



LOCAL NETWORK SUCCESS STORIES

Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2008

These Success Stories are a compilation of stories submitted by local *Network for a Healthy California* (*Network*) projects located throughout California for FFY 2008. They were drawn from the annual progress reports submitted in October by all projects. The projects include: local incentive awardees, non-profit incentive awardees, and local food and nutrition education contractors. The stories are arranged by type of agency/channel and then alphabetical within each channel. Contact information for each project is included. We hope the Success Stories will be beneficial to both our funded *Network* partners and to any non-funded agencies who read them. It is hoped that sharing these stories will strengthen our efforts to improve the dietary and physical activity habits of Food Stamp eligible Californians.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSIONS

First Five Madera Success Story

The population in Madera County is roughly 146,345 with 63.9 percent of those adults falling in the overweight category. Furthermore, of the 31,823 people eligible for Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE), 54 percent are not participating in the Food Stamp Program.

By participating in the local farmers' market, staff has been able to reach FSNE population through collaborative efforts with the Department of Social Services, Women, Infants, and Children Program, and First 5 Madera who share the same target populations. Not only has staff been able to distribute nutrition education, but staff has been able to reach participants through food and physical activity demonstrations conducted at the farmers' market and recruit participants to attend the quarterly "Health and Wellness" workshops. By attending farmers' market meetings and representing the needs of the FSNE-eligible population, staff has assisted in providing increased access to fresh affordable fruits and vegetables.

By participating in farmers' market meetings, FSNE-eligible needs were put into the development of the market, therefore having a lasting effect on the market itself (increased vendors with more variety and vendors who accept electronic benefit transfer [EBT]). The greatest success is seeing children enjoying a nice piece of fruit.

Although the farmers' market is a great success there is still work that needs to be done for the FSNE population. Staff will continue to provide input of FSNE needs, which may include establishing the market as an EBT provider for greater access to fresh affordable fruits and vegetables for the FSNE population.

For more information, please contact Diane Sandoval at dsandoval@first5madera.net.

CITY GOVERNMENTS

Exercising for Rewards

One of the major obstacles in promoting the importance of daily physical activity to youth living on the Samoa Peninsula is their lack of access to sports equipment and safe sites to recreate. Because our children are low-income (97 percent food stamp eligible), they often live overcrowded in substandard housing-- in tents at the beach, in local welfare motels, and in dilapidated recreational vehicles without access to safe yards in which to ride bikes, play, climb, run, and jump. In addition to their own personal lack of safe space to play or storage for sports equipment such as bikes, skates, or skateboards; the lack of infrastructure (sidewalks, street lights) on the Peninsula provides an additional barrier. Another barrier to outside play and walking is the dangerous highway which bisects the community. Nicknamed the "Hail Mary Samoa," this two-lane road with a posted speed limit of 55 MPH is heavily traveled by 18 wheeled trucks, logging trucks, and tractor trailers hauling heavy equipment that makes activity such as walking to school, crossing the road to visit friends, or accessing the beach, extremely dangerous. As a consequence of these barriers, many of our youth spend time indoors.

Over the years our Afterschool and Recreation Program staff and volunteers have been acutely aware of the need to encourage and motivate our participants to exercise. The equipment for biking, skating, sandboarding, hiking, skateboarding, gardening, surfing, swimming, baseball, basketball, and disc golf are readily available at our Center-after school and during summer recreation; however, these voluntary activities do not seem to produce any remarkable change in our participants' motivation to use them. Many youth opt to spend time on the computer or watch videos in lieu of outdoor exercising. Our *Network*-funded scheduled one time physical activities did bring about noticeable change. Staff added this exercise component to educational field trips. For example, a trip to the Arcata Educational Farm would be followed by a swimming trip to the nearby Mad River. Staff carefully selected field trips that involved exercise rather than sedentary activity or merely added exercise when it was needed. Our youth really responded to these scheduled events. Record numbers of youth attended summer programming on the scheduled days. For our youth, leaving the "island" is a great motivator—many children languish on the peninsula all summer, unable to access events occurring in town due to lack of transportation/money. The added attraction of an accompanying physical activity such as disc golf, climbing wall, swimming at the Pump Station, running through Redwood Park, or surfing at Moonstone Beach really brought kids out.

Our children became noticeably slimmer. Our children gained knowledge about free, near-by venues for exercising and enjoyment. Our younger children returning from summer hiatus are now inquiring about repeat trips to the farms followed by the one time only physical activities that staff incorporated into our educational trips.

We plan to continue scheduling our educational field trips partnering them with physical exercise.

For more information, please contact Christopher Drop at manilacc@suddenlinkmail.com.

Por La Vida Nutrition Education Program: Empowering Latino Community Members through Knowledge and Nutrition

The City of Montclair Por La Vida Nutrition Education Program reaches out to educate, inform, and empower low-income Latino residents. Our target population often faces confusion over the dietary recommendations (e.g., how to read a food chart for recommended nutrition guidelines), complicated by a language barrier and the fact that many feel that the continually rising cost of food is an obstacle toward making lifestyle changes. In addition, many have limited exposure to fruit and vegetables that are not called for in traditional recipes and are unaware of ways in which these different nutritious foods can be easily incorporated into their diet. Factors such as safety (e.g., some feel unsafe exercising outside in their neighborhoods) and monetary (e.g., gym membership costs) concerns continue to serve as barriers to engaging in regular physical exercise.

Through bilingual health educators and Promotoras, the City of Montclair Nutrition Education Program (funded by the *Network for a Healthy California*) provides Latino community members with nutrition and physical activity education courses. The primary aim of the program is to increase participants' consumption of fruit and vegetables and their overall physical activity. Promotoras facilitate the 16 session Por La Vida-Mujeres Decididas curriculum and they maintain a positive, ongoing rapport with targeted community members after sessions are delivered. Health educators lead the cooking demonstrations, advanced nutrition classes, field trips to local farmers' markets, and nutrition workshops at various community events. Participants frequently report that they have taken steps to increase their intake of a variety of fruit and vegetables and that they have modified their recipes to make them more healthy (e.g., replacing lard with vegetable oil when cooking rice). Many also report that they have taken steps to increase their physical activity (e.g., participating in an exercise classes and outdoor physical activities, such as walking and playing outdoor games with their children).

The Por La Vida Nutrition Program has had a positive impact on community member participants. Participants have noted that they are grateful that they have been able to participate in the program. The information they learn in the sessions and the relationships they establish with other community members (e.g., the support network formed with other program participants and city of Montclair staff members) help them in implementing and continually striving to make positive changes in their lives (e.g., incorporating new/more fruit and vegetables into their diet, modifying recipes to be healthier, engaging in regular, inexpensive physical activities). Participants share their struggles and successes in influencing their families (including spouses and children) to adopt healthier lifestyles.

Six months ago a woman began attending the Por La Vida Nutrition program as a quiet and hesitant individual. Through the course of the program she became empowered and relished the idea that by doing something as simple as reading food labels and making healthier choices she could improve the health of herself and her family. She also began checking videos out of the lending library to continue furthering her nutrition knowledge. In her Por La Vida classes she bonded with other participants and began sharing the positive impact the program was having on her life. As a result of implementing the nutrition information she learned, she lost 30 pounds and gained a new outlook on life. She also formed an informal walking group, in which she and a few other participants meet a few times a week to go walking.

The participant who became empowered and informed through the program serves as an excellent example of how learning and embracing positive eating habits can make a lasting change in the lives of individuals and their families. She also serves as a great role model for other program participants and show how the Por La Vida nutrition classes can serve as a springboard for continuing to learn and embrace nutrition and exercise ideas, programs, and activities.

For more information, please contact Michelle Roche at mroche@ci.montclair.ca.us.

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Middle School Children Increase Preferences for and Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables

Low-income middle school students (White, Hmong, and Hispanic), have more challenges to access and consumption of fruits and vegetables versus students from higher income families. Familiarity and access at home seem to be the two main reasons for the students not choosing fruits and vegetables at school during lunch.

We utilized the Sierra Cascade Nutrition and Activity Consortium (SCNAC) eating patterns survey to study the impact of California's Harvest of the Month (HOTM) program in a pre-post intervention-control study format in two middle schools. Both schools were compared against the same control middle school. We conducted seven tastings of fruits and vegetables and provided educational materials to teachers and parents as well as posted visual education with SCNAC created HOTM posters.

At the first target school, intervention students (n=469 matched pre-post) showed a significant change pre to post HOTM intervention using paired t-tests in fruit consumption with a mean increase of 0.3 servings per day (P=.001). In addition, White students showed a significant 0.3 increase in vegetable servings the prior day. Both White and Hispanic students showed a significant increase in their agreement with the statement that they think they can eat a vegetable served for lunch at school while only White students showed a significant increase in their agreement with the statement that they think they can eat a fruit served for lunch at school. The likelihood of having positive attitudes toward trying a vegetable or fruit at lunch or a fruit at snack was significantly higher in intervention students after controlling for ethnicity, gender, grade, and place of birth. Females were more likely to agree that they would eat a vegetable served at lunch than males. Hispanic males and both White and Hispanic females had significantly more positive attitudes toward eating fruit at lunch. There was a significant increase in soda consumption at the control school (n=247 matched pre-post) compared to no change at the intervention school.

At the second target school, intervention students (n=263 matched pre-post) showed a significant improvement in their preferences for apples, kiwis, and spinach. When separated by ethnicity, Hmong students showed significant improvement in their preferences for apples, pears, sweet potatoes, oranges, and broccoli compared to White students. There were no significant differences between these ethnic groups with regard to fruit or vegetables consumed the prior day. While intervention students overall showed increases in fruit and vegetable consumption, these differences were not statistically significant when compared to control students (n=247 matched pre-post). Control students showed a significant increase in soda consumption pre to post compared to no change in soda consumption among intervention students.

Positive attitudes and practices towards fruit and vegetable consumption were significantly greater ($P \leq .05$) for students who were either Hmong, female, born outside of the United States, or who participated in the HOTM tastings.

During the 2008-09 contract year, we will study the impact of the HOTM program on 4th through 6th grade students with the SCNAC eating patterns survey in a pre-post intervention-control study format. We also plan to strengthen the parent education component of our HOTM program.

For more information, please contact Cindy Wolff at cwolff@csuchico.edu.

East Los Angeles College
Contract #: 05-45507

Agriscap

There were two back-to-back nutrition education sessions in the summer, one in the morning and one in the afternoon at Sheridan Street Elementary School. We wanted to do something special for the summer session students. We learned that Cal Poly Pomona had an amazing farm and orchard called "Agriscap," and wanted to know if it was available for field trips. The Director of Agriscap stated that she would waive the normal tour fees, and grant us the field trip for a small donation to the farm. The teachers volunteered to cover the nominal cost. At this point, all we needed to do was come up with the transportation. When the principal at Sheridan Street Elementary School (SSE) heard about our need, he offered to donate a bus to us for free. Parents and administrators offered to chaperone the students on a volunteer basis. Nutrition Services at SSE provided lunch for the students at no cost.

This is a great example of different people coming together to pool resources and to provide excellent opportunities for students to gain first-hand experience as to where fruits and vegetables come from and how they grow. They were able to sample fruits off the trees and vines and taste fresh vegetables at the farm store.

The field trip changed perceptions and preferences for whole fruits and vegetables for many of these inner-city students. They also gained a new-found appreciation for the work it takes to bring fresh fruits and vegetables to their lunch bags and dinner tables.

We are hoping that more nutrition-related field trips such as this one will be allowed. If possible, we would like to expand this experience to all of our students at all of our elementary schools.

For more information, please contact Manjit Kaur at manjitkaurjs@msn.com.

Harvest of the Month – Making a Difference

I have heard although a number of stories that express the difficulty parents have getting their children to eat fruit and vegetables at home. Some parents have expressed their frustration that although they try to offer healthy choices at home, their kids will not eat them. Other parents admit that they are not very brave in trying new foods themselves. They may never have tried fruits and vegetables such as persimmons or spaghetti squash, much less know what they are, and would never have thought to provide them for their children.

One of our major *Network for a Healthy California* activities is our promotion of Harvest of the Month (HOTM). Each month we promote the featured fruit or vegetable in all schools through classroom tastings, parent meetings, teacher trainings, and collaboration with Food Service, which features the produce twice a month at lunch. Along with the samples provided to each classroom, teachers are able to sign up for HOTM workbooks which contain standards based activities for each monthly produce sample. This combined effort ensures that every student is exposed to the HOTM in a fun and positive way.

The exciting news is that parents and teachers now approach me, thanking us for providing a program that they see making a difference at school and in their homes. One of the many inspiring stories comes from a mom who pulled me aside to say thank you. Last year, her first grade daughter tried persimmons for the first time in her classroom. She loved the persimmon and immediately started asking her mom to buy them for her to eat at home. Her mom had never seen a persimmon or tasted one before, but encouraged her daughter's interest in this new fruit. One day her daughter noticed that their neighbor had a persimmon tree overflowing into her yard and with her mom's permission, asked the neighbor if she could have some. He was very gracious and said that she could get them at any time, as well as the tomatoes he also grew. She was so excited that she and her family could now eat persimmons every day. Her mom said "I am so glad that she discovered something new and that it is indeed healthy for her." This is the goal of our program, to expose students to healthy fruits and vegetables that they may never have tasted or enjoyed before.

Starting this year, we are featuring HOTM in our parent meetings. Family newsletters have gone home in student folders every month, but until now we have not had a method of following up or reinforcing that information with parents.

Now, at the beginning of every month we will be holding parent meetings at school sites during which we give a presentation on the featured HOTM and have our chefs lead them in making the featured recipe to taste. With this extra emphasis on educating parents, we hope to hear more success stories similar to that of our 1st grader and her mom.

For more information, please contact Christine Bou Sleiman at Christine.elhaj@gmail.com.

Healthy Choices Even At Fast-Food Restaurants

In the summer of 2008 “Eating Well, Living Well” debuted, an online lesson for adult English as a Second Language (ESL) students, “Lessons for Living Well: Fast Food Healthy Choices.” Developed for adult Intermediate level and above ESL learners with basic computer skills, the lesson provides learners with a comprehensible knowledge on healthy levels of fat and salt intake and the skills needed to begin making healthier choices for their families. Adult ESL students are extremely interested in health and nutrition lessons as indicated on needs assessments. With this lesson, students can improve language and literacy skills as they also improve general health literacy, maintain current healthy practices, and take steps towards making healthy choices at restaurants.

Thirty-eight students in two classes participated in a pilot test of the online lesson. The overall response was enthusiastic. Teachers began with a discussion of current practice related to eating out. Many students reported eating at fast food restaurants frequently, but also expressed that they knew that not everything on the menu was healthy. Some students said they did not eat fast food, but when questioned, said that their children and grandchildren often ate fast food. Most expressed interest in learning about making healthier choices.

After the discussion, students were directed to their computers, put on headphones, and got to work. In the lesson, students see a young Hispanic woman talking to her doctor about fat and salt in fast foods. The doctor recommends that the woman read a Nutrition Chart that the restaurant can supply to see the levels of salt and fat in common fast foods. Following the lesson, students wanted to talk about what they had learned. They shared their ideas for making healthier choices when they eat out.

Many students expressed shock at the levels of fat and salt in foods they often eat. They had plans for making changes. Here are some direct quotes from one of the classes and written feedback:

- “45 grams of fat? I will never order that item again!”
- “Now I know how much fat and salt are in fast food.”
- “I plan to eat healthier now.”
- “I learned how much fat and salt are healthy for me every day.”

The students were smiling, interested, and engaged in the lesson. The audio and video support made the lesson fun and engaging. Students were clearly interested and committed to making healthier choices in the future.

This is the final year of the “Eating Well, Living Well” project. All of the deliverables are on the “Eating Well, Living Well” website, <http://www.sdcoe.net/eatingwell/>. The California Department of Public Health intends to maintain the site, so that ESL instructors, nutrition educators, and ESL students can continue using the nutrition lessons, online training, online student lesson and resources for many more years.

For more information, please contact Nancy Hampson at nhampson@sdccd.edu.

Regents of the University of California, San Diego
Contract #: 06-55122

Web Traffic Control

Nutrition web lessons were not being completed by students regularly and a new strategy was established to provide the lessons to classroom teachers.

An incentive was also built in to reward classroom and staff developed and published criteria for distributing incentives at two time points over the course of the school year. Classrooms that completed a minimum of 50 percent of the nutrition education web lessons, in a timely fashion were rewarded.

We developed an online reporting system so that teachers could independently check quiz results and students' progress. Teachers have responded and there has been approximately a 30 percent increase in the completion rate of nutrition web lessons.

For further information, please contact Kari Herzog at kherzog@ucsd.edu.

COUNTY OFFICES OF EDUCATION

Alameda County Office of Education/California Healthy
Kids Resource Center
Contract #: 06-55067

Taking New Standards to the Classroom

This year the State Board of Education adopted kindergarten through grade twelve California Health Education Content Standards (CHECS). The new standards emphasize teaching skills that enable students to make and carry out real-life healthy choices. The *Network for a Healthy California (Network)*, California Healthy Kids Resource Center (CHKRC), and the California Department of Education (CDE) partnered to roll-out the CHECS standards to school-based contractors via a series of statewide trainings.

CHKRC delivered the Standards-Based Nutrition Education Training nine times, in six *Network* regions, from Orange County to Crescent City. Participants used eight key ingredients to design a recipe, and in doing so discovered the importance of standards to planning and guiding sequential instruction. Next, participants explored the components of skill development and experienced a model skills-based lesson. To wrap-up, they applied their new skills to evaluate and build a shared “map” of grade-level, standards-based resources. In 2008, 224 *Network* local incentive awardees staff and partners took the trainings. Overall, participants rated the trainings as 4.2 (on a scale of 1=poor to 5=excellent), and reported greater understanding of the new standards and skill development, increased competence to teach students nutrition skills, and improved ability to evaluate and access high-quality instructional resources.

Additional onsite trainings are planned. In 2009, CHKRC will also launch online, on-demand trainings. Taken together, these trainings will address selecting standards-based resources, planning and conducting skill-based instruction, and providing effective integrated instruction. The onsite and online training resources will help school day and afterschool instructors hone their ability to teach students skills that transfer to healthier real-life nutrition and physical activity behaviors.

For more information please contact Deborah Wood at DWood@californiahealthykids.org.

Secondary Success

Our program started as an elementary school program with a “whole school, every child participates” focus. As we moved into both middle and high schools, we tried to envision how each student could participate in integrated nutrition education. We decided to target science subject classes, but science teachers were ‘stuck’ in their curriculum and would not come out and “play.” Our middle school teacher focused on her strength – world cultures – and worked with the 7th grade core teachers to integrate a garden-based nutrition education and a cooking-based nutrition education into the framework of different countries around the world. Students planted tomatoes, then made salsa for the Americas; grew peanuts and cooked peanut stew for Africa (an alternate for those with allergies was included); and used garlic and hummus for the Middle East. Students and teachers raved about the lessons and now every 7th grade student will receive nutrition education at Ochoa Middle School. The program will move to Cesar Chavez middle school this year.

At the high school, similarly, the science teachers were not interested in working with the new Tennyson High Educational Farm (THE Farm). THE Farm was created by San Francisco Foundation money last year, and is maintained by families and the afterschool garden club. The physical education and health teachers came out for five lessons about nutrition at the farm across the parking lot. Health teachers in our end of year focus group spoke highly of the experience, both for the academic lessons the students learned and the ‘transformation’ of the students that were not very successful in the traditional classroom. These students focused and became experts in this different environment. Unexpected but totally delightful, English as a Second Language classes came out to the garden-based nutrition education classes which helped their oral language proficiency and their eating habits. Their teacher said that she never had so many students raise their levels of proficiency and she thought their experience with garden-based nutrition education was a primary factor.

We are making progress at the secondary level! I have included some actual stories from teachers at the middle school level reported by Molly O’Kane our new Program Manager.

With success comes challenges, we have ten schools knocking at our doors asking us to pick them next. We are working on ways to streamline our organization and cut produce costs to allow us to serve more students. What a problem to have!

Teacher Testimonial: I have to admit that a part of me was dreading this introduction to the Harvest of the Month program with my brand new Art I class. The broccoli had already been creating quite a stink in our staff room and the staff was complaining. I thought for sure I had to be met by a barrage of moans and groans and *EW’s!* on the part of the students...especially as I had already decided that I would microwave the

broccoli for about a minute to “green it up” a bit—my favorite way to eat it (blanching preferred over nuking) but knew that it would also create a “certain aroma” that would pervade the room. I heard one “EW” and quickly headed it off with a request to keep negative opinions private because it can influence how others perceive the food before they even try it and that this may not even taste the same as you’ve had it before! Well, I put on my best game face and got really excited talking about all the nutritional/health benefits. We had our first drawing assignment in the new journals and *they LOVED it!!* I did bring some ranch dressing, but not all tables wanted it and most kids did try the broccoli, some finishing off their plates completely—I even had one student pleading with another to *just try it* until he eventually did. Another student took the bunch of broccoli home to her family and another filled a bag with leftovers as he’d forgotten his lunch today and he said, “this is hecka’ better than a bunch of cookies!”
WOW! Made my day!

Mary Ann Nelson- Edendale Middle School Art Teacher

The lesson plan ideas that are now available because of your presentation are just what I can use with my students. I like that its a simple idea and adaptable for various levels. Being able to translate the everyday experience of the students’ into an observable, classroom experiment and lesson that is informative and engaging is very helpful. Middle schoolers are often so out of touch with their bodies, that they need something like this that they can sink their teeth into. J

Thanks so much.

Julie Dobkin

Rm 28, EMS

Teacher Anne Arranda sent the homework for the kids to make their veggie people and when they brought them back they wrote a class story using the characters. It is in Spanish. In a nutshell...Mr. Vegetable found a caterpillar eating his garden so he spoke to Mr. Apple and he told him to go to the ocean and get an octopus to bring back to his garden. He did so and the octopus came with him and ate the caterpillar and the garden was beautiful again.

Our elementary program has shown that we are facilitating changes in the healthy habits of students. We now know that the fully implemented program - in class, in gardens, and in afterschool programs – with staff, teachers, students, and caregivers-makes a difference. Environments are changing: community members asked for and received three farmers’ markets on school grounds (with the help of additional funding) where students and staff are providing nutrition education. The program is bursting at the seams – this year all of the high schools qualify for the program. We have been invited by Kaiser to provide a model of professional development for garden-based education and will work with the University of California, Cooperative Extension to create a volunteer program to support the maintenance of school gardens so we can continue our work and expand it beyond the borders of Alameda County across Northern California.

This year we are moving to centralize our operations into Alameda County Office of Education so as to reduce costs and provide Harvest of the Month (HOTM) to more teachers. Last year we served 795 teachers, this year we think with the reduced costs we can serve another 100 teachers. Transportation, receiving, and storing HOTM have become an issue because it is so large. But again, what a problem to have!

Another focus for us is to finish system integration of the program into the middle and high school levels so we can codify and articulate the processes in order to replicate them when we receive additional funding.

Also, we are working to find ways to outreach more parents by integrating with The Parent Information Center at the County Office of Education. This way we can use their expertise and become a part of their overall effort to inform and inspire parents.

Finally, we are again looking at the efficacy of our cooking and afterschool programs. Are we making a difference there? Can we increase our support? At this point we have trained all afterschool in SPARK. How can we support them additionally?

For more information, please contact Christine Boynton at cboynton@husd.k12.ca.us.

Alameda County Office of Education (Rock La Fleche)
Contract #: 07-65304

Nutrition Education Service Learning

Teaching nutrition education as a way to serve the community continues to be a successful way to meet program objectives for the Rock La Fleche Health and Nutrition Education Program. Each year, high school students learn about healthy eating and practice healthful eating strategies by teaching the same to elementary school students in their community (particularly underserved communities where there are high concentrations of students receiving free and reduced lunch meals).

Rock La Fleche students designed, practiced, and completed four separate service learning workshops (two garden-based and two classroom-based) at two elementary schools in West and North Oakland. Workshop themes included understanding MyPyramid, recognizing healthy fruits and vegetables, identifying and tasting garden produce, and discussing ways to include fruits and vegetables in on-the-go breakfast meals.

These nutrition education workshops further supports learning that is already taking place in these schools; reinforce for high school students the importance of making changes in their eating habits; and train young people as health advocates and involved citizens in their communities.

Nutrition education service learning workshops will continue in the coming program year.

For more information, please contact Toni Adams at vtoni@acoe.org.

Community Food Bank Partnership

Madison Elementary in Central Unified School District was looking for new ideas on how to help their low-income families access healthy food and to promote food stamp participation. The Community Food Bank in Fresno acquired a grant to purchase a mobile food pantry vehicle to reach the families in the rural areas. The Community Food Banks goal is to secure food accessibility, promote healthy food choices, and inform parents on food stamp eligibility. They are now able to bring the food to the families rather than the families finding transportation into Fresno for help.

Once a month, Madison's Afterschool Program hosts parent meetings to discuss issues concerning afterschool activities, changes, requirements, and school day related topics. The Community Food Bank presented at the monthly parent meeting. The presentation included food security, food stamp promotion, and nutrition education. Being that this was an afterschool event, the presentation was not limited to parents of students that attend the afterschool program. All of Madison's parents were informed and encouraged to attend the meeting.

Each parent who attended the meeting received information on food accessibility in their neighborhood, how to receive food stamps, and they were each given a bag of fresh produce and a box of "staples" (canned items, rice, beans, dried and boxed goods).

This short presentation delivered a huge amount of much needed and appreciated information. We look forward to continuing our partnership with our local food bank in efforts to support the well being of our communities! Our goal will be to collaborate more with the Community Food Bank to bring more of their resources to our *Network for a Healthy California*-funded schools during this new contract.

For more information, please contact Michelle Roman at mroman@fcoe.k12.ca.us.

Humboldt County Office of Education
Contract #: 05-45501

Collaborating with Afterschool Programs

One of our activities is to conduct bi-monthly nutrition education and physical activity promotion activities with afterschool programs. Due to staff shortage (two positions vacant, one staff member on medical leave) up until January 2008 of the reporting period, we were not able to focus as much as we would have liked on the afterschool programs.

Towards the end of the contract year, we connected with the newly formed Redwood Afterschool Network (RAN). Project staff was able to attend their September 2008 meeting and provide an overview of the Harvest of the Month and *Power Play!* programs. Additionally, we conducted a survey assessing current cooking facilities, nutrition education projects, and interest in doing more around nutrition education and physical activity promotion. All of the agencies present who meet *Network for a Healthy California* criteria were excited about the possibility to do more around nutrition education and physical activity.

As a result, we were able to recruit eight afterschool programs at the September meeting and received calls from three additional programs. With this new collaborative partnership we have the potential to reach approximately 300-400 youth.

Our plan for the new contract year is to attend RAN's monthly meetings and model a nutrition education lesson/activity and distribute food and materials to conduct the lesson/activity at their site.

For more information, please contact Linda Prescott at lprescott@humboldt.k12.ca.us.

Los Angeles County Office of Education Success Story

The Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) Coalition provides technical assistance and support to six school districts in Los Angeles County in their work to close the achievement gap by promoting fruit and vegetable consumption, daily physical activity, and other wellness issues that affect student readiness to learn. The LACOE Coalition holds regularly scheduled meetings to promote sharing among sub-contracting districts. Some of the challenges that we faced this past year was getting administrative support for planned nutrition education activities. Schools that have concerns with state testing scores are given guidelines by the district to improve these scores. Given the extensive academic requirements, teachers have limited time to devote to nutrition education activities. The Nutrition Education Reinforcement Incentives moratorium created additional challenges by limiting promotional activities and events. Additional challenges resulted from the inability to fill vacant clerical or fiscal positions due to the current state budget crisis and mandated hiring freezes at the local district level. Unique challenges of our LACOE Educational Programs included the distance between each of the eligible sites and the wide array of student learning disabilities.

A great program success for the LACOE Coalition has been continued collaboration and sharing among subcontracting districts and the recent hiring of a health educator to assist nutrition coordinators in developing skills-based nutrition education trainings for teachers and other district personnel. The most memorable events include implementation of the “taste testing” activities as well as discussions related to the teacher-focused “Harvest of the Month” newsletters.

LACOE Educational Programs

During the 2007-08 school year, Cortez PAU started a School Health Committee. This committee consisted of teachers and paraeducators that were the *Network for a Healthy California* participants. The committee was motivated to make campus wide changes to improve the health of the students beyond the nutrition education they were receiving in the classroom. Since its inception, the School Health Committee and the school’s Principal (Jim Andersen) were responsible for several health enhancing improvement to the campus. First, the committee and the Principal removed soda machines from the campus. The Committee also coordinated the campuses first annual Health and Fitness Fair on March 28, 2008.

Glendale USD

The state approval of the *Network* program at this school site led to a successful nutrition and physical activity fair utilizing the NNM® (National Nutrition Month) as a vehicle to carry out the message of “Nutrition: It’s a Matter of Fact!” This also aided in the incorporation of the largest A-Z alphabet salad bar and a *Network* activity, called Harvest of the Month (HOTM), into the event. The K-6 students and teachers had the opportunity to explore the various booths that related to increasing daily consumption of

fruits and vegetables and increasing physical activity. A HOTM booth was included to present nutrition facts and visuals about spinach; a local farmer discussed agriculture and farming equipment; a celebrity fruit character greeted the students and posed for pictures; the American Cancer Society (ACS) introduced and discussed the benefits of physical activity; the California Dairy Council discussed the importance of a good breakfast and MyPyramid; a supermarket challenged the students with a game, titled, "Fear Factor," which includes exploring different fruit and vegetable taste samples. It all ended with the largest A-Z salad bar featuring a different fruit or vegetable from all 26 letters of the alphabet and a free school meal.

Inglewood USD

The strength of the *Network* is the continued use of lead staff and teachers as coordinators at the targeted school sites. These coordinators serve as the heart of this program and help promote daily nutrition education and physical activity in the classroom.

Redondo Beach USD

The training, held at one of the child development center sites with a full kitchen adjacent to a meeting room, started 15 minutes after the center closed. Almost half of the teachers and instructional aides attended. Each individual was given a child's paper chef's hat and a copy of the *Network for a Healthy California's (Network) new Everyday Healthy Meals Network* cookbook upon arrival. Topics covered included a "culinary quiz," take home messages involving the teachers' role in promoting increased fruit and vegetable consumption, and the characteristics of programs that provide exemplary practices in nutrition education and physical activity. Also reviewed were the *Network's* goals for cooking with children, and how to translate age-appropriate gross and fine motor skill development into expectations related to food handling. The Chefs in the Classroom provided a demonstration of five recipes from the cookbook with chef tips to make things easier and safer. The group then broke into five teams that each prepared one recipe. At the end, the groups came together to taste each recipe and discuss their experiences.

Rowland USD

Besides reaching 200 classrooms, our nutrition educators and staff were active in reaching many parents at Morning Break Clubs, bilingual Special Education Parent Meetings, and five Family Nutrition Nights. This outreach exceeded our Scope of Work expectations and continues to reach more parents and families each subsequent school year. Our biggest success story, however, this year is at Jellick Elementary in Rowland Heights. Jellick has a population of 421 students in grades K thru 6th. When we had done taste testing at this school in prior years, students were very reluctant to try any new or unfamiliar food. Our nutrition educator made it a point to visit every classroom during the past school year and we arranged to conduct Jellick's first Family Nutrition Night during the school's Open House even in the spring. This September, we were present at the school Back to School Night and we were excited and pleased to see the number of students and their families taste testing our corn/tomato salad with very positive comments.

