

# Local Network Success Stories

## Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2009



The information within is a statewide compilation of FFY 2009 Success Stories from local *Network for a Healthy California (NETWORK)* projects.

This collection of accomplishments and achievements:

- Derived from FFY 2009 local incentive award, non-profit incentive award, and nutrition education contractors annual progress reports
- Is arranged by agency and channel type
- Is conveniently alphabetized
- Includes contact information for each project

We hope Network funded and non-funded partners find this resource useful and utilize it to strengthen efforts to improve the dietary and physical activity habits of low-income Californians.

This material was produced by the California Department of Public Health's *Network for a Healthy California* with funding from USDA SNAP, known in California as CalFresh (formerly Food Stamps). These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. CalFresh provides assistance to low-income households and can help buy nutritious foods for better health. For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit [www.cachampionsforchange.net](http://www.cachampionsforchange.net).

# **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSIONS**

Madera County Children and Families Commission  
Contract #: 06-55100

### **Youth Olympics and Beyond**

Madera County is a rural community with limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables and safe places to play for the Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) population. In addition, language barrier and economics have made it very difficult for families to get the fruits, vegetables, and physical activity they need.

Through activities such as health fairs, farmers' markets, nutrition education workshops, and events like "Nutrition Olympics," staff has been able to increase knowledge and access to affordable fruits and vegetables, as well as support the needs of the FSNE eligible population by ensuring electronic benefit transfer was added to the local Women, Infants and Children's certified farmers' market. Through these activities, in particular farmers' market nutrition education, staff has seen increased access.

Meaningful change comes when families feel valued, supported, and provided with information that is in their family's best interest. Many families have expressed gratitude and student Amanda Carranza said this "I would like to take this time to say thank you. I really enjoyed the activities, like how to exercise using your baby as a weight. I also enjoyed the smoothies." So, change can happen.

To follow knowledge and retention staff has changed its scope of work to allow follow up with state preschool families. This will provide staff a clearer picture of what is changing and what needs to be change.

For more information, please contact Diane Sandoval at [dsandoval@first5madera.net](mailto:dsandoval@first5madera.net).

# **CITY GOVERNMENT**

## **Por La Vida: A Decade of Community Impact in Montclair**

This year the City of Montclair hit a milestone - the ten year anniversary of its Por La Vida program. Though initially funded by other grant funding, the program has been funded by the *Champions for Change – Network for a Healthy California (Network)* since 2003, and during the last ten years has faced both challenges and success stories. In a recent gathering of the program's consejeras, or trained community volunteers who teach nutrition classes to the community, were able to reflect back on the early stages of the program. When the program first began the Latino community, our target audience, was largely unaware of the concepts of eating fruits and vegetables, making traditional recipes healthier and incorporating physical activity into their lives. The first program organizer had to go door to door to introduce the concept of the Por La Vida program, attempting to gain trust and explain what we wanted to teach the women in our community.

After the program's initial challenges, the program has succeeded in empowering a community of strong women. By teaching these women about nutrition and physical activity we have also showed a community of women something is not only beneficial to them but their entire family and that they can then teach other women about nutrition and physical activity so they can do the same. These women have also become community leaders, going into their children's schools and asking for more fruits and vegetables in school lunches and continually finding new ways to make healthy versions of traditional dishes. These first steps have then empowered these women to become leaders to other parents at their children's schools.

By teaching women that they can take charge of the food they eat and serve to their families, we have showed these women that they can do many things. One woman who completed the program started teaching nutrition classes and discovered she loved teaching, and then went back to school to earn her teaching degree and is now teaching at a middle school in our community. Another graduate of Por La Vida is now the *Network* funded Program Assistant, teaching and showing the women that they can take the skills they learn in Por La Vida classes and go anywhere. Others have gone from being timid homemakers to successfully holding jobs and leadership roles in our community.

The women in the Por La Vida program have continually shown us how empowering a community with knowledge about healthy lifestyles can create leaders. From here, we can only continue to see how these women will affect their communities and the new leadership roles they will take.

Perhaps one day in the near future one of them will become Mayor of our city, and give credit to the early empowerment she gained from learning about health, nutrition, and physical activities in Por La Vida classes.

For more information, please contact Michelle Roche at [mroche@cityofmontclair.org](mailto:mroche@cityofmontclair.org).

## **COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

## **Fun, Food and Fitness Fair**

### **Montebello K-4 Afterschool Nutrition Program**

Teachers at Joseph Gascon Elementary School wanted to promote nutrition education, not only to the students at the school, but to the entire community. They came up with the idea of hosting a community nutrition fair on a Saturday. The biggest challenge was that the grant did not allow any room for additional costs; therefore, the entire cost of the fair had to be donated from various sources.

As the idea gained momentum, the principal agreed to allow the teachers to use the school courtyard and pay for custodial time on a Saturday. The nutrition teachers sent out letters to various organizations targeting health and nutrition to kids and families to set-up a booth at the fair. A bilingual keynote speaker (a family health practitioner) agreed to speak at the event. Local karate and dance studios offered to perform at the fair. Local businesses donated raffle prizes for the event, including a bicycle. Teachers and parents agreed to volunteer for the event. Flyers were distributed to all students and community members. The fair was set for Saturday, June 6, 2009, from 9 am to noon. On the day of the fair, 16 vendors had their booths set up and over 200 students and parents came to the fair. The keynote speaker and performers were well-received by the audience. The participants stayed until the end for the raffle drawings.

Overall, with minimal cost, the teachers were able to rally support and host an immensely successful community fair. All participants walked away with the biggest prize: the knowledge of healthy living and the importance of good nutrition. The teachers felt empowered knowing that even with limited resources, they can be partners in promoting nutrition and physical activity within their community.

To possibly partner with other elementary schools and/or other organizations to reach out to more members in the community.

### **Roosevelt High School**

At the beginning of the year, our program had a full staff of health teachers and things looked bright for the year ahead. Fast forward six months; with state cuts and teacher contract conflicts almost all of the teachers in our program were cut and we were not even sure that health would be taught at the school. Also, physical education teacher's jobs were on the line, as well.

The physical education teachers were able to assist the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* staff in providing and rescheduling nutrition educational classes. The *Network* through the efforts of the three health teachers and physical activity teachers were able to reach the targeted goals.

Even with the state cuts and teacher layoffs, overall the *Network* staff was able to reach the students in providing valuable information through various activities in increasing the consumption of fruits and vegetables for healthy living.

The administrators are pleased with the implementation of Harvest of the Month (HOTM) for the 2010 grant year. The target will be to reach 4,000 students. The *Network* staff is also striving for the school cafeteria to implement HOTM and have participating teachers take the time to choose a fruit or vegetable of the month and support the dissemination of information for that month.

For more information, please contact Manjit Kaur at [manjitkaurjs@msn.com](mailto:manjitkaurjs@msn.com).

### **Accelerating Healthy Change Together**

Nestled in Central Los Angeles just a few blocks east of the Harbor Freeway, The Accelerated School (TAS) is a charter school that serves 900 Pre-K through high school students in what is commonly referred to as a food desert. As agents of healthy change we have conspired with other forces to affect sustainable and meaningful healthy change at a school saddled with an environment that consists of a fortress like cinder-block walled institution due to the vigorous gang activity surrounding the school and incessant commuter traffic. The positive changes that we were able to affect transpired during the months of May and June 2009 when the mural and a social networking site were constructed.

Under these less than optimum circumstances, the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* has teamed with an entity already at TAS named Healthy Eating Active Communities (HEAC). The coalition forged with HEAC has given us added momentum to affect environmental change within the walls of TAS as well as outside of this maximum security facility replete with armed guards to protect the students from the ubiquitous gang presence. HEAC, through a grant from the California Endowment has committed to make over mom and pop stores adjacent to the school to accent whole foods as opposed to processed foods. Within the confines of TAS, the *Network* has guided HEAC and TAS to appropriate over \$4,000.00 towards a tile mural project. This collaborative project brought together all of the elementary students in a collective effort to create a permanent mural reminding all that health is a priority at TAS. The tile mural coupled with the consistent Harvest of the Month (HOTM) delivery has created a health awareness that was anemic at best at TAS before our arrival in 2006. The HOTM newsletter that is sent out on a monthly basis shadowing the HOTM samples to all Pre-K-6<sup>th</sup> grade classes at TAS has brought an added health awareness that has parents commenting on how their own children are now helping with the grocery shopping guiding them to the produce section to seek out whole foods that were once shunned for cheaper prepackaged foods. Augmenting our efforts, TAS parents have been empowered to help with the TAS Wellness Policy with guidance from HEAC and the *Network*. Furthering our efforts, the Department of Public Health and a seminal organization named Youth Activism Against Obesity (YAAO) has also teamed with HEAC and our *Network* to bring the older students at TAS into the battle against childhood obesity. YAAO has empowered youth to create a social networking site called [werefedup.com](http://werefedup.com) an unorthodox student generated website that seeks to promote health awareness in adolescents.

This many pronged approach to healthy change at a school mired in the middle of a challenging urban environment exemplifies the amplified power of agencies working together in a myriad of modalities both within the confines of TAS and beyond.

The mural that we helped erect will decorate the gray institutional cinder block walls for many generations, exemplifying the power of collective student action espoused by R.W. Emerson, "Health is the greatest wealth."

Please visit [werefedup.com](http://werefedup.com) and witness the power of student generated social networking for positive change. Further supporting steps in the right direction a collaborative effort with students, parents, and HEAC are under way to ascertain safe walking routes to TAS. We are working to support physical activity that prior generations took for granted, the simple act of walking to school. Working collaboratively we are making a difference one step at a time.

For more information, please contact Christine Bou Sleiman at [christine.elhaj@gmail.com](mailto:christine.elhaj@gmail.com).

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

### **A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words**

Since its inception in 2006, the Lemon Grove School District (LGSD) Wellness Council has been working to improve the food environment at school sites in the District. In 2009, parents and teachers took issue with the Wellness Council's proposal to address the consumption of snack foods and caffeinated beverages on school grounds.

From the start, University of California (UC), San Diego's *Nutrition Link* (LIA) has been an active participant in LGSD's Wellness Council. Crystal Nguyen, health educator with UC San Diego's *Nutrition Link* program and a film student, and partnered with the Lemon Grove School District and Kaiser Permanente's Healthy ONES to document the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of key stakeholders with regard to the content and implementation of the wellness policy. The collaboration resulted in a twelve-minute documentary that captures the school food environment and the inherent potential and daily challenges of a District's approach to wellness. Much of the footage captured students eating foods with high amounts of added sugar, fat, and sodium, while others ate nothing at all. And key stakeholders who share an interest in the success and well-being of students did not always find common ground with regard to the District's role in student nutrition. The process and final product resulted in heightened awareness of the school food environment and have generated discussion about the design and implementation of wellness policies.

The film has developed into a tool to raise awareness and motivate stakeholders (staff, administrators, students, and parents) to collaborate for improving school food environments through policy. To date the film has been screened to LGSD's Wellness Council and District administrators.

The film is slated for viewing by parents and additional District stakeholders at future school and community events. The LGSD Wellness Council hopes to work with newly identified and emerging advocates to generate support for the development of policies to improve the food environments in the District.

For more information, please contact Kari Herzog at [kherzog@ucsd.edu](mailto:kherzog@ucsd.edu).

**COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

### **Update Professional Development with Online Trainings**

Tight economic times are challenging for professional development programs. In many *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* funded school-based programs, districts are reducing teacher training time, restricting travel approval, and decreasing teacher release time. This year the California Healthy Kids Resource Center (CHKRC) tackled this growing problem by developing an online training system accessible to all *Network* programs and other low-income schools and youth-serving agencies throughout the state. The new system enables *Network* local incentive awardees (LIA) project staff to access a variety of free, 30-minute nutrition and physical activity training modules 24 hours a day from the CHKRC Web site.

To gather information about current use of online trainings and important considerations and features for the training system, CHKRC interviewed *Network* and other key informants. They indicated that while staff's current participation in online trainings is low, anticipated use of online trainings is high. Key informants also noted that the most important online training features would be inclusion of real-life application, trainings developed by a reputable agency, and certificates of completion that could lead to district professional development hours/credits, or community college credits, four-year college credits, or salary-step increases.

To meet online training platform accessibility guidelines in a cost-effective way, CHKRC designed an in-house online training platform. This accessible online training platform not only allows for online delivery of priority nutrition and physical activity trainings but also for collection of training participant information by county and by *Network* region. Online training completion certificates will be granted to online training participants following completion of each online training module. The online trainings are accessible via a direct link from CHKRC and California After School Resource Center Web sites.

Because the site is shared with the California Department of Education (CDE) funded programs, the system and pages were reviewed by the CDE Technology Services Division (TSD). TSD reviewed the systems and Web pages for compliance with state and federal accessibility guidelines. TSD reported to the CDE After School Programs Office that the CHKRC system uses "best practices" and is "a model for state-funded online trainings."

*Network* state staff was oriented to the online training system and nutrition and physical activity modules during development. They were enthusiastic about supporting the online training system and wanted to participate in rolling it out to the LIAs.

CHKRC will continue to refine the online training system, add new training modules, and train *Network* funded programs to access and incorporate this innovative tool into their professional development programs.

For more information, please contact Deborah Wood at [Dwood@californiahealthykids.org](mailto:Dwood@californiahealthykids.org).

Alameda County Office of Education  
Nutritional Learning Community Coalition  
Contract #: 07-65305

### **Extending Our Reach**

Our program, *Project EAT (Educate, Act, Thrive)* formerly known as the Alameda County Office of Education Nutritional Learning Community Coalition, grew very quickly working with the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)*. At each new school site, we employed a Nutrition Education Site Coordinator who would facilitate teacher lessons, garden-based nutrition education, and overall school projects for nutrition education and physical activity promotion. Following other successful models such as the Berkeley Network project, we incorporated cooking in the classroom in a more comprehensive way by hiring cooking coordinators to work with the site coordinators to cook with teachers and students. However, since the *Network* was asked to limit growth, we had to limit cooking coordinators to four with twenty-six school sites. Ultimately, our goal was to create an equitable and sustainable approach to cooking in the classroom.

