



Addressing Food Insecurity in Jurupa Valley

Intervention Summary

At Jurupa Unified School District, an average of 78% of families qualify for free & reduced price school meals, with some school sites as high as 95%. Meeting basic needs is a stressor for many families at various times during the year. Various school sites provide a wide variety of resources for families, including clothing and referrals for emergency needs and assistance programs. Based on studies, the school district realized that hungry students may not perform as well in academics or physical activities. Schools already provide breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks, as well as summer meals. However, a well-coordinated network of food resources and free food distributions did not exist to support families in providing food at home and over the weekend.

The school district designated a Director for Parent Involvement and Community Outreach, who coordinates family activities, community resources and accesses grants for school health and extracurricular opportunities. Through the NEOP grant, the director attended multiple webinars and trainings on the topics of Food Distribution, Food Banks & Pantries, Hunger as a Health Issue, and Food Insecurity. Through outreach to multiple partners, it was clear that the Jurupa Valley community was in desperate need of a coordinated food distribution effort, and many partners lined up to provide support.

Determined to address this issue, food distribution plans began to develop with the school district, God's Pantry and For The Least Ministries to start a large scale food distribution in the parking lot of a high school campus. The first distribution was set for June 2015, with over 75 volunteers assisting 309 families with truckloads and pallets of donated food (reaching over 1,400 individuals). Word spread quickly and the momentum continues to build - once a month, this event provides an opportunity to link local service providers with families in need, and send them home with healthy food.

NEOP-funded staff from ReachOut provide nutrition education, recipes and Harvest of the Month materials to support families in preparing the foods from the distribution at home.

Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

Through the collaborative efforts of individual partners, any barriers have seemed rather minor. Determination outweighed the potential complications, since everyone involved was focused on the end goal of providing food and resources to families in need. Facilities issues (gate access, property usage, liability) were addressed with the support of district personnel. The two food ministries work cohesively to collect food from Feeding America and other food sources, and deliver them to the school site with trucks and forklifts. Volunteers from multiple student groups and community organizations show up; even those being served pitch in to help unload and distribute food to others.

One ongoing barrier is maintaining the availability and coordination of volunteers. When volunteers are short, the families served are asked to lend a hand, and many being served are now regular volunteers of the program as well. The site has applied to provide USDA-subsidized foods monthly, which would increase the variety, quantity and stability of food items provided. Delivering effective nutrition education at outdoor food distribution sites has been difficult, especially when families are receiving foods that require refrigeration. One solution would be to access a classroom or seating area in the shade to conduct a nutrition class before distribution.



Produce is sorted and bagged by volunteers.



Groups such as Girl Scouts provide a strong volunteer base.

Future Directions/Sustainable Success

The school district is currently connecting with local congregations to support a network of reliable food distribution on a consistent calendar. They are establishing a second food distribution site at a school on the other end of town on a different week of the month. This distribution will be aligned with Vida-Life ministries and local church congregations. With inclusion of USDA Commodities, the food distribution sites will gain

even more stability in the community. The goal is to pair food distribution with nutrition education and opportunities for community involvement each month.

Contact information about this Narrative

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