Many students asked for seconds and expressed how they liked having the nutrition educator come to their classroom. And that they learned about new fruits and vegetables!

San Gabriel USD

Many teachers have expressed enthusiasm about their participation in the HOTM and the positive impact that it has had on their students. District community liaisons increased involvement in the program has helped our efforts in providing nutrition education to parents and the community.

The lasting impact of the *Network* is evidenced by increased participation in nutrition education activities. Eligible teachers who participated in the impact evaluation showed an increase in the number of minutes they reported teaching nutrition.

Educational Programs

The School Health Committee has encouraged teachers and students to continue these health enhancing behaviors during the 2008-09 school year. Cortez PAU will continue to participate in the *Network* to further educate students and staff about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables and being physically active. They also plan to continue having healthy classroom parties. Next spring the school will host their second annual Health and Fitness Fair.

Glendale USD

“That was a wonderful event today!! WE ARE SO LUCKY TO HAVE BEEN CHOSEN! My students loved it so much. I ate lunch outside with them and had a chance to see them try new things and talk about what they liked and learned today. What a wonderful opportunity for the teachers and students” one teacher quoted. The principal also stated, “The students loved it. Some even asked if we could do this monthly or even weekly. Hats off to all of you and your staff!” “I was pleased to see that the vocabulary lessons this morning were focused on fruits and vegetables in each of the classrooms I visited. I could not believe how many kindergarteners tried the lentil-spinach soup and actually liked it,” the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services quoted. Finally, one student exclaimed, “This is the best food ever!”

Inglewood USD

The *Network* has developed a core of support staff, teachers, nurses, and food service staff who promote and emphasize the value of fruits and vegetables and physical activities and the role of these factors in the achievement and overall health of students and their families.

Redondo Beach USD

“I tried things that I would not normally try.” Teacher’s Aide
“A BIG thumbs up! When can we do this again?” Teacher
The overall feedback was very positive; the teachers really enjoyed the process and seem very excited to take that momentum and energy back into the classroom.

Rowland USD

The lasting impact we hoped to have achieved is that students and their families will continue to try and incorporate new and familiar fruits and vegetables into their daily diets. Ideally, the daily inclusion of fruits and vegetables becomes second nature and would be sorely missed if not included in their meals and at snack times. This, of course, is the ideal and with repeated education and community outreach, we believe this is possible. We are so very fortunate to have the *Network* and United States Department of Agriculture enable our efforts to reach and teach the benefits of fruit and vegetable consumption to students, families, and our community neighborhoods. It is through these combined efforts that we are all becoming “Champions for Change.”

San Gabriel USD

The enthusiastic involvement of the District community liaisons will have a lasting impact on the parents and the community.

The LACOE Coalition will continue to partner and collaborate with key district personnel to improve the delivery of nutrition education resources to teachers and support staff. Empower teachers to provide the nutrition education training in the classroom rather than relying on *Network* staff to teach nutrition. Provide more frequent nutrition education trainings for every eligible teacher on how to use the different elements of the Harvest of the Month toolkit. Identify and train lead teachers at every eligible school site to provide ongoing support and technical assistance for participating teachers. Meet with school administrative staff to review program goals and contractual agreements.

For more information, please contact Maryam Shayegh at Shayegh.Maryam@lacoed.edu.

Monthly Harvest of the Month Taste Tests Lead to Increased Nutrition Education in the Classroom

The teachers participating in our program find it difficult to add nutrition education and physical activity (PA) into their already crowded schedules. They recognize that nutrition education and PA are important subject areas, but they view them as extra subjects to teach; time they just do not have. It becomes a challenge to reassure them that these subjects can be integrated into their required content standards. This challenge often prevents them from full participation in our program.

We provide nutrition trainings to our teachers twice a year to demonstrate how nutrition education and PA can be incorporated into their standard and core subject areas. Last spring we demonstrated how to conduct a classroom taste testing with the Harvest of the Month (HOTM) fruits or vegetables. We showed the teachers how to conduct the taste testing with students and how to use the taste test in other subject areas, including literature and math. We provided each classroom with books pertaining to the HOTM theme, and other classroom resources including; bulletin board materials, "I tasted" stickers, and HOTM bracelets for the students. The demonstration and collaboration of nutrition education with the standard and core subject areas helped to alleviate concerns about additional work for the teachers. We were successful at increasing interest and participation in our HOTM program.

The teachers reported that the students enjoyed the taste testing in the classroom, and that it allowed them to teach other subjects with renewed interest. Teachers increased their participation in the HOTM program which led to increased nutrition education to the students. Some teachers took an opportunity to reach out to parents at their Back to School or Open House events with HOTM taste tests. They displayed their student's HOTM projects, and provided HOTM taste tests for the parents instead of cookies. The parents commented that they were surprised to learn that their children liked certain fruits or vegetables, and it helped increase their interest and understanding of the program.

This example of a successful implementation of the HOTM program will allow us to show other teachers and schools how our program can easily be implemented. It will also help the teachers incorporate more nutrition education in their classrooms, and promote interest throughout the school. We will continue to highlight this successful program to schools in Merced County.

For more information, please contact Jaci Westbrook at jwestbrook@mcoe.org.

CalSERVES Nutrition Olympics

Many of our students come to us believing they would prefer playing video games to physical activity and eating junk food instead of healthy snacks. Their previous experiences and media messages have left them to assume that exercise, especially if involved with school, has to be boring and tedious. Many students were not initially open to learning about healthy eating and incorporating physical activity into their lives.

Roseland Elementary School held a *Power Play!* Nutrition Olympics with various activity challenges such as a food pyramid relay, melon weight lifting, food trivia, coconut bowling, and many other nutrition and physical activity based challenges to encourage healthy eating and physical activity. When the day began students were milling around unsure of which activity to start with. As the day progressed the students began to see each activity as a personal challenge. They began to try activities...two, three, even four times in order to better their previous results. Throughout the area people could see the students working together to answer a difficult question and cheering others on. By the end of the day the children were exhausted and very satisfied with the day.

The students walked away with a new knowledge of nutrition and have been eager to try the day again. Students have been more inquisitive and eager to try new foods, even asking which foods belong in each food group. The activities showed the students that they could enjoy learning about and consuming fruits and vegetables.

Because of the success of the Nutrition Olympics, what was an event occurring just on the Roseland School campus has turned into an activity, with multiple school sites holding their own individual Olympics.

For more information, please contact Julie McClure at Julie.mcclure@calserves.org.

The Lives of at Risk Youth: Is There Something More Important than Nutrition

The population that I work with is classified as “at-greater risk” youth determined by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention due to violence, alcohol, and drug use, interpersonal difficulties, and/or criminal acts. Many ACCESS students are on probation and live in the roughest parts of Orange County in extremely unstable high risk family situations with histories of violence, substance abuse, and high rates of recidivism. High risk families are defined as students with children, families with more than one child enrolled in ACCESS, homeless/transient families, and families with one or both parents incarcerated. It is very discouraging at times to work with this population. Our impact evaluation sessions included information such as “the importance of fiber,” the importance of physical activity, and general nutrition education topics that we have deemed valuable information for our youth and their families. However, when I hear the individual life stories of the students many of them have lived lives that you would not wish on your worst enemy. Some have been homeless, lost parents, lost siblings to gang violence, and have been in abusive family relationships. The results manifest themselves in many ways: substance abuse, eating disorders, gang involvement, etc. I often think to myself, is nutrition and health of immediate concern for these students? Or do they live their lives working through each day – one day at a time.

Then I met a student at our Century School site in Garden Grove where I did impact evaluation sessions. I conducted three nutrition education classes over an eight-week time frame. He told me how much he enjoyed attending school on the days when they have nutrition class and physical education. I asked him why. He said it was “fun” making foods he’s never tasted before and he really enjoyed “most” of them. He was also shocked that he liked the spinach recipe the class had made. It was then that I realized if for a couple of hours, a day a week, we can provide our students with an opportunity for “fun” back in their lives and if they could forget about the “at-greater risk” that they live in that we have succeeded.

How can we impact attendance? This is the answer that administrators are looking for as we move into a time of severe budget cuts. We work for the county schools that generate ADA (Average Daily Attendance) from neighboring school districts, with school districts holding on to their students we are losing enrollment. The question of programs – how do you increase ADA? I believe I have addressed that through anecdotal stories from both students and teachers but I need to prove it. Many teachers truly believe that interactive lessons keep our students motivated to come to school, especially since many of them are on probation for truancy, programs like ours help.

I plan to continue the school site visits promoting the nutrition program but also the *Nutrition and Wellness* textbook where teachers can and already continue to provide nutrition as a five-unit elective course. Since many teachers do many hours in nutrition a month, with the textbook to enhance an overall nutrition education program, this could be the answer to the sustainability of our program's goals.

For more information, please contact Yvonne Ortega at yortega@access.k12.ca.us.

Getting Teachers and Parents Involved

Parents have been a challenging audience to consistently reach in large numbers and there have traditionally been limited resources for nutrition education materials appropriate for the pre-k environment. In an attempt to reach more parents and to fill the gap for pre-k nutrition education materials, the Orange County Department of Education *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* Coalition collaborated to develop a Harvest of the Month Activity Toolkit. This resource provides essential background information for teachers, lesson ideas that tie to pre-k curriculum areas, parent education materials, and additional resources. Ten school districts participated in this collaboration.

Initially members of the coalition met to determine the components of the toolkit. Each district took responsibility for a portion of the project. A Registered Dietitian was involved to ensure a clear nutrition education component and teachers were consulted to ensure clear ties to key subject areas. The pilot version was evaluated by teachers and a revised binder incorporated findings.

The parent component was developed with the goal of reaching more parents and mirroring what was being taught in the classroom. A teacher focus group met to determine the topics for both students and parents. Students received stand alone nutrition related to the parent topic and education in the classroom that was incorporated into key subject areas. They received cooking in the classroom and Harvest of the Month taste tests. Parents received monthly nutrition education, provided by the classroom teacher, that mirrored student education but at an adult level. They also received monthly cooking demonstrations with their students as Guest Chefs. Over 800 students and their families were reached each month.

As a result of this project, nutrition education became more intentional and the amount of nutrition education in the classroom increased. Parent classroom involvement increased as did the number of parents reached through nutrition education. Teachers became more involved and administrators more supportive. Lessons were learned as to how to gain teacher buy-in, increase intentionality, and reach a larger audience. Sustainability was improved by involving teachers and parents.

The revised toolkit is being implemented in ten school districts during the 2008-09 school year. Impact evaluation will be conducted for the parent education component. During the summer of 2009, this resource will be revised to include additional produce items and to incorporate teacher suggestions based on their evaluation of the program. This resource will be shared with *Network* partners and will be made available on our website.

For more information, please contact Kari Tuggle, MS, CHES, RD, at ktuggle@ocde.us.

If They Prepare It They Will Eat It

The challenge is getting young children to try fruits and vegetables they think they do not like or have never seen before. Young children do not like to try things that are not familiar to them.

At Bella Vista afterschool program, students were not only tasting fruits and vegetables they had never seen before but they were asking their parents to buy them at the grocery store. The students in the afterschool program were given the opportunity to try new foods. They were given the opportunity to prepare recipes and taste fruits and vegetables in new ways. They planted a garden and were given the opportunity to taste the food they had grown.

Parents told us that their children were not only eating the fruits and vegetables that were being brought into the afterschool program but they were asking them to buy these foods at the store. Parents told us that the kids wanted to make the recipes they learned in their afterschool program at home for their families to try.

We will continue to promote school gardens and cooking in the classrooms. By allowing the students the opportunity to prepare the foods they taste, it increases the chance that they will try it and ask for it again. We will continue to offer the new fruit or vegetable in more than one form so they can have a chance to try it in different ways.

For more information, please contact Tanya Marshall at tmarshall@shastacoe.org.

A "Sense-ible" Approach to Core Curricula

This year our *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* program staff was met with the challenge of inspiring and educating enthusiastic but ill-prepared teachers. With the help and direction of dedicated teachers, supportive parent volunteers, vested administrators, and eager students, we designed a sensible approach to nutrition education. Our collective idea was to create Harvest of the Month (HOTM) events on the school campus. These events focused solely on the subject of HOTM produce while integrating nutrition education and physical activity promotion with core subjects.

The plan for these events included stations where students could engage in math and language arts activities while they learned the nutritional benefits of eating fresh locally grown in-season produce. The students worked on fruit seed math and saw the different shapes and fractions into which produce could be cut. They were able to vote for their favorite fruit or vegetable and graph the results. They learned fascinating facts about different types of fruit and vegetables and solved challenging word searches. The anticipation on campus grew each month as we planned our HOTM events. The students would greet the *Network* staff with comments like, "What do we get to sample today"?

Moreover, in an attempt to encourage students to eat more healthful foods, children had the wonderful opportunity to become familiar with HOTM produce through their five senses. Students smelled the fragrant aroma of sweet, juicy apples wafting throughout the spacious cafeteria as they moved from one station to the next station. Students and teachers saw and touched a wide selection of different eye-appealing produce provided by the *Network*. Students heard the loud crunch of a fuyu persimmon, tasted a mouth-watering strawberry smoothie, stirred the pumpkin dip, and sipped all-natural orange juice made right before their watchful eyes.

Our plans for the future incorporate focused school-wide events that reach a large number of teachers and students with minimal effort. The materials are developed by numerous Local Incentive Awardees and shared via our collaborative website. The teachers have been surveyed and they want to continue the school-wide HOTM events. The next step is to gather pertinent and accurate materials to use at these school-wide events that are engaging and appealing to all grade-levels. These events are not only a virtual smorgasbord of sensory delights but also a great example of integrating nutrition education with core curricula.

For more information, please contact Nani Rowland at nrowland@tularehhsa.org.

INDIAN TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS

California Rural Indian Health Board, Inc.
Contract #: 06-55074

California Rural Indian Health Board Success Story

This year was the sixth annual Youth Olympics, and was not as well attended as previous years. A date change accompanied this year's event, which may have resulted in the lower attendance. Also, planning around various other community events during the same time period may have negatively impacted the attendance of the event. In addition, poor weather conditions on the day of the event may have impacted attendance. More adults were encouraged to join in the physical activity components to the event as some changes were made to the layout of event activities.

This year's fourth annual Health and Fitness Expo continued to meet or exceed our goal for this activity. Attendance was robust; there was more interest in participation than we had capacity to provide over the course of the two scheduled days.

As the capacity for production increases at the Healthy Traditions Garden, more groups of all ages show interest in coming to workshops. In addition to nutrition and physical activity education, we have expanded the workshop activities to include hands-on participation of native plant harvesting and culturally appropriate craft activities. Fruit and vegetable harvests have been increasing, with the result being more community members are inquiring as to how to participate in garden activities.

The Cooking Classes held throughout the year were well attended by a cross section of the community, and future classes are anticipated to draw larger audiences. In order to address suggestions from the previous year's classes, a diversity of foods, and dishes were featured. Classes focused on one healthful main dish featuring greens and whole grains, the other classes focused on quick, nutritious, and diverse snacks.

This year's Harvest Health Fair incorporated an increased opportunity for participation in physical activity with a rock wall and two costume parades. Attendance increased as a result of outreach to a local elementary school serving a Food Stamp Nutrition Education demographic.

The Eagle Visions Booklets were successfully revised according to the *Network for a Healthy California* requirements and printed. We have had a lot of interest in these booklets and almost all 500 have been distributed this year to multiple tribal youth groups throughout the state. The booklet has helped to incorporate nutrition education into youth programming in Indian communities.

For more information, please contact Stacey Kennedy at stacey.kennedy@crihb.net.

Native American Health Center
Contract #: 06-55104

Involve me and I will Understand

After teaching our *Network for a Healthy California* approved curriculum to the residents at Friendship House Recovery Lodge for a year and a half, I began to see challenges with the way the clients learned. Although all the people came from different walks of life and all different levels of social status and education, they were in the lodge solely because of drugs and alcohol. Since they had abused their bodies and had medical related issues, often times quite a few of them looked distracted in the classes. In order to teach effectively, we had to find a way to make the curriculum more inclusive, interactive, and give participants immediate and relevant reasons for healthy living choices so that a larger number of them could retain the information.

To increase the amount of fruits and vegetables consumed by participants, we were already doing activities such as fruit/vegetable sampling, food demonstrations, and taking participants on local grocery and farmers' market tours. The specific problem was how to keep the whole class engaged and focused. Over a period of time, we made it more interactive by making healthy living choices relevant to participants and encouraging participation with a game-like atmosphere. These included supermarket scavenger hunts, smaller teams, and mini presentations from participants who chose to speak about healthy food choices to the rest of the class. Keeping it non-competitive and friendly was another challenge which we encouraged by sharing information and fruit and vegetables samples at our farmers' market trips.

Overall, positive effects of these changes have been subtle due to the preexisting interactive features of the class. I observed that overall more clients participated and hopefully retained the information. Also, giving an opportunity for group captains to present healthy food options in class, made a big difference since individuals relate more to their peers. Probably the most lasting impact was our clients' positive feedback about our farmers' market trips and their requests to return.

From our last Annual Progress Report Narrative, our main goal was to try to have our participants associate healthy eating with positive feelings. I think the best way to summarize our new teaching approach is the old Native American saying of, "Tell me and I forget, show me and I may not remember, involve me and I will understand." We think the key to retaining learning is for participants to associate positive feelings with our nutrition and fitness curriculum through active participation, small groups, and a fun, game-like atmosphere.

For more information, please contact Christina Weahunt at chrisw@nativehealth.org.

MAC Girls

About a year and a half ago our Department was asked to participate in the Life Skills classes held at the Manzanita Education Building. The Manzanita Tribal Training Program provides education for TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) clients seven days a week, all year around. This program teaches the students how to progress into the job world and/or education world to further advance them toward self-sufficiency. A variety of classes are taught including a life skills cooking class. We were invited to participate in the cooking classes on Wednesdays. We demonstrate how to make home cooked food healthier, incorporating fruits and vegetables, to coincide with the menu of the week. In addition to the cooking demonstration we provide nutrition education. Some of the challenges we face with the students are their resistance to change, limited knowledge of fruits and vegetables, lack of access to fruits and vegetables, and that they live within an extremely limited budget.

When we first started most of the ingredients used in the cooking classes were the full fat versions and high fat meats and poultry. Since we have been participating in the class we have seen a considerable change in the eating and shopping habits of the students, especially with the ingredients they purchase for the food they prepare each week. We have seen more low-fat ingredients like low-fat sour cream, mayonnaise and cheeses. They are purchasing ground turkey and chicken breast without the skin and many of the dishes include a variety of fruits and vegetables. In addition to the improvement in their eating habits the students have recently started weekly exercise class.

We continue to see changes in the eating habits of these students and feel that we have made a positive impact with them. Students say they enjoy the new foods they have encountered during the classes and many have stated that they make our recipes at home.

As long as they welcome us, we plan to continue teaching our classes and introducing them to new healthy alternatives to high fat foods that taste good and dishes their families will enjoy too. In addition, we will continue to encourage better food choices and fun family physical activities.

For more information, please contact Lisa Turner at lturner@sihc.org.

Improving Attitudes One Market at a Time

The Native American population that United Indian Health Services serves has overcome insurmountable obstacles throughout their history. Over time, traditional foods of these people have been replaced by fast food, and the processed food that seems to increasingly replace the healthier fruits, vegetables, and whole grains in all American diets. They experience a disproportionately high incidence of diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular disease. Their rate of diabetes is about three times that of the United States population as a whole, approaching 40 to 50 percent in adults.

With the help of the *Network for a Healthy California*, we are doing our best to educate the Northern California Native American population on the benefits of good nutrition and physical activity. We want them to know that they do have some control over the health of their bodies, and that it is important to make good choices, while preserving the traditions that they hold so dear. Our nutrition and physical activity education in schools and Headstarts is so important. Beginning education at a young age is the key and we are proud to do our part.

Here at Potawat Health Village, we have a two-acre Community Food Garden. The produce is distributed to clients throughout Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. We also hold a Certified Farmers' Market Produce Stand Tuesdays and Fridays during the summer months. Partnering with the Garden to promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables has been an amazing success on many levels. At each Produce Stand, we provide a cooking demonstration that features a chosen fruit or vegetable offered at the stand. Recipes and nutrition information are also distributed to produce stand customers and potential customers. Clients absolutely love the cooking demonstrations and taste tests. They are able to sample items that they would not normally purchase, and we know that we are succeeding because of the increase in sales of produce.

We can see that our efforts are making a difference by observing customers of the produce stand. They are so enthusiastic to try new foods and see different ways of preparing foods that they already eat. Many of the customers are clients of the clinic, shopping for the meals that they will prepare for their families throughout the week. Increasing access for the Native American community to fresh fruits and vegetables and helping to get them excited about eating them, means that these families are getting more nutritious meals than they would otherwise. We are playing a part in shaping peoples' attitudes about fruits and vegetables. We could not ask for any more than that.

By word of mouth, the Potawot Produce Stand and cooking demonstration have gained quite a reputation. We have begun to travel to events throughout Humboldt and Del Norte Counties in an attempt to reach even more of the Native American community.

We will continue our efforts in order to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables and keep people talking.

For more information, please contact Alison Aldrige at Alison.aldridge@crihb.net.

**LOCAL FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION
PROJECTS**

Peer Education in Underserved Communities

The target community for our project was the eastern half of downtown Los Angeles, including Skid Row. This community is one of the most distressed and disadvantaged communities in Los Angeles County, as well as the State of California. Additionally, prior to this project, it was extremely underserved in the areas of nutrition education and access to healthy and affordable foods. More than a quarter of the target population are homeless, a group that traditionally is seen as “hard to serve.” The median income of the total community is 37 percent of area median income, but the incomes in Skid Row are even lower with the large majority residents earning between 7 and 22 percent of area median income. These extremely low incomes and lack of housing place additional barriers on implementing healthy choices as a result of increased knowledge of nutrition.

LA CAN has worked on community education in a variety of areas since our inception in 1999. We have always relied on training peer educators to reach out to community members on topics of importance. We strongly believe that peer involvement and leadership was crucial to this project’s success. We targeted traditionally “hard-to-reach” groups, including homeless people and people with disabilities, and simply would not have been able to reach as many people or educate them effectively without peer outreach and education. We learned, over and over, that residents respond best to their peers and are much more open to learning opportunities when presented by people experiencing similar challenges. For example, peers were able to teach within the context of the community and limited resources, sharing personal experiences of improving nutritional food choices on a very limited budget and while relying on free food providers. We simply could not have reached the number of people we did, or have been as effective as we were, without peer outreach and education.

Overall, our biggest accomplishment was reaching and educating a broad base of homeless and extremely low-income residents of downtown Los Angeles, an under-resourced community facing numerous challenges. Although residents are facing housing, employment, health, hunger, and other challenges on literally a daily basis, we were able to engage thousands of people in various forms of nutrition education and the feedback on this opportunity was overwhelmingly positive. We believe we filled a unique gap in the community and made substantive changes on individual and community levels. Our evaluation also showed us that educational sessions did lead to lifestyle changes in accessing nutritional foods, which will impact individual and community health in the long-term.

LA CAN is going to continue our peer education model in the Central City East community for at least the next three years. We are going to build upon our successes to develop and implement a new curriculum – addressing new nutrition topics and focusing on physical activity promotion. We believe this is a logical and crucial next step in improving the health of extremely low-income residents of downtown Los Angeles.

For more information, please contact Becky Dennison at beckyd@congress.org.

Expanding Services

Child care providers have very busy schedules. They work all day, sometimes seven days a week caring for children. If their facilities are not open at night, they are often taking classes at City College in order to meet the requirements and eligibility to make more money. They are leading Provider Network meetings to discuss issues and concerns among child care providers, and they are attending trainings to improve the quality of their care. Although it is certain that the nutrition and health of the children they care for is of the utmost importance to these providers, the reality of their time constraints is predominant.

The Children's Council Nutrition Department has always had trouble outreaching to the providers and has been notorious for having low turnout at our classes, unless they are mandatory. In years past, the attendance at our cooking classes and farmers' market tours has been abysmal. The attendance at our physical activity classes this year, aside from the first one (for which we collaborated with another department), was pitiful. We tried different strategies for outreach, invited parents instead of only providers, held them at different sites, but the attendance was always low. Halfway through this year we figured out the key to success.

At the beginning of 2008, we decided to start advertising our classes in the Provider Services Department calendar. This calendar is distributed to approximately 3,000 providers. This Department offers all of the classes that both new and established providers need to fulfill their licensing and education requirements. We realized that if the nutrition education and cooking classes were on this calendar, and that the providers could receive training hours for attending them, that it would incentivize them to attend. We were right. We had so many providers inquiring about the classes that we had to start limiting the number that could sign up. We also started listing our classes in the Provider Services database so other Children's Council employees could sign clients up for them.

It was inspiring to have so many providers excited to participate in nutrition education and cooking classes. The energy in the room was so different than it was in the classes that we required providers to attend. Some of them brought their children and showed them how to cook. For many of them the classes became a social engagement, where they would come to socialize with their friends and meet other providers. The classes were entertaining and the providers/parents learned a lot and enjoyed themselves.

The providers had very positive feedback about the classes. One enjoyed "learning different kinds of recipes which are very nutritious and less expensive." Another liked the "new recipes and used many ingredients they have never used before." One more said "even though I like to cook, I've never had a chance to be in a cooking class. It's as fun as I thought it would be. I can do this the whole day."

They claimed to have learned a lot and stated that they would use the information in their child care centers as well as with their own families.

The complaints/suggestions about the classes were:

- That it is only offered twice a year. Please do this workshop more often and with more recipes that we can do with the little ones.
- More cooking workshops.
- Cactus salad! Too spicy!!

There seemed to be a lot of interest in the classes both from providers that attended and those that did not. The classes offered by the Nutrition Department have finally become part of mainstream Children's Council programming instead of a side operation struggling for participants.

The funding to do these classes has officially ended. However, as a result of the recent partnership with the Provider Services Department, the classes will continue to be offered. There may be fewer of them offered due to staffing issues, but because they are so important and so popular among providers we will do everything we can to continue the service. The Nutrition Department received another grant from the *Network for a Healthy California* that started on October 1, 2008. With this funding we will extend the nutrition education and cooking classes to a different population: the low-income children and parents that attend child care centers in the Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood. We are very excited to start this project.

For more information, please contact Bergen Watterson at bwatterson@childrenscouncil.org.

Community Alliance with Family Farmers
Contract Number #: 06-55089

Creative Partnership Drastically Increases Reach

With only one staff to carry out activities, we have developed creative partnerships to help meet, and often times exceed objectives. One of these activities is nutrition education-based tours at Arcata Educational Farm, other local farms, or farmers' markets for students at lowered source schools. We have partnered with a farm worker to carry out farm fieldtrips and sustain the program past the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* funding.

We have developed a relationship with one host farm to assist with fieldtrips and because of this relationship have increased the numbers reached by almost 200 percent.

After working with this farm for a number of years, one especially involved fieldworker expressed interest in developing an educational program for the farm. In addition to helping carry out farm fieldtrips, she has also developed an extensive five-week internship program to train otherwise inexperienced volunteers to help with the fieldtrips (each trip requires four station leaders), and has offered diverse environmental education workshops to the community.

With this additional help it is not only easier to plan and carry out the fieldtrips but we were able to offer additional opportunities to qualifying teachers and ultimately reach more students.

The lasting impact of the partnership is a farm education program that will continue past *Network*-funding. This is an important sustainability piece for the ever popular farm fieldtrips. We are thrilled that teachers and students will still enjoy learning a complete nutritional concept from the standpoint of a farm.

The farm has recently established a fund with a local foundation. Individuals can make tax-deductible donations to the fund in support of the farm's youth programs. In addition to this sustainability piece, we have also held various events that doubled as fundraisers and promotional events; this is an important as this project enters into its third and final year.

For more information, please contact Michelle Wyler at mrwyler@yahoo.com.

Making of a Cookbook

The entire cookbook proved to be a challenging task for many reasons, but mainly because it was more time intensive than we had anticipated. When this contract proposal was written we did not think the writer took into account the requirements by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to follow their dietary guidelines in a cookbook. This would not be a problem if the people working on creating this cookbook came from a nutrition background, was a nutritionist, or perhaps a Registered Dietician. Not having that knowledge forced us to rely on software/web-based nutrition analysis programs. However, we were thankful to our *Network for a Healthy California* Program Manager for connecting us with the online resources that allowed us to analyze the nutrition content of the recipes collected for the cookbook. Even with the electronic resources, it was challenging converting ethnic/culturally appropriate recipes that were far from being in compliance with USDA standards, into healthy, nutritious, recipes. All in all, as a finished product, it was worth the many, many hours of collecting and analyzing ingredients.

Even though the entire cookbook was a challenge, it was even more so of a success. This cookbook was a collaborative effort between the residents at Kennedy Estates and the staff of the Hunger Coalition. We think many of the residents saw this project as a cookbook for them by them and they were excited about bringing their culturally appropriate recipes to this cookbook that would be shared with their neighbors. Because of this cookbook the residents now have a tangible product that they helped create, which forced them to think about their cultures, eating healthy, and how they could incorporate fresh produce grown in their edible landscape into recipes that they have cooked for generations.

The lasting impact is that the residents were so involved in the creation process of this cookbook that they did take ownership over the project and were interested (every step of the way) in where staff were at in the process towards the project being completed. At the final Summer Celebration we saw many healthy, nutritious dishes that were recipes taken from the cookbook. We hope that the residents will continue to use this product in their everyday lives in order to bring tasty and nutritious meals into their homes.

For more information, please contact Melissa Ortiz-Gray at mortiz-gray@communitycouncil.org.

Each One Teaching One

Young people in the San Antonio neighborhood of Oakland have extremely limited access to fresh, healthy food, and transformative nutrition education. School lunches and breakfasts provide some measure of nutrition, but markets with fresh fruits and vegetables are scarce. School and afterschool hours often do not include consistent, hands-on nutrition education that would assist students in making healthier decisions, and staff often does not make use of the school gardens that already exist to help make connections between food and nutrition for families.

To address these significant barriers, the Nutrition Education Project (NEP) of the East Bay Asian Youth Center has worked over the last two years to bring hands-on, high quality nutrition education to over 500 students and families in the San Antonio neighborhood. Since October 2006, The Nutrition Education Project staff and our highly skilled high school interns have worked closely with Alameda County Nutrition Services experts, school staff, and other community partners to deliver:

- twice per week afterschool cooking club at six different school sites
- once per week afterschool garden club at four different school sites
- six to eight sessions of garden-based nutrition classes for over 12 different teachers at 4 school sites
- family education nights at four different school sites
- two annual community health fairs

The NEP staff has achieved this through collaborations with other community partners, but also by working with a group of dedicated high school student leaders who have become nutrition advocates and healthy cooking experts for their younger charges. A central part of our work involves training these high school students not only to cook healthy snacks, but also training them how to teach these skills and lessons to the elementary students in the after school program.