We evaluated what the cooks were doing that increased teachers on site doing the cooking themselves. We thought that if we could build a sustainable system then we could deliver kits to teachers so that they could cook themselves and the four cooks could facilitate more schools. This would both expand the reach of this popular program and create a sustainable infrastructure for schools to continue nutrition education work. We created a system where the cooking coordinators became on site coaches who gradually transferred the responsibility to the teachers to do the work themselves. First they cooked for the teacher, next they cooked with the teacher, and finally, they watched the teacher cook. We thought that they could do this for three months and then just facilitate the delivery of supplies. About 50-60 percent of the teachers actually cooked when we did this. However, after examining the system we found that where the cooking coordinator taught for the classes for half a year, and then did the gradual release system for another half a year, 80 percent of the teachers cooked.

What a success! We now have our cooking coordinators teaching and coaching teachers at four new sites and facilitating the four sites that they worked at last year. Although it will take five years with the current team, we will have created a sustainable cooking program that is integrated into the school site.

Our next step is to think through the Nutrition Education Site Coordinator positions to figure out what we can further integrate into the infrastructure of the schools so that they will become places where students and staff are physically active and eating the right number of fruits and vegetables every day.

For more information, please contact Christine Boynton at [cboynton@acoe.org](mailto:cboynton@acoe.org).

### **Salad Bar is a Pathway to 5 a Day**

The students who attend Rock La Fleche Community School act like typical teenagers when it comes to making healthy food choices. They are significantly in control of their food choices (especially outside of school) and tend to select fast and convenience foods without much concern for nutrients. Nutrition and healthy eating is even more of a challenge for these students because they are involved in probation, social services, and foster care systems. While they are open to trying and learning about new foods and healthy ways of eating, it is difficult for most students to translate their learning into behaviors beyond the classroom experience.

The salad bar at Rock La Fleche (offered once or twice per week between October 2008 and mid-April 2009) was a success in that students were able to connect healthy eating directly to planning, planting, and harvesting fruits and vegetables from the school garden. Students met twice per week for nutrition in the garden activities like seasonal planting and tree planting, harvesting, cooking and tasting, and providing produce (lettuce, carrots, potatoes, radishes, onions, strawberries, and fruit) for the salad bar. Although the salad bar was primarily for taste testing and not to replace the lunch meal, it developed into an activity that students anticipated, relished, and enjoyed together each week. Selected students washed and prepped the garden produce, selected (via a student survey) items to be purchased which supplemented the harvested items from the garden, and set up the salad bar each week for their peers. Each week all of the food in the salad bar was consumed. This provided direct evidence to program coordinators that students at Rock La Fleche would regularly choose and eat a healthful snack comprised mostly of fresh vegetables.

Through the salad bar, Rock La Fleche students were regularly exposed to healthful options of fruits and vegetables at school. Students overwhelmingly participated in this tasting activity every week, including growing food in the garden and choosing and consuming salad bar items. They were able to enjoy an alternative option which represented at least one serving of fruits and vegetables that students were informed about during nutrition education classes. The salad bar provided a direct pathway for students to make a healthy choice that was connected to their classroom learning. Students' participation in the salad bar occurred in the context of their ongoing work in the garden to produce the food in order to increase their consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. The salad bar was the result of that collective effort and the individual learning. Students may therefore leave the program with a significant understanding about the benefits of consuming fresh fruits and vegetables and may independently make healthier eating choices.

Based upon the success of the salad bar program at Rock La Fleche, program coordinators will continue to utilize salad bars at other target schools where gardens exist and sufficient amounts of food can be produced.

For more information, please contact Toni Adams at [vtoni@acoe.org](mailto:vtoni@acoe.org).

Fresno County Office of Education  
Contract #: 08-85131

**Kindergartners know how to get their Hands Dirty, Thanks to the Extra Efforts taken by their School Teacher**

Houghton-Kearney's Kindergarten students, in Central Unified School District, have discovered that when the right planting steps are followed, words and imagination truly come to life. Creativity, role-modeling, and being hands-on have been a means for teaching challenged English Language and English as a Second Language learners.

Students learned on a daily basis how, Harvest of the Month produce could be openly discussed and connected to English, Math, and Science via a Day in the Life. Another aspect of this success story involved fine motor skills that developed hand-eye coordination, group activities, singing and acting out roles to facilitate teamwork, and social skills. Highlighting the end of the student's week included a *Cooking in the Classroom* demonstration that tied everything together. Because of the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* partnership, the kindergarten teacher was able to receive all the necessary materials, supplies, and support needed to make the magic happen.

Friday's allowed eager upper grade students opportunities to do peer-to-peer mentoring that boosted leadership skills. Past experiences indicated a correlation among learning and retention when applied with visuals, audio, and kinesthetic techniques; a definite win-win for the teacher, upper grade students, and those kindergartners who craved fun-filled and action-packed activities.

These yearlong opportunities offered children opportunities or chances to grow with enthusiasm and self-confidence; something these challenged English Language and English as a Second Language learners yearned for. An upcoming goal will be to replicate these techniques to our *Network* primary classes, while equipping them with necessary materials, supplies, and support needed to make their A Day in the Life, ever so successful.

For more information, please contact Cyndi Kirby-Dean at [ckirby@fcoe.org](mailto:ckirby@fcoe.org).

### **Cooking Up Some Fun in the After School Program**

Nutrition education staff at the Humboldt County Office of Education has wanted to expand our Harvest of the Month (HOTM) efforts into the after school setting. Making connection with these programs was challenging and limited until a partnership was created with the Redwood Afterschool Network. Starting with this reporting period we have been able to attend monthly meetings where nutrition education has become an integral part of the meeting and is a standing item on the agenda. Nutrition education staff models and distributes a HOTM cooking activity along with a physical activity promotion activity and kick-off our Junior Chef activities. Through the Junior Chef activities students learned about the importance of fruits and vegetables to good health along with food preparation skills while applying critical thinking, math, science, and literacy skills. The Junior Chef program became so popular that 7 of the 14 sites offered it during their summer program. This exceeds our goal of bringing three programs on board. One program director even commented "I would like to extend our thanks for the wonderful summer Junior Chef program. It was an awesome addition to our program activities. The kids really looked forward to all of the components. This was one of our most successful summer programs ever and the Junior Chef program was a big part of that." Throughout the summer children participating in the Junior Chef program learned how to make seven different salsa recipes as they learned about different fruits and vegetables, spices and herbs, knife and measuring skills, and recipe modifications. To culminate the Junior Chef Summer program activities, we partnered with the Regional Lead Retail Campaign to host a salsa tasting at a local participating grocery store. This opportunity allowed Junior Chef participants to further practice their skills while making a connection with the community.

Participation in the Junior Chef activities had a lasting impression on many of the children. At the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year, one eager student was quick to ask staff if he could be a Junior Chef again this year. He went on to share what his favorite salsa recipe was and share details about the other Junior Chef activities long after they were done for the year.

Because of the success of the program, an additional eight after school programs have signed on to participate during the 2009-2010 school year. Additionally, a proposal was submitted and accepted to share the Junior Chef program at an upcoming Regional After School conference.

For more information, please contact Linda Prescott, R.D., M.A., at [lprescott@humboldt.k12.ca.us](mailto:lprescott@humboldt.k12.ca.us).

### **Teacher Eats a Rainbow to Personal Success**

This story was relayed to me by one of our nutritionists after talking with a teacher in whose class she was doing food demonstrations: As a child and through my current adulthood, I never would eat any fruits or veggies. I was a “Carbo Queen” with protein thrown in for good measure. Teaching Kindergarten in Standard School District, I have been introduced to Harvest of the Month. Each month, healthy alternatives such as bananas, apples, and sugar snap peas have been delivered to my classroom. Offering these foods to my students along with fun lessons plans related to science, physical activities, and math were a new way of teaching. The kids loved when the food arrived. I had never tasted these foods or if I had it was at a very young age, I most likely cried and spit them out.... So crept in the challenge: How could I be a successful teacher if I wasn’t willing to “taste test” and embrace fruits and veggies myself? Admittedly, I started off slow with taste testing never letting my students see my fear and hesitation. Yet, I also found myself getting excited for the next month’s food to arrive. With taste testing, I have now developed a natural desire to eat fruits and veggies as my daily food choice. I can honestly say, Harvest of the Month has changed my life for the better. I have also introduced a “walking exercise program” into my evening routine. With these changes, I feel healthier; have lost some much needed weight, and most important feel honest and successful in teaching my students about the benefits of “eating a rainbow.” Harvest of the Month will have a positive and lasting impact in my life and that of my students.

For more information, please contact Kimberly K. Thompson at [kithompson@kern.org](mailto:kithompson@kern.org).

### **Healthier Students One District at a Time**

The Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) provides integrated educational programs and services in the diverse and multicultural environment of Los Angeles County. In 2003, the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* LACOE Coalition was formed to provide technical assistance, support, and resources for sub-contracting districts to enhance nutrition education and physical activity promotion efforts. This goal is achieved through ongoing nutrition coalition meetings and nutrition education activities such as hands-on cooking demonstrations, Harvest of the Month (HOTM) taste testing program, nutrition education classes, and activities for students and parents. In addition, teacher and support staff trainings, nutrition education curriculum, resources and materials such as the Harvest of the Month Toolkit are provided. The number of school districts participating in the *Network* LACOE Coalition, has grown from two to eight. One of our major challenges has been not having enough support from administrators and teachers to generate enough state share to fully utilize the funding allowed for the expansion of existing nutrition and physical activity promotional activities. Another challenge has been to show significant improvements in our impact evaluation study.

Given the growing level of interest in the *Network*, we have been able to add two additional school districts to our Coalition without increasing the total amount of our budget. We successfully developed and implemented a fiscal monitoring plan to include necessary tools for our site coordinators to comply with the requirements of the program including expenditure documentation. Our goal is to provide better support to participating teachers and school staff to ensure proper nutrition and physical activity is promoted on an ongoing basis. Teachers have already shown a great deal of enthusiasm in the “Harvest of the Month Tasting Trios” program and we expect that this change will help us reach our goal of meeting 90 percent of the state share budget. This will allow site coordinators to encourage and support additional nutrition activities targeting our eligible students and their families.

The *Network* has left a lasting impression on participating teachers and students. By meeting our state share budget goals, we will be able to expand our program to more eligible students and families.

Below are just a few comments that we have received from teachers participating in the LACOE Coalition educational programs:

- “Parents claim that my students are eating more variety of foods (fruit, vegetables, and other). This is great for my autistic students that have difficulty with tasting new food items and textures.”
- “Most of my students are at least willing to try new fruits and vegetables.”

- “My students are now more positive about eating their fruits and veggies for lunch here at school as well as out in the community. My students are more open to trying new fruits and veggies thanks to the HOTM.”
- “The big one is that students are not taking the cookies that are provided with their lunch. Also hearing students talk about calories and empty calories from bags of chips etc. “
- “My students no longer bring sodas to school for lunch they bring juice boxes. When we have class parties they create their own menu and always include a fruit and vegetable. I’m so excited that they are eating healthier and aware of making healthy food choices.”
- “Less sugar in snacks. More fruits and vegetables in meals. Students are choosing more healthy choices over non-healthy foods. Students are participating in gardening and growing plants, fruits and vegetables. They are so excited that they even start growing healthy foods at home. Parents are more involved.”

LACOE Coalition will continue to build and sustain relationships with district administrators and school staff to ensure successful implementation of nutrition education activities. We will implement a different evaluation plan to better measure our nutrition education interventions to ensure that we achieve our desired outcomes. LACOE Coalition will continue to document progress and meet on a monthly basis to share successes.

For more information, please contact Maryam Shayegh at [Shayegh\\_Maryam@lacoedu.edu](mailto:Shayegh_Maryam@lacoedu.edu).

### **Providing Positive Reinforcement for Teachers Pays Off**

Each summer our Merced County Office of Education Nutrition Team diligently plans for back to school. What will we tell the teachers? What did they say on their comments and evaluations last year? What do they need? Where do we notice that they need help? These are all questions that come to the table for planning our agendas and trainings.

Starting with the 2008-2009 school year, we choose to take whatever training time the administrators would give us, as their time was scarce and they were seeing our value diminish due to their budget and program cuts. Our approach was to focus on the positive rewards of the nutrition education and the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* program at their school.

Each School Nutrition Liaison was responsible for arrangements to train the teachers at assigned schools and develop an agenda. The agendas are simply a guide for Merced County Office of Education staff to know which topics will be covered and who will be making the presentation. They got very creative in how they approached the “positive reinforcement and reward” theme that we were trying to achieve.

One area of focus was what we titled “Logs & Rewards/Prizes.” This gave the Liaisons an opportunity to highlight teachers who had achieved the required number of state share hours, those who had even exceeded that recommendation, and review successful classroom activities. We utilized nutrition education classroom materials that were left over from previous contract years (extra bulletin board boards, die cuts, Harvest of the Month books) to create a resource basket. Each teacher who was acknowledged was able to choose an additional resource for their classroom. We used the training time to also review and highlight the components that are available to the teachers such as the classroom taste testing and resources that have been previously provided for Harvest of the Month.

Our team felt that by starting off the school year with a very positive and rewarding tone of nutrition education that the teachers were excited about their participation in our *Network* program. We continued to do “positive follow ups” throughout the school year and provided technical assistance when we saw someone struggling to meet their commitment to the nutrition program. At the end of the fiscal year, our team was excited to learn that we had earned 100 percent plus of our state share budget.

As a result of the success of our year-long positive reward and promotion, we will start the 2009-2010 school year with similar training agenda's and reinforcement that we used this year. We are looking forward to another successful year.

For more information, please contact Jaci Westbrook at [jwestbrook@mcoe.org](mailto:jwestbrook@mcoe.org).

### **Eating Right When the Money's Tight**

The availability of fresh fruits and vegetables at the local stores in the community is very limited. When there are fruits and vegetable available, they are not affordable. Our goal with this event was to highlight the availability of fruits and vegetables that are both easily accessed within the local community, and affordable for our families.

