



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

### Title

Seeds of Change in Tuolumne County

### Intervention Summary

FFY 15 has been a challenging one for Tuolumne County Health Department's SNAP-Ed program. During the first part of the year, there were several staff changes and by April 2015, a whole new team had been assembled with players who were all new to SNAP-Ed. The team quickly got down to the business of learning what this exciting program is all about, what in the world PSE is, and how we could begin implementing it. In a short amount of time, we expanded our partnership with Grocery Outlet to produce the county's first-ever Fruit & Veggie Fest in May, and worked with this retailer to place "My Plate" signage on shopping carts over the summer. We also established a major presence at Tenaya Elementary School, delivering direct nutrition education to grades K-6, beginning a school garden, and conducting a Smarter Lunchroom cafeteria evaluation that will inform our work there in FFY 16. Because our PSE efforts are all quite new, the major impact to date has been gathering data and expanding awareness of what SNAP-Ed does and can do in the community. In doing so, we have caught the interest of potential partners who can be supportive of our efforts in the future. We also are enthusiastic about future outcomes from our newly-formed CNAP group, which has a refreshing level of synergy amongst its members.

### Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

We have had an encouraging level of support in our initial PSE efforts this year. The biggest challenge was learning the SNAP-Ed program so that we could begin implementing the objectives of an inherited Integrated Work Plan. Our other challenge is that some efforts to expand into corporate retailers, such as Safeway, which has the minimum number of EBT redemptions to justify our presence there, have been slow-going due to retailer's lack of response. And, our small county does not have census

tracts so we have not been able to expand into corner stores and a farmer's market that accepts EBT. We will continue to pursue these avenues and explore alternative site targeting methodologies in order to have a presence at these venues.

## **Future Directions/Sustainable Success**

Our goals over the next 1-2 years are to continue refining our knowledge of our program and how to bring about meaningful change using PSE in various settings, and building our network of supportive partners. During this time, our school garden program will have matured at Tenaya Elementary and likely expanded to neighboring Tioga High School, and we will partner with the Master Gardeners program to help sustain the gardens and related education programs. We also will have partnered with school administration and cafeteria staff to bring about healthy changes in the lunchroom and in all foods served on the school campus before, during or after school. We expect to expand our marketing partnerships with current retail partners SaveMart and Grocery Outlet, providing program materials, such as shelf wobblers and other signage that encourages produce purchases. In addition, we will explore how to create opportunities for low-cost or free instructor-led fitness programs for the SNAP-Ed target population

Longer term goals include evaluating corner stores and expanding PSE efforts in these venues to eliminate food deserts and highlight healthy food and creating infrastructure for safe, outdoor PA opportunities within our rural setting which will include exploring multi-use possibilities with schools and faith-based organizations. Helpful stakeholders in achieving these goals are our CNAP team, community leaders and administrators within our cities and county, Master Gardeners, and professionals in the retail, fitness, faith and education sectors, to name a few.

## **Contact information about this Narrative**

**Local Health Department Grant Name: Tuolumne County Department of Public Health**

**Grant #: 13-20103**

**Author's Name: Elizabeth Ramos**

**Phone: 209-533-6818**

**Email: [eramos@co.tuolumne.ca.us](mailto:eramos@co.tuolumne.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](http://www.CaChampionsForChange.net).