Results from the matched pre and post tests have demonstrated an increase in knowledge and behaviors, as well as an increase in preferences and willingness to try new vegetables. Post tests have revealed a high level of engagement and satisfaction in the afterschool cooking and gardening clubs. In addition, attendance at all of the events has been high—at the first two health fairs, over 300 young people and their families participated, and attendance at the afterschool programs is consistently high. At one parent workshop, a parent shared that she learned about healthy cooking and physical activity from her son, who had participated in a healthy cooking lesson with our staff in school.

We will continue to build on the strength of our student leadership and our connections to the San Antonio community. As our high school interns work along side our NEP staff to develop cooking and teaching skills, and to build their nutrition knowledge we know they will become strong advocates for change in the San Antonio community. We will also build on the strength of EBAYC's overall afterschool program and integrated approach to community development by engaging students, staff, and parents at each school site.

For more information, please contact Susan Yee at susan@ebayc.org.

Food Bank of Yolo County
Contract #: 06-55088

Moveable Market Program

Through the Food Bank, the Moveable Market Program (MM) provides nutrition education information to approximately 231 ± 40 low-income households each month. The overall objective is to provide nutrition education and to increase the nutrition educational activities directed at Yolo County's Food Stamp participant households or Food Stamp-eligible residents to inform them of the benefits of increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, and to promote participation in Food Stamp programs in Yolo County.

There were originally seven intervention sites in Yolo County via Yolo County Health Department. Sites are in each of the incorporated cities (Davis, West Sacramento, Winters, and Woodland), the unincorporated population centers (Dunnigan, Esparto, and Knights Landing), and the largest migrant farm worker camp (Madison). The sites include low-income housing complexes, state-funded preschool sites such as Child Development Centers/YMCA, and the Head Start Centers. Currently, there are 20 sites, including a Head Start site in West Sacramento and a Farm to School site (California Alliance of Family Farms) at Esparto Elementary School, non-profit resource centers and housing complexes.

A baseline behavioral survey was implemented to assess behavior (before intervention) towards the purchasing, preparing, and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, Survey #1. We conducted a post-survey using the same instrumentation tool (Survey #1) to measure behavioral change (if any) after nine months of MM participation. Due to significant results measure in Survey #1, a follow-up survey instrument tool, Survey #2 was designed and implemented to further seek additional change in behavior amongst the target population. This process involved a focus group with the clients to ask more general interest questions geared specifically towards the MM. Results for Survey #2 are as follows:

Nearly all (97.5 percent) of respondents said they tried new fruits and vegetables, and 89.5 percent said their family consumed new fruits and vegetables. In addition, 95 percent said they would try to eat new fruits and vegetables if they were cooked in a different way, and 89.5 percent said they would make a new recipe from the MM newsletter.

Participants were asked, "*What methods would help your family try new fruits and vegetables?*" As seen in Table 4, below, respondents' most common response (43.9 percent) was "Add with food that I know how to cook," followed by 22 percent who said the best method would be to hide the look of the new food.

The mean number of times respondents said they would try to cook new foods using a new recipe was 2.9. Thirty-three respondents (84.6 percent) said they would be interested in participating in a cooking class to learn how to cook new foods in a different way. Lastly, 75 percent of respondents said they would participate in the Moveable Market Program for a fee of \$5/week or less.

Our experience shows that our client base responds best through human interaction and involvement. Tasting of unfamiliar produce and food preparation demonstrations tend to generate more interest and create an interaction with the client. Local buy-in has been helpful; residents facilitating the demonstrations or helping with translation has been most successful in drawing more participation by clientele. Any written information is best when it is short, preferably bulleted points. Recipes need to be simple with few accessible (inexpensive) ingredients easily found. Involved explanations or preparation can be difficult to explain during demonstration. One-on-one discussions with clients help to further substantiate nutritional benefit of vitamin/mineral content of the fruit and/or vegetable.

The Food Bank seeks to maintain our close community relationships with farmers, resource centers, school administrators, public health worker, and state programs. Our common objectives in serving the vulnerable communities are further enhanced by combining resources and creating a unified effort.

The MM plans to further enhance our role as a model in providing nutrition information and healthy eating options by implementing a variety of activities. This, we believe, will encourage all aspects of community involvement: in addition to providing fresh local produce by implementing a modified community supported agriculture program via MM. We plan to provide peer-to-peer training within our agency network that directly serves the community; to maintain our client base in areas that are not easily accessible; to designate a "lead" volunteer to keep the local community in touch with the MM's nutrition and update of its schedule; and to provide a series of healthy lifestyle classes on-site for a targeted population (e.g., elderly, pregnant/lactating mothers, sedentary teenagers).

For more information, please contact Jose Martinez at josem@foodbankyc.org.

Promoting Nutrition Education and Environmental Change

The Del Paso Heights community of Sacramento California faced many challenges in bringing fresh, affordable fruits and vegetables to its residents. This area is still one of the last communities in Sacramento that has a large expanse of undeveloped land and many areas devoid of retail grocery stores where fresh produce is available. This situation poses a further challenge for public health professionals who want to incorporate program components that make healthy food and/or areas for increased physical activity possible. In addition, community services are not consistent in their offering of resources where residents may receive nutrition education, outreach services, and/or food assistance.

In order to address these and other related challenges, the FEED (Food Equity Education and Diversity) coalition was formed in 2004 among a group of concerned agency members to assess and create solutions to these challenges. This coalition organized a local body of growers and land owners that created a farmers' market, nutrition education, and outreach materials and supported garden-based nutrition education efforts at local middle and high schools. As a result, a large customer base of over 600 was built which supported the farmers' market, along with seven local farmers, a chef, and several local businesses. Local "Champion Moms," organized under an initiative of the *Network for a Healthy California*, have helped facilitate local garden club formations and community forums where challenges can be addressed and solutions chosen. In addition, the farmers' market promotes local products from the local Grant High School's GEO program, and has funding and support to develop classroom cooking classes for students and adults. The leadership and support that the coalition members have received has helped to promote nutrition as a major issue in this community and created a sense of pride and ownership among community residents.

In retrospect, the work of the last four years has raised the awareness of the impact of poor nutrition among this community of Del Paso Heights. The farmers' market in this area serves as a regular comfortable destination for the residents and supports sales through Women, Infants, Children coupons and electronic benefit transfer systems. Staff involved in the many components of this project, such as student cooking classes, gardening projects, and festivals, have noticed and observed that individuals and families can express nutrition knowledge and relate environmental change needs to those interested.

In the coming years, the FEED coalition and its members are committed to next steps that will enlarge the farmers' market so that even more vendors, businesses, and growers may participate in this project, as well as community members who grow produce in the few but sustaining community gardens of Del Paso Heights.

The community members and stakeholders will be involved in building the relationships needed to community-based organizations. The local “Champion Moms” will continue to help lead the efforts and provide mentoring and encouragement. Everyone is committed to putting in the time and dedication it will take to continue to promote the environmental changes needed to make Del Paso Heights a healthy community for all.

For more information, please contact Julie Dang at jdang@healthedcouncil.org.

A Garden of Learning

During the fourth and final year of the project we had planned to work with Hawthorne Elementary, however a change in leadership at the school forced us to explore another school partner. What initially seemed to be a setback to our project was, in the end, a great opportunity, as it allowed us to work with Emerson Elementary School. The supportive leadership at Emerson made the school an ideal partner, and the school's large and beautiful school and community garden also offered a prime opportunity to expand the Harvest of the Month (HOTM) and Farm to School program to include garden-based learning.

Throughout the school year we conducted at least four education sessions in the garden with fourth grade students. Most students were thrilled to have the opportunity to roam the garden, inspect the plants, cook in the garden, and identify the plants, weeds, and bugs that all make up the diversity of the garden. However, there was one student who always seems unhappy to be there. This young man would sit on the side and engage only minimally in our activities. When urged to participate with the others he spent more time kicking at the dirt or complaining about the heat. With so many other students to oversee, I seldom had time to interact with this young man. Finally, my last visit to the school that year I was chatting with students during recess and I was surprised to see this student wander into the garden. The other students and I were in the corner of the garden and he walked the long way around, taking his time to get to me. When he arrived at the group I greeted him and told him that I was surprised to see him join us in the garden during recess. "Yeah," he shrugged, "I wanted you to try this" and he handed me a red cherry tomato. "Did you pick it from the school garden?" I asked. "No," he said "I picked it at home, my mom and I planted some tomato plants at home after we learned at school about how to grow them. And the plants are doing pretty good." I was astounded. Astounded that he had offered me this homegrown tomato, and astounded that during all our time spent in the garden, he had quietly been turned on to growing his own fresh fruits and vegetables. It was one of the sweetest tomatoes I have eaten in a long time.

This young man was not the only student who expressed how the program had changed their behavior. By exposing students to fruits and vegetables through HOTM and urging them to try new foods, we helped to influence their tastes. "I didn't think that I liked spinach before but now I do" said one student. Another girl told me, "I never liked radishes but after I tried them I do like them." The messages of healthy eating also worked their way home. One student told me, "I remember that last year I got to pull out a beet and I got to have it for dinner." Although offering taste tests and monthly education sessions may seem like a small token, the impact on young students' diets can be huge for them and their families.

The Riverside program resulted in a wealth of experiences and images that we are eager to share with others. We were fortunate to partner with a local photographer, Emily Hart Roth, who documented many activities during the final year of the project. As part of the Retrospective Report, she had assisted us in creating a slideshow from all three years of the Riverside project, which captures the spirit of the program. The slideshow can be viewed on the Farm to School YouTube page here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O09rtp61khU>.

We are also in the process of collecting the curriculum used in Riverside and gathering the learning into a document highlighting how to combine HOTM and Farm to School. This program, called the 100-Mile Harvest of the Month, will be shared with Farm to School and HOTM practitioners throughout the state and nation. We look forward to debuting this resource later in the year.

For more information, please contact Anupama Joshi at ajoshi@oxy.edu.

People's Grocery
Contract #: 06-55102

People's Grocery: A Employee's Testimonial

Meet Danae Washington, a 17 year old young woman with a bright smile. Growing up in Oakland without easy access to grocery stores and healthy food, Danae relies on fast food and corner stores for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Her family's diet also reflects the circumstances of their environment: her mother has hypertension and her younger sister suffers from type 2 diabetes. In Danae's words, "I grew up not really caring about my health or my family's health."

Danae joined People's Grocery simply for the sake of getting a job. However, over the course of her work she has gradually broadened her awareness on issues of nutrition and health. Through her training in nutrition education, Danae has learned about the links between nutrition and health, ways in which chronic disease can be prevented, and how to be a strong public speaker. She has not only learned this information, but she has developed activities to educate her peers about nutrition. In addition, she attended a six-week cooking class and actively participated as a member of the Be-Healthy Team conducting nutrition promotion events to Food Stamp Nutrition Education eligible residents.

Danae has changed dramatically over the course of the last year in her eating habits. She no longer drinks soda; chooses healthier options when possible; has learned a great deal about cooking and uses her training to lead cooking demonstrations at least once a week. She has even lost a few pounds. More importantly, Danae has truly become a leader in educating her community about healthy eating and nutrition as her comfort level in front of audiences and public speaking skills have improved exponentially. Last week she spoke to over 200 people about how the impact that People's Grocery has had on her life and moved audience members to tears. Finally, she notes that her family regularly asks her to cook for them and to help them make healthier choices.

Danae continues to work for People's Grocery in the 2008-09 contract year. She graduated from high school and has more time and energy to devote to nutrition education. She is working closely with our new Community Outreach Coordinator to use her knowledge and skills to develop and implement a nutrition education festival, develop new interactive workshops for youth, and to work with other youth to pass off her leadership and experience as she moves to the next level in her life.

For more information, please contact Diana Abellera at Diana@peoplesgrocery.org.

Trust for Conservation Innovation, Nextcourse
Contract #: 06-55097

Spreading a Healthy Food Message is as Simple as an Apple

Nextcourse was asked on the very first day of the new school year to participate in a neighborhood block party and provide a message of healthy food that would balance some of the other foods available at the party. We had only one week to come up with a healthy food concept, all of our materials and supplies, and student volunteers to help implement our project.

Our small team came up with the idea to have an apple tasting booth, highlighting apples as a featured September fruit in the Harvest of the Month program. We partnered with a local market that helped our student team identify four apple varieties available through local farms that we could feature in tastings. To further embellish the apple tastings, our team found a healthy yogurt dipping sauce to showcase how to make apples an even healthier snack, and we also located apple-themed coloring pages and puzzles to draw in younger children. Our student team arranged for one of the school's art classes to make colorful posters and signs with interesting apple nutritional facts, and included promotional advertisements during the mornings' physical activity announcements to encourage people to come out to the event.

The apple tasting booth's main attraction was an apple contest; with the winner guessing the correct number of apples in a bushel basket. The winner received a gift basket donated by local vendors. Over 150 people entered the contest, and an estimated 200 people received apple tastings. The apple booth had a constant crowd of adults and children throughout the entire block party. Ten students and five adults volunteered.

This event created such great energy around healthy food and really inspired our student volunteers. Three of the students went on to apply for our project's Culinary Leadership Team and have become real "champions" for healthy food within their families and the school. These students will complete an intensive training program through October, and then will begin co-facilitating nutrition education classes in November.

Working in a high school setting requires that students are an integral part of our nutrition education strategies and share visible and meaningful roles as part of our project's team. Events like this block party provide an opportunity for students to experience the fun, camaraderie, and community that is possible through enjoying and promoting healthy food with their peers.

For more information, please contact Susie White at Susie@nextcourse.org.

Improving Diet and Nutrition among Agricultural Workers in the Central Valley

Farm workers are responsible for producing much of the food we eat. However, they are among the most vulnerable and impoverished of all California residents. As a result, many suffer from poor diet and nutrition. The California Health Interview Survey (2001) revealed that Fresno County – the number 1 agricultural county in the United States-had the second highest rate of food insecurity in California. A previous study conducted by the California Institute for Rural Studies, “Suffering in Silence (2000),” found higher rates of diet-related disease among farm workers than the general population and other Latinos. Other research has had similar findings.

With a multi-faceted approach, we set out to assess food security, prevalence of hunger and nutrition and dietary habits, and implement measures to improve diet and nutrition among agricultural workers in California. With the results of the assessment indicating their diets are high in fat and low in fruit/vegetable consumption, our nutrition education outreach focused on three themes: decreased fat consumption, increased fruit and vegetable consumption, and decreased consumption of high-sugar beverages. We based our curriculum and outreach materials on the philosophy that small, realistic changes and a focus on healthy aspects of traditional Mexican diet would have the greatest impact on farm worker health. Our nutrition education curriculum incorporated a visual approach - bags of fat and vials of oil - to demonstrate amounts of fat in certain food items. Participants were also encouraged to measure, rather than pour, cooking oils and we provided measuring spoons and cups for them to use at home. For the final component of our project, we produced a Spanish language telenovela (soap opera) with the same three themes interwoven into a plot full of drama and romance.

A very high percentage of farm workers that participated in the nutrition education classes indicated that they intended to eat less fat, eat more fruits and vegetables and prepare more food at home. The telenovela will provide an ongoing and entertaining medium to present ideas on how to make small dietary changes to a traditional Mexican diet.

We plan to provide the telenovela to a large audience who then can share the telenovela with friends and family. Additional copies of the telenovela will be available through the University of California Cooperative Extension.

For more information, please contact Christy Getz at cgetz@nature.berkeley.edu.

Exposure to South Los Angeles Farmers Market

The Keck Diabetes Prevention Initiative of University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine (KDPI) designated a portion of its California Community Foundation funds for initiatives to support the mission of the Los Angeles Collaborative for Healthy Active Children (LA Collaborative). KDPI with assistance from County of Los Angeles, Public Health Nutrition Program LA Collaborative sought applications from organizations, agencies, groups, and individuals serving the Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE)-eligible individuals living in and around the Watts/Willowbrook area of South Los Angeles to receive farmers' market vouchers in order to maximize exposure to the newly established market. One of the main challenges to getting people to try the farmers' market is letting them know it exists. This is especially true in South Los Angeles as many residents are not aware of changes in their community. Further, if they knew of the market, they may not have gone for a variety of reasons such as fearing it was expensive or the quality of food was not worth a trip. Another challenge is increasing the membership of the LA Collaborative. Providing mini-grant opportunities is just one way for individuals and organization to see the value of the collaborative. The goal of this collaboration was not only to support the LA Collaborative member organizations in their work but also to expose community residents to the Watts Health Farmers' Market in hopes that they would continue to shop there and increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables. A total of \$8,000 was made available to fund-eligible programs. Requirements and funding restrictions included:

- Watts Healthy Farmers' Market Voucher projects must provide direct nutrition education to the target audience. This must be the focus of any proposed project.
- All projects must be held in Los Angeles County and provided services to FSNE- eligible participants living in and around the Watts/Willowbrook area of South Los Angeles.
- The primary zip codes must include 90002, 90059, and 90061.

KDPI staff worked with four South Los Angeles area agencies to enhance their nutrition education programs by providing them with Farmers' Market Vouchers. As program participants completed education classes, they received market money vouchers to spend at the Watts Healthy Farmers' Market. Not only does this program provide an incentive for individuals to complete nutrition education classes, it also exposes individuals to fresh fruits and vegetables and promotes the market.

The following agencies received vouchers as a result of the mini-grant opportunity through the LA Collaborative:

Institute for Maximum Human Potential Voucher amount: \$1,000 # of anticipated participants = 80	SHIELDS for Families, Inc Voucher amount: \$2,000 # of anticipated participants = 100
St. Francis Medical Center Voucher amount: \$2,000 # of anticipated participants = 100	Watts Healthcare Corporation Voucher amount: \$2,000 # of anticipated participants = 100

As a result of this project, four agencies were able to enhance their nutrition education programs as a result of being members of the LA Collaborative. Additionally, approximately 380 South Los Angeles residents were exposed to the Watts Healthy Farmers' Market and provided money to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. It is hoped that this exposure provided an opportunity for those community residents to increase their fruit and vegetable intake and become aware that the Watts Healthy Farmers' Market is a weekly venue by which they can continue to purchase fruits and vegetables.

The next steps will include an evaluation of how many vouchers were redeemed and hopefully be able to provide this opportunity again in the future.

For more information, please contact Valerie Ruelas at vruelas@chla.usc.edu.

Urban Resource Systems, Inc.
Contract #: 06-55087

Kids Love Veggies from the School Garden

At Martin Luther King, Jr. Academic Middle School (MLK) in San Francisco's Portola neighborhood, students used to come to school every day with sodas, candies, and chips. Students stopped at the corner store near school every day and bought these foods, bringing them into class, leaving litter everywhere, and eating junk food for breakfast. Teachers complained that these foods affected students during class, making them moody, irritable, and unfocused.

Teachers at MLK invited Urban Sprouts to partner with the school, to provide garden-based nutrition education for all of the school's sixth and seventh graders. For the entire 2007-08 school year, over 300 MLK students learned to plant, tend, harvest, and eat fresh fruits and vegetables from the school garden. Students made meals for their classes and even served fresh salad from the school garden in the cafeteria for the entire school. Urban Sprouts' garden-based nutrition education used interactive class lessons combined with hands-on experiences in the garden to help students change their opinions about fruits and vegetables.

Now, MLK students love to eat fruits and vegetables. Teachers say that students ask them for healthy snacks like apples and carrots. One student said, "Now I try more things like vegetables that I wouldn't even bother trying to eat before." Another remarked, "I don't eat so much candy, chips and soda. I try to eat more fruits. I told my mom about a lot of things I learned here, and now she goes to the grocery store and buys more fruits and veggies."

With such strong evidence that school gardens can help students to eat more fruits and vegetables, Urban Sprouts is working to help more schools integrate gardens into their nutrition education programs. We are involving parents, community members, and businesses in the garden, in order to make our school gardens bigger and better. Parents can reinforce students' learning at home, by buying more fresh fruits and vegetables and by starting home gardens. Community members can come out and help in an Urban Sprouts school garden, or bring their co-workers out for a company work day.

For more information, please contact Abby Jaramillo at abby@urbansprouts.org.

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

Community Partners Can Be Champions for Change

Reaching the many eligible recipients in Alameda County with meaningful nutrition education and physical activity promotion messages is a large challenge with limited staff and resources. Yet, in order to create any social norm change and move the population toward healthier lifestyle choices, it is important to reach many and varied communities in ways that are culturally, socially, and economically competent.

Alameda County Nutrition Services (ACNS) has successfully engaged a core group of community partners who have received regular and repeated train-the-trainer workshops to enable them to deliver nutrition/physical activity messages to the community members that they serve. These partners do not have nutrition backgrounds or perhaps any health education training, but have become effective messengers reaching the Food Stamp-eligible population in Alameda County to a much greater extent than ACNS staff could have. Combined, over 100 community partners from faith-based groups, community-based organizations, day care providers, community clinics, and youth organizations attended two trainings during 2008 on “What’s In Your Bag?”, a module to promote healthier choices when eating at fast food restaurants; and “Be Sugar Savvy,” a module designed to teach about hidden sugars and promote alternatives to sugary beverages. Following each workshop, ACNS staff provided telephone follow-up and assistance to workshop participants to support their teaching and provide materials, problem-solve, and encourage community partners in their efforts to provide nutrition education to their constituencies. Refresher “mini-workshops” were held as needed.

Using a train-the-trainer model has enhanced the ability of ACNS to reach a larger audience and has created “nutrition ambassadors” in the community. These community partners are very effective messengers, bringing culturally and socially appropriate competence to their teaching. There are many stories of large and small changes in eating and physical activity behavior from the community partners who have attended the workshops, making them models in their community and even more effective in delivering the health messages.

Assessment of what the community partners’ needs are for future workshop training is ongoing and ACNS plans to provide new workshops and refresher trainings throughout the coming program year.

For more information, please contact Diane Woloshin at diane.woloshin@acgov.org.

Sprinkle the FLAVOR

Telling people that they should choose healthy food may not be enough to motivate them to do so. Especially if the person providing the information is a stranger that talks at them for an hour, leaves, and never sees them again. One of the challenges faced by our target audience that makes choosing healthy food difficult is the way information is presented to them. An audience may be more motivated to make healthier food choices if the information is presented by someone whom they have built a relationship with. They may also be more motivated if the information is presented as more of a discussion than a lecture in which audience members have the opportunity to share what they know about choosing healthy food, and are able to practice the new skills during the presentation so that they feel empowered to apply them at home.

The FLAVOR of Nutrition train-the-trainer is a six class series developed by the Feeling Good Project to train community providers on how to offer nutrition education in a way that is visually stimulating, participatory, and gives clients the opportunity to apply the information right away. We chose to do a train-the-trainer for providers because they are in a position to help motivate their low-income clients to make healthier food choices, as they have built relationships with their clients and see them on a continuous basis. During the final class of the series, providers showcased what they learned through a presentation they designed and implemented. After the six-week training was completed, Feeling Good Project staff was available to provide technical assistance and conduct observations as providers began to sprinkle concepts of FLAVOR into their nutrition education presentations. During the course of this contract year, we did one Train-the-Trainer FLAVOR class series and two observations of classes by our trainees.

Before the FLAVOR of Nutrition class series was over, providers had begun to implement concepts from the training, and would come to class eager to share how they had incorporated their new skills with their clients. During the observations of providers conducted after the class series ended, it was rewarding to see how engaged the participants were during the nutrition education presentations and how proudly the providers beamed as they saw the difference they made in motivating their clients towards healthier food choices.

Two FLAVOR of Nutrition class series were offered in summer 2007 and spring 2008. Although the Feeling Good Project will no longer offer the training, the FLAVOR of Nutrition curriculum will be made available to *Network for a Healthy California* to serve as a resource for educators.

Even if educators do not use all parts of the curriculum, we hope that they will find some of the concepts and practice skills beneficial and sprinkle some FLAVOR into their own teaching style.

For more information, please contact Laura Brainin-Rodriguez at laura.brainin-rodriquez@sfdph.org.

Being the Change

Choosing healthy food and being physically active at the alternative school Berkeley Technology Academy can be challenging. Peers are easily drawn to the affordability, convenience, and taste of fast food, and to a corner store market directly across the street from the school. There is no organized physical education program in a regular comprehensive high school. These youth are challenged daily to make healthy decisions. Although there is a weekly farmers' market on the same street of the school, students tend not to view it as accessible to them, nor are they drawn to fruits and vegetables when soda, candy, and chips are available to them in the same proximity.

These sessions focused on an introduction to food label reading to determine the amount of sugar in food items, and then on food access issues, including talking about corner markets. Two young men in the school's Youth Advisors group stood out as students who not only wanted to help make changes but wanted to "be the change." One young man talked about how he, at his age, has high blood pressure and has had to take medication for it – something he said most people consider older people having to do. A spark seemed to light up in the other young man the more we talked about corner markets and food access – he expressed how unfair it was and asked what could be done, what choices they have. These young men wanted to make changes for themselves and also their larger school community.

Both of the young men started to make changes to what they ate and become more physically active. One of them went directly to the school principal and asked if he could start a basketball club for the school. Soon after, there was a portable basketball hoop installed to the side of the school courtyard, with this young man heading and organizing a basketball group for interested students. The other young man brought his enthusiasm and inquisitiveness into discussions with other students, hoping to get them to think about what they were eating as well. Both young men applied and were accepted into our part-time Community Health Worker Trainee program under the Chronic Disease Prevention Program to continue to learn about such issues as nutrition, physical activity, hypertension, diabetes, and other public health issues, and develop skills to enable them to continue to reach out to their peers and the community.

Bringing the energy and passion these young men possess into their work with students in the high schools and middle schools will certainly shape our peer education trainings and teaching sessions, and continue to make an impact on other youth. In their new roles as Community Health Worker Trainees, they will be key in helping to deliver nutrition education and physical activity messages to their peers and to younger children.

For more information, please contact JoAnn Evangelista at jevangelista@ci.berkeley.ca.us.

Ready, Set... Let's Get Healthy!

The Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Active Long Beach Program, in its goal to increase the community's awareness of the importance of healthy eating and physical activity, hosted "*Healthy Active Long Beach Week 2008.*" This is an annual week-long series of events that incorporated citywide nutrition education activities and learning opportunities for all ages.

Long Beach is a large, diverse city with many eligible families unable to participate in events that take place exclusively in the downtown area. We have also found that most of our participants benefit from activities designed to increase their skill level and self-efficacy and not ones that just provide information. With that in mind, we developed a week-long series of activities that took place throughout the cities Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE)-eligible neighborhoods including those that focused on hands-on, skill building workshops.

The second annual Healthy Active Long Beach week's theme was "Ready, Set, ...Let's Get Healthy." The scheduled activities were designed to complement the theme with free nutrition workshops, healthy food tasting, hands-on skill building activities, and physical activity opportunities to help ensure residents of all ages are "ready and set" to "get healthy."

Healthy Active Long Beach Week 2008 highlights included:

- Five Nutrition Education Workshops (Cesar E. Chavez Park, Fairfield YMCA, Downtown Library, and the Westside Boys and Girls Club)
- Three Large Events (Kick-Off @ MacArthur Park, Downtown Farmers' Market and Celebration Event at The Pike)
- Nine Healthy Cooking Demonstrations/Healthy Food Tasting Daily Physical Activity Demonstrations/Opportunities including the California State University, Long Beach Breakers, KidTribe, Special Guest Star Power Panther (United States Department of Agriculture's Eat Smart Play Hard Campaign Mascot) and Mayor Foster, who came by our Celebration Event to speak to the participants and even joined in with KidTribe during "hoop-a-palooza!"

By the end of the week our program had reached over 1,000 people.

As a result of Healthy Active Long Beach week, our program has developed new partners throughout FSNE-eligible areas of Long Beach that will enable us to increase our future reach and impact. There has also been interest in some of our partners taking key roles in next year's Healthy Active Long Beach week which will enable us to make our annual event a city-wide event with even further impact.

We would like to continue to develop and grow this week long event. We plan to include a walk or bike event in partnership with parks and/or our bicycle clubs and would like to involve our partners to provide additional skill building activities in 2009.

For more information, please contact Lara Turnbull at lara_turnbull@longbeach.gov.

Not while you're Working

Our biggest challenge is the simple task of changing someone's dietary habits. Our target population is somewhat apprehensive to try new foods and so is our outreach staff that works with this group; for some it takes some coaxing to get them to try something different. We have had some success in having some staff change or add healthier food items to their diets or at best tried something new or modified.

We were tired of having staff see me coming and hiding what they were eating or simply saying something like, "I know, I know, this isn't good for me," even though we were not going to say anything. After speaking to our senior management team, a nutrition class for community representatives and staff assistants was approved. These are the staff members that order and/or plan the food/refreshments for various meetings or community events. Our objective was to have the message of eating healthier come from all segments of the Pasadena Public Health Department.

The idea was that when the Health Department staff was hosting a meeting at the Department or in the community, the menu should reflect our mission to be the guardians of health for the community especially when choosing food options and using city funds. Nutrition information was given to staff to make an educated choice for their families and themselves. Staff was asked to be very aware of what they were serving to the community or community leaders. Foods high in fat, or soft drinks high in sugar were not acceptable. What they did at home or on their free time was up to them, so "not while your working" with clients or community leaders become the motto. They needed to become "Champions for Change" in the community as role models of healthier choices.

It is never made any sense to be an exhibitor at a health fair when the organizers are providing coffee and donuts for breakfast. At every meeting, workshop, or conference we attend, it seems that we are the ones who always bring up this point; maybe it is because we always end up leaving hungry. We did not want that for the Department or meeting/event participants, we wanted guilt free eating/snacking. So we organized a few key people, put a power point presentation together and presented, "Eat Well, Meet Well." This three part educational session covered the obesity epidemic and the chronic diseases associated with obesity by one of our doctors, the United States Department of Agriculture's MyPyramid and the food groups by a guest Registered Dietitian. Lastly, we provided some simple tips on low fat menu planning which included fresh fruits and vegetables. The training was well received; a total of ten people attended this training.

We planned healthier menus including fresh fruit and vegetables to be served for various community and staff events. This training impacted staff fundraiser's as well which are now offering alternate healthier choices in food sale items.

We hope to go city-wide and include vending machines in all city-owned buildings with general public access to offer healthier choices.

For more information, please contact Mary Urtecho-Garcia at [mugarcia@city_of pasadena.net](mailto:mugarcia@city_of_pasadena.net).

Creating Champion Communities

Families need local markets to stock healthy offerings but often local stores do not carry quality fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nonfat or low fat dairy items. This is a reality for many residents in neighborhoods of West Contra Costa County. Based on the findings from the Communities of Excellence (CX3) retail survey, one community organization, Neighborhood House of North Richmond, and Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS), the *Network for a Healthy California's (Network)* local project, agreed to collaborate to increase healthier food in neighborhood stores and recruit retailers and residents to become "Champions for Change."

The organizations began to work together in order to create a comprehensive view of healthy food availability in parts of Richmond. CCHS *Network* Program, which is restricted to work in federally designated, low-income census tracts, used the CX3 survey to assess eligible areas. Neighborhood House, using summer youth workers trained in nutrition by CCHS *Network* staff, administered the CX3 survey in adjacent non-eligible, low-income census tracts to create a complete neighborhood profile.

The combined survey findings showed that no stores in either area qualified as "healthy." Both agencies are now collaborating to improve the availability of healthy food in Richmond by working across census tract lines to inform storeowners about becoming WIC and Food Stamps vendors, to educate them about improving food choices, and to promote the stores that make healthy changes.