February was Canned Food Month. To celebrate, we hosted an, "Eating Right When the Money's Tight" family nutrition education event. We knew that we wanted to go to the next level with this event and make it memorable. We started by collaborating with our regional network leads to pool together resources in our local community. Together, we were able to organize a grocery store tour, a canned food donation collection for the Redwood Empire Food Bank, a canned food sculpture project, and bring together many other community resources for a fun family nutrition education event.

During the grocery store tour, the students were able to sample a variety of different apples, tour the many departments of the store, practice reading food labels, participate in a cooking demonstration, and experience a physical activity demonstration, all right there inside the store.

The regional network leads were able to get a donation of over 300 cans so that our students could build the canned food sculpture designed by the students at Sheppard Elementary. The canned watermelon design was later dismantled and donated to the Redwood Empire Food Bank.

The "Eating Right When the Money's Tight" family nutrition education event was a huge success for the community. Over 130 students and 100 parents participated in the activities. Parents were able to pick up information about the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, food stamp applications, food assistance programs through the Redwood Empire Food Bank, and coupons for free produce at Food Maxx. There were also nutrition education art projects, fruit and vegetable tastings, physical activities led by Zumba dance instructors, and a "Rate the Taste" lesson evaluating infused waters. Everyone went home excited and happy that evening.

Parents have shared with us that they have since applied for food stamps, signed up for WIC support, and they now know that they can come to us if they need help and that we will help guide them in accessing local resources.

We are working with the North Coast Regional Network to make this an annual event.

For more information, please contact Julie McClure at [julie.mcclure@calserves.org](mailto:julie.mcclure@calserves.org).

### **Am I Going to Die**

The alternative education students of Santiago Creek School are faced with several barriers when choosing healthy food options and participating in physical activity. The school site, located in Santa Ana, does not have space allocated for physical activity. The only space allocated is a parking lot. As part of a youth engagement activity, the students decided to assess their environment by conducting a Photo Voice project. The photos are telling of the barriers they are faced with. In turn the students decided to take what they have learned and teach their peers at the school site. They also decided to work with another neighboring alternative education site for homeless elementary school students.

Each week the high school students provide nutrition/physical activity classes. The younger students look up to them and listen to their every word – the message is effective being taught peer to peer. In one class, “Eating on the Run,” the students were asked to measure the amount of fat using shortening. One student, a tall, thin Hispanic, 16 year-old boy measured out about 175 grams of fat when he ordered two double cheeseburgers, fries, and a shake. He proudly claimed he ate that at least twice a week for lunch and was unwilling to give it up because he “is thin and exercises” and basically did not think it was negatively affecting his health.

In September, the students participated in a staff health fair with me. They created a Rethink your Drink booth and educated staff working with Food Stamp Nutrition Education families about healthier beverage options. At the health fair, screenings were provided. The tall, thin, 16 year-old decided to have his blood pressure and cholesterol measured. His blood pressure was extremely high, his cholesterol was high. He looked at me and asked me, “Am I going to die?” a teachable moment that I took advantage of explaining the relationship to disease, heredity, and diet/exercise. Since then he has been a leader in the project and understands the importance as many of the other teens in the project do.

The students will be presenting their project to the ACCESS administrators. We have looked at our student store and have provided the staff with healthier options to sell to students. They continue to provide lessons to the students at Project Hope (homeless youth). They want to make changes promoting physical activity in their community. We see the spark in their eyes as they become advocates for their community.

For more information, please contact Yvonne Ortega at [yortega@access.k12.ca.us](mailto:yortega@access.k12.ca.us).

## Anaheim City School District

### Cooking in the Classroom

One of the objectives for our district is to provide cooking in the classroom experiences to both elementary and preschool classes. Previously we had utilized a consultant who was great, but since the activities were planned externally, they did not always mirror everything we wanted to include in the program. Additionally, coordinating the events on days that were available for both the classroom teachers and the consultant was difficult and we were unable to target the number of students we thought would make a strong impact.

In November 2008, Anaheim City School District (ACSD) filled a new position for a Nutrition Education Assistant, specifically to coordinate and conduct these activities. Rebecca Ramos immediately took on the task of creating exceptional cooking in the classroom events, in which the students are taught about healthy eating, staying fit, and a healthy lifestyle, and then given the opportunity to create a simple, age-appropriate recipe. Rebecca was able to reach approximately 4,000 students in ACSD through the cooking in the classroom events. Sample recipes included “food bugs” for preschoolers; “fruit kabobs” and “fruit pizzas” for grades kinder through second, and “fruit cups” and “edamame salad” third through sixth grades.

These events have been very useful in making nutrition and eating healthy a fun activity that is easy to understand for students of all ages. In addition, the cooking in the classroom events have increased teacher participation in all aspects of the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* program and improved enthusiasm for teaching nutrition education in the classroom. In all regards, hiring a specific person to conduct these activities has allowed the program to evolve more organically and we have been able to make weekly improvements and changes to provide the best possible cooking in the classroom experiences.

The most notable impact the cooking in the classroom events has had is on the general excitement and enthusiasm for nutrition education and a focus on healthy lifestyles within the schools. Teachers have explained that they are now more apt to teach additional nutrition in their classroom, particularly during the few weeks before and after a cooking event. The students are excited to try new foods and experiment with “cooking.” It is rare to see a child refuse to try the recipes and many times those students are convinced by their peers to try new foods by the end of the lesson. Finally, many parents state that their students return home from a cooking in the classroom lesson and ask to continue trying new recipes, fruits, and vegetables at home! These behavioral changes outside of the school environment are essential to sustained change.

For the 2009-2010 school year, Rebecca has improved her cooking in the classroom events further by incorporating the Harvest of the Month (HOTM) items, obtaining new and simpler recipes, and connecting each grade level lesson to the California Health Education Standards to provide more complete nutrition education. Additionally, by beginning the lessons early in the school year, we will be able to reach a much larger audience, especially targeting more preschool classrooms than before.

## **Buena Park School District**

### **Exposure, the More the Merrier**

It is important that our students increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables and to try new types of fruits and vegetables. Many students will not try something new, just because they are not familiar with it. We all know that eating a variety of fruits and vegetables is important for children to improve their overall health and to develop a healthy lifestyle. How you go about doing that is a challenge, even parents say it is hard to get their children to try new fruits and vegetables. Bringing it to the classroom and making it interesting is one way. Included in the classroom situation is a little positive peer pressure.

One place that children can be exposed to more new fruits and vegetables is the school. In the school setting, for one, they are there for about six hours five days a week; second, there is positive peer pressure. When students are surrounded by their peers, who are trying something new, they are often times more likely to try it too. This effect of positive peer pressure often gets students who would not try something at home, to give it a try if all their classmates are doing it. A great place for this to happen is in the classroom. In the past year there have been 102 teachers in the Buena Park School District (BPSD) who had the HOTM produce item delivered to their class monthly, providing their students the chance to try and be exposed to new fruits and vegetables, and even to try again something they may know about but are a little unsure of. This has been a very positive experience for BPSD, allowing many more students to experience and have more exposure to HOTM.

Students are beginning to try and eat more fruits and vegetables. Teachers tell stories of students not quite so certain about a specific fruit or vegetable, but with a little positive peer pressure, they tried something new, and then asked for a second taste. This is happening in a number of the classrooms, telling us that the positive peer pressure works to get the student to first try something new, and then when they find out they like it they want more.

Our next step is to continue providing this to all teachers who want to participate, and to encourage as many teachers to do so. We may also begin to work with Food Services to provide taste testing in the cafeteria for those students who are not in a class where the teacher participates in HOTM. By providing taste testing in the cafeteria, it would be available to all students.

## Capistrano Unified School District

### The San Juan Elementary Nutrition Mural

San Juan Elementary School is one of the oldest schools in Capistrano Unified School District. It is located in the heart of downtown across the street from the beautiful Mission San Juan Capistrano. The school staff is very dedicated and hard working. Recently the school implemented a two-way language immersion program in English and Spanish. The teachers and administrators work hard to encourage parental involvement at their site. Like many schools, San Juan is under great pressure to continually improve test scores. This endeavor dominates the curriculum and planning efforts of the teachers. Our challenge at San Juan is to encourage integration of nutrition education in the daily program and educate parents about the critical need for children to maintain a healthy diet and be physically active.

We decided to offer the principal at San Juan, Mrs. Silvia Pule, the opportunity to use *Network* funds to work with artist Elizabeth Shepard to create a nutrition mural at the school. Mrs. Pule was very interested in this opportunity and was particularly eager to follow our suggestion that the students be involved in designing the mural. We created and printed a "Nutrition Mural Design Contest" flyer for all the students at San Juan. Each teacher taught a mini lesson on nutrition and assigned the mural design as homework for their students. We sent these student designs to Elizabeth Shepard and she included elements of their designs in her mural. Ms. Shepard also worked hard to include the historical elements of San Juan in her beautiful design of children participating in physical activities in the midst of many colorful fruits and vegetables growing in fields around a depiction of the school. This mural ended up covering an entire wall in the multipurpose room of the school. Ms. Pule started off the new school year in September by inviting students and parents to a "Mural Unveiling." She worked with Food and Nutrition Services to provide a delicious breakfast of fresh fruits for students and parents in the multipurpose room, at no cost to the *Network* program. As families entered the room to see the mural, Ms. Pule asked students a simple nutrition question and gave them a sticker before directing them to the fresh fruit breakfast. Parents and students were truly impressed by the beautiful mural and its message "San Juan students flourish because they are well nourished." Many parents expressed gratitude and appreciation of the beautiful mural and the important message it conveys.

Each day when the multipurpose room is used for lessons, assemblies, music classes, Parents and Teachers Association meetings and staff meetings, students, parents, and staff are reminded of the importance of eating fruits and vegetables and being active when they see the giant, colorful mural in the back of the room. Recently, when we visited a staff meeting at San Juan in the multipurpose room, Ms. Pule reminded the teachers about the importance of integrating nutrition education and completing and turning in the monthly nutrition logs.

The nutrition mural makes a very bold statement about nutrition. The fruits and vegetables are bright, colorful and very appealing. The depictions of active children are also very inspiring. We would like to see a nutrition mural at each of our sites because of the lasting impression it leaves on the school. We are encouraging each of our principals to visit San Juan to see its mural and to try to find a place at their site for such a beautiful display promoting health for its students.

## **Capistrano Unified School (Pre-K)**

### **Nutrition Together**

The Capistrano Unified School District School Readiness and Child Development State Preschool Program's goal is to collaborate with effort and community partnerships to serve families in need. The *Network* has enabled and provided opportunities for extended nutrition collaborations. This funding has allowed the programs to provide support, resources, and nutrition education to families and children on making healthy food choices, being physically active, encouraging community food resources, and when eligible applying for Women, Infants and Children Food Stamps, and the free/reduced lunch program at school. The local family market that is within walking distance from the elementary school offers a variety of healthy foods that are not always utilized by the families. The families need assistance and instruction on choosing low-cost meals, preparing healthy meals, and nutritious snacks.

*Network* celebrated a family educational opportunity with the county health care association, state preschool, elementary school, and El Toro Rojo market. During class students tasted new vegetables, played fruit and vegetable bingo, and read the story "The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear book." Afterwards, students from the state preschool paraded over to the market with teachers and parent volunteers in their strawberry costumes. At the market they became food critics tasting smoothies, played wheel of nutrition, participated in a physical activity demonstration, reviews a recipe book, community resources, and a tour of the market. Also available for consultation were champion moms, dietitians, and a pediatrician.

The opportunity to participate in this activity allowed children and families to utilize the neighborhood resources to promote healthy eating and lifestyles. Parents were encouraged and valued this family learning experience.

The next steps include planning and following up with families and teachers with resources and activities for the classroom and at home that encourage life-long healthy habits. Plan and implement nutrition activities for parents and children to work together using preschool age appropriate school readiness activities.

## Centralia School District

### Cooking in the Classroom

One of the objectives for our district is to implement cooking experiences in the classroom at the Child Care - After School programs. We consulted with Chef in the Classroom and set-up two presentations during winter break to be aligned with the HOTM. The staff implemented lesson plans that covered MyPyramid, how to read food labels, and how to choose healthy nutritional foods. The week was a great hands-on experience for the children. They not only learned nutritional facts about fruits and vegetables, they also learned that they can choose to be a chef as a career choice.

Our preschool teachers have utilized the materials given in the Pre-K binder, by planning and implementing physical activity, nutritional lesson plans for the program, conducting monthly cooking in the classroom demonstrations, and offering parents an opportunity to come in and participate.

Our preschool parents are given the HOTM parent newsletter encouraging them to serve HOTM fruit or vegetable at home. Parents seem to be excited to receive this information and continue to ask teachers for more resources and recipe books so they can increase their fruit and vegetable consumption as well as ways to promote physical activity in their households.

The classroom nutrition education and cooking demonstrations have been very valuable making the experience a healthy enjoyable activity that is easy for parents and students to participate in. Overall teachers are participating in all aspects of the *Network* program and are enthusiastic and continue to find new ways to promote the program.

The lasting impact cooking in the classroom demonstrations have provided includes excitement and interest for nutrition education and a focus on healthy lifestyles within the schools. The parents and students are excited to try new foods and experiment with "cooking." Many parents have informed the preschool teachers that by making these small changes of implementing fruits and vegetables at home they have increased their energy level and jump started a healthy lifestyle for the whole family by making more mindful decisions when purchasing foods at the grocery store.

For the 2009-2010 school year, our programs will continue to incorporate HOTM items and connect lesson plans to the California Health Education Standards to provide a complete nutrition education program. We will also be incorporating bulletin boards in the classroom and defined accessible cooking areas utilizing cooking carts and materials purchased (such as books, nutritional games). These areas will be available for the children to have access on a daily basis and allow children to engage in hands on activities to stimulate their interest.

## **Cypress City School District**

### **Let's Get Steppin'**

A lengthened stepping program was implemented at King Elementary.

