

Parlier Drainage Canal Blossoms into a Recreation Area

“These improvements have made Parlier a safer, healthier place to live.”

Armando Lopez
Mayor, City of Parlier

PROBLEM

A lack of safe routes and a pedestrian hazard hindered Parlier residents from walking throughout their community.

SOLUTION

Improve the ability of Parlier residents to walk in their community by filling an open drainage canal and turning it into a skate park for community recreation.



PARTNERS

- U-Save Market
- Mothers and families from Parlier
- Armando Lopez, Mayor of Parlier
- Ishmael Solis, Chief of the Parlier Police Department
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- U.C. Cooperative Extension, Fresno
- *Network for a Healthy California—Latino Campaign, Central Valley Region*
- *Network for a Healthy California—Children’s Power Play! Campaign, Central Valley Region*

STEPS TOWARD CHANGE

In June 2005, 10 Parlier mothers involved in the WIC program were taught how to use a walkability survey from the *Fruit, Vegetable, and Physical Activity Toolbox for Community Educators* (www.cachampionsforchange.net). The walkability survey shows how easy or difficult it is to walk throughout a community. The mothers walked in a Parlier neighborhood, filled out the survey, and realized that there were multiple problems that made it difficult for them to easily walk in their community. The problems that they discovered were so big that they decided to take further action by conducting the survey again with local policy makers.

Accompanied by their families and escorted by Parlier Mayor, Armando Lopez; Parlier Chief of Police, Ishmael Solis; and Parlier Farmers’ Market Manager, Joe Vasquez; the mothers lead the group on a well traveled path to the neighborhood grocery store. During their 1-hour walk to the U-Save Market, they completed the walkability survey. The survey showed that there was an open drainage canal, broken sidewalks, lack of crosswalks, speeding vehicles, un-kept and cluttered lots, missing STOP signs, and overgrown shrubbery that made it difficult for drivers to see pedestrian crossings.

The mothers and local policy makers reviewed the list of problems and agreed to focus first on fixing the open drainage canal. They brought this issue to the Parlier City Planning Department and other city officials. The city officials promptly responded by filling half of the canal. They then went one step further by building a skate park on top of the filled canal. The skate park provides hours of fun physical activity for local families. Plans are now underway to complete the revitalization project and eventually fill the rest of the canal. The projected time of completion is early 2009.

Parlier Drainage Canal Blossoms into a Recreation Area (Continued)

As further commitment by the City of Parlier to improve the walking conditions of the community, the City has repaired broken sidewalks, installed crosswalks and speed bumps, and removed shrubbery that blocks the views of drivers. The City also installed surveillance cameras to help monitor activities around the skate park. These changes have allowed the residents of Parlier to walk more freely throughout their community and enjoy their local resources, including nearby grocery stores and the skate park.



For partner information, visit www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net or contact Eustolia Zamora-Bonilla, *Network for a Healthy California—Latino Campaign*, at ezamora@ucdavis.edu.

For consumer information, visit us at www.cachampionsforchange.net.

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