The CCHS *Network* Project is working with Neighborhood House to provide nutrition education and technical assistance to agencies and residents that are partnering to advocate for improvements in neighborhood stores. Staff from both agencies meet regularly and recently attended a CX3 training together. To support these efforts, CCHS *Network* staff provides nutrition education to residents and storeowners in targeted census tracts in the community.

CCHS *Network* Project and Neighborhood House have a vision to increase access to healthy food by providing storeowners and residents with nutrition education and assisting storeowners to enroll in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and Food Stamp programs. The intervention will have a lasting impact by increasing demand for healthy foods among residents and making it more economically viable for storeowners to stock healthy foods. These stores will have a dedicated customer base of residents who are enrolled in WIC and the food stamp program and must buy healthy foods. An additional outcome is the increased capacity that a local community organization has gained in advocating for improved nutrition in this low-income, underserved community.

Once local markets are transformed into 'Champion' stores, CCHS *Network* staff will continue to provide nutrition education, offer media support, on-going technical assistance and collaborate with the *Network's* regional retail campaign to provide healthy cooking demonstrations that feature items from the new WIC package. This joint effort maximizes key nutrition messages to food stamp-eligible families to eat healthy by choosing more vegetables and fruit, whole grains, and low fat dairy foods.

For more information, please contact Andrea Menefee at amenefee@hsd.cccountry.us.

Planting the Seed for Healthy Choices throughout Life

Trying to decide what success story to describe is a challenge in itself for our program. It is like trying to pick out a favorite child and telling one success story that represents that child. We have five subcontractors that are all doing amazing projects, and we feel have begun to make a difference in lifestyle behavior in their pre-school, their elementary school, middle/high school, and/or in the larger community of people that they reach. In addition, we coordinate and facilitate a community-wide Collaborative, the Wellness Collaborative (re-named this year as a shorter version of the Marin Physical Activity Nutrition Wellness Collaborative). The mission of the Collaborative is to pull all the “pieces of the jigsaw puzzle together” in order to improve the community environment around increasing access to healthy foods and physical activity and in helping to make positive changes in social norms and behaviors around eating healthy and being physically active.

Teachers and parents lament about the unhealthy food consumed by youngsters and even the lack of nutritious food in the home. Often times, we hear how students are coming to school hungry and not paying attention in class and not getting enough physical activity due to unsafe neighborhoods and time spent on computer and video games. Studies show that just presenting facts and figures to individuals does not change lifestyle behaviors by itself. We have to change the community one class, one school, one organization, one neighborhood at a time until we have lasting, sustainable changes in our community. This cannot be accomplished in one year or even three. An overall challenge to us, as a public health program, is trying to change organizational practices, not only to integrate nutrition education curriculum into our projects, be it pre-school, elementary school, teen center, or community organization but to increase access to healthy food and physical activity in budget burdened times. Staff and teachers are hard put just to squeeze in the academic curriculum that they must meet each school year. We must compete for busy teachers and parent’s time and attention. Add to that, the increasing funding constraints and staffing cuts and it becomes even more of a challenge.

We think that if we had to choose an undercurrent of success in our five subcontractors, it would be around the incorporation of gardens and cooking as a vehicle to teach all age groups, as well as our youth empowerment and mentoring.

What began with a planter box and some donated seeds in one elementary school has caught fire and become a centerpiece of nutrition education in many of our projects. Learning about where food comes from and how delectable it tastes, especially when it is planted, nurtured, and harvested with the help of children themselves is never forgotten.

One only has to visit the Kindergarten class at Bahia Vista Elementary School, San Pedro Elementary, or the “Garden of Eatin” pre-school project, as the children learn to “harvest” greens and vegetables in their garden and bring them into the classroom to wash and prepare a special salad. A teacher may use “nutrition theme” music and point out why each ingredient is so special for their growth and health, and provide taste testing new foods thus incorporating all of the senses in the learning process. Incorporating multiple components such as these helps establish healthy eating habits.

At Bahia Vista Elementary, when we began our subcontract, we were envisioning tracking only one class from Kindergarten through 5th grade and doing an impact evaluation study for the last three years. However, the principal asked us to provide technical support and classroom activities for each subsequent set of teachers. Subsequently, by the end of next year, we will have worked with every grade’s teachers, and provided technical support for providing nutrition education, not only for the targeted class, but for teachers, parents, and staff. Moreover, we would have made a positive impact on the environment of the school as well.

At San Geronimo Community Collaborative, low-income food stamp-eligible families enjoy the fruits of the garden and learn how to prepare food bank donations with Harvest of The Month recipe ideas that are demonstrated in “family cooking nights.” Only because of the *Network for Healthy California (Network)* funding are we able to support nutrition education with a garden/cooking concept.

At BACR Teen Center, low-income teens are learning how to use culinary skills to make healthy food taste delicious while at the same time learning lifetime and future professional skills.

As for our program, we have made great strides this year in our communication plan, and social marketing efforts, especially with the addition of the *Network “Champions for Change”* campaign, which has been incorporated into our Latino outreach efforts. We selected and trained a Latino *Champion Mom* and have made efforts to integrate the campaign into our media outreach efforts.

Our program has also taken the lead in strategic planning and the completion of a new community wide plan, included in the Healthy Marin Partnership’s report entitled “Pathways to Progress 2008-2011.” The plan, introduced to the community in February 2008, utilized our CX3 mapping efforts of low-income census tracts and we have subsequently added new indicators and strategies to take our community “upstream.” The plan will be used to help focus our Marin Wellness Collaborative efforts and strategic planning process for the next three years and in bringing new partners to the process.

The impact is reflected in our ability to train the taste buds of children to appreciate fresh fruits and vegetables in their natural state without a lot of added sugar or fat. Our North Bay “Garden of Eatin” Nutrition Education Coordinator, underscored this by saying “what you do here will stay with the children the rest of their lives.”

And we would like to add, that we find it encouraging that, in many cases, the children are teaching and influencing their parents' behaviors. As one parent stated at Bahia Vista Elementary School, "my child is now asking me for tangerines instead of hot cheetos as a snack!"

The same holds true for the middle and high school youth who are beginning to have a lasting impact on changing the social norms in their schools. These youth leaders have also helped tremendously in our social marketing efforts in promoting key nutrition messages that youth can relate to. Youth now have a voice in our School District Wellness councils as well as our Marin Wellness Collaborative Steering Committee.

Until now the focus at our schools and child care centers has been on training teachers, and staff, as well as educating the children via incorporating both garden and cooking experiences. We will also continue to discover better ways to engage parents and teens in activities that will link them to be role models and mentors and achieve lasting positive lifestyle changes. This coming year, we will begin to move more into the community, using our CX 3 baseline data to track progress. We will connect with more organizations that can strategically make an impact on enhancing the ability of our low-income population to access healthy foods and safe, walkable neighborhoods.

For more information, please contact Linda Armstrong at larmstrong@co.marin.ca.us.

County of Riverside Community Health Agency
Contract #: 06-55107

CalWORKS/GAIN: Nutrition and Physical Activity Classes Reaching Food Stamp Participants

We faced many challenges before we were able to work with the CalWORKS/GAIN Program. The first priority of the program was helping their clients get work. Work is their mandate and everything must be related to it. The GAIN (Greater Avenues for Independence) program provides employment-related services to CalWORKS recipients to help them find employment, stay employed, or move on to higher paying jobs as part of the Welfare-To-Work Program. Participants who are not employed usually attend job searching classes which are called, "Job Clubs" in Riverside County.

We knew there were a lot of participants in the program and that they all received welfare to qualify for the program. We never knew there were 50,000 CalWORKS participants in Riverside County (2007).

After many doors were closed to us, in 2005, we began working with Gerry Martin at the CalWORKS/GAIN office in Cathedral City. We did classes at her office. Gerry knew the classes were helping her clients so she championed our cause when it was not the popular thing to do. Thanks to the support she provided, we have now expanded to nine offices in 2008. Furthermore, we have overwhelming staff support from the CalWORKS/GAIN program offices all over Riverside County and it is becoming a challenge to keep up with all of the requests for classes.

We have provided more than 150 classes for participants this fiscal year 2007-2008. Our subjects range from MyPyramid, Label Reading, and Good Fats/Bad Fats. In Riverside County, we were able to educate over 1,500 people most of whom are certified Food Stamp recipients in addition to meeting our other objectives.

We have so many ideas for enhancing this program such as finding ways to measure our success or providing a second class for each Job Club we serve. Our presence is so well supported by the CalWORKS/GAIN supervisors that they frequently visit our classes and invite us to participate in other major events such as the Employment Expo in the Palm Springs Convention Center targeting their clients and others unemployed, the Fit-to-Work Conference celebrating CalWORKS/GAIN participants, or we may be invited to their individual staff meetings to give them a more in depth training.

The *Network for a Healthy California* County of Riverside, Nutrition Services program is proud to have reached the target audience with information that empowers changes for a healthier lifestyle and helps individuals and their families be healthier, productive members of their school, community, or the workforce.

For more information, please contact Nancy Allende at nallende@co.riverside.ca.us.

Garden Brings Food, Future to Impoverished Neighborhood

Lack of affordable and quality fruits and vegetables contribute to health problems among the low-income families and children who live in the City of San Bernardino's Westside. According to a survey conducted by the California Neighborhood Garden Association, there are little or no youth activities offered at parks and recreation centers on the Westside. In addition, collaboration between community organizations and local government agencies has been limited in the past.

Amidst a neighborhood long plagued by poverty and violent crime, springs the 40 by 139 foot, *Network for a Healthy California (Network)*-supported Community Garden at Anne Shirrel Park. The garden is the product of hard work and ongoing dedication between government agencies (i.e., Mayor's Office, Councilman Rikke Van Johnson, the Police Department, and Rio Vista Elementary School) and community organizations (i.e., Inland Empire Master Gardens, Boy Scouts, and Temple Learning Center Youth Group). Local newspapers have also embraced the endeavor by providing six articles, many with large color photographs, which include the *Network* message of increased fruit and vegetable and physical activity. To date, six families have been assigned plots that they will till and consume what they grow. An educational program for children, overseen by an *African American Campaign Desert Sierra Region* Coordinator, will take place at Rio Vista Elementary School, which adjoins the garden.

The Community Garden at Anne Shirrel Park has created lasting policy and environmental change. The newly developed working relationship between the City of San Bernardino and the County Public Health Nutrition Program has led to key policy changes, such as the inclusion of nutrition education at a city elementary school and the awarding of garden plots to community residents. The garden's sustainability is safeguarded by the level of dedication demonstrated by key stakeholders, such as city officials, school administrators, church youth groups, Inland Master Gardens, and nearby residents. The garden's unique ability to break down barriers and reach community members on a personal level is best exemplified by one of the children currently involved with the garden. According to this nine year old, working in the garden has been a chance to form new kinds of relationships with living things. Before, he said, he did not know it was possible to care about a plant. Now he says, "They need me, and I need them."

The garden will be maintained through collaborations with Parks and Recreation, Rio Vista Elementary School, community members, master gardeners, and California Gardens Neighborhood Cluster Association. Resources will be shared with interested school teachers to incorporate the nutrition and the garden into their curriculum materials. "Champion Moms" will provide nutrition education to the plot owners and community members and demonstrate recipes using the fruits and vegetables harvested in the garden.

It is hoped that the garden will be a place of peace and beauty as well as a nutrition learning center for all that enter. Garden collaborative partners will meet to see the feasibility of replicating this model in other underserved, access-poor communities.

For more information, please contact Jeanne Silberstein at jsilberstein@dph.sbcounty.gov.

Breakfast on the Go! It doesn't have to be boring or bad for you

Breakfast is a very important meal for growing children who must sit in class during the day and concentrate on their work. When a child has not eaten breakfast, they are less attentive, tired, and unable to focus. When children qualify for a free breakfast at school, they get a healthy start in the morning, however many children who eat breakfast at home eat on the run. They usually have processed products low in nutrition, fiber, and vitamins. They feel full, but it leaves them feeling sluggish, and the feeling of fullness wears off fast. This year, one of our subcontracting schools spent a week discussing what breakfast is and why it is important to eat foods that fuel the body.

Children knew they were being marketed to in the grocery store, but were not aware just how manipulated they are once they are in the cereal aisle where we compared food labels. We discussed the difference between "natural" and "healthy," how to read a label to check for nutritious ingredients and to recognize the green and white United States Department of Agriculture's organic label. This lesson was augmented with a tasting of chopped apple and low-fat vanilla yogurt topped with granola. We looked at the oats, nuts, and raisins closely and discussed why they were healthy foods and where they came from. Our granola was sweetened with molasses, and although most children had heard of molasses, they had never tasted it, did not know its nutrient content or that it came from the grain sorghum. After eating, the children felt good, not sluggish or stuffed. Finally, we talked about how easy this breakfast was to make at home. It only had three ingredients and was portable. They could even take it in a paper cup in the car on the way to school!

Originally this activity and tasting was with young children, K-3. It was easy enough for them to understand, make themselves with little supervision, and involved light clean up. They loved it! They told their parents about it. Now, they are seen getting out of a car in the morning with their cups of 'portable breakfast'. The parents really like it when their kids like something nutritious, too. Now the plan is to use the lesson with older students and expand it to include discussions on genetic modification, chemicals in food, what organic means, and how to save money, e.g., buying food in bulk and avoiding expensive packaging. It might be fun to brainstorm some ideas for naming the treat – maybe start our own trend! By the way, we used apples from our own orchard, but other fruit could be used as well. The possibilities are endless.

For more information, please contact Lynn Walton at lwalton@sonoma-county.org.

Family Challenge Going Strong

The Tulare County Local Incentive Awardees (LIA) program is a unique, multi-organizational partnership of public agencies and community-based organizations focused on activities that promote healthy eating, physical activity, and food security. Primary activities include: the maintenance and expansion of the Tulare County Nutrition Collaborative that promotes the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* goals, The Family Challenge Program, and Nutrition on the Go. The primary target audience is low-income, food stamp-eligible residents throughout Tulare County.

Some of the challenges the target audiences face are lack of knowledge on food preparation and lack of options for healthier recipes.

An impact evaluation was conducted in July 2008 and showed positive results for the Family Challenge program county-wide. Evaluations were conducted at one, five, and ten weeks. According to the impact evaluation the ten-week program significantly improved fruits and vegetables being consumed for snacks. Both the five and ten-week interventions significantly improved daily fruit consumption.

The Family Challenge toolkit along with approved nutrition education reinforcement items from the *Network* and other approved resources, (i.e., Dairy Council and United States Department of Agriculture material) create fun and simple ways to be healthier!

The two new markets that we have reached (Porterville High School Health Academy and Grace Homes) are excited to receive new recipes they can prepare themselves, physical activity tips facilitated by the Family Challenge Educator, and promotional items. All these activities help create a more dynamic curriculum for the toolkit.

The Family Challenge is being introduced into the Native American community and Tulare County Worksite Wellness Program. Stanislaus County Health Services Agency has adopted the Family Challenge toolkit and has made it part of their nutrition education programs.

The lasting impacts have come through our collaboration with the three partners of the LIA program: Woman, Infants, and Children, FoodLink, and the Health Promotion Unit of Tulare County. As new activities are taken on by the Tulare County Nutrition Collaborative, we have found it easy to see how this collaborative has been able to build upon each others programs and activities. For example, Family Challenge is being used as a resource for nutrition education county-wide. Outside agencies are seeking nutrition education classes through the Family Challenge Toolkit.

Many participants who have completed the toolkit have made positive statements regarding their experience with the Family Challenge program. Participants were asked which tools they would continue to use after the Family Challenge program and some of the responses were: “even after completing the ten-week course I still use the Nutrition Fact Panel and MyPyramid.” One participant from Grace Homes has made significant changes in her lifestyle and as a result has lost 25 pounds and continues to be aware of what she and her child eat and how it is prepared.

The next step is to update the Family Challenge Toolkit with different recipes, more information on local farmers’ markets, and more safe green spaces for physical activity. We will continue to build collaboration with all of our partners as well as reaching outside agencies and continue to explore new avenues while expanding our target audience.

For more information, please contact Peggy Redfern at predfern@tularehhsa.org.

Motivating the Community

Imperial County is a unique rural community of approximately 167, 000 residents located in the southeast corner of California, bordered by Riverside and San Diego Counties, Arizona state, and Mexico. Imperial County is extremely poor and predominantly Latino and Spanish- speaking. Migrant and seasonal farm workers comprise a substantial portion of the Imperial County's workforce. An estimated 30, 000 people work in the fields and related agricultural jobs. Of these, an estimated 14,000 are migrant farm workers and 16,000 are seasonal farm workers.

There are many factors that negatively affect the health of our people in this County: in particular, the lack of consumption of fruits and vegetables and sedentary lifestyles.

Program staff educates and encourages healthy behaviors among our low-income Latinos. Not only do we focus on individuals out in the community, we partner up with agencies throughout the County through the Physical Activity and Healthy Eating (PAHE) Coalition. PAHE brings together a consortium of agencies that work towards a same goal: increasing the overall health of our community. Within PAHE, a member has been very proactive in sharing the message and implementing healthy behaviors within her own life. This member started consuming more fruits and vegetables and became physically active. As a result, she lost 30 pounds within the last year. She is a program advocate and shares with her program participants the change and success of her life.

The PAHE member advocates openly to her program participants. As a result, nutrition education and cooking classes are often conducted to the participants that the PAHE member serves. In addition, our Program continues to build on the rapport established with the member and agency she works for.

Program staff will continue to work with agencies and community members. We will continue to educate and encourage healthy lifestyles to our community.

For more information, please contact Yoliviviana Sanchez at yolivivianasanchez@imperialcounty.net.

Monterey County Health Department
Contract #: 07-65330

One Step at a Time

Monterey Peninsula School District was excited to have the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* in their schools. We noticed that staff members were unwilling to let go of the soda and unhealthy food vending machines, creating an environment that was not willing to change. We started working with one teacher, which made a big difference.

One teacher started to make personal change in her eating habits and physical activity. She started eating healthier foods and incorporating nutrition messages in her math and science lessons. She used food as a medium for science experiments first then taught the effects of eating healthy to maintain weight. She models the behavior to students, provides fruits for snacks, and then discusses their health benefits.

The lessons in science and math impacted the children. They also learned to eat healthy snacks and the benefits of physical activity. The valuable lessons were passed onto their peers and family.

As a result of this story, School Wellness Council is excited to work with the *Network* staff for technical assistance, share ideas, and work on something that will have a lasting impact in the student's life.

For more information, please contact Niaomi Hrepich at hrepichns@co.monterey.ca.us.

Youth Learning and Sharing Nutrition Information

At the 100-unit low-income housing complex in La Habra, the majority of families have limited food budgets, small areas for physical activity, and few nutrition education resources. Most children attend an elementary school where ~50 percent do not have a healthy weight, per school fitness data. The residents are primarily Spanish-speaking with one or both parents working outside the home. Children often attend onsite daycare and need to prepare meals/snacks on their own. Project Access, a non-profit organization, provides the afterschool care and assists these families with other services. Staff members were concerned about the health of the youth attending their programs and contacted the Health Care Agency (HCA) to conduct nutrition classes. HCA and site staff reviewed the needs of the youth and determined it would be best to offer two series of classes, one for youth ages 6-12 years, and another for teens ages 13-18 years, which focused on basic nutrition and food preparation skills.

Thanks to the coordination between HCA, Project Access, and the youth, the classes were a success and the impact went beyond the classroom setting. The teen classes lasted one hour and enthusiasm was high. The teens became skilled at reading food labels and making healthy food choices using MyPyramid. They learned to prepare several recipes, including “Banana Berry Pancakes,” discovering that fruit could be used in place of syrup and that adding mashed banana to the batter made the larger pancakes they preferred. The classes gave four teens the confidence to help teach the subsequent nutrition classes to the younger youth. The youth learned about MyPyramid, ways to include more fruits and vegetables in their fast food meals, and how to choose healthy beverages. The food demonstrations also gave the teens and youth a chance to taste new foods, such as tofu, which was highlighted in the “stir-fry” class.

Several teens were inspired to host a nutrition/physical activity booth at the site’s annual health fair. They wanted to share their nutrition knowledge with their parents and neighbors. They selected handouts as well as visuals, such as fat and sugar displays. They developed a fruit and vegetable beanbag game, initiated a coloring contest, and lead physical activities such as musical chairs, jump rope, and hula-hoops. The initiative and knowledge shown by the teens was praised by parents, Project Access, and HCA.

As a result of the classes, Project Access decided to create a “Healthy Eating Library” for use by the residents. HCA assisted in this project by providing *Network for a Healthy California* cookbooks, brochures, and other materials. The site also participated in the *Power Play!* and *Kid Healthy* Campaigns. The site learned more ways to be healthy and the youth used a pedometer to track their activity.

There are plans to provide nutrition classes to additional youth next year and conduct a tour at a local supermarket. HCA has been contacted by other Project Access sites to provide similar activities.

For more information, please contact Maridet Ibanez at mibanez@ochca.com.

Comenzando Bien's Nutrition Message

Comenzando Bien has been a successful program with our Hispanic mothers for many years. The challenge has been that they have not had an understanding of the food they have been serving their families, especially their children, and the need to increase fruits and vegetables in their family's diet. They also did not understand the connection of sodas and fast food and the effect these foods have on their children's weight and health.

During a recent class, one of the mothers asked the facilitator what to do about her child's weight. She stated that the doctor had mentioned that her child was at the 90th percentile for weight. This participant's question opened the door for other mothers to ask the facilitator about weight and how to feed their children healthy food. The class had a lively discussion. The next time the class met, they all brought examples of food they prepared that was low fat and healthy for their children. They also increased the number of fruits and vegetables in their recipes.

These women became more knowledgeable about healthy weight and proper nutrition for their children. They increased their awareness about their role in helping their children eat foods that are healthy for them. Through this increase in knowledge and awareness, they will be able to help their families eat healthier and decrease the amount of junk food in their diets.

Many of these women are enrolled in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program. Through WIC and the new Healthy Habits program, these women will continue to increase their knowledge regarding healthy nutrition and exercise for themselves and their families.

For more information, please contact Vicki Spannagel at vspannag@placer.ca.gov.

San Francisco General Hospital Foundation
Contract #: 07-65308

Network for a Healthy California—Chinese Project: A Pioneer in Combating Obesity among Chinese Youth

Choosing healthy food and physical activity are not easy choices for low-income Chinese families living in San Francisco due to limited residential space, access to recreational facility or parks, and culturally and linguistically-appropriate nutrition and physical activity educational materials. Physical activity is not a priority for most new immigrants due to their hectic work schedule. In addition, Chinese parents value academic success over healthy eating and physical activity; hence they do not typically promote healthy lifestyle choices to their children. The goal of the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)—Chinese Project* (NHCCP) is to empower low-income Chinese living in San Francisco to improve their nutritional and physical well-being and thus reduce the risk of chronic diseases. The project uses the Spectrum of Prevention model to achieve this goal. Activities include community nutrition education, media outreach, local coalition building, collaborating with community partners, provider training, and policy training.

NHCCP has partnered with over 30 community agencies and leveraged multiple communication and outlet channels to reach over 50,000 clients. In 2007-08, 41 press articles and interviews were published (impression: 3,901,500), of which 20 were *Network*-funded (impression: 654,000). In addition, NHCCP was awarded non-*Network* funds to start the *Eat Right! Get Fit! Get Healthy!* initiative to combat childhood obesity among Chinese youths. This three-month pilot intervention program adapts the National Institute of Health “*We Can!*” program, making it culturally appropriate for Chinese children and families. Participants learned to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables, choose low fat foods, stay physically active, and limit screen time.

Evaluation data from *Eat Right! Get Fit! Get Healthy!* showed significant gains in tracked outcomes. Youth participants ate more fruits and vegetables, engaged in more physical activities, and reduced their screen time; while parent and grandparent participants reported more favorable attitudes toward healthier portion size, greater knowledge in healthy eating and physical activity, and reduction in screen time behavior after participating in the intervention program ($p < 0.05$). “Champion for Change” mom, Ms. Lana To, a participant of *the Eat Right! Get Fit! Get Healthy!* class, said, “We learned how to read nutrition labels, and our family is doing our best to increase physical activity as well as decreasing screen time in our everyday life.” Lana’s son Brandon loved the fun games and activities, enjoyed eating more fruits and vegetables, and always looked forward to coming to classes and hiking trips.

In 2009, NHCCP will continue to collaborate with the National Institute of Health’s “*We Can!*” program to launch the interactive workshops and seek additional funding to do more culturally-appropriate materials. Our goal is to empower low-income Chinese families to embrace long lasting healthy lifestyle choices. NHCCP will continue to

recruit new community partners including schools, family associations, and faith channels, in order to institutionalize healthy guidelines and to advocate for more funding to create culturally-appropriate programs and resources for low-income, monolingual Chinese families.

For more information, please contact Catherine Wong at CKWWong@aol.com.

**Asian Nutrition and Physical Activity Project
Building a Bridge to Families through the Community Organizations**

One of the activities of the Public Health Services (PHS) *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* staff was to establish and incorporate nutrition education into existing services and programs through the support of *Asian Pacific Self-Development and Residential Association (APSARA)* and *United Cambodian Families (UCF)*.

In partnership with the *Network* in San Joaquin County, APSARA and the Carrington “Diamond Cove” Community Center, this year’s nutrition education and cooking classes were part of an intervention designed to engage north Stockton residents in hands-on cooking practicum and educational practices to make healthy food choices and acquire food preparation skills that support healthy eating habits.

APSARA is a nonprofit organization that works to build a healthy, positive, safe and strong community in the Park Village Apartments and to empower Cambodian families through educational and cultural programs. APSARA has worked with other community organizations, including PHS. Some of the programs provided are the following: 1) Seniors Program, 2) Leadership Development Programs, and 3) Afterschool Program. In addition, UCF is a nonprofit agency that has been an active partner in outreach and education of Cambodian families about community health. Fiscal year 2007 class participants in north Stockton were Asian American families ranging from 25-75 years of age. In San Joaquin County, the Food Stamp Nutrition Education program focuses on influencing nutrition habits of families in these community sites.

During 2007-08, the PHS *Network* staff collaborated with APSARA and Carrington “Diamond Cove” Community Center to provide nutrition education and cooking classes. The accomplishments in coordinating these nutrition activities were as follows:

- The PHS *Network* staff attended steering committee meetings to promote the nutrition education and cooking classes.
- The PHS *Network* staff continued to review nutrition materials, such as the Dairy Council, United States Department of Agriculture’s and the *Network* Resources to ensure cultural appropriateness.
- The Project Coordinator and Community Outreach Worker conducted six nutrition education and cooking classes at APSARA and Carrington “Diamond Cove” Community Center. These classes were conducted in the appropriate language. The presentations with scheduled dates and topics were as follows:
 - February 26, 2008 (APSARA) – “MyPyramid”
 - March 25, 2008 (APSARA) – “Healthy Food Shopping”
 - April 28, 2008 (APSARA) – “Food Labeling”
 - July 10, 2008 (Carrington Center) – “MyPyramid”
 - August 14, 2008 (Carrington Center) – “How Many Cups Do I Need?”

- September 11, 2008 (Carrington Center) – “Physical Activity Pyramid,” “Be Active Your Way,” and “Health Benefits of Physical Activity”

There were 52 community residents that participated in the nutrition education and cooking classes at both sites. Materials and NERI items were provided at the presentations.

Over the year, the Project Coordinator and the Community Outreach Worker sustained a solid relationship with APSARA and UCF in San Joaquin County.

- **Community Leaders Involvement:** Generous community residents provided their time to promote the nutrition and physical activity education to their families.
- **Teamwork:** The community residents with the support of the Project Local Incentive Awardees Coordinator chose the *Network* recipes that were used in the culturally appropriate cooking classes.

With repeated visits to the centers, the Project Coordinator was able to offer two series of nutrition education and physical activity workshops. These cooking demonstrations convinced community residents to try a greater variety of fruits and vegetables at their home. Recognizing that healthy eating must be fostered in the home, partnering staff sent nutrition education messages to children, parents and seniors at both sites.

As of September 30, 2008, the PHS *Network* staff reached between 40 and 60 Food Stamp Nutrition-eligible residents of north Stockton through Healthy Cooking class series. The purpose of the nutrition education classes at APSARA and Carrington “Diamond Cove” Community Center were to increase knowledge of nutrition and to learn skills in food preparation.

Before the lesson, few community residents had knowledge of “MyPyramid” and how many cups of fruits and vegetables they should eat each day. After the lessons, most of the 52 participants gained information about eating healthy via nutrition education and learned new skills from performing hands-on cooking in class.

The Project Coordinator disseminated a participant satisfaction survey at the final series of the nutrition education and cooking class workshop for each community site. Here are some of the responses from community residents who participated in the event at APSARA and Carrington “Diamond Cove” Community Center:

- “Thanks for coming and showing us new foods. I have high cholesterol and do not know how to control it.”
- “My eating has changed a lot. I am trying to get my grandchildren to eat more fruits and vegetables.”
- “I have enjoyed the hands-on cooking class.”
- “Thank you for encouraging me to eat better.”

Because of the transformative experience of participants in the nutrition education and cooking class workshops, APSARA and Carrington “Diamond Cove” Community Center agreed to repeat the series in FY 2008-09.

In the new FY 2008-09, the PHS *Network* staff will be using the “Train the Trainer” concept to train community leaders at each community site to promote and advocate healthier foods for their families. To strengthen the community and home connection, the community leaders will promote nutrition and physical activity awareness such as advertising via flyers, hands-on cooking classes, community family health events, and nutrition education.

The “Community Toolbox for Educators” lessons will be used to encourage community residents and their families to eat healthy foods and be active.

The PHS *Network* staff will continue to provide on-going training and technical support to the community leaders at selected community sites. Materials and promotional items will be provided at their community sites.

For more information, please contact Shené Bowie at sbowie@sjcphs.org.

Less information...More Motivation

Our target audience is very aware of the health benefits of fruits and vegetables and being physically fit. Nevertheless, they report many barriers for not increasing the intake of fruits and vegetables and not being as active as they would like. However, they do want to lose weight and prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes and cancer whose presence are being felt more and more in their communities. Our audience is searching for successful strategies for behavior change and to stay motivated.

To address the need for strategies for change, part of our nutrition education presentations has the participants work on an individual action plan to support and facilitate the desired changes using © *Mini=Max Behavior Change Tool* developed by a behavioral therapist. With the aid of this tool, the individual designs an action plan based on their own circumstances, barriers, and values, thus, empowering them with self-efficacy. The tool was translated into Spanish to meet the needs of our Latino population.

When participants were called back to follow up on their plan of action, not only did most individuals remember the details of their written plan, but many had made changes, having prepared strategies for the expected pit faults and barriers. They realize that even small changes can make a difference and were proud of their accomplishments, therefore, increasing self-efficacy, essential for behavior change to take place. Many reported no longer having soda in the house, eating more fruit and vegetables, drinking more water, taking their children out for walks and being much more aware of what they were eating. Developing a plan of action that takes into account an individual's barriers to change is important to facilitate change.

Recently, the UDSA published an article confirming that our clients need more than just nutrition information. Our clients are seeking strategies to overcome the barriers they are facing internally and externally. They want suggestions on how to stay motivated; many feel disempowered. The introduction of the behavior change tool into our nutrition education programs addressed this need. We also discovered that our follow up calls provided additional support and motivation. We will be developing and incorporating more strategies for change in our programs. After all, we are "Agents for Change."