Clair King School participated in a school district wide stepping and nutrition education eight-week program called, "Stepping into Health." The program, targets both students and teachers, included: 45 minutes of didactic nutrition education, 30 minutes Chef in the Classroom cooking class, and 45 minutes of non-competitive physical activity each week. Both students and teachers were given pedometers to encourage increased physical activity. A total of 16 teachers and 361 students completed the program. The teachers developed their own walking clubs and stepped a total of 1,379,004 steps or ~1,600 miles. One of the teachers lost fifteen pounds during the program. The students walked a total of 21,919,718 steps or ~11,000 miles. Steps were recorded by the nutrition educators on a weekly basis and the top two stepping students received a prize for their achievement. Acknowledgement of the teacher's stepping success was also provided, of which his or her class received a health party, weekly. Nutrition education topics were: Milk – Bone Growth, Protein – Be a Power Ranger Strong!, Starches – Fiber the Key to Colon Health, Fruit – Throw a Tantrum for Fruit, Vegetables – Eat Your Colors, Menu writing – Take Charge of Your School, Hidden Fats – Beware of your Favorite Fast Food, Sugar in Beverages – They are stealing your money. These presentations were knowledge, behavioral, and self-efficacy based. The weekly physical activity program included a science component which was designed to be fun, teaches that physical activity is healthy and non-competitive. The games played were: Crossing the River, Marine Boot Camp, Alien Invasion, Clean your Room, Get Soaked Bowling, Animals and the Zoo Keeper, Mosquito Tag, and Get Stuck in the Mud. The program was well received and the principal and teachers requested again for 2009-2010. The children still remember the program and requested it again.

## **La Habra City School District**

### **Healthy Classroom Celebrations**

The *Network* funded project at La Habra City School District (LHCSD) has been successful in increasing the number of preschool, elementary, and middle school students and parents who receive nutrition education and physical activity promotion information. But our families do face barriers in choosing healthy foods and becoming more physical active. According to the 2000 Census, La Habra has a large, growing Hispanic population (49 percent) with linguistic, economic, medical, and geographical challenges. As one parent reports, rising cost, lack of grocery stores within walking distance with ample healthy food selections, and lack of knowledge to help decide what is a healthy choice are some of the challenges they face.

With the help of *Network* funds, LHCS D has been able to provide students and their families with ample opportunities in school to learn how to make healthy food choices, from the HOTM Food Sampling Events to the Chefs in the Classroom presentations. From these interventions our students and families are slowly starting to make changes in what they eat and the activities they do. A shining example of this trend is clearly presented in our classroom celebrations. Teachers are advocating for Healthy Classroom Celebrations – requesting parents to bring fruits and vegetables instead of cake and candy. In one Kindergarten classroom recently, the teacher requested the parents to bring healthy food options for their child’s celebration. The parents brought a platter of various fruits. The kindergarten students actually devoured the entire platter and wanted more, which surprised all the adults since most young children have a preference for sugary sweets. We are hearing more and more stories like this throughout our schools.

We are seeing some lasting impact in our students, families, and staff. Students are becoming more vocal to both district personnel and their parents as to the type of foods they want to consume (they want healthier food options). We are beginning to have staff conduct school-wide events that focus on nutrition and physical activity on their own (without the assistance of the *Network* Coordinator).

In spite of many obstacle facing residents, there is a strong movement of collaboration in La Habra regarding obesity. The city of La Habra is developing a “city-wide plan” to address the issue of obesity. Not only were the school district, city departments, and local businesses present, but so were residents. The city is beginning to implement some of the items in the plan (like conducting 5-10 minutes of physical activity before city-sponsored music concerts in the park). In addition, LHCS D plans on doing more interventions geared towards parents, since they have primary control as to what their children eat when they are not in school. With everyone working together we hope for a brighter and healthier future.

## **Magnolia School District**

### **Anesthetic Parents**

Our School Readiness Program offers HOTM Parent Education at all of our preschool classes. The challenge is getting our parents to stay for the classes each month. Another challenge is to keep our parents coming back each month and not just reading the parent newsletter for HOTM information.

We have scheduled all our classes to begin at the same time at the start of each preschool class so we can make it convenient for the parents to stay and hopefully reach as many parents as possible. We have also utilized the techniques given in the Pre-K binder, especially building rapport within the group. At two of our preschools we had parents who were able to get in touch with their thoughts and feelings and bonded well together. They attended classes each month and shared with each other different ways they prepared HOTM from the previous month. It was a great experience to see

this group of parents excited, enthusiastic, and empowered to increase their fruit and vegetable consumption and promote physical activity in their households. The lasting impact of this intervention is the change in behavior and lifestyle of these families after attending our monthly classes that will hopefully be a permanent part of their lives.

Continue to improve our techniques as educators to promote this type of involvement in our nutrition classes so we can empower our parents to increase fruit and vegetable consumption and live healthy active lives.

## **Westminster School District**

### **Children and Parents Learn Together**

Westminster School District is located in the western portion of Orange County and is a community of striking cultural diversity. After the Vietnam War ended on April 30, 1975, a huge wave of Vietnamese refugees left their homeland and resettled in the United States. The largest concentrations of refugees settled in Westminster and parts of Garden Grove. In the past 15 years, the district has also seen a decline in the Caucasian families and an increase in the Hispanic population.

Additionally, a large number of families served through the *Network* funding live in high density, low-income apartments, many of which are in substandard condition. Due to high rental costs, it is not uncommon to find two or three families sharing a one or two bedroom dwelling. Despite the family problems facing our multi-ethnic communities, they all possess particular strengths. Overwhelmingly, all of our families share a strong sense of cultural pride, a capacity to endure and overcome impedance and life challenges, and an inherent desire to support their children.

The monthly parent nutrition trainings, which included 30 minutes of nutrition education that mirrored the lessons the children were learning in the classroom, were highly successful in helping parents grow in their understanding about feeding their families healthy food and the importance of physical activity. Having the children act as the chefs for the HOTM parent taste testing events added greatly to the success of our parent education component. Many of the HOTM fruit and vegetables were new to our families, since many of these foods were uncommon to their cultural group. The team (five Westminster School District [WSD] preschool teachers, WSD school readiness nurse, and Orange County Department of Education's Kari Tuggle and Dareen Abdrabou), who designed the children's and parents' educational component took great care in selecting recipes that were both reflective, as well as new to our cultural groups, and having the children serve the parents during the test tasting events encouraged the parents to attend the training and try new foods.

Pre- and post- surveys were distributed to parents in one of three different languages: English, Spanish, or Vietnamese based upon their own language preference. English and Spanish versions of the Fruit and Vegetable Inventory and the Fruit and Vegetable Checklist surveys used have pre-established validity and reliability.

Overall, the results of the survey revealed the monthly nutrition education parents received did change the classroom environment significantly. Parents became more open to various fruits and vegetables that they would not have otherwise taste tested, mostly due to cultural preferences. They were more supportive and encouraging of their children's exploration of various fruits and vegetables. Also, when bringing food items to classroom celebrations, parents began choosing healthier food options like fruit instead of sugary sweets. Finally, parents and their children reported purchasing more fresh fruits and vegetables when shopping for groceries, including featured HOTM produce items.

For more information, please contact Kari Tuggle at [ktuggle@ocde.us](mailto:ktuggle@ocde.us).

### **Treats for Trade**

Halloween is a fun and exciting holiday that comes each year and should be celebrated. However, children are exposed to an excess of unhealthy foods with no nutritional value and continue to graze on the treats throughout the month and even throughout the year depending on how much candy they collect. We would like to have the children celebrate the holiday with a challenge and in a healthier way.

Through network funds we have created an event that takes place after Halloween that allows the children to compete in a challenge amongst their peers and other schools within the county. The children turn in their Halloween candy to their classroom to be weighted as a class total and compete against all the other classrooms at their schools. Treats for each class are weighed to get a school total. This amount is used to compete against all other schools participating throughout the county. The class winner at each school gets a healthy class party and the school that has the most candy in pounds gets a healthy party for the entire school. The candy along with thank you letters and pictures from the students get sent over to the troops fighting the war. Last year we collected over 700 pounds of candy at ten schools.

The students were so excited to have their candy sent to the troops and asked if we would do the challenge every year. The parents are happy to have their children give up some of the non-healthy treats in support of our troops and in lure of their kids health.

The children now are promoting the event this year along with the teachers and staff. We hope to have more schools and classrooms participate. Flyers are passed out to all the parents and bags are made with the Candy Monster on it for the kids to dump their candy into to be weighted. Each year we hope to collect more pounds of treats and promote healthy alternatives to candy at Halloween.

For more information, please contact Tanya Marshall at [tmarshall@shastacoe.org](mailto:tmarshall@shastacoe.org).

### **Peachy Keen Resources**

This year our *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* program staff was met with the challenge of generating new passion and motivation for teachers and school staff feeling overwhelmed, under staffed, and constrained by ever tightening purse strings. Choosing healthy food and being more physically active is accompanied and promoted by good sound resources. Our target audience would not be able to receive proper nutrition education and physical activity promotion without the help and direction of veteran teachers, supportive parent volunteers, dedicated administrators, committed community members, and eager students. For this reason we designed a keen approach to nutrition education.

Our collective idea was to create easy to use Harvest of the Month (HOTM) inspired resources. The “ready to serve” approach was well received by teachers feeling more than a pinch in their pockets and on the time clock. These resources focused solely on the subject of HOTM produce while integrating nutrition education and physical activity promotion inclusive of California Content Standards and the new health standards.

The plan for these resources enabled teachers to address the grade level standards in math and language arts while the students learned the nutritional benefits of eating fresh locally grown in-season produce. Partnered with the Chef in the Classroom the students prepared healthful recipes, measured fractions, learned new vocabulary, and tasted inspiring recipes such as Avocado Tortilla Soup as a result. They were able to dice their favorite fruit or vegetable and graph the amount of vitamin A and C in each. They learned fascinating historical, garden, and culinary facts about different types of fruit and vegetables from the farmers’ market or Nutrition on the Go! The anticipation on campus grew each month as we planned our HOTM resources. The students would greet the Chef and *Network* staff with comments like, “What are we preparing today and I tried my new recipe at home...my baby sister loves it!”

Moreover, in an attempt to encourage students to eat more healthful foods, children had the wonderful opportunity to become familiar with HOTM resources and produce through monthly deliveries from our local farmers. A resounding fourth grade student recalled, “I smell all the peaches when I go to the store with my grandma. She says they are ‘Peachy Keen’.” Another third grader made the proclamation, “I have my own peach trees growing in my back yard...I share them with my neighbors and friends.” An infatuated young boy said, “My favorite recipe is Jessica Simpson’s Fruit Cobbler...it is on page 19 of our cookbook. I know the recipe by heart. I can make it in the microwave in seconds (to him it must only seem like seconds).”

Comments like these from our kids, grand parents, and teachers really inspires us to continue the good work to provide “Peachy Keen” resources that everyone wants to use in the classroom, cafeteria, and at home. Our plans for the future will incorporate focused school-wide resources that continue to be ready-to-use. Literature, science, and math links will be included and shared via our local and collaborative website. The teachers surveyed collectively desire school-wide grade appropriate HOTM resources. Making resources accessible, engaging, and appealing assures sustainability. As the little girl’s grandma so wisely said, “they sure are ‘Peachy Keen’.”

For more information, please contact Nani Rowland at [nrowland@tcoe.org](mailto:nrowland@tcoe.org).

# **INDIAN TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS**

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

### **California Rural Indian Health Board Success Story**

As the capacity for production increases at the Healthy Traditions Garden, more groups of all ages show interest in coming to workshops held there. 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 increased resulting in more inquiries about garden activity participation.

The Cooking Classes continue to remain popular and are well attended by a cross section of the community. From data gathered through the classes, changes will be made to future classes based upon participant suggestions. In order to address suggestions from the previous year's classes, a diversity of foods, and dishes were featured. We will continue to focus on healthy choices such as a diversity of whole grains, fresh fruits, and dark leafy green vegetables.

For more information, please contact Stacey Kennedy at [stacey.kennedy@crihb.net](mailto:stacey.kennedy@crihb.net).

Native American Health Center, Inc.  
Contract #: 06-55104

### **Support leads to Success**

Friendship House (FSH) is a recovery lodge for men and women who are trying to become sober and change their lives. The Nutrition and Fitness Department at Native American Health Center teaches nutrition education and physical activity promotion to the residents of FSH as part of the contract with the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)*.

The nutrition classes are very well received; however, when we started the series of classes there was often hesitation when we began the physical activity (PA) promotion/demonstration portion of our lesson. Most of the residents have low self-esteem, anger, and other psychological issues that make it difficult for them to participate and feel good about themselves. Our challenge was to engage the participants and build confidence to empower them to enjoy PA (especially in a group setting).

The first week most of the participants were reluctant and just observed. We encouraged participation but did not require it. The three leaders demonstrated activities in a fun, spirited way that invited the group to join-in. We created a game-like atmosphere including relays, using everyday objects like pencils to balance while walking and the *Network* playing cards to use for walking exercises (5 block poker). Creating a fun, non-competitive environment helped to relax and engage the residents.

After the initial reluctance, we observed that the residents began to feel more confident and looked forward to learning about PA and using the PA demonstrations in their everyday lives. They felt empowered to exercise almost every day because they felt better and stronger (their feedback to us). When we walked to the farmers' markets they always commented on how fun this particular outing was and how they could walk the three miles without problem when most of them reported they would have had a much harder time at the beginning of the class series.

Our primary goal throughout these class series at FSH was to have the residents' associate healthy living with positive feelings. We believe that the key to retaining learning is for participants to engage by active participation, interactive process, and creating a fun, game-like atmosphere. The staff at FSH will continue to play the PA games and work with the residents on building a healthy lifestyle.

For more information, please contact Christina Weahunt, R.D., at [christinaw@nativehealth.org](mailto:christinaw@nativehealth.org).

Southern Indian Health Council, Inc  
Contract #: 06-55117

### **The Younger the Better**

The population we work with in the Campo area is an isolated group of people. If we did not go out to them, they might never have the opportunity to learn about what living a healthy lifestyle means. We are fortunate enough to work with all age groups even as young as preschool age. We have worked with a couple of preschool classes at the Campo Education building where we are able to teach nutrition and introduce fruits and vegetables to these small children on a weekly basis.

For several years now we have taught a weekly nutrition class to preschool kids at the Campo Education Building in Campo. The children are ages three-five years old. By the end of the year, some go on to kindergarten and some stay for the next year. Because they are so young the classes are very basic; we talk about fruits and vegetables a lot and emphasize what kinds of foods, including fruits and vegetables, are good for our bodies and help us grow big and strong. Sometimes we feel like no one is getting what we have been teaching them all year then one day we ask the same questions we always ask and two or three of them raise their hands and answer correctly. It makes us so happy to see that they are absorbing what we have taught them, it just takes them some time to process what they have been learning. They too, get excited to be able to answer the question. It is also fun to see them try new fruits and vegetables. Stickers work very well to get the kids to try the produce, even if they do not like them.

We feel the younger we can provide basic information about nutrition and health, the more they will accept fruits and vegetables into their lives. The more someone hears and experiences something there is a greater chance that the information is going to stick with them. Teaching the kids what kinds of foods are good for their bodies and having them try different fruits and vegetables as much as possible may also help influence their families to make some healthier choices when grocery shopping and eating out.

We will continue to work with this population and spread the message of how proper nutrition and physical activity will lead to a healthier life.

For more information, please contact Lisa M. Turner at [lturner@sihc.org](mailto:lturner@sihc.org).

United Indian Health Services, Inc.  
Contract #: 08-85164

### **Honor the Gift of Food**

It is no secret that the rate of Diabetes among the Native American community is extremely high. Moving away from tradition has led to an increase in obesity as well as sedentary lifestyles. A lack of nutritional knowledge as well as a lack of resources, economic, and otherwise, has created a population that continues to be extremely unhealthy nutritionally.

What we have learned throughout my time here at United Indian Health Services however, is that among our clients there is no lack of desire to learn about what it takes to become healthy by eating well. The information is not only needed, but craved by the people that we serve. By tailoring our interventions so that the population can relate, we have been able to create a significant amount of change in behaviors as well as attitudes about nutrition.

One way that we were able to reach people this past year was through a series of "Honor the Gift of Food" sessions that incorporated MyPyramid information, physical activity promotion, and cooking demonstrations. In previous years, we have done in-home Honor the Gift of Food sessions on a one-on-one basis, but never before had we done group classes. After doing this first round of classes, I want to do more. The group environment created an energy that you cannot replicate one-on-one. Their enthusiasm was infectious and because of it they soaked it all in eagerly. Sometimes as professionals we forget how limited the nutritional knowledge is of the majority of the population, and how much of a difference we have the opportunity to make.

There is no real way for me to know what kind of lasting impact we were able to make during those three weeks, but what I do know is that every time I see a participant of the class walking the clinic halls I am immediately updated on what he or she is doing to keep up their new way of life. The fact that most of these individuals are parents leads me to believe that the ones that physically attended were not the only ones reached.

Over the next two years I hope to make these sessions a regular occurrence. Word of mouth is a very powerful thing, and I have already received a number of requests for more classes of this nature. With the addition of courses I hope to gain a greater understanding of the needs of the population in order to address them appropriately.

For more information, please contact Alison Aldridge at [Alison.aldridge@crihb.net](mailto:Alison.aldridge@crihb.net).

**LOCAL FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION  
PROJECTS**

### **Healthy Change Starts with the Trainer**

All of our member agencies have good intentions to provide nutritious and healthy food, but many do not know how to start providing healthier food for their clients. It would be a dream come true to be able to go to each and every one of our near 300 member agencies and teach about nutrition, but frankly that is quite impossible. Because we cannot conduct workshops at every single agency, we thought it would be beneficial to set up a series of train-the-trainer style workshops for our member agencies. Our goal was for our audience to take what they learned, and teach the lessons to their clients at their facilities.

A total of six workshops were conducted using curricula developed by Alameda County Nutrition Services, and recipes from the *Network for a Healthy California (Network) Cookbooks*. At each workshop, we started with an icebreaker, presented a brief PowerPoint presentation discussing particular nutrition topic at hand, and taught the lesson in the train-the-trainer style. In addition, participants conducted Food Demo's using recipes that utilized food commonly found in our Food Bank warehouse, and participated in a physical activity such as Shape of Yoga. Our intention was to make the workshops fun, interactive, and easy to follow. All participants were very engaged and asked many questions. Many realized how certain things they do or eat affect their lifestyles, and shared this information with the group. This created a feeling of support and understanding within the group.

One woman who attended the train-the-trainer for youth series shared a personal story with the group at the second workshop. She told us she realized what she had been eating affected her health and weight, and how she began making small changes. She began checking the nutrition facts on her favorite drinks. She was appalled at how much hidden sugar and calories were in the drinks.

She also noticed that the majority of the young women where she works tend to gravitate towards unhealthy food. She mentioned she prepared a recipe from one of the *Network* cookbooks, but the young woman did not like it too much. She said she is taking smaller steps now, like limiting the amount of salt and butter that is put on the vegetables.

She is changing things within herself, and setting a good example for her family, and her clients. Her persistence and new found knowledge about nutrition is allowing her to advocate for herself, and her clients.

Stories like the one above keep the Food Bank motivated. We will be offering another series of train-the-trainer workshops starting next February. We are working on developing new topics that previous attendees have expressed interest in. We are also working on ways to gain more interest and attendance at the workshops.

For more information, please contact Bridget Galvan at [bgalvan@accfb.org](mailto:bgalvan@accfb.org).

### **Peer Education and Grassroots Champions for Change**

The target community for our project is 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, in the state or nation. Additionally, the community is heavily reliant on free food providers who, historically, did not generally provide much healthy food. More than a quarter of the target population are homeless, a group that traditionally is seen as “hard to serve.” Incomes in Skid Row are generally extremely low - between 7 and 22 percent of area median income. These extremely low incomes and lack of housing for some, place additional barriers on implementing healthy choices as a result of increased knowledge of nutrition.

During the past year, we have included four new volunteer peer educators thereby increasing our effectiveness and credibility in the community. All of our volunteers, as well as core program staff, have worked diligently to incorporate new sites into our educational program. For example, we added a workshop series at the Golden West Hotel this year. This hotel is home solely to people with mental disabilities, a group of people often excluded from social services and housing due to their disabilities. We were able to engage a strong group of residents in a four-session series, as well as engage in dialogue and feedback to make our workshops as effective as possible with diverse audiences. Many of the participants participated in shaping some community events which were designed to promote healthy eating and physical activity.

Our peer education model has been incredibly successful in educating community members and sparking change in individual behaviors. However, we are also expressly trying to engage community members in long-term action to change different aspects of their community. All of our interactions include some information about how to get involved in being a Champion for Change, including being trained as a peer-trainer, implementing changes and encouraging changes among friends and neighbors, becoming active in Food Stamp promotion, and multiple other ways that each individual can contribute. By engaging people in activities after the workshops or events, we can begin to undo unhealthy community norms and widely promote healthier choices, even within limited resources.

LA CAN will continue our peer education model in the Central City East community for at least the next two years. We are looking forward to implementing our recently created evaluation plan, so that we can learn from participants and make necessary adjustments on a quarterly basis to reach even more people and more effectively. We also will utilize this project, and complementary efforts, to improve the health of extremely low-income residents of downtown Los Angeles through increased consumption of healthy foods.

For more information, please contact Becky Dennison at [beckdenn@sbcglobal.net](mailto:beckdenn@sbcglobal.net).

## **The Evolution of a Community**

In collaboration with the non-profit Farms to Grow, Children's Council of San Francisco installed an edible garden at Charles Drew Child Development Center. The installation of the garden was secondary to the project and provided a springboard for training and education to parents, children, and families. The children actively participated in garden-based nutrition education, Harvest of the Month, cooking classes and taste tests over the course of the school year. During the sessions, the children are introduced to a different fruit or vegetable every month. Seven parent mentors attended a five series class called "Train the Trainer." They learned basic nutrition education, prepared and cooked meals, learned how to read recipes and food labels. The parent mentors also work diligently on the garden and the beatification of their community. By the end of the series, the parent mentors successfully took on several cooking demonstrations for audiences at Charles Drew Child Development Center.

A challenge was not having enough parent mentor volunteers. It seemed as though the parents were reluctant to give up their time after school to stay and participate in the Train the Trainer Series. We had a total of seven parents who participated in the series and three of the seven volunteered their time both in the creation of the garden and in the series of classes.

One of the amazing successes was the sense of ownership that the parent mentors felt. There were three parents who took over every detail and aspect of the garden. They took so much pride in their garden that they even created an elaborate webpage depicting a timeline of the evolution of the garden ([www.drcharlesdrewcdcgarden.shutterfly.com](http://www.drcharlesdrewcdcgarden.shutterfly.com)). In turn, they became eager about learning and teaching others about the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables. The parents also did a food demonstration at the food bank pantry at Charles Drew School. They reached over 200 people that day, providing basic nutrition and wellness information. The parents used some of the food from the pantry and made amazing vegetarian quesadillas with portabella mushrooms. The parents became self sufficient gardeners and nutrition educators and now are able to go into the community and model their knowledge and skills to others.

The parent mentors reported that the children learned where fruits and vegetables come from and what it takes for a fruit or vegetable to end up on their plate. A farmer came and talked to the students about his life on the farm, what he plants, what a typical day looks like, and who benefits from the food. After the talk everyone walked to the on-site school garden and the farmer talked about the different fruit and vegetables that were growing in the garden. The biggest impact is evident in the students.

Upon our arrival to Charles Drew School, we are frequently greeted with shouts and hugs from the students. We are known as the “Vegetable Ladies” and the students are always eager to share their stories about trying a certain vegetable or fruit that we had presented the previous month. The children continue to be enthusiastic about participating in learning.

Lasting impacts and changes can be seen in the parent mentors, students, and the community around Dr. Charles Drew School. The sense of pride and ownership that comes from the community; people are coming together and making a change; the beautification of the neighborhood. The students have learned the process of growing fruits and vegetables and the wonderful benefits that each contains meanwhile having fun while learning. Parents have become nutrition educators and are teaching others in their community.

Our next step is to make sure that the parent mentors and the garden are sustained, so the efforts do not stop after we leave. We have set up the parent mentors with a kitchen starter kit for food demonstrations. We have also encouraged them to apply for grants. This team of parent mentors worked very hard to maintain the garden and to learn basic nutrition and wellness information that will benefit them, their children and their community.

For more information, please contact Donna Adkins at [dadkins@childrenscouncil.org](mailto:dadkins@childrenscouncil.org).

Community Alliance with Family Farmers  
Contract #: 06-55089

### **Creative Partnership Drastically Increases Reach**

One of our objectives is that at least 400 K-8 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education students will participate in nutrition education-based tours at Arcata Educational Farm, other local farms, or farmers' markets. It was challenging to recruit enough volunteers to help host this many fieldtrips. In addition, the schools' desire for fieldtrips has grown over the years and we wanted to be able to accommodate as many classes as possible.

By partnering with, and hiring the Education Coordinator at Redwood Roots Farm, we were able to drastically increase our reach and to add summer programs, after school programs, and cooking programs. We have exceeded our original annual target of 400 for a total reach of 710.

In addition to fieldtrip expansion, the Coordinator has also developed an extensive five-week internship program to train inexperienced volunteers to help with the fieldtrips (each trip requires four station leaders). With this additional help it is not only easier to plan and carry out the fieldtrips but we are 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 for a Healthy California* funding. This is an important sustainability piece for the ever popular farm fieldtrips. We are thrilled that teachers and students will continue to enjoy learning nutritional concepts 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. Community support will allow for sustainability.

For more information, please contact Erin Derden-Little at [derdenlittle@gmail.com](mailto:derdenlittle@gmail.com).

### **Fun With Cooking**

Clients of River City Food Bank receive monthly food bags although many of them do not cook regularly. Many eat mostly convenience foods and food bank foods. Although River City strives to provide fresh fruits and vegetables when available, protein rich foods, and canned produce; clients' diets are often low in vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. Clients appear not to be cooking regular meals at home as part of their daily routines.

The Fun with Cooking Class is designed to increase the knowledge and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables through nutrition education while using staple ingredients from food pantries and supplementing fresh produce to create nutritionally balanced meals. At the class, a registered dietitian discusses label reading, whole grains, sodium and potassium, fruits and vegetables, fiber rich foods, food preparation, and other topics. The education session is paired with hands-on healthy food cooking demonstrations. A River City client named David attends the Fun with Cooking Class regularly. At one class he spoke of the recipe from the previous month and was thrilled to have made the tomato garlic omelet and the peach crisp for his mother and some friends. He was so proud of his ability to cook these recipes and share them.

The Fun with Cooking Class participants receive the basic skills and encouragement they need to prepare inexpensive, healthy recipes; improving their intake of healthier foods such as vegetables and fruits. The class teaches them you can eat healthy on a tight budget as well as the social importance of sharing meals time with others.

The Sacramento Hunger Coalition will continue to grow the Fun With Cooking series in fiscal year 2009-2010 so that we can continue to establish a cultural norm of healthy eating.

For more information, please contact Melissa Ortiz-Gray at [mortiz-gray@communitycouncil.org](mailto:mortiz-gray@communitycouncil.org).

### **Each One Teaching More than 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 after school hours often do not include consistent, hands-on nutrition education that would assist students in making healthier decisions, and staff often do 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 (EBAYC) 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, NEP 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 after school cooking club at six different school sites
- once per week after school garden club at four different school sites
- six-eight sessions of garden-based nutrition classes for over 12 different teachers at four school sites
- family education nights at four different school sites
- two annual community health fairs

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 prepare 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 after school 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 after school programs is consistently high. At the third health fair, over 1,200 students and families attended. 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.

Finally, our high school interns, the Creative Healthy Eating Activists became real leaders in their community, championing improved lunches at their school, teaching over 100 elementary school students how to prepare healthy meals and snacks, and eventually winning a statewide video contest and presenting their project at two public events.

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 after school 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](mailto:susan@ebayc.org).