For more information, please contact Lydia Guzman at lguzman@co.sanmateo.ca.us.

Partners for Fit Youth Coalition

The Partners for Fit Youth (PFY) Coalition of Santa Barbara County completed a three stage media campaign this fiscal year. Our challenge was to find a way to reach our low-income population with nutrition messages in Spanish. We wanted to make it practical and fun. The stages were: a television (TV) advertisement (ad), a bus poster, and a poster for community-based organizations serving low-income populations.

We decided to make several TV ads to show on our local Spanish Univision-TV. We used the model of the photo novella to script and film four scenes of a Latino family at home. A PFY partner found a clinic staff worker who was outgoing and was willing to be filmed in her home, and with her family for the TV scenarios. We developed scripts for scenes that would strongly convey our nutrition messages in a fun way. Univision donated their production crew. The 30 second messages were: (1) It's OK not to clean your plate, (2) Turn it off and come sit at the table, (3) Good Nutrition is fun, and (4) Eat healthy, Move more. The ads were shown around the evening news and a popular TV novella during prime time and rotated for four months in 2006-07.

The mother who acted the scenes began to be recognized around her town of Santa Maria. She began to get questions about nutrition and so she began to educate herself. She began to walk and eat healthier, improve her family's diet, and to lose weight. She was interviewed for an article on Nutrition and spoke at a local Child Obesity Prevention Summit in 2008. The ads had a phone number to call to receive a free cookbook and we received 150 calls from viewers in the first three months.

The same family was featured in a poster which was developed to be in interiors of buses in the three county cities which have public transit systems for the four months of August through November 2008. In January 2008, the bus posters which have the message (in English and Spanish) *Veggies Make Great Snacks*, were also distributed to community-based organizations which are PFY partners and serve our low-income population. Evaluation surveys showed that there was an estimated reach of 77,000 through September 2008.

For more information, please contact Caro Stinson at caro.stinson@sbcphd.org.

Santa Clara County Integrates Strategies for Chronic Disease Prevention

Lower income populations are disproportionately affected by environmental conditions that do not support healthy eating and physical activity. Santa Clara County Public Health Department (SCCPHD) uses select strategies to create a culture of wellness in Santa Clara County, including the integration of the *Network for a Healthy California's (Network) Local Incentive Awardees (LIA)* activities with those of other programs.

Through 1) creating linkages between traditional and non-traditional partners, 2) building partnerships and collaborations, 3) providing and evaluating culturally appropriate programs and services, and 4) integrating social marketing campaigns, SCCPHD integrates strategies, services, and programs in a multidisciplinary approach to chronic disease prevention. These four strategies have changed the pulse of chronic disease prevention efforts in Santa Clara County.

Integrating the work of multiple grants, such as Steps for a Healthier Santa Clara County; Kaiser Permanente Healthy Eating, Active Living; and the *Network* has expanded our resources to the our target audience. As a result, the variety of channels creates a dynamic community-based participatory approach. Channels include: community (promoters, community educators, food banks, farmers' markets, and neighborhood initiatives), school channels (schools, districts, and County Office of Education) and multiple government channels (including Santa Clara County Supervisors, Parks and Recreation Department, public housing, and cities of San José and Gilroy).

Layered upon these channels are innovative techniques to community mobilization, such as the photovoice project, which gave a voice to youth in the Communities of Excellence in Nutrition (CX³) Washington neighborhood. CX³ food access data includes walk ability assessments, food access surveys, and fast food advertising assessments. These tools engaged and empowered residents and community leaders to use the data to set priorities to make changes to the built environment. CX³ Pilot Project has led to buy-in by local policymakers and development of a community priority. In Gilroy, the Gilroy Neighborhood Revitalization strategy prioritized increased sidewalks, repairing damaged sidewalks, and improved street lighting into their objectives. In the Washington neighborhood, Councilmember Sam Liccardo has decided to take on the possibility of implementing a subsidized farmers' market in the area, which was highlighted as a priority during the Washington community forum. A partnership with Parks and Recreation has led to the development of Healthy Trails: a physical activity challenge promoted to the Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) target audience to provide residents with free physical activity opportunities in the outdoors. This partnership allowed county parks to target a population who traditionally underutilized the county parks trails and provided Santa Clara County *Network LIA* with a tool to serve this population while promoting nutrition and physical activity.

This collaborative program has been widely endorsed by government officials, especially Santa Clara County Supervisor Ken Yeager.

Retail promotions, worksite wellness efforts, and media promotions via bus shelters, newspapers, and mass mailing have reinforced messages taught in schools, afterschool programs, and community-based organizations by the *Network* LIA and all partners involved.

Partnerships and collaborations between multiple agencies, programs, and grants have created a county-wide school focus, with development and implementation of wellness policies in every school district, and school-based activities for children, teachers, and parents.

In addition, Santa Clara County Supervisors and City of San José both passed vending machine-related policies and have increased health promotion efforts. Santa Clara County Supervisors also passed a menu labeling ordinance and a Sugar Savvy/Rethink Your Drink Initiative. Council members with the City of San José presented a Health Awareness Proclamation as well as a proposal for a ban of fast food retailers.

Selecting targeted strategies and integrating innovative techniques to chronic disease prevention creates synergistic interventions through multiple channels and community partners. As a result, efforts maximize resources, increase community buy-in, and create an interdisciplinary model for chronic disease prevention. SCCPHD has created linkages between partners by actively initiating and participating in community collaborations and coalitions, which has led to environmental and policy changes for increased sustainability. Through support, technical assistance, resources and training provided by Santa Clara County, CX³ communities have been able to obtain additional grants from Kaiser, Health and Human Services, and The Health Trust.

Plans to continue CX³ data assessment in additional neighborhoods are underway; in that manner, *Network* LIA can further the community engagement process used to prioritize issues related to healthy food and physical activity access. In addition, *Network* LIA continues to support coordinated county efforts by providing nutrition education to the FSNE audience, reinforcing the environmental and policy changes taking place in Santa Clara County and continuing to be a voice for the needs of the FSNE audience.

For more information, please contact Bonnie Broderick at bonnie.broderick@hhs.co.sci.ca.us.

Santa Clarita Valley School Food Services Agency
Contract #: 07-65339

Family Cooking Night Community Event

Communicating healthy food and activity choices to parents of students in a significant way is challenging, as access to them is generally limited to Parent Teacher Association-type presentations and written communications. The challenge is increased as many parents are English language learners, with low level English reading and speaking abilities.

The goal of Family Cooking Night is to help elementary students and their families experience the positive social, nutritional, and psychological values of eating together; to make meal preparation an enjoyable experience by teaching safe and nutritious food preparation skills, and to increase English vocabulary skills. English Language Learners (students and parents) identified by the Newhall School District at the Food Stamp Nutrition Education eligible sites, are invited to attend Family Cooking Night. Eighty-six participants were involved this year. Recipes are taken from the *Network for a Healthy California* recipe books, or the Dairy Council of California Kids Cooking resources. All recipes are posted in English, Spanish, and Korean. Key vocabulary words are posted at each recipe station. Eight to ten recipe stations are set up in the Wiley Canyon Mobile Park Recreation, with ~ ten participants at each station. Each station is facilitated by a school district teacher or administrator. As the families “get cooking,” they learn important healthy food preparation skills, as well as reinforcement of English language.

Students, parents, and participating teachers/administrators note that the event is memorable, engaging, and they have an increased knowledge and awareness of nutrition and basic cooking skills. Value for the event is heightened by the participation of district administrators and teachers, as families hold these individuals in high esteem. Feedback from families as they leave the event is very positive. A frequent comment: “This is so special, we will remember forever.”

Family Cooking night will continue as an annual event in the Newhall School District, supported by our Scope of Work. We have seen over the years that participating families then become more comfortable with attending subsequent school events, offering additional opportunities to promote healthy food and activity choices.

For more information, please contact Tracy Fiscella at tfiscella@scvfsa.org.

A Vision for Healthier Food Retail in Shasta County

The Governor's Vision for a Healthy California includes the challenge that healthy foods and beverages will be accessible, affordable, and promoted in grocery stores. Shasta County Public Health (SCPH) accepted that challenge and has moved forward with a vision for retail at a *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* qualified retail food store.

SCPH staff have collaborated with the Regional Director of Marketing for a chain of retail food stores located in Shasta County, one of their store managers, the Healthy Shasta Partnership, and the Network-Sierra Cascade Region to create a partnership with a local food retailer to provide nutrition education to the community and establish sustainable store-wide changes that promote healthy food choices.

One approach used to establish the relationship with the food retailer and provide the nutrition education has been to provide merchandising materials from the *Network* and from Healthy Shasta's Food Fight Campaign for placement in the store. Another approach has been to provide an on-site event that featured healthy cooking demonstrations with taste test, nutrition education materials, and nutrition focused activities for shoppers. This event involved several community partners. The food retailer donated two \$25 store gift certificates, all of the food, and store staff time to assist Culinary Arts students from Shasta College with food preparation for the demonstration. A Master Gardener answered questions and promoted locally grown produce. A Registered Dietitian was available to answer nutrition questions, provide *Network* nutrition education materials, and provide guidance for a scavenger hunt which featured searching for particular fruits and vegetables and identifying a fruit or vegetable that the participant had never tried before. Finally, a radio personality was on-site to advertise and promote the event. The store manager said that on the day of the event, sales increased by 25 percent. Shoppers enjoyed the event, shared how fun it was, and stated that these events should be held more often.

SCPH staff built and developed sustainable collaborative relationships with a local chain of retail food outlets, the Healthy Shasta Partnership, the Regional Network, Shasta College Culinary Arts Program, and Shasta County Master Gardeners to set the stage for changes that promote and support healthy choices in the retail food environment. Due to the promotional event, store customers benefited by having an increased awareness of the health benefits of fruits and vegetables, an increased familiarity with the taste and preparation of vegetables, and an increased awareness of the variety of fruits and vegetables available.

SCPH will continue to provide *Network* and Healthy Shasta merchandising materials for display and nutrition education through promotional events such as food demonstrations and store tours to the retail food chain. Events will support the National Nutrition Month and continue to involve community members. Opportunities for more sustainable store-wide changes that promote healthy choices will continue to be explored and introduced to management.

For more information, please contact Michelle Sabol at msabol@co.shasta.ca.us.

Challenged Communities

The Communities of Excellence (CX³) project identified three Solano County low-income neighborhoods that were considered food deserts and one neighborhood was considered a severe food desert. Corner markets, gas station mini marts, convenience stores, and fast food restaurants are prevalent and are very accessible in these neighborhoods, resulting in residents needing to travel outside of the neighborhood to shop at large grocery store. Residents who do not have reliable transportation are left to take the bus or a taxi to the nearest large grocery store. Not having easy access to large grocery stores makes it very difficult for struggling families to shop and prepare simple healthy meals for their families. They are more likely to shop at places that are convenient and close by, which usually do not have healthy options. The healthy choice is not the easy choice in these neighborhoods. The solutions to this problem are challenging and difficult, and important to pursue.

The results of the CX³ project have been presented to the public health nurses, public health leaders, Food and Nutrition Network of Solano County (the county's CNAP), Solano Coalition for Better Health Disparities Elimination Project, and the African-American Advocacy Leadership project. We are preparing to present the results to the County Board of Supervisors and plan to present the results to the City of Fairfield. As a result of these presentations, awareness has been raised about the issue and the African-American Advocacy Leadership Council has selected the CX³ as one of their projects. The Food Bank selected three afterschool programs in the Solano CX³ neighborhoods to distribute fresh fruits and vegetables. Next year a nutrition education component will be added along with Harvest of the Month. Food pantries in these neighborhoods have agreed to increase their produce and include recipe demonstration using fruits and vegetables. Many residents in the CX³ neighborhood wanted to know how to make easy and healthy meals for their family. Next year a community cooking event will be held in two of these neighborhoods.

So far, the lasting impact or change is that more people have increased awareness about this issue and the solutions are complex and challenging. Hopefully in the next year our *Network for a Healthy California* project will move the neighborhood closer to having easy access to healthy foods.

For more information, please contact Denise Kirnig at ddkirnig@solanocounty.com.

A Healthy Beginning

Childcare providers are role models for young children. However, due to the high demands of their work, leading the classroom as a healthy role model can be a challenge. In addition, young children spend the majority of their day under the care of a provider, making the childcare setting an important place to implement healthy habits.

A partnership was developed with the local Children and Families Commission to train local childcare providers throughout Stanislaus County. The training was titled "A Healthy Beginning" and was designed to provide tools on how to lead healthier lives so that in turn, childcare providers can model these healthy behaviors in the classroom.

The training was hosted in February 2008 on a Saturday, to ensure accessibility outside the childcare setting hours. The keynote presentation "Taking Care of Yourself on the Outside" set the foundation of the training by providing basic tools such as introduction to my pyramid, portion sizes, reading food labels, and the importance of physical activity. A breakout session titled "The ABC's of Healthy Eating" followed and provided hands-on-tools on how childcare providers can engage children in fun healthy activities. In one exercise participants read the "Hungry Caterpillar" book then were able to create their own caterpillars using healthy ingredients such as lettuce, crackers, and olives.

After the completion of this capacity building activity, 300 participants increased their understanding on how to care for themselves in order to model healthy behaviors to children they serve.

Evaluation results provided to us by our partner agency indicate that the training was well received, and participants learned something new. Key partners were also in attendance as a result; *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* staff was invited to present the same training to over 250 Head Start coordinators in August 2008. In addition, the Children and Families Commission taped the presentation and it is being broadcasted on the local government channels throughout Stanislaus County. This taping has proved to be a success; many people within the community have approached staff stating they had seen the presentation on the local channels. In a particular case, a retired county employee came across the taping and has communicated to *Network* staff that he now follows the simple steps that were presented and not only does he feel better but also has lost a significant amount of weight.

The long term goal of this activity is that childcare providers in Stanislaus County will continue to carry out the healthy lifestyles message to the children and families they serve. The impact of this activity on our work is huge, through this channel the *Network* message will have a broader reach by enabling the provider to act as the catalyst for healthy change in the childcare setting.

For more information, please contact Rocio Huerta at rhoerta@schsa.org.

Stretching your Food Dollar

One of the biggest challenges that I have seen in the community is that many parents sometimes wish to provide healthier foods for their families; however, they do not have the financial means to buy healthier foods such as fruits and vegetables. A participant, mother of three, in one of the nutrition classes shares her frustration with us with this statement, "sometimes it's easier for me to feed my family fast food because I can buy an entire meal for the whole family with ten dollars with hamburgers from the dollar menu, and I can't feed them with ten dollar if I go to the grocery store to buy meat and fresh vegetables." Sometimes it is not just lack of nutrition knowledge but also lack of resources that prevents parents from making healthier choices for their families. Our challenge as educators is not only to teach these parents why fruits and vegetables are important and how feeding their children hamburgers for dinner every night will contribute to health problems in the future, but to also help them find a solution that will allow them to make positive changes within their financial limitations.

In the past year, we have tried to focus on helping parents manage and stretch their dollars as they attempt to offer healthier foods for their families. I believe we accomplish our goal with most of the groups. In fact, this was exactly the case with the group where the parent who was buying ten dollars of hamburgers for dinner instead of purchasing foods to prepare at home. At the next class, after she shared with us what the barriers were for her, I brought three bags full of vegetables, fruits, and legumes that I had purchased at the local "99 Cent Store." I was not advising them to buy foods at that particular store but just wanted to demonstrate to them that \$10.00 can buy enough fresh vegetables, fruits, and lentils to feed a family of five for more than just one meal. The group was surprised and delighted with the quality of the fruits and vegetables available. The baby spinach and romaine lettuce were even organic. During the rest of the class series, we continued to talk about how to save money using coupons, buying items on sale, shopping around for quality and price, and also to buy fruits and vegetables when they are in season. These parents also learned how to prepared balanced meals using legumes and other less expensive protein sources. I hope the skills and knowledge gained in the classes will allow them to eat less meat as part of a healthier diet and also stretch their food dollar. The mom, who was feeding her family fast food to save money, was eventually convinced she could afford to buy healthier foods and began to make small changes in her food selection and the family's eating habits even with her limited budget.

One of the many reasons we stay motivated and continue to work with groups in the community is the response we get from these parents. When we hear comments like, "I am grateful for people like you who spend their time coming out into the community and have the willingness to educate us even when we sometimes don't care about our own health. Thank you very much."

This impacts me because it tells me that I am out there helping people in my community, people who otherwise might not get this type of help. The next step is to implement the new curriculum and to continue working with our partners.

For more information, please contact Silvia Lopez-Navarro, R.D. at silvia.lopez-navarro@ventura.org.

Reaching the Entire Spectrum

In conducting nutrition education classes, parents began to self examine why health behavioral changes for their families were not successful. Parents expressed that lack of continued motivation and social forces such as deeply held values and beliefs that were taught from childhood are big factors in not being very successful at changing long-term eating and physical activity patterns.

The Yolo County Health Department (YCHD), *Network for a Healthy California* is reaching the entire spectrum at the Woodland Joint Unified School District (WJUSD). During the 2007-2008 school year nutrition education classes and promotional events were delivered at all academic levels within the WJUSD. Participants included state preschoolers, elementary students, teen parents and adult education students, parents, and teachers. Interactive nutrition education classes/workshops, statewide initiative events, and nutrition presentations were offered in classrooms, afterschool programs, back to school nights and open houses. Hands-on cooking demonstration classes where parents participated with their children served as a mediator in reinforcing the message of the importance of increased consumption of fruits and vegetables between parents and children. YCHD received an immeasurable amount of support from the WJUSD staff in reaching their students and families to better their lives and combat the overweight and obesity epidemic.

The information of healthy lifestyle choices for students was viewed by parents as supportive to their families in making long-term eating and physical activity changes as a family priority versus an individual change. This year's objectives had a resounding success due to a family intervention method that reached the child and the parent, thus resulting in a greater impact to the entire family. Parents continually expressed the gratitude for the support in offering their children and family members a better and longer life.

Our next step is to educate families to make and be part of community change. Participants were well aware of the choices involved in living a healthy lifestyle and are clear that avoiding the right choices could result in drastic health issues. We will continue to offer services that will encourage and educate the residents in Yolo County on the importance of making the most of healthy living choices together as a family and as a community. Taking this stride together is definitely a step in the right direction.

For more information, please contact Charlene Shon at Charlene.shon@yolocounty.org.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Alameda County Community Food Bank
Contract #: 07-65357

Improving the Health of Food Bank Consumers by Facilitating Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables

Tens of thousands of low-income Alameda County residents cannot afford meals for themselves and their families: 40,000 people in Alameda County access emergency food services every week. The majority of the Alameda County Community Food Bank's clients represent vulnerable populations like children (35 percent) and seniors (18 percent). The demand for emergency food has increased steadily since the Food Bank's inception in 1985, with a 70 percent increase in demand reported by Food Bank pantries since 2001. With residents already struggling to access sufficient amounts of food, making healthy food choices becomes a greater challenge. The benefits of consuming a diet high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains are well known. However, consuming such foods is often difficult for many Food Bank consumers, since they are difficult to access in their neighborhoods and often too expensive for them to purchase throughout the month. Many Food Bank consumers receive healthy food options from the Food Bank, but are unaware of how to best prepare such foods.

Funds from the *Network for a Healthy California*, directed through California Association of Food Banks, have allowed the Food Bank to promote healthy eating choices through nutrition workshops at its member agencies and with community partners for all age groups, from small children to seniors. Recent partnerships with public health and health science students from the University of California, Berkeley, and California State University East Bay have allowed the Food Bank's Nutrition Education Program to expand. Unpaid student interns are trained in basic healthy eating topics and then teach children at local schools that participate in Food Bank distributions.

The nutrition education workshops are a success story. During the workshops, Food Bank staff and interns focus on the importance of making healthy food choices and using fresh produce and non-perishable staples, such as oats and canned tuna, distributed by the Food Bank. The workshops always involve the participants in food preparation in appropriate ways; for instance, children spread peanut butter on celery with a butter knife, while adults prepare sweet potatoes glazed in apple juice or black bean chili on the stovetop. These workshops teach Food Bank consumers and their families how to incorporate healthier items into meals and snacks and offer tasting opportunities for consumers to try new, unfamiliar foods.

The Food Bank's nutrition education workshops have positively influenced both the desire to eat healthier and the actual eating habits of Food Bank consumers and their families. One workshop, taught in Spanish, at a Food Bank agency that is a family resource center, highlighted healthy ways of preparing fruits and vegetables. Many Food Bank consumers tend to prepare cabbage using fatty cuts of meat or mayonnaise to flavor the vegetable. Since the Food Bank distributes cabbage during most of the year, it is important to share healthier ways of preparing this vegetable with consumers to promote good health and prevent chronic disease. At this workshop for adults, the

participants prepared a healthy version of coleslaw using fresh herbs, jalapeño, and cider vinegar to flavor the dish. The adults remarked that it was an incredibly tasty salad, and all proclaimed that they planned to make it at home and for family events like barbeques. The workshop exposed the adults to a new, affordable, and healthier way of eating a common vegetable distributed by the Food Bank and encouraged lasting change to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables and prevent chronic disease.

The workshops are introducing Food Bank customers to healthy food preparation so that they can make healthy food choices on a budget. The workshops should be expanded, perhaps by recruiting more interns from local universities or by training consumers as peer educators, so that healthy eating can become a reality for even more Food Bank clients.

For more information, please contact Bridget Galvan at bgalvan@accfb.org.

Farm to Family

In addition to making sure food is distributed to hungry and food insecure households, food banks in California are also taking steps to insure the food that is distributed is increasingly healthier. Many food banks are participating in food distributions that provide low-income households with fresh produce. For example, The California Association of Food Bank's (CAFB) Farm to Family program and California Emergency Foodlink's Donate Don't Dump have developed statewide produce networks that distribute fresh and nutritious produce to needy California families who live at or below the poverty line. Farm to Family acquires fresh produce directly from growers and packers and delivers, with the help of California Emergency Food Link, the following day to food banks all across the state. Farm to Family will distribute approximately 60 million pounds of produce in 2008. In some cases, food banks have mobile pantries and mobile produce distributions that take food, including fresh fruits and vegetables, to where the people who need that food are located.

Fourteen food banks are incorporating a variety of education strategies into their activities for clients and in some cases for their donors and boards, regarding healthy food and healthy lifestyle options.

CAFB has ongoing challenges to provide adequate program support under Nutrition Education due to the great amount of time needed for contractor compliance and tracking and the relatively small amount of funding we receive to do both this and program support.

The agencies participating in CAFB's demonstration project employ a wide range of nutrition education strategies at food distributions and in the communities they serve. From popular education skits engaging women standing in a produce distribution line to providing education materials to seniors at "brown bag" food distributions, food bank clients are being exposed to the importance of healthy diet and physical activity.

CAFB has continued to increase and improve our fiscal and programmatic monitoring and tracking. We successfully negotiated an increase in our nutrition education subcontractor – adding four former local food nutrition education contractors so that they can continue their great work. This will allow us in federal fiscal year 2008-09 to staff more nutrition education work with an experienced program manager who has been with CAFB for some time, Terry Garner.

The food banks and local agencies participating in CAFB's nutrition education program provide their clients with a tremendous range of nutrition education opportunities. Commitment, skill, and enthusiasm are truly impressive and evident among participating food bank staff. For food banks, and their member agencies, the importance of healthy eating and physical activity are issues of growing concern and priority.

CAFB and its member agencies represent a strong, coordinated, and large scale infrastructure with tremendous outreach to low-income residents' ideal for achieving the *Network for a Healthy California's (Network)* and Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) goals. Through non-FSNE funding and strategic partnerships, CAFB has also greatly increased food stamp clients' access to fresh produce which, of course, reinforces and supports their FSNE-funded education efforts. CAFB and the *Network* should continue to work together to identify specific trainings, materials, systems changes as well as collaborations with other *Network* contractors that will further support CAFB member agencies efforts and success.

CAFB is looking toward the publication of the Nutrition Education Case Study for food banks and the Produce Distribution Nutrition Education Curriculum to enable CAFB to increase our support for our contractors and improve the outcome of their work. Additionally, CAFB will be preparing an outcome evaluation strategy with the *Network* to analyze the long and short-term outcomes of providing nutrition education at produce distributions.

For more information, please contact Jessica Bartholow at Jessica@cafoodbanks.org.

A Family Approach to Adding Fruits and Vegetables to Meals

The challenge we have in our farm worker population is having our clients, who pick and harvest California fruits and vegetables, actually prepare and serve them to their families.

We recently were working with a patient who came to our clinic for information regarding how to help control her oldest child from gaining weight so quickly. She was very concerned due to a family history of diabetes and hyperlipidemia.

We reviewed a healthy children's menu planner which included an explanation of MyPyramid and portion control of meals and healthy snacks as well as the importance of regular physical activity.

Upon close examination of the food frequency assessment form, we realized that the family was not eating the daily recommended amount of vegetables and fruits. The parent stated that she did not know how to prepare vegetables that her family would enjoy and asked for ideas on how to increase the family's fruit and vegetable consumption.

We gave the patient a recipe book that was written in Spanish entitled "Everyday Healthy Meals" that utilizes culturally specific foods that her family could prepare together as well as a children's menu planner and exercise book.

The patient returned two weeks later with her children and was so happy with the progress that they have made. They were able to incorporate fresh fruits and vegetables into their daily diets and reduced the consumption of high calorie snack food items. With the money they saved in purchasing processed and fast food items, they were able to purchase more healthy foods and have quality family time chopping and preparing their meals together. The children lost an average of two pounds each since their last visit and were taking walks and riding bikes in the evenings.

We plan to continue contact with the family having monthly follow up appointments to check on progress and to help with meal planning and low fat cooking techniques.

For more information, please contact Cynthia Peshek at cpeshek@cvhnclinics.org.

Seniors Living Healthy

The El Modena Family Resource Center located in the City of Orange provides residents with many programs and services. In fact, some of these programs are targeted towards seniors including the Senior Lunch program which provides seniors with a nutritious lunch daily. However, some seniors will bring their own lunch which at times is unhealthy because they do not like the lunch that is being served.

During this contract year, staff was able to offer an eight-week senior nutrition education program during their Senior Lunch program. One of the challenges staff encountered was the seniors thinking pattern of not understanding the importance of eating healthy. Staff had to modify the curriculum to make it appealing to the seniors.

This program was successful in educating seniors about the benefits of eating healthy. In fact, staff conducted pre and post surveys and the results showed that at the end of the program, the seniors had increased their knowledge about eating healthy.

Linking tools that were culturally appropriate for these seniors made it possible for this program to be successful. In fact, this was seen as the seniors finished watching the video “El amor se conquista por la comida” (novela from the Latino Toolbox) which emphasizes the importance of eating healthy and the consequence of bad eating habits. Senior commented to staff how they finally understood what she was trying to teach them.

Our next steps will include continuing to provide the seniors with additional resources and information on healthy eating.

For more information, please contact Connie En at cen@capoc.org.

Community Food Bank
Contract #: 07-65357

Community Food Bank Success Story

One of our challenges has been expanding into Madera County because the community leaders are hesitant to let us come into the community to provide our services.

Sitting down one-on-one with the right community leaders in Madera and explaining the types of services and programs we have to offer to them has had an overwhelming response. We are currently in the process of working to form collaborations with senior and teen centers, and low-income housing in the area. Once they have the time to review our programs, they cannot deny the benefits this will have to the members of their community. Also, this introduction into the community is a good springboard for agency development in an area that needs food pantries.

We will be able to serve a larger portion of the population and also have access to more rural areas in this community that we might not have previously had access to. We will be developing a strong relationship with the community that we are starting to serve, and develop more agencies to provide help to the food insecure population.

We plan to expand our contact list in Madera County through the contacts we have already made by networking.

For more information, please contact Dennis Darnell at dennis@maderafoodbank.org.

Farmers' Market Nutrition Education and Promotion Project

While many farmers' markets have started to accept electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards since paper food stamps were eliminated in 2003, many food stamp recipients are not aware that they can purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at the farmers' market with their EBT card. Consequently, many residents of Food Stamp Nutrition Education-eligible neighborhoods do not eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables daily.

The EBT Farmers' Market Nutrition Education and Promotion Project has assisted 34 eligible farmers' markets that accept EBT to promote nutrition and EBT redemption at these farmers' markets. The Project designed and distributed posters and flyers throughout the community, including through direct mailings from school districts via school lunch application packets, and organized health fairs and taste tests at farmers' markets. The project has also conducted outreach at other local health-focused community events and afterschool programs. Project staff assisted some markets in distributing promotional items throughout the community, and helped farmers' market managers identify locations in the community frequented by food stamp recipients, including libraries, community centers, child care programs, Women, Infants, Children (WIC) offices, and health clinics. The EBT farmers' market project also collaborated with other local organizations and agencies in order to create partnerships in nutrition education and outreach through EBT farmers' markets, resulting in greater outreach efforts and connections. Partners included food banks, school districts, *Network for a Healthy California* regional offices, local public health departments, WIC, and food stamp offices, and nonprofit organizations.

The efforts of the EBT Project have resulted in greater awareness of the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets that accept EBT, as illustrated through higher EBT redemption rates at EBT farmers' markets and indicated in results of our Project surveys. It has also resulted in greater awareness of the long-term health benefits of increased fruit and vegetable consumption. For example, the Project recently received this feedback from Sacramento's Del Paso Heights Farmers' Market: "The Project was a huge support to establishing increased EBT use at our farmers' market. The educational and promotional support from the Ecology Center was instrumental in expanding awareness of our market and increasing access of healthy, fresh, locally grown produce. The Project is truly unique in the support it lends. As a farmers' market Manager of a market serving a low-income neighborhood, I would be very disappointed to see this project not continue."

The work of the EBT Project is not complete. EBT farmers' market and nutrition promotions must be consistent over time in order to have a lasting and far-reaching impact. We need to continue working with the farmers' markets we have already started working with, increase the number of eligible farmers' markets that we work with, and track new farmers' markets that accept EBT to introduce them to the program. We also plan on making the many valuable resources available through our website more known to those who can benefit from those resources.

For more information, please contact Martin Bourque at martin@ecologycenter.org.

Ecology Center
Contract #: 06-55105

Farm Fresh Choice “Fast Food Fools!”

Often times, in our community the youth are so bombarded with “fast” and processed packaged foods that they fail to appreciate the simple, naturally grown foods that are available. Additionally, they are unaware that the “fast” foods lack vital nutrients and may contribute to adverse health effects. Farm Fresh Choice is committed to changing that reality.

Through the development of a new activity called “Fast Food Fools!” community youth are invited to take a closer look at the fast food around them and compare the nutritional value thereof. Moreover, this interactive process allows them to redesign and envision a healthy community.

Farm Fresh Choice is presenting this concept at the various after-school facilities and area high schools. This activity, in conjunction with sharing fresh and prepared food samples, recipes, tips and ideas is encouraging our youth to eat less junk foods and they are choosing to eat more fruit and vegetables as witnessed by staff at the various sites and personal testimonies.

As we continue the valuable work of Farm Fresh Choice, we see that the youth in our community are eating more fresh fruit and vegetables than ever before. It is interesting to see young people acting as ambassadors of good health, influencing their friends and family. Additionally, they are learning that they can avoid many of the adverse health conditions experienced by many in their community through greater consumption of fresh foods.