Ecology Center  
Contract #: 06-55105

### **Interns Overcoming Challenges**

Our youth interns face the same challenges, obstacles, and opportunities (or lack of), as those of our target community, because they come from the communities they serve. Needless to say, we have real concerns regarding nutrition awareness and physical activity when our youth are living examples of their community.

We have many success stories to share. We have watched youth interns lose weight as a result of increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, as well as our involvement in the “Soda Free Summer” campaign. One intern stated “Farm Fresh Choice has impacted me because since I’ve started working here, I’ve lost 21 lbs and learned so much on how to eat super healthy and how to vote with my fork.”

We see young people who are able to give personal testimony as to how the increased consumption of fruits and vegetables has positively improved their health and well being. We listen with excitement as interns share fresh food recipes and stories of health improvement.

As these young leaders go into their communities, they are living role models and trendsetters. Their potential to transform the communities they serve is tremendous, because they will in turn teach their children these principles of sound health and nutrition.

For more information, please contact Hunia V. Bradley at [hunia@ecologycenter.org](mailto:hunia@ecologycenter.org).

### **Garden Grows Healthy Youth**

Typical of California youth, most of Jonas Salk Academy's 6-8th graders consume only one serving of fruits or vegetables a day while consuming at least one serving of high calorie, low nutrient food and beverages. Over 80 percent of the students receive free or reduced lunch but, lack opportunities to throughout the day consume healthy foods. With an afterschool snack bar selling unhealthy treats, proximity to a number of convenience marts, and no farmers' market in biking distance, youth are quick to refer to vegetable-based recipes as "nasty."

In the Eat from the Garden program, youth learn about nutrition through hands-on activities in the garden and kitchen. Youth learn how to identify, harvest, and cook the vegetables that they collectively gather.

Participants who previously referred to some vegetables as "nasty" were harvesting, chopping, and eating whatever vegetables were ready in the garden. One youth stated, "Going harvesting was one of the hardest but when you knew your vegetable names you can harvest anything." We noticed once youth were empowered with this experiential knowledge they were ready to try out most any traditional dish "doctored up" with loads of fresh produce. The primary youth response to the question "What was something that you did not think you would enjoy but did enjoy after you tried it?": "Pizza- with all the garden fresh veggies."

It appears that youth participant eating habits are changing. One student noted " I didn't think I would enjoy most of the vegetables that we put in everything but after everything was cooked it was a great experience and very tasteful." Participants show their excitement to bring the recipe home and share it with their family. Vegetable Quesadillas, an inexpensive option with easy-to-find ingredients, is one students love to make at home. Not only are they asking for recipes, but often request seeds to grow produce at home.

Growing, harvesting, and cooking nutritious foods is a key priority to build the health of our school community and beyond. We would like to formalize the role of the second and third-year "youth leaders." A few of our youth leaders will soon be recognized in a *Network for a Healthy California*-funded film project of the Center for Food and Justice: *Farmer in the Classroom*. Youth are truly learning how to recognize different fruits and vegetables, about the benefits of eating plant-based nutrients for better health, and how to cook healthy recipes from garden fresh produce. This is success: eating from the garden.

For more information, please contact Julie Dang at [jdang@healtheducouncil.org](mailto:jdang@healtheducouncil.org).

Natividad Medical Foundation  
Contract #: 08-85148

### **The Power of Telenovela**

It is ironic that many agricultural workers cannot afford to eat the fruits and vegetables which they harvest. It is challenging to reach farmworker populations with information that would promote increased access to and preference for healthier foods as low literacy rates, limited ability to attend nutrition education classes, and understandable fears of accessing services may impede the delivery of effective nutrition education services.

Using a telenovela video and a set of focus group questions developed and approved by the *Network for a Healthy California*, three nutrition education messages were successfully promoted: 1) decreased fat consumption, 2) increased fruit and vegetable consumption, and 3) decreased consumption of high-sugar beverages. The telenovela was designed to resonate with agricultural workers in the Central Valley of Fresno County whose demographic is very similar to that of the Central Coast region. We anticipate that this would also resonate well on the Central Coast. The Local Food Nutrition Education (LFNE) Project of the Central Coast took these measures and tested them on agricultural workers in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties.

In the first year of the LFNE Project, six focus groups were successfully conducted at low-income housing sites where approximately 80 agricultural workers live. All groups gave the telenovela favorable reviews. All groups articulated the three nutrition education messages promoted in the telenovela. Additionally, the focus groups served as an assessment tool for each of the groups, as participants identified barriers to adopting healthier eating habits and indicated what they would like in future nutrition education activities which would help them to successfully incorporate the health messages into their lifestyle.

While the telenovela has been well-received at small venues, it has also been distributed at selected safety net clinics and Monterey County family clinics. The telenovela will continue to be shown to all applicable groups and continue the focus group process which has proven successful with this select group.

For more information, please contact Chesney Hoagland-Fuchs at [hoaglandfuchsn@co.monterey.ca.us](mailto:hoaglandfuchsn@co.monterey.ca.us).

### **Blending Fruits and Vegetables**

The participant in this story was invited to attend the second focus group that was held for this first year of the contract. The participant had stated that when they first started attending the series of workshops she could not get her children to eat tomatoes or onion, whole or chopped into little pieces. Even several weeks after completing the series of workshops, the children would not eat tomatoes or onions and most other vegetables. She did remember though hearing the instructor talk about a method she used to get her kids to eat vegetables. The suggestion was to blend the vegetables so that they would go unnoticed. This in itself was a challenge for the parent because this would mean she would have to change the way she cooks, but she was prepared to make the change and remembered that patience was the key to helping her and her family make healthy changes.

The parent's first attempt was blending broccoli, tomatoes, and onions together and mixing the puree in with the rice she made. Remembering the message the instructor gave her about making rice in a variety of fun colors would help her kids wonder what ingredients were in the food. The kids ate the rice on the first attempt and did so not knowing the ingredients. There was not a grain left at the end of that first sitting and the parent continued to make colorful rice as a means of ensuring her kids are eating the recommended servings of vegetables.

The parent was so excited to share the changes she made so easily and with her children being unaware of the change; other parents in attendance wanted to get advice about how to prepare the foods using this method. The parent even said that she's tried the same blending techniques with various fruit that the children would not consume otherwise and again they drink the blended fruit drinks and even ask for more because of the great taste. Other parents in the focus group stated they would try this technique immediately after returning to their homes and hoped to get the same results with their children.

To ensure a lasting impact, the program will continue to outreach to more families and agencies to broaden the participation within the community. Other planned partnerships in the works are to work with the Santa Monica Mountain Recreation and Conservation Authority to provide outdoor activities to the families through field trips as well as work with organizations that have community gardens in place.

For more information, please contact David Flores at [dflores@neworg.us](mailto:dflores@neworg.us).

### **Farmers' Market Fresh Recipes**

Many Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Education (SNAP-Ed) and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) recipients do not know that they can use their benefits at farmers' markets, and many believe that farmers' markets are expensive, or that at the market they will find only unfamiliar vegetables they do not know how to cook. They may also be afraid of wasting their limited financial resources if they fail to cook something their family will enjoy. This project helps empower SNAP-Ed residents to rediscover the pleasures and advantages of shopping for healthy, local produce at their farmers' markets.

The *Cookin' the Market* Nutrition Education Project uses a series of cooking demonstrations featuring simple recipes made up of fresh, seasonal ingredients to encourage SNAP and WIC recipients to eat more fruits and vegetables. The chefs who conduct the demonstrations use local, seasonal vegetables (for example, in the winter, squash, kale, or Brussels sprouts) and teach participants that shopping for seasonal vegetables at farmers' markets can be cheaper than buying those same products, or out-of-season produce, at the grocery store. Each participant in the demonstrations is given the opportunity to taste the dish, ask questions, interact with the chefs, and take home the recipe. Many participants attend the demonstrations with their children, so they can see immediately that their children not only will eat vegetables, but actually enjoy them.

By giving SNAP and WIC recipients the skills they need to prepare delicious, new vegetable dishes, the project helps low-income families eat healthier food within a tight budget. "My kids never eat vegetables," said one mother as her son finished off his sample of Brussels sprouts. "But I'm going to make this for them." One woman described preparing a butternut squash risotto for her father, a former cook, who was amazed at his daughter's new skills. "He asked me where I learned to make that," she said "I told him, 'on welfare.'"

Our next step will be to create a series of cooking classes in which participants will gain not only knowledge, but hands-on experience cooking with fresh, seasonal produce. We have also begun to build on our partnerships with social service agencies across the Bay Area to encourage cooking with seasonal produce and promote farmers' markets as resources for healthy fruits and vegetables.

For more information, please contact Sarah Nelson at [sarahnelson@pcfma.com](mailto:sarahnelson@pcfma.com).

## **I Can Touch My Toes**

Georgia, a quiet senior citizen with a beautiful smile, can not get enough of the cooking classes. Suffering from autoimmune disorder and hypertension, Georgia was hospitalized for pneumonia in both of her lungs in December 2007. Her whole system started crumbling: she was breathing less than 12 breaths a minute, her kidneys were failing, and she lost consciousness for days. While the doctors never quite determined the source of her body's shut down, Georgia took this as a wake up call. She sought out ways to engage in a healthier lifestyle.

During the Spring 2009, cooking class participant Antoinette Deyi was bringing her friends, sometimes up to three of them, to tag along with her to People's Grocery's adult nutritional cooking classes. Thanks to Antoinette, Georgia found People's Grocery. Georgia describes herself as "dragging" when she first started the class. She said she had limited mobility, and felt down and out. The women Georgia came to class with often sat down in the corner and observed the class with little hands-on participation but lots of questions. They seemed content to learn through watching and listening, and they certainly enjoyed the warm company and sharing stories at the table. They kept trying to attend session after session, but we had to ask them to allow others a place after their sessions were completed. In particular, Georgia always had a smile on her face, yet she seemed shy and lacked confidence in speaking up and sharing her opinion.

Determined to take the class again to learn how to prepare winter vegetables, Georgia convinced the cooking instructor, Vigi, to let her return. Vigi immediately noticed that Georgia's face looked brighter and more vibrant than before. Georgia came into the class and exclaimed, "Vigi, look at this!" She swooped down and touched her toes, a feat Georgia claims she has not done in years. She thanks the cooking class for helping her change her diet. "I eat salads everyday now," she claims, proud that she uses a tip she learned from Vigi's cooking class. As a result, Georgia has lost a whopping 27 pounds and can now put on a pair of stockings she has been trying to fit into for some time. She says she can't remember the last time she ate out, and even though she is more physically active and mobile, she always prepares her food at home now. She eats more fruits and vegetables, her meat is mostly fish, and she has eliminated white sugar and white flour from her diet. Georgia plans to apply to become part of People's Grocery's newest program, Community HANDS, training for trainers program for cooking class graduates to become nutrition advocates delivering their own cooking demonstrations in the community. The program launches in November 2009.

When I asked Georgia to describe the impact the class had on her, she simply stated, "It was a life saving class. It put me back on the track of health."

For more information, please contact Diana Abellera at [diana@peoplesgrocery.org](mailto:diana@peoplesgrocery.org).

### **Learner Centered Success**

During a series of nutrition education trainings, it appeared that a large number of participants showed a lack of interest in the written materials, such as newsletters and food and nutrition checklists that were distributed. Upon further discussion and familiarizing myself with participants, I learned that these materials were not adapted to the literacy level of many participants. Jointly we talked about how they could best benefit from the sessions and retain the lessons without taking written materials home. Working with these participants, we came up with several recommendations on better ways to adapt learning materials to low literacy level and limited English and Spanish proficient community members:

- Use more pictures and drawings as well as props like fruits, food cans, measuring cups, etc.
- Instead of just distributing written recipes for cooking demonstrations, include samples of the ingredients to pass around and for participants to identify and memorize ingredient ratios.
- Share and use personal experiences with food, school cafeteria situation, or parent meetings, etc., to help in the learning of new information.
- Verbally repeat the steps of food preparation during the demonstration, and allow for more hands on participation.
- Have participants volunteer to support and help explain information during exercises in small group sessions.
- Develop a “yes” or “no” five question survey which can be read to participants at the end of each session.

Participants are more animated and involved when the lessons are taught verbally and visually, and when peer-to-peer interaction is fostered. Many admitted to feeling more comfortable and were encouraged to ask for help when visual teaching methods were employed versus learning from reading written hand-outs. Once the sessions were adapted to suit their preferred learning style participants felt more at ease and many shared that they were able to use information at home cooking for family and neighbors. I also observed that a few quiet participants became more actively engaged once peer-to-peer interaction increased. At the conclusion of these trainings, five participants employed lessons learned by attending outside activities such as school cafeteria visits during lunch where they bought and tried foods, including salad bar items. The group also met the local School Cafeteria Supervisor to discuss food concerns and develop effective ways to maintain ongoing communication with the supervisor and other administrators.

Continued follow up with participants on their involvement to monitor and help promote healthy food access at their schools and communities.

For more information, please contact Sissy Nga Trinh at [sissy@seaca-la.org](mailto:sissy@seaca-la.org).

### **Healing the Soul with Healthy Foods**

The Soul Food Project serves formerly incarcerated women who struggle with long histories of substance abuse, little to no legal income, lack of housing, gang violence, and much more. The dietary challenges these women face include little to no understanding of health impacts food has on the body, minimal awareness of healthy food vendors, and a general misconception that healthy food is both expensive and lacks taste.

Through weekly nutrition education sessions and monthly market walks, the clients learn to use their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance benefits at local farmers' markets, significantly reducing costs spent on fresh foods. In addition, they learn how to create a nutritious, affordable food budgets and meal plans. During each class women are exposed to a "new" fruit or vegetable, increasing exposure and appreciation for uncommon foods. Clients also learn a range of cooking techniques which demonstrate healthier ways to cook much liked foods, while minimizing detrimental health consequences. Finally, for many clients, this is the one and only meal during the week eaten with others, in a communal space.