Farm Fresh Choice will continue to creatively provide nutrition education classes and presentations at the sites and area schools. It is important that we deepen our connection to the community we serve

For more information, please contact Hunia Bradley at hunia@ecologycenter.org.

Building Strong Partnerships

Finding time to talk with one another about program activities is a continual challenge for nutrition education providers. Each program works within its own “silo,” although we work with the same populations and share similar goals. The hubbub of providing events, classes, and interactions creates communication challenges.

The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano participates in two planning groups that bring together providers from a variety of organizations receiving funding from the United States Department of Agriculture to provide food support and nutrition education to low-income populations. For the past six years, the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano has staffed and convened the Food and Nutrition Policy Consortium in Contra Costa County. This group of providers includes Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Community Wellness, the Contra Costa Child Care Council, representatives from the Food Stamp Program Employment and Human Services administration, representatives from school districts, staff of elected officials, the Food Bank, and interested community members. We meet every two months, and we learn about program changes as well as explore issues like the Farm Bill reauthorization in depth. In Solano County, the Food Bank participates in a planning group called the Food and Nutrition Network of Solano County which initiates joint actions such as trainings, mailings, and events to expand nutrition education and food stamp outreach in Solano County. By coordinating our messaging and jointly planning events, we are able to deliver service more effectively and take advantage of our combined knowledge of what is happening in the county among low-income populations.

These meetings provide excellent networking opportunities, in addition to timely information exchange. Because we are all serving a similar demographic, we can consider coordinated responses. If we hear about new legislation or regulations, we can ask the person from the organization that will be charged with implementation. For example, the Food Bank is hearing about the elements of nutrition education that will change at the WIC offices next spring as they get ready to implement the new WIC nutrition package. Since the Food Bank serves WIC families as their children get older, this information helps us keep our Food for Children program in line with WIC.

We will discontinue providing fruit juice and replace it with fresh fruits and vegetables. Coordinated messaging amplifies the impact of the nutrition education intervention. As another example, we have partnered with Community Wellness for the past two years to supply apples for the walkers at the schools that are participating in Walk to School day. We are able to provide resources for our partners at no cost to the *Network for a Healthy California*.

We will continue to meet regularly with our partners in both counties and find ways to augment our efforts through collaboration.

For more information, please contact Barbara Stanley at bstanley@foodbankccs.org.

Nutrition and Cooking Classes: A Recipe for Cooking Confidence

This year we developed several new partnerships to bring nutrition and cooking classes to organizations whose clients were interested in learning more about healthy eating and cooking techniques. One of the partnerships we are especially proud of is with Arcata House, a transitional housing organization with three sites in Arcata, CA. Food for People worked with Arcata House to complement their existing life skills classes with nutrition and cooking classes that promote fruits and vegetables, teach cooking and nutrition skills, and instill confidence to test out recipes in the *Network for a Healthy California's (Network) "Everyday Healthy Meals"* cookbook.

According to a survey and focus group conducted by Arcata House, residents revealed a number of barriers to eating fresh fruits and vegetables. Some of them include: (1) fresh fruits and vegetables are too expensive (2) difficulty getting children to eat fruits and vegetables (3) unfamiliar cooking terms and ingredients in recipes (4) unfamiliar with cooking from scratch or eating as a family. Taking these barriers into account, we put together an in-depth nutrition and cooking class to help build skills for healthy living and eating.

During the first half of each class, we reviewed the goals of each food group within MyPyramid. We discussed ways to find the best prices on items like fruits and vegetables, for instance by choosing canned, frozen, and dried options. We discussed many facts and tips such as the importance of varying the colors of fruits and vegetables we eat and making sure at least half of one's daily intake of grains is from whole wheat or whole grain sources. We went over the tiny segment of the MyPyramid set aside for the foods we want to limit or avoid, pointing out the various way these items are hidden in an ingredients label.

As a group, we practiced critical skills by analyzing the nutrition facts labels of various foods and beverages to figure out which ones help us meet our nutrition needs for the day. For example, participants learned how to use the percent daily value column to determine whether a nutrient is high or low for one serving and whether that nutrient is something we want to eat more of or limit. We analyzed nutrition facts labels for serving size and servings per container to learn about portion size and multiplying nutrition facts information by how many servings we end up consuming. Participants also learned how to convert grams of sugar on a nutrition facts label into teaspoons in order to visualize how much sugar they or their children eat or drink throughout the day.

In the second portion of each class, Food for People's volunteer professional chef taught participants how to make several recipes from the *Network's "Everyday Healthy Meals"* cookbook. We chose recipes that incorporated both in-season produce and food bank commodities available in the current month's food box.

Some of the recipes used include a zucchini sauté, stuffed bell peppers, and tuna apple salad made with a simple homemade salad dressing.

Participants learned new cooking skills and tidbits of cooking information, shared stories and recipes with the group, and enjoyed asking the chef for professional cooking tips and tricks. When we sat down at the dining room table to eat as a group, some of the parents pointed out that their children had never liked the vegetables we cooked with until trying it that day at the class. We left class participants with enough tools and fresh vegetables to try the recipes again and they were excited to try using those vegetables in other ways we had discussed during class.

This success story has lasting impact and cultivated many positive changes for those involved. For most class participants, having exposure to the points covered during both portions of the class was life changing. Armed with new evaluation tools, house residents were inspired to go through their food cabinets to read and evaluate nutrition facts labels and examine their foods in a totally different way. Many had never been exposed to home-cooked meals or cooking from scratch. Parents learned that they should not give up on fruits and vegetables based on their children's dislikes and that they should continue to offer them, perhaps in new ways. It was clear that participants were interested and impressed with the new tools they were learning to navigate through their world of eating, whether it was label reading, learning about inexpensive ways to eat healthy, or understanding how many times children need to try a fruit or vegetable before deciding if they like it. Overall, our cooking classes aim to build confidence to use and stretch the basic foods one has on hand and to use them in a healthy way. We will continue to offer these classes and grow them to cover topics that address our participants' needs.

For more information, please contact Deborah Waxman at dwaxman@foodforpeople.org.

FOOD Share
Contract #: 07-65357

Think Your Drink

Educating children to eat right is a major challenge secondary to media influence, poor role models, poorly balanced school meals, and peer pressure.

After educating five third grade classes at Portola Elementary School about the differences between 100% juice and juice drinks (containing zero percent juice), students stopped me days later in the cafeteria to report consuming fruit drinks and sodas less often on a daily basis!

Clearly, nutrition education demonstrations are beneficial to school children in that they introduce and reinforce healthy eating, and ultimately lead to positive behavior changes.

Ongoing nutrition education demonstrations, taste-testing, and hands-on cooking and food preparation activities are necessary and important in order for children to feel confident and prepared when choosing healthy foods.

For more information, please contact Jewel Pedi at jpedi@foodshare.com.

Mobile Food Pantries

Calaveras County is a small rural county with a population of 42,000. HRC clients are spread out over a large and diverse topographical area. A good deal of this is very rural with backcountry road conditions. It is sometimes difficult to navigate the roads in the winter months. This can be a challenge for our clients as well as for the food bank. The cost of living is high and the pay scale is lower than in most areas. Calaveras County is a recreational area and also has a lot of vacation homes. Many of the jobs are in the service industry and are seasonal. The state of the economy is also a huge factor at this time here in Calaveras, as it is in all areas of the world. As a result of this our challenges are many, our clients are increasing in number and their needs are growing at a rapid pace.

This year we continued to reach many families with our Mobile Food Pantries. The Produce Distribution is a favorite of our clients. It is a social event as well as a place where they plan and talk about how they can and prepare their fruits and vegetables. It is great to see the younger generation learning how to store food for their families. The Produce Distribution continues to be an ongoing venue that is attracting other partners and visitors from other programs in the county. The fact that we are in the Cal-Works parking lot and the county workers are there is really wonderful for all of us and so beneficial to the clients.

The food pantries in the area continue to grow stronger and work well with us. The high cost of traveling and living in general has made our food pantries even more valuable to us and to our community as a whole. We are working with the food pantries to have cooking demonstrations, taste testing, trainings on food safety, workplace safety, food stamp outreach and having healthy, nutritious food available and ways to prepare it. We have been able to get produce on a weekly basis this year from a variety of sources. This has given us the opportunity to add fresh produce to our client's family meals. The produce is given out at the mobile pantries, Women, Infants, and Children sites, community food pantries, as well as, the main food bank office's direct distribution. Instructions on cooking and recipes are given out with the produce.

The fact that more produce is being given out means the community is eating healthier and the families are stronger and better for it. The fact that we are hearing about the people canning the food and are given samples of it is a great example of how people's lives are being enriched. We are reaching more people by strengthening our pantries, expanding on some interventions that are already available. We are encouraging and making it possible for our community to make healthy changes in their diets by providing the food and giving them the knowledge and skills on how to prepare it.

We are getting closer to making our move to the new facility. This will be a reality in the next few months. The larger space will allow for more training, cooking demonstrations, nutrition education classes, gardening and more storage space for food and miscellaneous items. There will be a strong emphasis on our pantries in the new program year. We will be doing more trainings and nutrition education on a regular basis at these sites. We are fortunate to have some very strong and willing partners in this area and we look forward to empowering them and thus enriching the surrounding community as a whole.

For more information, please contact Jessica Bartholow at Jessica@cafoodbanks.org.

Imperial Valley Food Bank
Contract #: 07-65357

Crack Cultural Barriers—Bring Healthy Nutrition to Our Community

In our second year of nutrition education, we observe that the population is more willing to change their eating habits and eat more fruits and vegetables. But we still have some challenges when we try to introduce more physical activity for seniors.

Our efforts to provide information about good and healthy nutrition to our community are growing strong. Our community is asking for more information (handouts) on benefits of fruits and vegetables. In our activities at the supermarket, we can observe that our suggestions to add non fat items to their shopping are being taking in consideration. The afterschool programs are introducing more fruits and vegetables in their snacks and also they are implementing stretching exercises before children start homework.

Our program is making a strong impact in our community. One example is the increased number of phone calls to our Food Bank asking for handouts regarding benefits of fruits and vegetables. Also every time we have a table event in one of our health fairs, residents collect materials that help them on their selection of healthy foods when they shop, how to cook and store foods to avoid illness like e-coli or flu, some of the most common illnesses our low-income families and seniors suffer from.

With the small but strong success of our program, our next step will be the introduction of nutrition education in our church youth groups and service groups. Also we would like to present our information to first time food stamp recipients. If we suggest food selection from the beginning, they will benefit by stretching their food stamp money and buy what they need, instead of trying to buy food items that are not allowed by the Food Stamp Program.

For more information, please contact Jessica Bartholow at Jessica@cafoodbanks.org.

Redwood Empire Food Bank (REFB)
Contract #: 07-65357

The Megan Furth Harvest Pantry Fights Anemia while Feeding Kids

There are alarmingly high rates of iron-deficiency anemia amongst young children in Sonoma County. In 2005, only four other counties in California had higher rates. Anemia is also found at a significantly higher rate in Hispanic children than in white, non-Hispanic children. One of the contributing factors is believed to be inadequate intake of foods with good sources of iron and over consumption of dairy products. The challenge is to inform this population of the long-term consequences of childhood anemia, educate families on how to provide enough iron-rich foods for their children, present information on appropriate milk consumption, and distribute healthy fruits and vegetables to low-income people with children at risk of anemia.

The Megan Furth Harvest Pantry began in 2005 and today is serving over 525 families with 620 children each and every week in ten low-income neighborhoods. At each distribution, recipients receive an average of 27 pounds of fresh produce and a ten minute lesson on a variety of topics. Our nutrition education plan continuously reinforces the need for mothers to provide iron-rich foods for their children, and explains how much and what kind of milk a child needs from birth to teenage years. A variety of other topics are explored including: Sugar and Its Many Disguises; More Exercise, less TV; Fruits, Vegetables and Vitamins; How to Cure and Use a Cast Iron Skillet and many more.

The Harvest Pantry has had great success educating families in the community. The Harvest Pantry Coordinator has worked hard to keep milk consumption among recipients at recommended levels, increase fruit and vegetable consumption and provide updated knowledge on how to include more iron into a child's diet. As word of the Harvest Pantry has spread, community clinics and nurses have recommended patients with nutrition issues to the pantry. Also, other organizations with important health messages have used the Harvest Pantry as a vehicle to educate and inspire.

The Harvest Pantry will continue to find new curriculum and ways to increase good nutrition among its recipients. REFB is also exploring possible expansion through grant funding.

For more information, please contact Jessica Bartholow at Jessica@cafoodbanks.org.

Safety First

The challenge for Second Harvest Food Bank is to meet the needs of hungry children and families in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. Our 2005 hunger analysis indicated that one of the cities in our service area with the greatest unmet need for food assistance was Daly City. In 2007, our Food Bank took several steps to help remedy this problem. By providing nutritious food and nutrition education, our Food Bank began work to improve the health of these Daly City children. Second Harvest began providing the children of the DeLue Boys and Girls Club of Daly City with nutritious and easy to prepare food to take home on weekends and over school vacations when other resources such as free or reduced cost school lunches are not available. This is the mission of Second Harvest Food Bank's Backpack Program, renamed "Kids NOW" (Nutrition On Weekends). Kids NOW links with Second Harvest Food Bank's Produce Mobile, a refrigerated truck that brings high-quality fresh fruits and vegetables to the neighborhood each month. All food is provided free of charge. Nutrition information targeting the children and their families was included with each distribution of Kids NOW and the Produce Mobile. To further encourage healthy eating, nutrition education, and cooking classes were provided through a partnership with Kaiser Permanente, Robertson Middle School, Daly City Parks and Recreation, Bayshore Advisory Council and the DeLue Boys and Girls Club. This project was called "Creating Healthy Families Across Generations."

In 2006, Creating Healthy Families Across Generations was commenced to improve individual nutrition knowledge and awareness of Daly City middle school children. For the past three years, students from the Daly City Robertson Middle School 6th grade class were provided nutrition education classes and then a smaller group met once a week for a cooking class at the DeLue Boys and Girls Club. Seven volunteer senior mentors, our Food Bank nutritionist, and a Registered Dietitian helped increase healthy eating behaviors and improve their understanding of how to make better food choices. These sessions also benefit the low-income senior mentors with nutrition information and generational exchange of ideas with the children. The elders were given a chance to enhance the curriculum. To enhance the interactive cooking classes, nutrition computer lab sessions were provided for groups of 15 students. Surveys and student focus groups indicated an increase in nutrition knowledge and the cooking classes encouraged positive behavior changes when making healthy food choices.

The goal of this program was to increase nutrition knowledge and skills in making healthy food choices. Children's surveys reported significant changed behaviors. Student pre and post testing established learning outcomes and confirmed that they are making better food choices. Parents were informed of the subject materials and the students engaged their parents and family members in making changes at home. Students described specific learning outcomes that included good eating habits and choosing healthy foods with details about fats, sugars, dairy, etc.

All the students responded in the focus groups and survey that the mentors were a positive influence on their learning.

The program is currently being evaluated. The program is very labor intensive and funding may not be sufficient to continue this model. Alternative methods of teaching and additional funding sources are being considered.

For more information, please contact Tami Cardenas at tcardenas@shfoodbank.com.

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENTS

City of Duarte Parks and Recreation Department
Contract #: 05-45506

A Parent Leader

Por La Vida is a nutrition education class taught in Spanish at a local elementary school with over 51 percent of the students receiving free and reduced priced lunches. The greatest challenge of the program is to recruit the parents for the class and to keep them engaged throughout the five week session.

In March 2008, Por La Vida was offered at Andres Duarte Elementary School. To assist in the recruitment and retention of parent participants, a parent who had taken the class the prior year was recruited.

One woman is a parent of a boy attending Andres Duarte Elementary School. In 2007, she participated in the Por La Vida program and in 2008 she was recruited to play a more active role in the program. She was a nurse in Mexico and already had an interest in health, nutrition, and disease prevention. She was the perfect choice of a parent who could assist in overcoming the challenges of the program.

This parent first became a parent leader by assisting with the recruitment of Spanish speaking parents for the class. Having been a former participant herself, she was able to share with parents the benefits of participating in the program. Once the class began, she was able to use her knowledge as a nurse and a parent to expand on some of the topics covered in class.

This year's Por La Vida program was very successful. We had more than enough parents enroll in the class and complete the ten hours of training. Also, at the end of the course, 100 percent of the parents stated that they planned to choose healthier foods to eat in the future.

This year's class was taught with assistance from the City of Hope National Medical Center. The staff at City of Hope was so impressed with this parent that they are looking into getting her a permanent position working at the City of Hope.

Also, her participation in Por La Vida was so successful, that she has been asked to assist again with the 2009 program.

The City of Duarte plans to continue to offer Por La Vida in the community. We are working on securing a site for the 2009 program and have received a commitment from this parent to assist with the program again.

For more information, please contact Donna Georgino at georginod@accessduarte.com.

Champions for Change

Having access to healthy food items and being physically active can be very difficult for the city's low-income target audience because food choices are limited and there are not enough safe places to be physically active.

In August 2008, the Department sponsored its 4th annual billboard and transit shelter marketing campaign encouraging city low-income residents to be a "*Champions for Change*" by eating fruits and vegetables and being physically active. Each poster featured community residents participating in our many nutrition education and physical activity programs. All billboards and transit shelter posters were strategically placed throughout the city in qualifying census tract areas.

The annual billboard and transit shelter health and wellness campaign has had a positive effect in the community. We have received positive feedback from featured participants and their family members as well as receiving several emails and calls from persons that have seen them driving to their various locations.

During the first week of the campaign the Department took time to conduct Man On the Street interviews with persons waiting at the bus stop to get their impression of the posters. The Department has also seen an increase in the number of people interested in our programs. Participants that were not featured in this year's campaign, participate in even more programs in the hopes of being in the next billboard and transit shelter campaign.

Our next step will be to use the same tactic in the community centers. We will place advertisements for our programs on the bulletin boards of our centers, featuring program participants in hopes of increased participation.

For more information, please contact Glenda Martin-Robinson at robinson_gl@ci.san-bernardino.ca.us.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Healthy Classroom Environment

As awareness of the childhood obesity epidemic increases, ABC Unified School District's *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* has encouraged teachers to create a healthy classroom environment for their students by increasing opportunities for fruit and vegetable consumption, as well as increasing physical activity. This message has been reinforced by the Superintendent, who has recognized the growing trend of childhood obesity in our District, and has introduced an initiative as part of his strategic plan, Healthy Students, Healthy Adults. Teachers felt particularly overwhelmed when a new State law indicated that only credentialed physical education (P.E.) teachers could teach P.E. to the students. The need for professional development to support teachers in this effort arose.

Teachers have begun to reconsider how they celebrate birthdays, holidays and other special occasions with their students. ABC USD's *Network* recognized this as an opportunity to provide nutrition education while introducing teachers to delicious and nutritious recipes. Teachers are often very busy and are looking for quick and simple ideas to use in their classrooms.

Teachers were given the opportunity to attend a Healthy Classroom Parties workshop during the school year, as well as during the summer. Teachers were reminded of the growing obesity epidemic and were encouraged not to celebrate with highly sugared drinks and foods of minimal nutritional value. They were also encouraged to teach nutrition while celebrating with food. Teachers had the opportunity to make recipes such as Pumpkin Dip, Monster Fingers, Fruit Bouquets, Sandwich on a Stick, Banana Hot Dog, and many more. Teachers who attended these trainings have indicated that they have learned a great deal from these trainings and hope to create a healthy classroom environment for their students.

In addition, teachers were also given the opportunity to attend training on integrating nutrition and physical activity within the school day, as many teachers did not feel comfortable teaching physical education. A partnership was formed with Los Angeles County Public Health Department, where the physical activity specialist introduced teachers to games from Sports4Kids, which required little to no sports equipment. The games also focused on engaging the entire class, not just a few players.

Teachers continually request professional development opportunities from the *Network* to help them promote nutrition and physical activity in the classroom. Many teachers have provided feedback indicating that they have implemented the new ideas into their classrooms, and they have been well received by the students.

In the upcoming school year, we plan to continue to provide professional development opportunities, such as SPARK, healthy cooking ideas, and other ways to promote nutrition and physical activity in the classroom.

For more information, please contact Dipa Shah at Dipa.Shah@abcusd.k12.ca.us.

Alhambra Unified School District Takes the Challenge

Everywhere you go, you can feel the presence of the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)*. School bulletins display student work; you can always find something related to healthy eating and see creative fruit drawings. If it is not on paper, you can most likely get a sampling of some fresh herbs or vegetables growing in the gardens. Teachers and students are making a conscientious effort to select healthier options and be active. Each year, promoting our programs becomes more and more challenging. Classroom teachers are up against time constraints and increased pressure to meet academic standards. As much as nutrition education is a segment of health standards, as well as many academic core curriculum connections, it is not a priority. Packaging the way nutrition education is delivered by making it creative and fun for the classroom makes nutrition education a more sellable product.

All of our elementary and high schools participate in the *Network* program. As a result of our programs and collaborative partnerships, we have received several recognitions and awards. Both Monterey Park and Alhambra city councils have presented us with recognitions and proclamations for many of our activities. In addition, we received the American Cancer Society's Community Partnership Award for community support and partnership, as well as the Blue Cross Anthem Community Service Award, for Garfield Schools' Nutrition Advisory Council. Three of our *Network* schools (Monterey Highlands, Repetto, and Ynez Elementary Schools) received the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Bronze Award.

This past year, our impact evaluation was measuring a change in fruit and vegetable consumption with parent nutrition education interventions. We were able to show an increase in knowledge and behavior change from providing interventions which included; MyPyramid, meal planning, reading labels, strategies for making healthier choices, physical activity, the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables, food demonstration and sampling. To take it to another level, the last session involved physical activity for parents as they walked to a local supermarket for a scavenger hunt. Parents left us with a lasting impression, as they shared how they have made changes in their eating habits and/or shopping to include more fruits and vegetables in their family meals.

I think everyone who takes part in the *Network* program, administrators, teachers, students, and parents are all "Champions for Change." We have made a big leap forward for the health of our community. We still need to continue by communicating our messages and reinforcing the importance of "Eat healthy, Be Active" to continue our momentum.

For more information, please contact Judy Huffaker at huffaker_judy@alhambra.k12.ca.us.

Pablo, the Nutritious Puppeteer

“Pablo” attends elementary school in a low-income district in Salinas. He lives with his mom in a rental home. They do not own a car so they cannot shop around for the better-priced fruits and vegetables.

However, “Pablo” was in the nutrition education classes and gathered nutritious information to share with his mom. Nutrition lessons included: nutrition fact label reading, knowing how to read and figure out how much sugar, fat, calories, and nutrients are in the foods they are eating. “Pablo” also learned the importance of physical activity by checking his heartbeats per minute before and after exercising. A puppet named “Frijolito,” was the one that introduced the nutrition lessons, which gained the focus and attention of everyone, especially “Pablo.”

“Pablo” created his own puppet and would share the nutrition information from class with his mom through the puppet. His mom said that “Pablo” is more conscious of what he eats for snacks now. He eats less hot, puffed cheese snacks and more whole fruit. At recess time he takes a piece of fruit for a snack. The mom says that she now walks to the flea market on weekends and buys the less costly fruits and vegetables for the week. She has noticed a difference in her own energy level also, now that she eats more fruits and vegetables. The walking has helped to lose a little bit of weight. She is happy to see the enthusiasm her son has for learning about what he eats.

“Pablo” is an active advocate for eating healthy snacks at school. “Pablo” wants to use his puppet at school, on closed circuit television, to share nutrition information from Harvest of the Month. His mom has agreed to help out in the school garden to continue promoting healthy eating through the garden. More students will be exposed to healthy eating by their peers and community members.

For more information, please contact Petra Martinez at Petra.martinez@alisal.org.

Impacting Student's for the Long Haul: Jasmine's Return

In a 2007 Berkeley Health Status Report, the Public Health Division reported that approximately 14 percent of 0-4 year olds and 28.6 percent of 5-19 year olds were obese in 2006 and 2007. During this period, over 2,200 Berkeley children lived in poverty, with 30 percent of the African-American children living below poverty level. Children and families living in Berkeley face barriers that can make choosing healthy foods a challenge. Often, low-income residents lack access to fruits and vegetables, public school districts find themselves cutting physical education due to limited budgets, and fast food and soda industries market heavily to school-age children. To help turn this tide, Berkeley Unified School District's (BUSD) *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* program has remained steadfast in its commitment to providing low-income students and families with engaging nutrition education.

Through monthly hands-on garden and cooking-based nutrition education classes, students at *Network*-eligible schools learn about where their food comes from and how to cook healthy meals. Parents and students learn fun ways to make healthy choices through annual events such as harvest fairs, farmers' market booths, and parent cooking classes. In collaboration with Nutrition Services, the *Network* promotes a Harvest of the Month program, featuring monthly seasonal recipes taught in the cooking classes and offered weekly on the school lunch menu.

As a result of BUSD's *Network* program, students are learning first hand how to prepare healthy meals and the importance of eating fruits and vegetables. At Rosa Parks Elementary, located in West Berkeley, our *Network* Cooking Instructor shared a success story about one of her students named Jasmine. As a kindergartener many years ago, Jasmine was labeled an at-risk student, struggling in her class work. The Cooking Instructor recalled that Jasmine took special interest in the cooking nutrition education classes often asking for additional recipes on how to make healthy dishes. Soon she became a "Junior Chef" in the class, often assisting the teacher. Jasmine participated in cooking class from K-5 and then went on to Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School. This past year, as a 6th grader, Jasmine showed up at one of Rosa Parks' *Network* afterschool cooking class and shared with the Cooking Instructor how important the class had been to her throughout her elementary years. She talked about how much she loved cooking healthy dishes at home and felt a need to give back to the younger students. With a big smile on her face, Jasmine asked if she could volunteer as a Cooking Assistant at Rosa Parks' Afterschool Cooking classes and has been serving as a mentor ever since.

Jasmine's story reminds us of the deeper impacts that experiential nutrition education can have on students' lifestyles over the long haul. BUSD's *Network* program is committed to developing a sustainable model so that we can ensure such hands-on learning opportunities to Berkeley's students for years to come.

We hope that the United States Department of Agriculture will continue to support this critical work that has had such positive impacts on students and their families.

For more information, please contact Melanie Okamoto at Melanie_Okamoto@berkeley.k12.ca.us.

Calistoga Joint Unified School District
Contract #: 05-45502

The Great Broccoli Debate

My name is Amy Braddock and I have been a part of the Nutrition Education Program at the Calistoga Elementary School for two years. Our student population is about 80 percent Latino. Most of our students have a diet high in grains and not enough colorful fruits and vegetables. Our kids enjoy learning about "Eating the Color Way," but not all kids eat their vegetables and certainly not anything green.

In September 2007, we led a nutrition lesson focusing on colors for Grade 5 special education. At the end of the class, eight students planted a broccoli seed. The plants were kept in their classroom and the kids were responsible for taking care of them. When their "babies" were ready for our school garden, the kids were like proud parents as they tucked their plants in the soil. The students enjoyed the harvesting, preparation, and cooking. When it came time for eating, several students declared, "We will not eat green vegetables, we only like corn and carrots." After some encouragement, they agreed to try it only because it was of their own creation. All four of the kids loved the cruciferous vegetable.

Not a week goes by without being stopped and hearing a rundown of colorful fruits and vegetables consumed. We have reached so many kids and families through our Nutrition Program and Harvest of the Month promotion.

We have had tremendous success with our program through in-class and afterschool activities. Our achievement has been recognized by faculty, food service, principal, and the superintendent. These people have vowed to support and promote our program giving a chance for greater success. With more support, our program will reach more kids and more families learning to "Eat the Color Way."

For more information, please contact Joan Bruno at jbruno@calistoga.k12.ca.us.

Compton Unified School District (CUSD)
Contract #: 06-55081

Afterschool Programs Embrace Nutrition Education

Our Program has consistently been challenged with obtaining and maintaining participants for the impact evaluation. This year (2007-08), the focus was placed on the afterschool enrichment program where a *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* lead teacher was also serving as Afterschool Education and Safety Program (AESP) lead. The Impact evaluation was successfully completed at eight sites. During the 2006-07 school year nutrition education was requested in three afterschool programs. The Network was able to be utilized because the AESP received funds from the *Network*. The programs are also supported by the Center for Collaborative Solutions (CCS).

The impact evaluation was featured at eight sites for a period of ten weeks. Students participated in nutrition education following the United States Department of Agriculture, "Empowering Youth" Program featuring food demonstrations from the "Everyday Healthy Meals" Cookbook. Program teachers told others about the great nutrition program. Afterschool coordinators reported at their monthly meetings about the success, involvement, and participation rate on nutrition/cooking days. As a result of the good reports, two schools joined the extended program which was requested at the end of the impact evaluation period until the end of the 2007-08 school year. Six of the eight impact sites extended nutrition education until the end of the school year. Three of the sites, Dickison, Kennedy, and Roosevelt held an afterschool program culminating event which included students preparing a recipe for their parents and offering nutrition literature.

The Compton AESP invested in five cooking carts, which were featured at the CCS Open House. The afterschool program plans to hire cafeteria staff to provide food demonstrations during weekly nutrition education time/cooking class. The partnership with the AESP includes weekly cooking demonstrations at 13 sites as well as school site gardens for the fall and spring.

Nutrition education combined with healthy taste tests is contagious among our students and staff. The value of nutrition education is evident in the willingness of outside programs to embrace and promote nutrition. Educators value the standard based skills students develop while learning nutrition and healthy lifestyles. Students and parents enjoy the enrichment, and will taste anything they make themselves.

Together with AESP, we plan to incorporate nutrition education inside and outside the classroom. AESP is featured in all CUSD schools. The next step is to maintain the cooking and gardening components in the current 13 and bring on board at least four more schools in the spring.

Students participating in AESP incorporate the Harvest of the Month using workbooks created during the 2006-07 year.

Compton plans to promote nutrition education and healthy eating in areas where it is not the norm, and support where it has become the norm.

For more information, please contact Tracie Thomas at trthomas@compton.k12.ca.us.

The Parent Trap

One of the many challenges we continue to face is trying to get the nutrition message home to the parents and families of our students. We have made great strides in educating our students about the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables and being physically active over the past eight years and have had a very successful program in place with Harvest of the Month (HOTM) as our staple and gardens used as outdoor classrooms. Our students are fruit and vegetable savvy, however, getting that message home and making an impact with our families continues to be a priority. Our challenge continues to be: “How do we get the message home?” And, “How do we know we are being successful?” “How do we trap our parents?”

With our foundations set in the classroom with the students and staff, the next step was to find a way to reinforce the messages with families/parents. One way was to provide the HOTM Family Newsletter to each school site and encourage the school administrators to insert it in their monthly parent newsletters. This has been a very successful way for us to get the HOTM message home. Another subtle change that has been made stems around the scheduling of our lessons in the classrooms, especially the younger students who have parents that pick them up. Our Nutrition Education Specialist noticed that when she scheduled her lessons to end around the same time parents came to pick up their student, the children’s exuberance was so apparent and filtered to the parents. Preschoolers were saying “Pumpkin Smoothie!” and parents would taste their child’s sample and the connection would be made. We learned later that many parents had requested the recipe and we were able to provide it to them. Trapped! Additionally, this past year we have made HOTM the theme at all our parent events such as Back to School nights, Open Houses, mini farmers’ markets, etc. No matter the time of year the event takes place, we feature the same fruit or vegetable that we are celebrating in the classrooms that month. This way, parents and family members are receiving the same information that our students are with regard to nutrition facts, interesting facts, cooking, taste testing, history, etc. Trapped! Finally, one anecdote we would like to share with you involves one of our school board members. He stopped in our office and shared with us that he had taken his grandchildren to the store to buy them pumpkins for Halloween. Instead of getting excited about the pumpkins, the grandchildren proceeded to tell their grandfather about the other kinds of winter squash and how he could prepare them, step-by-step. These grandchildren are students at one of our schools that receive HOTM and classroom lessons by our nutrition educators. Trapped!