Due to the structure, frequency, and community-based approach to the project education components, women have experienced "learning so much," and "never knowing what I was eating was hurting me and my family." In addition, many clients have made simple, yet profound dietary changes like using alternate cooking oils, including fruit for breakfast, reading food labels, limiting sugar snacks and drinks, and being open to new ways of preparing "weird foods,"

Many Soul Food clients face substance abuse associated healthcare issues. Expansion of the curriculum to reach this client base is planned. In addition, we will address childhood nutrition, cooking healthy without a kitchen, and other subjects that directly pertain to this unique clientele. Finally, we hope to expand our internship program (dependent on additional funding) to offer talented, dedicated, and motivated clients an opportunity to further their skills around nutrition and culinary arts.

For more information, please contact Susie White at [susie@nextcourse.org](mailto:susie@nextcourse.org).

### **My Neighborhood, My Rules in Action**

Many Los Angeles county residents are overweight and find it difficult to get community level support to aid in getting enough exercise and eating a healthful diet.

During this contract term, one of our Market to Your Plate grocery store tours was quite remarkable. This tour was one where we walked to the local supermarket, instead of meeting there or carpooling over. Everyone was excited about walking and taking a look at how they were going to be able to shop in their local market. There were approximately twenty participants present for the tour, so they were divided into two groups. The participants were very anxious to ask questions about all the fruits and vegetables they had always seen but did not know how to prepare. They were smart consumers and had already checked out the market to be able to point out to the instructors where the healthy items were. When they had questions in regards to which of two similar products were better many of them were able to identify them on their own but were thankful that they had others to reassure them of the right choices. When the tour was over the participants were overall very content with the healthy items that were available at their local market. Everyone walked back to the class and the participants had a small discussion amongst themselves about a few items that were not found in the store. One person mentioned wanting baked chips and a variety of brown rice at their supermarket, but was sure if she asked the manager they would not comply with her request. The response of another participant was “if we do it as a group, time and time again, they will listen.” During the tour the participants demonstrated their new skills, knowledge, and comprehension, but after the tour they demonstrated community empowerment. Some of the parents who attended the nutrition education classes also became involved within their local schools to eliminate junk food on school premises. These participants have formed collaboration with the school food service to create a healthy environment for their children and have asked their local grocery store to supply more healthy options.

Using the social-ecological model, the above scenario demonstrates increased knowledge on an individual level as well as on an interpersonal level as members of the class were able to educate each other of how changes could be made to better their food access especially if they acted as a group. At an organizational level all of the partnering grocery stores were always welcoming of the tours and learned to listen to their customers who were requesting a greater variety of healthier items. Participating in our classes not only empowered some parents to request new items at their local store but also to become more active in their child’s school to create a healthier environment. This in turn created a change in both the community level and environmental level of the social-ecological model as nutrition knowledge and awareness created a sense of community among participants and their requests to add healthier options in the stores improved the environment.

The Market to Your Plate program works well with low-income, Latino, and low-literacy populations and can be provided at a minimal cost. The supply cost for six-six week series is approximately \$5,000 plus the cost of staff. We hope to continue this project through other grants and private donations, as well as pass on the Market to Your Plate program and evaluation tools to other organizations. The Market to Your Plate materials including the evaluation components were made available to the *Network for a Healthy California* on a compact disc.

For more information, please contact Valerie Ruelas at [vruelas@chla.usc.edu](mailto:vruelas@chla.usc.edu).

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

### **Families Cultivate Healthy Living in the Garden**

Over the past two years, students in Urban Sprouts programs transformed their eating habits from hot chips and soda to apples and carrots. However, asking their parents to buy these healthy snacks is not as easy as it sounds. Neighborhood convenience stores carry a lot of candy and liquor, and healthy produce stands or even supermarkets are not available in many neighborhoods.

Urban Sprouts' students at two high schools shared their new nutrition knowledge with their parents. These parents came to the garden and saw what their children were learning, and confirmed that lack of access to fresh, healthy, and affordable fruits and vegetables is a major obstacle to healthy living. In the spring and fall of 2008, the parents brainstormed with Urban Sprouts staff to develop a solution. The winning solution: the Farmers-in-Residence Peer Education Program. School parents would serve as peer garden-based nutrition educators, growing their own food in the school gardens for family consumption and teaching their fellow parents about healthy living. Throughout 2008-2009 a group of four parents from the two high schools worked intensively with Urban Sprouts staff to develop and pilot the program.

Fall 2009 marked the family farmers' first harvest and peer outreach. The parents tell us that the social experience of learning with their peers motivated them to learn to grow their own fresh food and to eat healthier. The parents re-discovered the fun of cooking and gardening with their children. They will continue as peer leaders during the upcoming school year, and they will train other school parents to do the same. In this way, the impact will multiply as it ripples across the school campuses.

Through the successes and challenges of working with school parents, Urban Sprouts staff learned how to better meet the needs of the community by listening to the needs and realities school families face. This family program found success because parents articulated what they needed to be successful. Now, the program will continue and expand over the next three years as we fine-tune and then replicate the program at two more schools.

For more information, please contact Abby Jaramillo at [abby@urbansprouts.org](mailto:abby@urbansprouts.org).

## **LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS**

### **Manzanita Makes Many Changes**

As in many low-income elementary schools in Oakland Unified School District, creating significant change to support healthy eating and physical activity is challenging. Many campuses are divided into small schools as a result of No Child Left Behind mandates, and building cohesion among students, teachers, and parents to effect change is particularly difficult. Yet, when the entire campus works together, the impact can be far reaching.

Alameda County Nutrition Services (ACNS) has worked with Manzanita Elementary School for over five years, providing nutrition education and physical activity promotion. When the campus split into two small schools (Manzanita Community School and Manzanita SEED) the commitment to continue to support the program was renewed by both school administrations. This year, ACNS has provided the full complement of nutrition education interventions in both schools including classroom activities to support art and writing, TV Turn Off Week, Be Sugar Savvy, and Walk to School Day in addition, intervention such as coordinating with the garden educator and after school programs, provision of communication vehicles such as a nutrition bulletin board, Harvest of the Month (HOTM) posters and newsletters, posted nutrition messages in the cafeteria, and HOTM promotion at faculty meetings were successfully implemented. Manzanita Community School worked with ACNS to provide a six-week "Getting In Shape" class targeted at families of overweight children. A Healthy Living Champions for Change group meets monthly bringing together parents from both schools to receive HOTM recipe demonstrations, learn about nutrition, healthy eating and physical activity, provide volunteer support for the Traffic Safety Patrol to encourage students to walk to school, provide volunteer support for the salad bar and identify other priorities for healthy change.

Healthy Living Champions for Change parents are encouraged to participate on the district Wellness Council to work on implementation of Oakland's very comprehensive School Wellness Policy. As a result of attending the Nutrition Advisory Committee of the Wellness Council, one parent leader from Manzanita spearheaded a Healthy Valentine's Day at the two schools to promote healthy celebrations and raise awareness about the Wellness Policy. She has since allied with a strong community-based organization to bring attention to improving the school lunch program district-wide and has gained much parent support. Out of this was born the Oakland School Food Alliance, which is working to identify resources and make changes in the school food system to better meet the health needs of the students.

Systems and environmental changes have produced lasting impacts at Manzanita. The Traffic Safety Patrol has been in operation for two years and encourages safe walking to school each day. The salad bar provides fresh fruit and vegetable options for students at every lunch. Wellness policy implementation efforts continue as the campus works to comply with the administrative regulation regarding nutrition/food. The formation of the Oakland School Food Alliance will lead to positive changes in the food service system of the entire district and affect thousands of students and families.

ACNS will continue to work closely with the Manzanita campus both in the classroom and with the parent community. As the Healthy Living Champions for Change identify new priorities, ACNS will facilitate and support their work.

For more information, please contact Diane Woloshin at [Diane.woloshin@acgov.org](mailto:Diane.woloshin@acgov.org).

### **Feeding Body, Mind, and Spirit**

For the 14-16 women who are enrolled in a two-year Transitional Housing Program through a local women's shelter, facing the emotional and physical challenges of being homeless and past life circumstances, have the potential to overshadow the topic of nutrition. In this program, they have professional counseling, a place to stay, and the space to develop life skills that will help in their transition from not having a home to finding more stable housing.

Starting in August 2009, "First Wednesdays," are held once a month during regular house meeting times. During this time women can talk about their health, how food and physical activity affects it, and their ability to take the steps to care for themselves. Meeting around the large kitchen table, the women talk about what food means to them, the idea of nourishment, the basics of nutrition (MyPyramid), and sample and make healthy recipes, and learned fun ways to engage in physical activity (dance to music, dynabands).

The women have enjoyed learning about seasonal fruits and vegetables and remarked how easy and tasty the *Network for a Healthy California* recipes are. When our staff returned for the second workshop, a few of the women talked about how they tried to make some of the recipes in the month between workshops. Some of the women were interested in where they could buy healthy food, as cost could be an issue for them and many seemed to not know where they could go or what types of things to buy. While the women have full access to the kitchen and share in the duties to cook meals, the menu is planned out by a staff member. Having had the opportunity to sit in these first two workshops, the staff member is making an effort to plan and purchase healthier items for the women to use. Several of the women in the program recently were found to have diabetes. Addressing this and lifestyle issues have become key issues. With these two workshops, the women have already started to take ownership of the workshop, requesting different ways they can start thinking about food and movement.

"First Wednesdays" will continue next year in the 2010 program year with the focus on bringing more Harvest of the Month materials, healthy recipe ideas, shopping, reading food labels, ways to get moving. The enthusiasm these women have has already filtered to shelter staff who want to spread these same messages to their other programs and other sites. While still early on in the workshop series, these groups of women who already personally champion against adversity are working steadily toward being champions for change.

For more information, please contact Katherine Brown at [kbrown@ci.berkeley.ca.us](mailto:kbrown@ci.berkeley.ca.us).

### **Champion Mom: Taking Charge at Home**

A participant's husband was making it difficult for her to prepare healthier meals for the family. He would make negative comments about the changes she had made. He did not understand why she was making healthier choices.

Participant brought her husband in to participate in the Healthy Active Long Beach Nutrition Education classes. He participated in all six lessons. He learned how to read nutrition food labels, about the food guide pyramid, the importance of adding daily physical activity and he also tried a variety of healthy fruits and vegetables. His entire family participated in preparing the Tortilla Veggie pizza cooking demonstration. He mentioned to his eldest daughter that she needed to remember this recipe for future family dinners. He really enjoyed it.

After the sixth Healthy Active Long Beach Nutrition Education lesson, he was asking for more lessons. His wife also stated, "Now he goes with me and helps me shop for the meals, and he is making healthier choices." She was very happy, because of these changes.

These results help make our job a lot easier, because participants are motivated to make changes as a family, we have planted a seed and they will continue eating healthier and will make better choices.

During the scheduling process encourage wives to include their spouses to participate in the nutrition education classes. Also explain how important it is to include the whole family.

For more information, please contact Lara Turnbull at [Lara.turnbull@longbeach.gov](mailto:Lara.turnbull@longbeach.gov).

### **Making Headway with Head Start**

For a few years the Community, Child and Family Services (CCFS) Head Start Program has been part of the Nutrition and Fitness Council. Nina Paddock, R.D., has been a key supporter of the *Network for a Healthy California* for parents through the Pasadena Public Health Department by promoting nutrition education class at various school sites. After discussing the nutritional needs of the Head Start families, it was decided that a major educational training would take place which would include all the staff of Head Start so they too could benefit with healthier lifestyles and encourage this behavior throughout the program.

In October 2008, the goal was to introduce the Food and Drug Administration's Food Guide pyramid and promote physical activity to the staff of CCFS Head Start. During one of their all staff meetings, four trained health educators taught four sessions to 129 staff members. It was so successful that the same curriculum; Eat Healthy –Stay Active was to be taught to the parents; this time there was only one Health Educator, so three consecutive classes were scheduled in the evenings. The classes needed to be conducted in Spanish this was a challenge because these classes were going to have a lot of parent participants in them and needed to be interesting, informative, and culturally relevant. The classes went without any problems. Several trained bi-lingual teachers were at hand to help with the class materials and at times rephrase or support what was being taught. The Curriculum focused on the portion amounts for three-four year olds and for an adult (based on 2,000 calories a day). Head Start provided dinner and child care which made a more comfortable environment for the families participating. The entire Head Start community of staff, parents, and children was on the same page. This made for such a conclusive learning environment.

Parents reported learning quite a bit and enjoyed the teaching style. Participating parents still talk about the classes and changes they have made with their families. Teachers have fruits and vegetables lesson plans and parents report their children are coming home talking about the different fruits and vegetables they tasted.

Continue to nurture existing relationship with CCFS organization. Continue to promote and conduct nutrition education at Head Start school sites.

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

### **The Pick Me Campaign**

The challenge was to develop a unified nutrition education campaign with our San Francisco County Nutrition Action Plan (SF CNAP ) (United States Department of Agricultural funded partners) that would promote fruit and vegetable intake to low-income San Francisco residents. The campaign would be visually appealing, promote the message multiple times, and appeal to many different communities.

We decided to have an art contest with entries from the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) student body. The theme was “Pick Me” promoting fruits and vegetables as a better choice. We worked with the SFUSD *Network for a Healthy California* funded Nutrition Education Project to solicit the student art. We had over 750 entries. Of these we selected ten winners, two for each of the following grade levels – Pre-Kinder and Kindergarten, First and Second Grade, Third to Fifth Grade, Middle School and High School, with a first place and second place winner in each level and one Grand Prize winner selected from the ten winners. We were able to solicit community donations which allowed us to provide a \$200 prize to the Grand Prize winner and \$100 to the first place and \$50 to the second place winners respectively. We also received donated food and free use of a convenient community site for our event. The San Francisco Municipal Railway (MUNI) and some community agencies donated the space for the posters produced and these were also disseminated through our SF CNAP member organizations.