With our continuing efforts we are optimistic that we can make an impact with our families. By reinforcing and communicating the HOTM with families at school and community events in addition to our students sharing their experiences in the classroom and gardens with their families, we are confident that we can help families make that connection and share the HOTM experience on a regular basis.

More and more we are hearing from parents that their children share their fruit or vegetable experience with them at home. With our community being so small, it is not unusual to run into students and their families during the weekend or in the evening and students many times introduce us to their parents as “the nutrition lady.” This allows us to hear personal stories about their children’s experiences, so we know that we are reaching many families through our program.

We have a lot more work to do with regard to getting the message home to our families. Our work has just begun. This next year we are planning on attending more events and functions where we can reach/trap parents. School Site Council Meetings are a great way to reach parents as they make up one-half of the councils. Attending Back to School and Open House events as well as school specific events are a priority as well. District Parent Education Meetings (Title I) are being planned and we are asking to be a part of that series. Nutrition educators are looking at opportunities to schedule lessons in the pre-school and lower grades towards the end of the day when parents are likely to stop in to pick up their child. We continue to provide HOTM Family Newsletters to school sites for inclusion in their parent newsletters. Finally, we are looking to include more opportunities to communicate and educate families about the importance of fruits and vegetables and being physically active by hosting more retail events in our community.

For more information, please contact Deborah Kravitz at dkravitz@delnorte.k12.ca.us.

Downey Unified School District
Contract #: 07-65317

Workbooks Boost HOTM Teacher Participation

Encouraging teachers to promote and participate in our Harvest of the Month (HOTM) program has been our priority. Since teachers often comment that it is difficult to find time to teach nutrition, we developed six grade-level, standards-based HOTM student workbooks. These workbooks are an extremely successful resource for incorporating our HOTM program into the classroom. However, the success of our workbooks here at Downey is not the end of the story.

Because of the success of these workbooks, we were asked to share them at a Shaping Health as Partners in Education (SHAPE) meeting with other districts. After seeing the workbooks, other districts wanted to tap into this dynamic resource. Now, these workbooks are on the Los Angeles Collaborative website for all *Network for a Healthy California* districts. We know they are being utilized by other districts as our printer in Downey has had over 100,000 orders for these workbooks throughout California. And that is just one local printer.

Annually we do a teacher evaluation asking how our HOTM program has impacted students. Reading the results of this evaluation is the most encouraging part of the contract year. Responses such as students are eating more fruit and vegetables, bringing more produce for snacks, and requesting more produce at school parties are just a few of the positive comments we have received from teachers.

We will continue to produce the HOTM workbooks with the goal of improving the connection to the new state health standards. We also will continue to work with other school districts to help make these workbooks as dynamic and effective as possible.

For more information, please contact Colleen Anderson at cmanderson@dusd.net.

Harvest of the Month Expansion

For the past three years, Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) classrooms have been receiving Harvest of the Month (HOTM) produce for taste testing and exploring. The challenge was that teachers were ready to do more with the produce than just taste. The other challenge was that this great program was only reaching the FSNE students in the district and all children can benefit by this program.

One of our activities is for students to make a non-cooking recipe using fruits or vegetables one time per school year. This year the students made a Broccoli Salad. Many teachers believed the students would not like the Broccoli Salad and were surprised to find that almost all the students liked raw broccoli. By helping to prepare the broccoli, the students were more willing to try it. The success of the cooking activity inspired us to adjust our HOTM program to incorporate more recipe based HOTM activities instead of just taste testing and it encouraged us to apply for additional funding in order to offer HOTM to non-FSNE students.

The HOTM program will now focus not only on tasting a fruit or vegetable, but on how to prepare the produce. Elementary teacher, Kathleen Ochoa said, "The kids enjoyed it very much even those who said they don't like broccoli!" When squash was the HOTM, one teacher wrote: "We cooked the squash today. It was delicious! A parent brought in the different types of squash and the kids had a great time making observations (and *observation* was our vocabulary word this week). As a result of the zucchini, we learned the difference between 'summer' and 'winter' squash. Also, the parent tasted the squash, and loved it. She said she had never thought she would like squash. THANKS so much. It was a valuable activity!"

Through Kaiser Permanente, we applied for a Healthy Eating Active Living grant. We received funds to provide produce to 350 additional classrooms for the 2008-09 school year. The grant will also pay for the duplication of the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* HOTM educator and student resources available on the harvestofthemonth.com website. During the 2008-09 school year, approximately 750 classrooms, equally approximately 17,250 students, (of which 400 classrooms are *Network*-funded) will receive produce, educator newsletters, and parent newsletters in order to increase their knowledge and acceptance of fruits and vegetables.

For more information, please contact Anne Gaffney at agaffney@egusd.net.

El Monte City School District Community Jog-a-Thon and Nutrition Fair

Although the *Network for a Healthy California* at the El Monte City School District (EMCSD) has been actively working with the community for several years at increasing awareness and consumption of fruits and vegetables and being physically active, we have faced some difficult challenges. In general, the large Latino community that resides in the area are faced with an environment with less than healthy food, few safe physical activity options and minimal discretionary income to purchase healthy foods which may sometimes be more costly. These obstacles create a challenge in meeting the dietary recommendations and an increase in overweight and obesity.

Despite the challenges previously described, the *Network for a Healthy California* (*Network*) has been successful in incorporating nutrition and physical activity into the EMCSD and the surrounding community environment. The real success here lies however in the fact that not only has the program impacted the individuals that receives the information provided but that a group of individuals is empowered to take the information and disseminate it to the community at large. The EMCSD Community Jog-a-thon and Nutrition Fair is a great example to illustrate this point.

This past year through our parent nutrition education program we identified a group of parents with leadership qualities that took the initiative to put together a community event to promote nutrition and physical activity to the EMCSD Community. The parents proudly took the planning upon themselves, with the guidance of *Network* staff, and put together a successful event. Community organizations as well as the City of El Monte participated to make this event a memorable one. The event consisted of nutrition promotion and physical activity booths at one of our school site's fields along with a three-mile family walk/run along the San Gabriel River Walkway. Participating booths included *Power Play!*, nutrition/physical activity challenges, Harvest of the Month taste testing with recipe samples, City of El Monte Recreation and Parks, and many more. The event was a triumph for our parents and they cannot wait to get started planning for this year's event.

More than 500 people joined us at this event from the EMCSD Community. Each participating student received a colorful medal and felt accomplished at the finish line. For the next couple of months before the end of the year constant stories and anecdotes were shared at parent and district meetings emphasizing the great event that had inspired different students, parents, or teachers to begin being more physically active or to begin making vegetable quesadillas at home.

This year we hope to replicate the EMCSD Community Jog-a-Thon and Nutrition Fair and establish it as an annual event to celebrate wellness in this community. Our goal is to reach at least ten percent of our district's families and to continue empowering community members to develop a passion to share health and wellness.

For more information, please contact Corina Ulloa at culloa@emcsd.org.

As Seen Through New Eyes

The Career Technical Education classes, students, and programs are being seen through new eyes. I am new to my position as Coordinator for the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)*. As I began my position, I met with teachers and students to determine what challenges we face. It became very clear to me that constant change in program management has diluted the message and purpose for our grant. Teachers need clear direction and support if they are to tackle the challenges of declining enrollment, underachieving students, and a need for supplies and materials. The focus this year has to be on instructional and materials support.

Being new to my role of coordinator for the *Network* grant has allowed me the opportunity to see students, programs, and teachers through a fresh perspective. In my role, I observe many classes and see a variety of instructional strategies. Every district has teachers who are willing to go above and beyond to educate, guide, nurture, and support their students. Duncan Polytechnical High School is lucky to have two such staff members. Elaine Wade is the teacher for Child Development and Education and Blake Packard teaches Home Economics Careers and Sociology for Living. Together they form a dynamic team, devoted to preparing their students for future success through supportive activities and lessons both in and out of the classroom. They are the sponsors for the Nutrition Club on campus that promotes healthy nutrition choices and an active lifestyle to students, staff, and parents. They make learning fun which keeps students engaged and involved. They do not have a foods lab on site, preparing for activities such as taste testing or promotional events takes on a new complexity for this team but through planning and good instruction they make it work. Together they build an enthusiasm for the topic of nutrition that is contagious and makes students want to be a part of the fun. The lesson learned is that healthy choices can be fun, and can involve students beyond the classroom.

While on Fresno High School's campus I made a point of stopping in the school cafeteria around the lunch hour. I was impressed by the *Network* and nutrition related materials on display in our school cafeteria, through the efforts of our Network Student Advocates and the site Food Services staff. Nutrition has made an impact in their instruction and with our Food Services staff. Every where I looked I could see the lasting impact our teachers and students have had on campus as well as the impact of recent legislation. Gone were the lines of students buying soda and chips from the single item line, instead students were making healthy choices and stopping to read the material posted on the walls and windows of the lunch line areas. Does it seem possible, that through our efforts and the efforts of other related nutrition campaigns that we now have young consumers who want to make healthy choices?

I have had our first *Network* meeting. It became very clear through discussion that our teaching staff struggles with the required paperwork and documentation and a lack of materials. I need additional training to better support our teachers and students.

For more information, please contact Sally Fowler at Sally.fowler@fresnounified.org.

Children's Cooking Camp

We decided to have the Children's Cooking Camp on the week right after school ended and before summer school started.

For the class we needed 30 9-12 year olds. The fact that so many boys were interested in cooking came as a big surprise to me as well as to some of the parents. The class filled up fast and we had a waiting list. We told the students on the waiting list we would call if someone cancelled. We had no cancellations so no students were added. The students really enjoyed learning how to prepare healthy meals and snacks with fruits and vegetables. They learned about healthy eating, food safety, safety in the kitchen, and the cost of cooking pizza at home versus ordering pizza.

On the second day of class we took the students on a grocery store tour. The grocery store tour guide was very knowledgeable when it came to touring the produce section. He made the kids feel very welcome and made the tour a lot of fun for the kids.

A parent who had two students in the class mentioned to me that after going through the class, their family was getting home from school and work one day, and she said that she and her husband were asking each other what they should do for dinner. Then one of their kids jumps up and says, "I'll cook dinner Mom!" So she took them to the store, the kids got everything they needed for the recipe. She said that the kids asked her if she liked to cook. She replied, "No, I would rather wash dishes all day than cook." The kids told her, "Mom, its not that bad," and they volunteered to do the cooking. Now they are always in the kitchen. She feels the class really empowered them to do this. Hopefully mom will continue to encourage them to cook and maybe this family will be eating at home more often.

Due to the positive response we decided to add another class this past September 2008. We are currently in the middle of our six-week Tuesday evening Kids in the Kitchen class. We invited all the kids on the waiting list to sign up for the class, before sending out more flyers. This time we only accepted 20 students because on our 6th class we plan to invite the student's families and have an "Eat Dinner with Your Family class." The students will be preparing some of the recipes that they learned and will be setting a table where they will sit with their families and taste testing the recipes. At the table they will have conversation starter cards. After filling this class we have another waiting list of about 30 more kids, so this means we will be doing more classes.

For more information, please contact Nora Ortiz at ortizn@gfusd.k12.ca.us.

Hawthorne School District
Contract #: 06-55091

Making Nutrition Education and Physical Activity the Norm

“Our goal is to have 100 percent of students and teachers participating in Harvest of the Month, and we will not rest until that goal is accomplished.”

I wrote the line above as part of last year’s Annual Progress Report Narrative, FFY 07. At the time, about 80 percent of our teachers were utilizing Harvest of the Month (HOTM); our program was the “toast of the district,” having switched to boxed “fruit of the month club” style packaging and streamlined delivery. Teachers, principals, and superintendents were raving about our program. We seemed to have support from every corner of the district.

Yet, if you are at all familiar with the Hawthorne’s *Network for a Healthy California* (*Network*) staff, you might guess that we were not satisfied. Eighty percent participation was not viewed as success. It was viewed in terms of, “How can we rope in those last few teachers?” We tend to view our success in terms of what has yet to be done. Understand, the *Network* staff in Hawthorne is comprised of nutrition education professionals, who are disappointed when “only” 150 parents turn out for a Family Nutrition Night event, or when we “only” have 550 participants in the annual Healthy Hawthorne 5K Run & Walk (as was the case two years ago). We are not a group to sit on our laurels. The mantra at our staff meetings remained, “What can we offer teachers to get their buy in?”

Last winter we had the opportunity to meet with our district’s Director of Teaching and Assessment as well as the Assistant Superintendent of Education Services. Both individuals are highly supportive of our program, while remaining very protective of Language Arts and Math instruction. The District has invested untold thousands of dollars into “Open Court,” a language arts curriculum used to teach the subject starting in Kindergarten and extending through 5th grade. More time is devoted to Open Court in the classroom than any other subject; along with Math, in many ways Open Court is the cornerstone of classroom education in Hawthorne.

Our idea was simple: we wanted to create nutrition education lessons that tie to the Open Court program. This would represent the ultimate form of integrating nutrition into the core curriculum. We felt we could review Open Court, find natural nutrition linkages, and design lessons with accompanying worksheets that would allow teachers to teach nutrition without skipping or changing any Open Court material. We felt that the synergy created would not only make the Open Court lesson more memorable for students, but that the nutrition component would be more effective as well.

We pitched the idea...and they loved it. Both the Director of Instruction and Assistant Superintendent embraced it, offering a particular portion of classroom time – called “workshop” – for Open Court Nutrition (OCN) lessons.

So, we scoured the Open Court series during the summer and began to develop grade- and unit-specific OCN lessons. We have also begun to make Open Court connections to HOTM. It is our goal to roll the program out later this year, and to use it as the line that reels in those last remaining “hold outs” from HOTM.

The OCN lessons are still in development; the lasting impact on that front remains to be seen. However, the relationship we have built with the Education Services Department has continued to grow. Based on the trust and communication fostered last year, we are working with education services now like we never were able to before. We have been invited to participate in teacher trainings sponsored by them (as opposed to pushing our own trainings, which they also support); they have asked us to develop curriculum to be taught during breakfast time and to connect nutrition to the new mathematics adoption.

This year we are continuing with face-to-face meetings with teachers and principals at every school, our goal to know the names and develop a personal relationship with every teacher in Hawthorne. We will continue to develop innovative resources (HOTM desk calendar and student workbooks) and programming (Wellness Series, Fitness Expo, OCN, and other teacher trainings). We will continue to communicate with district staff in unique ways, using technology whenever possible to promote our programs and resources (Podcasting, email, web resources).

Finally, I am happy to report that HOTM participation went up again this year, to 85 percent. What can we offer the last 15 percent of teachers to get their buy in? Whatever it is, we will not rest until 100 percent of the teachers are on board. Our program will continue to develop effective, innovative programs, this year and beyond.

For more information, please contact Steve Baldwin at stbalwin@hawthorne.k12.ca.us.

Olympics with a Nutrition Twist

The students at the Westminster School District face the same challenges as many other students in California when it comes to having a safe place to live, walk, and go to school. In addition, physical education (PE) is not a required class in our elementary schools. Due to this, as well as other reasons, physical activity levels among our youth are lower than recommended. With the rates of childhood obesity at an all time high we know that our children not only need more physical activity but a balance diet as well.

The Nutrition Olympics is a nutrition and physical activity promotion event. It is designed for an elementary school setting with the objective to combine nutrition messages along with physical activity stations. A total of five stations were set up side by side. The stations included: an *Apple* Toss, the *Tater* Trot, the *Carrot* Hop, the *Strawberry* Relay, and the *Lemon* Tic Tac Toe Throw. At each station, students learned about the specific fruit or vegetable featured. For example, at the Tater Trot they learned that potatoes are a good source of vitamin C; they grow underground, and are most nutritious with the skin on.

What an exciting event! After completing one station you could observe the students jumping up and down in excitement for the next station. When we were done, they were ready to start all over again. Each student completed the event with a taste test of apples and a certificate of completion. Following these learning activities, teachers provided a MyPyramid lesson in the classroom and reinforced the messages that had been given during the activity.

This activity has shown our young students that being physically active can be fun. One teacher, Cyndi Johnson stated that “The students had a great time with the Nutrition Olympics. It was one more way for them to learn about a fruit or a vegetable. The activities were very age appropriate and got them moving. After the Olympics, the students wanted to know if we could do that everyday for PE and if we could have apples too!”

Due to the positive results received from the students and the teachers, we plan to extend the Nutrition Olympics activity to all grades at the elementary school level. Teaching young children about fruits and vegetables while having fun in a physical activity provides a positive experience and hopefully encourages them to eat healthy and stay active.

For more information, please contact Lauren Teng at lteng@hbuhdsd.org.

Get Healthy, Stay Healthy

Kern River Valley families suffer from low-income and the absence of choices when it comes to making better and healthier choices for their families. We see many children and adults suffering from obesity, type 2 diabetes, and other preventable health issues in our community. Families cannot pay rent and utility costs so invariably they purchase the cheapest food items at the market which are usually high in fat and sugar. Eating nutrition poor foods creates a lack of motivation and energy which we have also witnessed in the increase of sedentary lifestyles of our school community members.

Our afterschool students receive intense nutrition education with nutrition/cooking classes, school site gardens, and increased physical activity opportunities. We promote healthy eating and physical activity in health fairs and school nutrition events. Harvest of the Month taste tests and activities occur with all of our strategies giving low-income families more opportunities to taste different fruits and vegetables. Every time a child tastes and enjoys something that they previously refused to eat it is a success! Our most enjoyable activity is the Annual Nutrition Olympics. Kids are laughing and learning which makes it fun for all of us. The event is full of taste and exploration that the students and community get excited over. Upper grade level students help with the event which the younger children really seem to enjoy. My favorite moment was when a kindergarten student stopped at the taste testing booth with her parents and tried every vegetable available twice! The mom could not believe it and insisted her daughter would never eat any vegetables at home (hopefully that has changed!)

Our Impact Evaluation efforts show that knowledge continues to increase in our students and they are choosing healthier snacks and 100% fruit juices on their own. This means that parents and guardians are learning and purchasing healthier foods for their children to consume. Our seniors are eating more fruits and vegetable and choosing more varieties. Our classes impress the importance of eating fresh fruits and vegetables in season making them a better value.

We continue to try to increase nutrition education and Harvest of the Month (HOTM) opportunities in the regular school day. The advances our afterschool students have made are impressive and would be even greater with more regular day students involved. We have had several "Bring a friend to H.O.P.E.," (Afterschool program) events to encourage more enrollment. We will step up efforts to bring more HOTM activities into the school cafeterias and continue to promote the school site gardens to the teachers and staff.

For more information, please contact Alisa Hinkle at alhinkl@zeus.kern.org.

Lamont School District
Contract #: 07-65324

Parents Making a Difference

Lamont is a rural community surrounded by agriculture in the Central Valley. There are many places for people who live and work here to purchase unhealthy foods and fast food. There are only a couple of markets where people can buy fresh fruits and vegetables, but the cost is high and the quality is poor. Families looking to buy low cost, healthy fresh fruits and vegetables need to travel about 20 miles to Bakersfield to a larger supermarket. It is hard for people in Lamont to eat the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables everyday.

We used the Eating Well, Living Well lessons developed by the San Diego Community College District and recruited the parents already attending other English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in the community. Attendance was very good; we had an average of 38 students attending each class session. At the end of the lesson, we would prepare a recipe from the new Everyday Healthy Meals cookbook. The class participants took a cookbook home and tried the recipes we had demonstrated in our classes, they all reported that their families loved the recipes and even the children that had always refused vegetables were now asking for seconds. Our participants were also empowered to ask the local grocer about having higher quality fresh produce. This *Network for a Healthy California* activity was successful in convincing local families that they need to make a change in their eating style and add more fruits and vegetables to their diet.

Parents attending the classes learned how to prepare healthy meals for their families and that eating healthy does not have to cost more. One ESL parent wrote, "I like to know about nutrition,---- now I buy 100% juice, more veggies and fruits, and my children eat more fruits." Another parent wrote, "I learn to read the nutrition facts on the juice and other packages, and (have) a good life."

I received lots of positive feedback from the community members that took the classes; they all told us how the classes had helped them make a positive change for themselves and their families. I would like to encourage the participants to form a walking group and to offer more sessions where we can just gather, create a healthy recipe to share, and talk about other changes they can help create in their community to make it a better place to live.

For more information, please contact Yolanda Ramirez at yramirez@lesd.us.

Fitting Nutrition Education into a Very Busy Schedule

Teachers continually face the challenge of providing nutrition education within an impacted teaching day that focuses on language arts and math. They express a desire to provide appropriate nutrition education and request assistance in “fitting everything in.” They know that students need to learn how to choose healthy foods and be active; they know that students who choose healthy foods and who are active can learn more.

During the course of the year, Long Beach Unified School District’s (LBUSD) *Network for a Healthy California* -funded Health Educator and Child Nutrition Specialist (RD) provided 28 trainings to 384 teachers. Schools could schedule any of the five teacher trainings offered: Basic Nutrition, Nutrition Education Linked to Literature, Cooking in the Classroom, Gardening and Nutrition, and Nutrition Activities; each of these trainings provides current information with focus on health skills (accessing information, analyzing influences, decision-making, goal-setting, interpersonal communication, self-management, and/or advocacy). Trainings are held at the school site, with compensation for the teachers’ time outside their contract day, and instructional resources and lesson plans are provided to all teachers who attend.

Teachers continue to report their intent to provide an enhanced nutrition education program upon the completion of the training. More importantly, three months after the training, teachers reported they did provide enhanced nutrition education. They felt their students increased their knowledge about nutrition and physical activity, and that their students have expressed intent to increase their consumption of fruits/vegetables and involvement in physical activity. Teachers reported that the nutrition education materials provided “fit in” with their language arts and math curriculum and provide a sequence for instruction so that students build their knowledge and skill competency. They continue to express appreciation for the lesson plans and materials that are easy to use, of high interest for students, and support the English language development of many of LBUSD’s students. They report that nutrition education has become a regular part of their instructional program with a focus, rather than a provision of haphazard activities, and complement the many other nutrition education activities that take place on their campuses.

LBUSD *Network*-funded staff will continue to work with teachers to identify additional needs (content, instructional materials) and strategies to support a planned, sequential skills-based nutrition education program. Each workshop will be revised to include a brief overview of the California Content Standards for Health Education so that teachers can align their nutrition education instruction to those standards.

For more information, please contact Robin Sinks at rsinks@lbusd.k12.ca.us.

Making Changes with One Small Step

You may think that being physically active and eating the right kinds of foods would be easy for any kid. But gone are the days of playing with neighborhood kids after school or having a healthy afternoon snack at home. Now boys and girls need to stay inside the home due to safety reasons and are spending more time in front of the television or the computer. And in some communities, finding “fast food” restaurants are easier to locate than stores that carry fresh fruits and vegetables.

But 4th and 5th graders throughout southern California are taking “Steps to Healthy Living.” “Steps to Healthy Living” is a physical activity and nutrition education campaign sponsored by ABC7, community health organizations, and *Network for a Healthy California—Power Play!* These organizations team up with school districts to get 4th and 5th graders to track their steps using a pedometer (provided free to them by the program sponsors) and to record daily on their passport (record sheet) not only their steps but also their consumption of fruits and vegetables. As the students kept count of their steps, they were also gaining valuable nutrition education knowledge through *Power Play!* activities.

Let me introduce you to Miranda, a 4th grader attending a school in northeast Los Angeles and let her share her story with you:

How did participating in the “KID HEALTHY – Steps to Healthy Living” campaign encourage you to be more physically active?

“I was encouraged because I was always a slow runner and walker and I wanted to improve. I started softball about a week before getting the pedometer. In softball sometimes we have races. I checked my pedometer and I had big numbers at the end. The same thing happened at school. Now my body is twice as active than before. During last summer I would walk three miles a day and I would be so tired but I think I can take it.”

How did learning about nutrition through your Power Play! Student workbook help you to make healthier choices?

“I learned many new facts. The Power Play! workbook helped me make better choices. I learned to read labels that have the nutrition facts. Some things in the food can make me sick. I do like some fruits and vegetables. Some servings should be the amount of a baseball! An orange is the amount of a baseball.”

From Marinda’s story, we can see that the work we do is so worthwhile and that we can make a difference in the lives that we teach and touch. It encourages us to go on and to know that big changes can begin with just one small step.

For more information, please contact Roberta Acantilado at Roberta.acantilado@lausd.net.

Madera Unified School District
Contract #: 05-45518

Harvest of the Month School Menu

Madera Unified School District is approximately 77 percent Hispanic. Many of our students are English Language Development students where Spanish is the primary language at home. Students bring home information on nutrition that is for the most part only in English.

Participation in the nutrition grant has had various benefits. One of them is the Harvest of the Month school menu. We print the menus in both English and Spanish and distribute them out to our students every month.

The nutrition education team is working to make the students more aware of what a healthy diet is. The menus printed in Spanish help engage the family. The menus also include nutritious recipes the families can prepare at home.

The District continues to support the importance of good nutrition by being proactive in adopting current regulations as well as by mandating increased physical education time every day. This will support the message that students take home with them and hopefully it will also affect decisions made at home regarding healthy eating and physical activity.

For more information, please contact Rosa Garcia at Garcia_R@madera.k12.ca.us.

Tasting Trio Touchdown

Our snacking program has fumbled over the last few years and in fact never even got to a first down. In an effort to recover the produce, we needed to discover what was blocking our teachers from cooking in the classroom. Snacking activities were designed to allow students to be creative with their food before they ate it. It was intended to be a fun way to try new foods. However, most of the snacking activities required teachers to purchase an average of six ingredients to complete.

We scored a touchdown with our new *Tasting Trio* program! Tasting Trios are simple three ingredient recipes teachers can use to cook in the classroom using the Harvest of the Month (HOTM). Sometimes the HOTM is difficult for teachers to easily use in their classroom or the recipes provided in the educator newsletter are time consuming to prepare. For example, October is Winter Squash and our chefs have to fully cook the produce by making a Spaghetti Squash Soup for the students during the monthly cooking lessons. If we deliver spaghetti squash or even pre-cut butternut squash to a classroom, it is highly unlikely that teachers will be able to cook with it in their classroom for various reasons. Our *Tasting Trio* recipe for October is called Pumpkin Delight and it is designed to make Winter Squash easy and fun to serve to students. The three ingredients include pure canned pumpkin, whole grain graham crackers, and honey. Teachers will make this recipe with their students and send a copy home for parents to prepare.

The data speaks volumes for the change created by kicking off of the *Tasting Trio* program. In previous years, we had two teachers participating in the snacking program and now we have 124 subscribers to the *Tasting Trio* program. Our Impact Evaluation results also showed a significant improvement in consumption of fruits and vegetables which could in part be due to the success our *Tasting Trios*. Many parents share with us how thrilled their children are to cook the recipes at home. The impressions and changes made at home are ones that will make the most impact.

The quick growth of this program during the 2007-08 reporting period has made a big impact on the work of our staff. Now we are trying to develop systems that will make each step of the Tasting Trios more manageable for our staff. The continued success of this program will rely not only on teachers, but will depend on the students handing the recipes off to their family to ensure a *Tasting Trio* Touchdown!

For more information, please contact Valerie Parsons at vparson@monrovia.k12.ca.us.

Fruit and Vegetable Education is Firmly Planted

Montebello Unified School District (MUSD) is a “program improvement” district and is struggling with substantial debt. We have had numerous shifts in leadership personnel, including instruction. Nutrition education hardly “blips” on the radar when No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements focus so heavily on language arts and math. Further, MUSD is comprised of significant numbers of English Language Development level students.

In the face of tight budgets and NCLB challenges, teachers continue to engage in nutrition education, especially our fruit/vegetable promotion, now over ten years old. Teachers report their students – of many grade levels – begin the year hesitant to try new items; yet, by the end of the year are open minded and enthusiastic. For example, at one intermediate school in one of the lowest income areas of the district, “salad greens” months were celebrated by creating a green salad of a mixed array of greens. The students voluntarily brought in their additions, many of which were vegetables featured in former months that year. The teacher reported that, if the salad bowl itself were edible, it would have been consumed along with everything else. The students devoured the food. The impact has been noticeable from elementary to high school, from high achieving classes to our alternative education students. Our reach is extensive and the depth now provided is obviously making a difference. The presence of site lead teachers at many schools has meant more teachers than ever are participating, despite the budgetary and academic challenges that are present at every school.

When a program is allowed to flower and develop roots, it can be sustained. We have attended to this effort for years and many teachers have stayed with us. That means we now have a program that is responsive to children, meets the needs of teachers, continues the strong relationship with our Nutrition Services staff, and is a feather in the cap of the district. We have retired teachers who serve as mentors to new staff; and they recommend participation in our programs. We serve on the Coordinated School Health Committee and promote the program further, (this year we provided teacher training to the intermediate and high school physical education teachers and included an overview of the fruit/vegetable promotion.)

We aim to secure more sight lead teachers to join us. Also, we would like to develop promotional materials to engage still more teachers to come on board. Perhaps if the veteran teachers can coach newer staff we can overcome some remaining hesitation.

Finally, we will need to continue to demonstrate that all our efforts reinforce core content standards thereby contributing to our academic improvement beyond nutrition education.

For more information, please contact Piper Mattson at mattson_piper@montebello.k12.ca.us.

Children Learning to Change the World

We have become more and more intentional about the way we address health and nutrition in Mount Diablo CARES (Collaborative for Academics, Recreation and Enrichment for Students). Since we have been doing this we have seen tremendous improvements in our program.

We are changing the world one person at a time:

A Recreation Specialist, who has taught nutrition lessons for the past year, shared that her 12 year old son was a diabetic. She was so pleased to share since she had learned more about nutrition and healthy eating her son had lost 14 pounds.

Another Recreation Specialist, who weights over 300 pounds, said since visiting the garden regularly with students he had learned a lot about nutrition and developed a taste for fresh produce. He has lost over 50 pounds to date.

Yet another young man was excited to share with me how good fresh carrots were when you sauté them in olive oil and seasonings. He said he had taken some carrots left after the food bank distribution and had them for dinner. A fellow worker asked why he had carrots for dinner and his response was that was the only food in the house.

A Teen Garden Corp participant, a 15 year old high school student, had never tasted cucumbers until harvesting them and tasting them in the garden. After that, she left everyday with a bag of cucumbers to take home and snack on.

At one Elementary site, students were asking staff to hide bags of oranges for them so there would be sure to be some left at checkout time. On another occasion when there was an abundance of carrots from the food bank, staff brought a juicer and kids tried different kinds of carrot juice: carrot/apple, carrot/orange, and carrot/lemon.

After informing parents about our zero tolerance for “junk” food, a Site Coordinator was approached by a grandmother who did not know what to send with her grandson to take his medication. She had been sending a soda and chips because she did not know what else to send. The Site Coordinator made some suggestions of 100% juice and healthy snacks she could send instead. We also offered to have fresh fruit available for him. The zero tolerance policy proved to be something we needed to do.

Our impact evaluation indicates that we have not only increased consumption of fruits and vegetables with program participants but with families as well. We were excited to see this outcome and hope to continue our efforts to impact the lives of the families we serve.

We are continuing to look for ways to improve outreach to our families. We are working with the food bank to expand the weekly produce to all of our sites it is currently at eight which is half our sites. We are also going to do Food Stamp promotion at our parent nights and have our staff go to each site to eat breakfast with kids once a month in an attempt to increase the number of kids participating in school breakfast.

For more information, please contact Ali Medina at medinaa@mdusd.k12.ca.us.

Newport Mesa Unified School District
Contract #: 04-35454

Making a Healthy Difference with Carrots

Getting kids to eat fruits and vegetables regularly has been a challenge in the United States and in California. One way to overcome this challenge is helping them learn about produce and encouraging them to taste it. Once they have tasted it, getting them to eat it regularly has been another challenge.

This past year the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* team (Geoff Ianniello, Pamela Williams, and Veronica Sanchez) worked to encourage students to taste fruits and vegetables during lunch. The Harvest of the Month (HOTM) for April was carrots. Teachers introduced carrots in the classroom along with lesson activities that were based on carrots. Our *Network* team went to Paularino Elementary School and formally introduced carrots to the students and they loved them. As a result, the cafeteria manager decided to add carrots to her regular menu several times a week. Each time she included carrots on the menu she would run out. She would order more and still run out of carrots. She continued increasing and serving carrots throughout the months of May and June. By the end of the year, the carrot intake had doubled each time it was served.

The response of the students demonstrated that the educational strategies of HOTM are successful. By introducing carrots to these students, they have made the healthy choice to eat carrots regularly.

We will continue to serve carrots and other produce to students at Paularino Elementary School and other *Network* schools. By including fruit and vegetable activities in the curriculum, during lunch and as an activity, students can increase their overall fruit and vegetable intake.

For more information, please contact Geoff Ianniello at gianniello@nmusd.us.

What have you done to my Child

Orange Unified School District (OUSD) Network for a Healthy California (*Network*) has provided Harvest of the Season (HOTS) three-tier program for over six years for OUSD students and the community. HOTS tiers include comprehensive fruit and vegetable nutrition education targeted to students from infancy to 12th grades, their families, and teachers/staff. Students learn about the produce and taste it fresh. If teachers sign up to receive the taste test, then they are provided a “Guest Chef” who is a credentialed teacher trained to provide a HOTS recipe demonstration and literary connection (tied to California Health Education Content Standards). Students learn how to incorporate the fruit or vegetable into a recipe. Lastly, students are provided HOTS nutrition education and recipe cards to share at home. At the start of the program, the challenges OUSD *Network* faced were convincing teachers the program was not only going to be successful, but that it was not going to take away from critical classroom instruction time. As word spread of the HOTS program success, the challenge has now become having enough staff to support every classroom that is a part of the OUSD *Network* program. In addition, OUSD *Network* relies on Harvest of the Month newsletters developed and provided by the State *Network* program; it has been instrumental in streamlining HOTS programming. The challenges we face as we continue are that the State is not going to continue developing Harvest of the Month materials.

Over 400 classrooms have been reached per HOTS fruit and vegetable feature. Parents recognize OUSD Guest Chefs at the local market, dental office, and at schools and ask “what have you done to my children!?” elatedly. After having a taste of a featured produce such as cabbage or bell peppers, students ask their parents to buy and prepare foods that incorporate the HOTS featured fruits and vegetables. Teachers have also noticed a profound change in the types of foods brought home by students especially during snack time. Here are some responses from teachers about their HOTS experiences:

- “The activities sent with each fruit and vegetables were very good.”
- “Kiwis- Kids loved them, most of them have never eaten it.”
- “Some students got to try fruits that they have never tried before.”
- “Students actually go home and talk to the parents.”
- “Kids get excited about the different fruits or vegetables.”
- “Teachers state that students are aware of making healthy choices.”
- “Guest Chef is always great!”
- “Taste Testing is always easy and well planned.”
- “They are bringing healthy snacks in the morning.”
- “Students are more likely to talk about the choices their friends are making for snacks. They “nag” on each other to eat healthy snacks.”
- “I notice they are much more aware of the importance of eating well.”
- “Seem more open about trying new fruits and veggies.”

- “They talk about fruit and bring it to school more often.”
- “The kids really seem to enjoy taste testing the featured foods. They often tell me about the foods they eat, whether at home or at school.”

To continue providing HOTS to every OUSD Network school site and promote to other partners. A few non OUSD Network schools have adapted the HOTS program and fund it all on their own either through parent donations, school budgets and/or other school program funding. OUSD hopes to continue HOTS throughout the district.

For more information, please contact Katryn Soltanmorad at ksoltanmorad@orangeusd.org.

All inclusive in Learning

During National Nutrition Month in March, as part of many activities performed to highlight the importance healthy lifestyle, we sponsor a district wide essay contest. The topic of the essay is nutrition related. This year, we focused on our middle school students, 6th-8th grade. The contest is finalized by the end of May and the winners are recognized in June by the Pasadena Unified Board of Education. We do not know any of the winners until the recognition ceremony in June.

Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) collaborates with the Pasadena Public Health Department's (PPHD) *Network for a Healthy California (Network)*-funded program. Due to PPHD wide community resource fairs and activities, Marie Garcia, Project Coordinator, gave input on how students provide feedback at the events and are able to speak about healthy eating and basic nutrition wisely and intelligently.

All of our winners were a typical middle school age students except one. To my surprise the third place winner was a 6th-8th grade special education student. "M" is an autistic young lady whose essay was amazing. I will never forget the moment when I introduce "M" to the Board of Education and I invited her to come up to the stage to meet with the Board members. The moment was magical. "M" will never forget the moment.

The time "M" took the stage, I felt so proud of the *Network* activities. We reach out to all our students including our special education population. Looking into "M" eyes and congratulating her for her accomplishment and see her smile as walking on the lighted stage makes what we do worthwhile.

"On more than one occasion, the children have stated that they had heard the same message from "Miss Adriana" or "Miss Sonia" in their classrooms. They will expand on their nutrition knowledge and their parents also tell me what the children have been teaching them at home. For a child to remember someone's name, the actual lesson and go home and talk to their parents about nutrition is impressive. Recently, at a community health event, I had the daughter of a co-worker at my resource table and she was able to give out nutrition information with such ease. She stated she had lessons at school, (a PUSD school). The remarkable thing is she is only seven years old. Event participants were in awe of her because it was amazing to see a child recite basic nutrition information intelligently and logically. Moreover, her mother stated she keeps the family on the right track of eating fruits and vegetables. This goes to show that the teaching methods are working.

To see students remember what they have been taught at a Saturday health fair or a community resource event, a seven year old's ability to display and understanding of basic nutrition and to continue to provide nutrition education in a creative style are some of the success I have seen this year.

For more information, please contact Katia Ahmed at kahmed@pusd.us.

Running, Eating and Thinking Healthy

On Saturday, October 20, 2007, Rosemead School District held its first annual Run/Walk – Health & Fitness Fair at Encinita Elementary. The theme was “Running, Eating and Thinking Healthy.” The event was from 8-11 a.m. There were approximately 100 volunteers from the key club, builders club, parks and recreation, and Rosemead School District staff. The run/walk races were divided according to the student’s grade level. All students/adults received a participation award, t-shirt, and goodie bag. First, second, and third prize winners got the gold, silver, and bronze medal. In conjunction with the run/walk race, there were over 20 community partners that displayed information on health, nutrition, and physical activity. The Rosemead Education Foundation sponsored the event. The *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* helped gather the community partners for the resource booths and provided goodie bags. The *Network* also provided fresh fruit/vegetable taste testing and cookbooks were passed out. The challenge in putting this event together was that it took many hours of planning. Some community partners had prior engagements and could not attend the event.

Approximately 400 parents, students, and teachers were reached at the Run/Walk & Health Fair. Over 20 different community partners came out to support the event by having a booth and bringing their educational materials, flyers, brochures, games and samples. Community partners included: Children’s *Power Play!*, Dairy Council of California, Reach Out Health Care Dental, Asian Pacific Family Center, Methodist Hospital, and many more.

Based on comments of participants, volunteer workers, and community partners, this event was very successful. It created awareness of health/nutrition and physical activity promotion. It also gave local health centers/organization the opportunity to reach out to the community. There were child/parent participation, staff/administration participation, and the community partners that provided health and nutrition education. Participants, volunteers, and community partners are looking forward to participating again next year.

To make next year even better we will:

- Recap with planning committee on what was successful and what could have been better.
- Broaden list of possible community partners to invite and inviting them months in advance.
- Start the planning process at least six months in advance.
- Meet monthly to plan event and divide job responsibility to different sub groups.

For more information, please contact Diane Ezzo at dezzzo@rosemead.k12.ca.us.

Building Healthy Bodies, Building Healthy Mind

Francis Scott Key is a school of approximately 500 students in the Sunset District in San Francisco. The school has a high percentage of English language learners and low-income families. Over 60 percent of the families are Chinese speaking. Often grandparents, who are limited in speaking English, pick up students at the end of the school day and care for them during the afternoon. The challenge has been to make the school a welcoming place for all the school's families and to spread the nutrition message to all members of the school community.

Francis Scott Key's Nutrition Wellness team came together to organize an exciting Family Nutrition Night. The event was a successful collaboration of students, teachers, administrators, community businesses, afterschool program line staff, the physical education specialist, and the school's social worker. The school cafeteria was set up with booths including a nutrition prize wheel, healthy snack tasting, chef cooking demonstration, germ "cootie catchers," and a healthy soda tasting. Each booth was decorated with student created posters which included key health messages in both English and Chinese. The school's main hallway was turned into a fun and challenging obstacle course. The event was a huge success with over 200 students and family members in attendance. The event was made even more special by the attendance of a reporter and video crew from the local San Francisco program *Eye on the Bay*, which ran the program the following month.

The event opened the doors to many families that had not participated in school activities in the past. The media coverage brought a sense of community pride to the school. The event was followed in the spring by a successful Healthy Cooking Workshop for families which also was well attended. After the Nutrition Night, the school adopted as its slogan: *Building Healthy Bodies, Building Healthy Minds*.

More events are planned for the school year 2008-09, including cooking demonstrations at the weekly food pantry, another cooking workshop and a Family Nutrition Night. The Parent Teacher Association has made it its goal to have healthier foods for family celebrations. Students are reporting to their teachers that they have helped cook healthy recipes at home and they are bringing in food labels to discuss the nutrient content of foods they eat at home; parents are reporting that their students are being more experimental in tasting new fruits and vegetables.

For more information, please contact Mark Elkin at elkinm@sfusd.edu.

Harvest of the Month Parent Cooking Classes

The *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* is very pleased that at least five schools in the Santa Ana school district have doubled their parent's attendance at the monthly parent meetings which take place at their child's school site. The Harvest of the Month (HOTM) parent cooking class includes cooking demonstrations and taste testing of the HOTM produce item. This is the same HOTM produce item their children are tasting in their nutrition lessons in their classrooms. The parent classes allow the parents to stay abreast of the nutrition education their children are learning in the classroom. In addition parents increase their own nutrition knowledge and skill in preparing healthy HOTM featured produce items.

One example of an involved parent begins in November 2007 at Harvey Elementary school. A mom, Mrs. X was extremely hesitant to participate in the *Network* cooking classes because of her limited English speaking abilities. However, Jennifer Crawford, Nutrition Specialist, conducted the class in Spanish and English and provided Mrs. X with nutrition information materials in Spanish.

Mrs. X was able to learn how to prepare the healthy recipes as well as understand why these recipes were healthy choices for her family. After participating in the HOTM parent cooking classes, Mrs. X was confident enough to share this information with other parents at Harvey Elementary school. The Principal of Harvey Elementary school, Mrs. Stetler, reports that parent attendance at their monthly parent meetings have doubled this year and that Mrs. X is now volunteering for other parent committees and has become a parent leader at the school and a true "Champion for Change."

This year the parents at Harvey Elementary school continue to support the HOTM taste testing at their monthly parent meetings. The Parent Outreach Consultant, Tami Pitroff, called the *Network* office at the beginning of September 2008 wanting to know what the HOTM produce for the year will be. Ms. Pitroff said parents are calling her asking what produce will be featured at the monthly parent meetings. The parents are excited and look forward to learning how to prepare the healthy recipes that their sons and daughters are also learning about in their classroom HOTM activities. Harvey Elementary school students benefit from the nutrition skills they learn in the classroom. The parents benefit from the nutrition skills they learn in their parent classes. When both parents and children share in this nutrition learning experience the family is much more likely to make healthy choices.

We are continuing the HOTM parent cooking classes. We have added five more schools so far this school year. Of those five schools, we added two parents from the kinder readiness program. They will come to the class and learn the recipes and take it back to their parent advisory group.

This is a group of parent leaders from each of the 11 pre kinder sites. Each of these parents will go back to their school sites and provide the taste testing recipe with the nutritional facts.

For more information, please contact Jennifer Crawford-Chavez at Jennifer.crawford@sausd.us.

Santa Cruz City School District
Contract #: 05-45535

HOTM Successful School-wide

Many teachers at Gault and Bay View Elementary Schools were not sure how to use the Harvest of the Month (HOTM) resources. The nutrition program had to think creatively about ways to encourage teachers to take advantage of the materials.

In the Life Lab garden, all students tasted and prepared a monthly recipe featuring the HOTM produce. Parents shared positive comments such as “My daughter insisted we make the fresh tomato sauce at home. She followed the recipe from school, and it was delicious!” Through HOTM tips at staff meetings and HOTM teacher trainings, more classes took advantage of the resources. Teachers exchanged tips on management of classroom cooking. With tomatoes, one teacher purchased ingredients for five classes to prepare a fresh tomato salsa. Students eagerly shared their classroom experiences tasting and cooking with tomatoes when they would come out to the school garden. They are making the connection, with comments such as proclaim “We used tomatoes like these to make fresh salsa! It was so yummy!” and “I remember tasting these tomatoes in class!” A first grade teacher purchased the ingredients for a recipe using HOTM produce for her class to prepare on Wednesday, and another first grade teacher prepared the same recipe on Friday. The afterschool program is beginning to use the HOTM resources as well.

New ideas for using HOTM in staff meetings and trainings made a difference. The teachers who had already been successful reached out to help other teachers, and they worked together to make classroom cooking happen more often with HOTM resources. In September, the cafeteria workers reported that students at Bay View and Gault were taking lots of cherry tomatoes that were featured on the salad bar. It was clear that their classroom and garden tomato tastings had an effect. A beautiful HOTM display graced the cafeteria wall each month, and the Food Service director continued to use the monthly HOTM menu slick. The school board included HOTM presentations in its Wellness Committee.

We plan to continue using the HOTM materials in the K-5 garden nutrition and cooking classes, and K-5 classrooms. We are working to expand the use of HOTM in the preschool and afterschool programs. We will hold another HOTM teacher training.

For more information, please contact Jessica Silverman Curcio at jcurcio@sccs.santacruz.k12.ca.us.

Ukiah Unified School District
Contract #: 05-45541

It's Harvest of the Month Time

Ukiah Unified school students and their families face the challenge of not having enough money to purchase a variety of fruits and vegetables that would help them to live healthier lives. Our population is more than 60 percent free and reduced lunch and many students have only two meals a day – breakfast and lunch at school. The fruits and vegetables are grown in California and used in our Harvest of the Month (HOTM) program which is part of our total nutrition education program. Ukiah Unified has over 250 classrooms participating with over 5,000 students (pre-k through high school) taste testing and learning the importance of eating fruits and vegetables for ten months of the school year.

Since our humble beginnings in 2001 with HOTM, we had 30 teachers participating. Terry Nieves was the orderer, organizer, and delivery driver for HOTM. Today in 2008, we have over 5,000 students taste testing HOTM! Leah White orders the produce for Ukiah Unified and several other school districts in our consortium. Leah and Terry organize it for delivery to classrooms and two bus drivers deliver it to the cafeterias where the nutrition educators pick it up and deliver it to the classrooms. Students look forward to the next months harvest with anticipation. When they see their nutrition educator, they say such things as, "What is the harvest of the month?" or "We've never had such good kiwis, can we have more?" Teachers are involved with lessons in the classroom and giving suggestions for improving the program. Some schools feature HOTM during their back to school or open house nights. One school featured HOTM during their family literacy night with taste testing samples, parent newsletters, and writing a recipe to use with the fruit or vegetable.

Parents are involved because their students come home from school after a HOTM lesson and want their parents to buy the fruit or vegetable the student has just tasted in class. We had a report of one student asking her parent to buy the spaghetti squash. This parent called and did not know what spaghetti squash was. We were able to get her the parent newsletter and give her advice on what it looked like and where to find it. Last spring, students harvested peas from the school garden and ate them. The next month they had them for their HOTM and got very excited. One student was quoted as saying, "Those are the peas we grew in our garden, they look just like them and I can't wait to eat them!"

Ukiah Unified has asked the local newspaper to run a monthly HOTM column. We are working on the beginnings of this column which will be taken from the parent newsletter and include information on the produce, a recipe, and a physical activity idea.

For more information, please contact Terry Nieves at tnieves@uusd.net.

Parents in the Kitchen

Our school parents have the desire to raise healthy children. But often, they do not know what to look at when they are preparing their meals or they do not know how to prepare healthy meals.

Our *Network for a Healthy California* program has a Parent Cooking Class component. Once a month, parents are invited to come to our cooking class and learn how to make an easy and healthy recipe that comes from our Harvest of the Month program. The parents who participate are often parents who volunteer at our school during the day and attend our monthly Parent Forums in the evening.

In our discussions with the parents, they have often stated that they appreciate the time and effort that we have placed on their nutrition education. They share stories about their cooking successes at home. At our last Nutrition Education Parent Forum, during our comment session, a parent got up and excitedly shared with the others the way she had learned how to make the pasta salad with tomatoes in class. She made a large bowl for her family thinking that she would have leftovers for the following day. To her surprise, her family loved the recipe, finished her dish, and there were no leftovers.

I have shared this story with others because it demonstrates the effectiveness and necessity of our program. I thought that everybody has tasted a common vegetable pasta salad either at home or at a restaurant and they would have knowledge on how to prepare it at home. I was wrong. Our parents do not have these nutritional experiences and when they do learn and have successes, they themselves share their stories with others. This is probably the best social marketing tool yet.

For more information, please contact Suzanne Llamas at sllamas@vaughncharter.com.

Ventura Unified School District
Contractor #: 05-45544

Unexpected Outcomes – Students Build Assets through Garden-Based Learning and Nutrition Education

In several of our schools, students who are English language learners often try to fit in by desiring to eat unhealthy foods available in so many venues and not valuing the foods that their parents work so hard to grow in the local farming community.

As part of the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* project at Ventura Unified School District's (VUSD) Healthy School project, nutrition and garden-based lessons were implemented.

Lincoln Elementary School third-graders planted lettuce seeds in the fall, learning about plant parts (standards-based science curriculum) and nutrition lessons about edible plants. In the early spring, the plants were harvested and incorporated into a cooking in the classroom lesson.

Many lessons were learned, some by students, some by teachers, and some unexpected. Students in the garden had an opportunity to experience "kinetic learning" that comes best with doing it for yourself and seeing first hand results. Several boys learned that girls are not necessarily afraid of bugs, and that some bugs are good for plants and much better than pesticides.

Several third graders were English language learners, coming from Spanish speaking homes where their parents, and sometimes the students themselves are migrant farm workers. In the classroom setting they do not generally feel like contributors, frequently lagging in academics. However, in the garden, they are the resident experts. They glow in sharing their knowledge of the plant life-cycle and the importance of eating seasonally. Students work together to share knowledge and learn from each other. In the cooking lesson, students have the opportunity to learn about the plant nutrients and how they affect their health. As they mix their salads from freshly harvested veggies they learn how to use utensils, weights, and measures. They experience collaboration and team work and encourage classmates to take a risk, by trying a new food.

Asset building in students was an unexpected outcome from the nutrition and garden based learning opportunities- valuing alternative learning styles, such as hands-on application of knowledge, working together, recognizing talents in others, mutual respect, feeling that they are contributing – are all valuable lessons for building life skills as well as the healthy habits from participating in the VUSD Healthy School Project.

Building healthy lifestyles, to include asset development, has become an integral part of the VUSD Healthy Schools project- imparting to students practical tools to nutrition, such as growing and preparing your own foods, gardening as a wonderful physical activity, and active community involvement in support the *Network*.

For more information, please contact Anne Thille at anne.thille@venturausd.org.

Visalia Unified School District
Contract #: 05-45545

Second Grade Students All Benefit From Nutrition Education

We have been offering nutrition classes to kindergarten through third grade teachers. Much of our time was spent in recruiting and scheduling teachers instead of providing nutrition education to students. Not all students at eligible sites were receiving this important information and positive experience with healthy food.

The word spreads. As one teacher at a site would invite the Nutrition Promoter to conduct the nutrition classes, the teacher would see the positive impact on students. Students were willing to taste fruits and vegetables that they had never eaten or thought that they did not like. Teachers would also see how the students were very engaged in the curriculum presented and would begin to report fruits and vegetables that they were trying at home. Soon other teachers at the site were requesting the classes. At the end of last school year, I was asked by the Area Administrator of Elementary sites to put together a plan to reach all students at one grade level. He had come to realize the importance of making sure that all students receive this important experience to develop a lifetime of healthy eating habits.

A schedule has now been developed to teach a nutrition unit to all second grade students in the district. Classes began in September. The school district also provided funds to pay for a portion of another Nutrition Promoter to teach the same unit at the sites that do not meet the *Network for a Healthy California* eligibility. This will provide a consistent opportunity for all students and time will no longer be spent trying to recruit teachers but on helping students have a wonderful experience learning about fruits and vegetables.

Come to look for opportunities to expand nutrition education with students and families.

For more information, please contact Neva Wright at nwright@visalia.k12.ca.us.

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA COOPERATIVE
EXTENSIONS**

Regents of the University of California on behalf of Cooperative Extension
in Alameda County
Contract #: 05-45543

CNAM Creates CHAMPIONS

Most families of diverse ethnic backgrounds in Oakland Unified School District experience the lack of access to grocery stores that sell fresh fruits and vegetables, the knowledge of how to prepare healthy recipes, and unsafe communities riddled with crime. Nowadays, as economic times have become more difficult, many families hold more than one job resulting in less time to spend cooking and preparing meals, eating together, and the ability to purchase quality food items that may be more costly. In addition, fast food establishments pose a challenge in convincing these families to eat healthier when meals are offered at a lower price with large portions. These factors have contributed to the difficulty in choosing healthy food and being more physically active.

The Nutrition Education Training Academy (NETA) integrated a parent component called the Community Nutrition and Mobilization Project (CNAM) in 2005-2006 to address the important role families play in forming the habits and shaping the behaviors of young children. Parents were selected as Community Nutrition Education Assistants to receive in depth trainings on topics including personal skill development, nutrition, adult education techniques, and community mobilization. After completing the training sequence, each parent was to organize a nutrition event at their Early Childhood Education (ECE) site to increase interest in nutrition and recruit other parents for nutrition classes they soon would conduct, contribute to creating a newsletter twice a year, conduct parent nutrition classes, and organize parent advisory committees to address nutrition-related school and community policies at their child's ECE site. Two parents continued with the CNAM program and in 2007 were recruited as Champions for Change Moms through a partnership between University of California Cooperative Extension Nutrition Education Training Academy in Alameda County and the *Network for a Healthy California*. Because of the resources, support, and opportunity to make change in their community and within their family, they were inspired to make healthy changes in their own personal lives.

A result of their participation in the CNAM program, the two moms reported cooking more at home, losing weight, changing their portion sizes, reading labels on food, eating more fresh fruits and vegetables, exercising more, and changing their eating habits to model for their children. The moms also limit fats and sugars in their children's diet, experiment different ways to cook vegetables so their kids will try them, and refrain from buying soda and fast food. Similarly, there has been a positive result in the school community. It has been reported that other parents now look at the ingredient list while shopping, spend less money on food, eat standard portion sizes, and have complained to the teachers about the food offered at school.

Community Nutrition Education Assistants have offered suggestions for improvement which we will incorporate as we move forward with the CNAM program. Suggestions include the translation of materials into other languages, more food safety information, and more information on label reading, teaching a unit on menu planning and food shopping, and have three-dimensional models available to show portion sizes. In addition to these suggestions, efforts will be made programmatically to shorten training times and focus on community mobilization.

For more information, please contact Lucrecia Farfan-Ramirez at cdalameda@ucdavis.edu.

Serving Families Having Very Hard Times

The University of California Cooperative Extension, Alameda Food Stamp Nutrition Education and Outreach Program targets underserved families in blighted areas and communities surrounding three low-income housing units. We try to improve family food behaviors: daily fruit and vegetable intake, healthy eating and lifestyle practices, safe food handling, and food resource management. Changing food habits is a difficult task especially if the families have limited food resources. This year we went door to door and on the streets of these communities to deliver nutrition and food stamp information to neighborhood churches, libraries, community centers, schools, and local businesses. It was evident that many families needed help finding enough food and when referred to emergency food sites many were out of food.

How does one talk about completing a Food Behavior Checklist (FBC) or shopping surveys when people are more interested in just feeding their family? I was not able to go back to all families to complete six hours of education because I did not have food or money to offer to help them for more food. But, in the single contacts, I offered the basics about good nutrition, money management, food safety in the home, and a small *Network for a Healthy California* reinforcement item. Fifty-two families received multiple contacts and a follow-up (FBC) to determine behavior change, and a shopping survey to find out where they spend their food dollars.

After three months, the daily fruit and vegetable intakes of adults had increased only by 15 percent. However, follow-up FBC data collected on 122 families who had received nutrition education about a year ago was more encouraging. These families showed more promising changes over time with about a 60 percentage point improvement in desirable money management practices (from 16 percent to 76 percent); 29 percentage points for healthy eating practices (30 percent to 59 percent); 21 percent for desirable food safety practices (64 to 85 percent); and 44 percentage points for overall desirable practices in all three behavior areas (11 percent to 55 percent).

The follow-up FBC (collected after about 12 months) on the 122 food stamp eligible families who had received nutrition education showed long term improvement in nutrition, food safety, and money management over time. We stressed increased fruits and vegetables intake. Follow-up data showed the number of families reporting eating a variety of fruits daily increased from 16 percent to 67 percent, and vegetables from 27 percent to 76 percent.

We promote food stamps as a nutrition education program and support the family unit as the place where healthy attitudes and practices can be nurtured and passed on to the next generation. We will continue to promote increased fruits and vegetable intake for family meals, and outreach to needy families to promote the use of food stamps to stretch food dollars and encourage them to apply for this nutrition program.

For more information, please contact Mary Blackburn at mlblackburn@ucdavis.edu.

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
SISTER PROGRAMS**

Reaching the Under Served Pregnant Teen through Regional Partnerships: Nutrition Education in Cal-SAFE Programs

Since its inception in July 2000, the California School Age Families Education (Cal-SAFE) Program has served over 30,000 pregnant and/or parenting students and their 20,000 young children across the state of California. The typical student served by the Cal-SAFE Program is a single Hispanic female, aged 16 or 17, still under the guardianship of her parents, and living in a highly populated urban area, also, the typical student does not work and therefore survives on a very limited income. Most do not know how to cook, shop, or make healthy food selections for themselves or their child. The Cal-SAFE coordinators who oversees all program aspects for their district usually are not confident or prepared to provide the needed nutrition education and have not established relationships with agencies who have the expertise and resources to provide the nutrition education for the Cal-SAFE program.

The California Department of Education (CDE) Learning Support and Partnership Division (LSPD) oversee the Cal-SAFE Programs throughout California, which offers a comprehensive, integrated, community-linked, school-based program that:

- a. Improves the educational experiences for expectant and parenting students.
- b. Increases the availability of support services for these students.
- c. Provides child care and development services for their children.

This year the CDE Nutrition Services Division partnered with the LSPD to strengthen the quality and quantity of nutrition education provided through the Cal-SAFE programs throughout California, using the results of CDE needs assessment to determine topics. A total of 143 program coordinators, site coordinators, nutrition specialists, child care personnel, certificated teachers, parent liaisons, public health nurses, and social workers attended the four regional workshops. At each workshop, a variety of regional partners, which included University of California Cooperative Extension, *Regional Network for a Healthy California*, Women, Infants, and Children program, and the Program for Infant and Toddler Care, presented on nutrition for pregnant teens and breastfeeding teens; and infant and toddler nutrition. Each presenter also highlighted their program's nutrition education research-based curriculum and their program services and resources.

Through these regional trainings, local Cal-SAFE agencies became more committed to strengthening the nutrition and food security education lessons taught in their programs. Most importantly, sustainable partnerships developed between local Cal-SAFE agencies and regional community partners. Based on written evaluation results, on average, over 80 percent of the participants stated the nutrition education, food security, and community partnerships objectives were well achieved and overall attendees felt more empowered to collaborate with agencies to ensure that their students receive

nutrition education. Many wrote comments such as: “This was the best training that I have ever attended,” “I learned how many organizations are available to us” and “It was well worth my time, especially meeting regional community partners who can help strengthen the nutrition education component of the program.” Many participants requested to have another training that will include more food demonstrations on how to teach the teen parents to cook while increasing fruit and vegetable consumption on a low-income budget.

CDE will continue to coordinate with Cal-SAFE education consultants to provide support in the area of nutrition education. This will include sharing information on upcoming conferences and trainings, information alerts, and resources from community partners. Local agencies can continue to use the Global Resource Guide that they received during the training to access community nutrition program partners and teaching materials; thereby, strengthening nutrition education taught in the Cal-SAFE programs.

For more information, please contact Shannan Young at syoung@cde.ca.gov.

Youth Empowerment Experience

The goal of the Youth Empowerment Pilot Project was to provide support, leadership, technical assistance and training to five projects throughout the state in order to engage and activate youth among the Food Stamp-eligible population to increase fruit and vegetable consumption, increase physical activity, and promote positive community change.

Challenges:

- Technical Assistance (TA) support-The year two sites had to transition to a new TA provider and it took time to build trusting relationships and rapport with some of the adult allies.
- Adult Ally Leadership- One adult ally struggled to meet deadlines with assignments and reports and did not communicate with the Youth Engagement Specialist in a timely manner.

The trainings for the adult allies as well as for both the adult allies and youth leaders were well-received. Many of the youth leaders and adult allies expressed that the trainings helped them to continue their work.

It was revealed in the Evaluation Report that adult allies did report an increase in fruit and vegetable intake as well as an increase in the awareness of the importance of fruit and vegetable consumption.

Aside from increased fruit and vegetable intake and physical activity opportunities, there were other impacts on the youth involved that included: improved leadership skills, increased self-esteem, and improved public speaking and presentation skills.

We plan to continue to have pilot sites work on their action plans to improve fruits and vegetable intake in their youth; provide training and technical assistance to *Network for a Healthy California* contractors on youth engagement using a similar model.

For more information, please contact Joann Gooley at joann.gooley@cdph.ca.gov.