We were able to get 21,287,500 media impressions from the bus posters alone. This was calculated as follows: There are 750,000 MUNI riders daily. Since the posters were only on buses and not trolleys or cable cars, we reduced our daily exposure in over 800 buses to 350,000 per day. The posters were on all buses from February 23-March 31 (37 days x 350,000 = 12,950,000). Then for the next month these posters were in about ½ the buses (30 days x 175,000 = 5,250,000) and in May they were in about ¼ of the buses (31 x 87,500 = 2,712,500). In addition we received coverage in the SF Chronicle (print and online versions), Sing Tao Daily, and World Journal, resulting in 441,500 other media impressions. We felt the repeated exposure to these images created a frequent message promoting fruit and vegetable intake. In addition, the 2009-2010 Parent Calendar for the SFUSD, reaching 58,000 families in San Francisco, featured winning art work from the Pick Me Campaign.

We found out in late September 2009 that MUNI has offered again to place our Pick Me Campaign posters on their buses November-December 2009 at no cost to the SF CNAP. We are very excited about this emerging opportunity to continue to promote fruit and vegetables intake to the bus riding public in San Francisco and the fact that the initiative came from MUNI.

For more information, please contact Laura Brainin-Rodriguez at [laura.brainin-rodriguez@sfdph.org](mailto:laura.brainin-rodriguez@sfdph.org).

### **Creating Partnerships for Champion Communities**

Purchasing quality fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods has proved difficult in many communities in West Contra Costa County. In these communities, a few small markets stock fruits and vegetables, but most do not carry quality produce, whole grains, non-fat or low fat dairy items. As a result, residents are obliged to travel outside of their communities to purchase healthy foods. This means that access to healthy foods is especially difficult or impossible for those families who are unable to travel due to limited means of transportation.

Two community-based organizations, Neighborhood House of North Richmond (NHNR) and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Street Merchants Association, collaborated with Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) to increase availability of healthy foods in neighborhood stores in West Contra Costa County and to increase the access to healthy foods for residents of that area.

CCHS and NHNR initially collaborated on a Communities of Excellence in Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Prevention (CX<sup>3</sup>) survey to get a comprehensive view of healthy food availability in parts of Richmond. CCHS *Network for a Healthy California* (*Network*) staff conducted the survey to assess *Network* eligible areas within federally designated low-income census tracts. NHNR employed summer youth, trained in nutrition by CCHS *Network* staff, to implement the survey in adjacent non-eligible, low-income census tracts. Survey coverage of both the federally designated low-income areas and the adjacent neighborhoods provided a more complete profile of the neighborhoods.

Both agencies' survey findings showed no stores in the areas qualified as "healthy." CCHS and NHNR chose one of the areas, the Richmond 23<sup>rd</sup> Street corridor, for intervention. CCHS and NHNR partnered with the 23<sup>rd</sup> Street Merchants Association to approach market owners in communities along 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, and started the intensive process of building trusting relationships with them. This involved talking with store owners about the *Network* and how it could be utilized as a resource, and the role that a local health department could play. Through this process, three stores agreed to work toward improving healthy food access by applying to be Women, Infants and Children (WIC) vendors. CCHS *Network* staff and partners provided nutrition education, WIC vendor information, and technical assistance to the storeowners.

Two of the three markets initially approached for intervention met the necessary requirements and have since become WIC vendors. The third market plans to re-apply for WIC vendorship in January 2010. A fourth store that was subsequently approached has also applied and become a WIC vendor. Since becoming WIC vendors, these markets now stock fruits and vegetables, whole grains, non-fat or low-fat dairy items, and other WIC foods. The eligible markets have also partnered with the *Network*

Regional Retail Campaign and one market has collaborated with the Latino Campaign to conduct food demonstrations with market customers. The intervention will have a lasting impact in three 23<sup>rd</sup> Street neighborhoods in several ways. First, market owners will see increased demand for healthy foods by WIC recipients which will make stocking healthy foods more economically viable for them. Secondly, WIC participants in these neighborhoods will have access to fruits and vegetables and other healthy food items without having to travel to a supermarket. And, finally, all residents in the neighborhoods will have improved access to healthy foods.

CCHS Network staff will continue to provide nutrition education and on-going technical assistance to new WIC vendor markets and collaborate with the WIC Local Vendor Liaison to provide technical assistance to existing WIC stores to promote fruits and vegetables and a healthy lifestyle featuring the new WIC package. Partners will continue to collaborate with the *Network's* regional retail campaign to provide healthy cooking demonstrations and fruit and vegetable sampling.

For more information, please contact Andrea Menefee at [amenefee@hsd.cccounty.us](mailto:amenefee@hsd.cccounty.us).

### **Catch the Wellness Spirit**

For the Nutrition Wellness Program, we work with five subcontractors all targeting Food Stamp eligible population but quite diverse in age and cultural backgrounds. We also work with a wide range of staff that has varying backgrounds and experience.

In addition to our five subcontractors, the Nutrition Wellness Program coordinates a community (nutrition and physical activity) wellness collaborative with agencies and programs that work with food stamp eligible population.

Perhaps the biggest success can be most readily seen in the expressions and feedback from our community programs, principals, teachers, and their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-Ed) participants. See the joy and delight in the children when they taste a tangerine for the first time or pick a zucchini from the garden and learn how it is not only good for their body but that it tastes delicious. Talk to a parent who exclaims that their child actually asked the parent to provide a tangerine rather than high salt and fat snack at recess, talk to a parent in one of our workshops who learns tips on how to stretch her food stamp dollars and still find foods that her family will enjoy, and a senior who may not be familiar with some of the produce provided at the food pantry and needs to know how to prepare it.

This year, we reached at least 18,000 low-income individuals and families in many varied venues. We helped to promote the Food Stamp electronic benefit transfer cards and the Champion for Change campaign with help from our community partners. We have continued to try and break down the “silos” in our county in order to “converge” and join forces in working together towards addressing food security and promoting a healthier Marin.

With the *Network for a Healthy California's (Network)* help we would like to strengthen our program infrastructure, and continue to build community partnerships in the county and throughout the *Network* in order to make a more meaningful impact and to be able to truly “turn the curve” on obesity and chronic disease rampant in SNAP-Ed population and by increasing efforts in our community around promoting eating healthy and being active.

For more information, please contact Linda Armstrong at [larmsstrong@co.marin.ca.us](mailto:larmsstrong@co.marin.ca.us).

### **Bringing Nutrition Education to Parenting Teens**

Residents at a teen shelter in Tustin have more than your usual daily challenges. These teens are homeless, have no family support, and are pregnant or raising small children. Dependent on the shelter for food, they have limited money and minimal cooking skills which compound their challenges. Most of the teens are overweight and tend to make poor food and snack choices. They have minimal control over most things in their lives except food, so junk and comfort foods are an issue. Few nutrition education resources and limited space for physical activity contribute to weight concerns. Shelter staff was concerned about the health of the teens but did not have the expertise to help. They contacted the County of Orange Health Care Agency (OCHCA) to conduct a nutrition class. OCHCA and site staff assessed the needs of the teens and determined nutrition education for individuals, staff and the group would be beneficial.

Individual nutrition education sessions supported teens wanting more personalized assistance. During these sessions goals were set to improve food choices and increase physical activity. Due to the education and encouragement provided by OCHCA, one teen was motivated to lose weight after giving birth, by using a pedometer to increase her daily steps and journaling as a means to address her feelings and reasons for eating when bored.

Staff wanted to learn more about healthy eating for teen growth and development, especially for pregnant and breastfeeding teens. An interactive staff training presented information on teen nutrition and reading food labels, which provided staff with the knowledge and skills needed to mentor the teens and help improve this program. Participants discussed healthy alternatives for snacks and “junk food hour,” opportunities for physical activity, and ways to make meals healthier. Staff prepared “Breakaway Banana Splits” and planned to offer it to the teens at breakfast or as a snack.

Group classes with the teens focused on building nutrition and food preparation skills. The teens gained experience in reading food labels, identifying healthy beverages, and making better food choices using MyPyramid. They assessed their current food choices and physical activity level and set goals to make improvements. Mirroring the activity from the staff training, the teens learned to independently prepare “Breakaway Banana Splits” as a healthy snack alternative.

Since the staff training, recipes from the *Network for a Healthy California's* “Everyday Healthy Meals” cookbook have been incorporated into the shelter’s menu. Improved menu options featuring fruits and vegetables make it easier for the teens to make healthy choices a natural part of their lifestyle.

As a result of the group classes and individual nutrition education sessions, several of the teens are making healthier food and beverage choices and are engaging in more physical activity.

The shelter plans to revise their daily “junk food hour” by renaming it and encouraging healthier snacks and non-food options. OCHCA will continue to provide the shelter with technical assistance, nutrition education, and staff trainings as needed.

For more information, please contact Maridet Ibañez at [mibanez@ochca.com](mailto:mibanez@ochca.com).

### **Riverside County Bookmarks a Recipe for Physical Activity**

In our scope of work, we planned to provide nutrition and physical activity (PA) information to a very large audience. We were able to provide nutrition information, but found that the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* had limited PA information available. We realized that we did not have a low cost *Network* PA promotional item to send out in bulk for our Women, Infants and Children (WIC) project. Large quantities were not available for free and the general cost is often about 15 cents per brochure.

We wanted something that was *Network* approved to reach more than 50,000 WIC families in Riverside County. If we did reach each one with a brochure, that would cost about \$7,500. Furthermore, the PA brochures were not available to order in the numbers we needed and we did not know if they would be in-stock and shipped in time, if ordered by our county. We talked with our regional PA representative and discussed the need for PA material in our Regional *Network* meeting with the State when they came to review the Desert Sierra region. We were encouraged and supported in pursuing the development of the PA education material. We have so many items, that this seemed like something we should have already on our shelves.

We worked on a bilingual (English/Spanish – back-to-back) PA "bookmark" that could be printed on one page then divided into three pieces lowering the cost by 33 percent. In addition to a lower price for meeting our objective which would allow us to reach more people with the message, we would be able to control the printing, order quickly, and support the use of local resources and employment.

We could also offer use of this product statewide in California and that would promote more cost savings. Eventually, as different cards are printed we would have more variety in the physical activity messages we promote with these cards.

We are so proud that our product(s) was recently approved for our county to print and we will be able to encourage PA to many more WIC participants and other county residents in both English and Spanish in the 2009-2010 fiscal year. Currently, we are working on a PA "recipe card" that could be made from one sheet of paper then cut into four cards, again saving printing costs by at least 25 percent. We now really do have a "recipe" for PA that can be "bookmarked" for everyone.

For more information, please contact Nancy Allende at [nallende@rivcocha.org](mailto:nallende@rivcocha.org).

### **Food Stamp Nutrition Education Eligible Population Appears in Large Numbers for Nutrition Education**

Eat Right When Money's Tight classes were delivered in conjunction with the delivery of free food at Temple Community Outreach Center, a certified delivery site for local food surplus that is located in a qualified census tract. A taste test of a recipe from the *Network for a Healthy California (Network) Everyday Healthy Meals Cookbook* was a part of each class along with a goody bag that contains the cookbook from the African American Campaign. The taste tests and nutrition classes were presented every Friday, starting on July 10, 2009, and ending September 25, 2009. The 12 individual classes reached close to 400 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-Ed) eligible attendees. The instructional information and teaching activities for these nutrition education classes came from the Online United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) SNAP-Ed Connection Resource Library for Eat Right When Money's Tight, and a few lessons were derived from the Fruit, Vegetable, and Physical Activity Toolbox for Community Educators.

It was challenging to engage this audience in learning activities, such as breaking out into groups in order to list ways to increase fruit and vegetable consumption, especially when the number of attendees increased from under 20 per class to about 50 per class. Individual learning activities, such as recording your daily intake of fruits and vegetables, were only successful if an additional facilitator was present which could not always be the case.

The well fostered working relationship with San Bernardino Sun newspaper reporter Jim Steinberg led to the provision of unpaid print ads to promote the Eat Right When Money's tight nutrition education classes by the newspaper. The free advertisements (ads) ran once a week beginning on August 24 and ending on September 24. The ads read in part, "Attendees will taste-test recipes from the free, 60-page cookbook they will receive. At the end of the session, attendees will receive a free bag of food. "Before the newspaper ads began, the average number of class attendees was 19. The ads increased the average number of class attendees to 50, Nutritionist Julie Maniord's direct phone line was offered in the ad and she received approximately 10-12 inquiries every week about the nutrition classes. The coordination of nutrition education with free food distribution and the *Network's* educational materials such as the cookbook promoted by an ongoing ad in a large, general audience newspaper proved to be a winning combination.

The cooperation between the county government agency, a non-profit community program, and local print media set a precedent for joint planning among diverse organizations. This type of networking enables each party to share resources for effective prevention and community outreach.

The weekly event promoted community education by introducing a significant number of the SNAP – Ed eligible population to important health education messages, such as healthy food can taste great and keep you well.

Tentative plans have been made to continue to deliver nutrition education in coordination with food distribution at the Temple Community Center. Planning sessions will begin next contract year and include representatives from Temple Community Outreach Center, county Nutrition Program staff, and newspaper reporter Jim Steinberg. Instructional resources from USDA’s SNAP-Ed Connection Resource Library and the *Network* will be reviewed for use. Additional help will be sought to assist with the logistics and teaching.

For more information, please contact Jeanne Silberstein, M.P.H., R.D., at [jsilberstein@dph.sbcounty.gov](mailto:jsilberstein@dph.sbcounty.gov).

### **Celebrate National Nutrition Month with Healthy Mondays**

In Shasta County, 66 percent of adults and 27 percent of adolescents are overweight or obese. Shasta County Public Health (SCPH) took on the challenge of overcoming barriers to choosing healthy food and being more physically active through a month long campaign to make Monday the day of the week to incorporate healthy lifestyle changes into everyday routines. Residents were encouraged to begin their week by joining the fun at several Healthy Monday events in March 2009 to celebrate National Nutrition Month.

The Healthy Monday campaign promoted fruits and vegetables and emphasized incorporating beans into meal planning. We reached the community through four major events and schools through various other events on numerous school campuses during the month of March. The first community event was a Healthy Cooking demonstration at a food retail outlet in Redding. This demonstration featured the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* Black Bean and Corn Pitas recipe. The second and third events were Nutrition in the Garden Workshop and Eating Healthy on a Budget, both held at the county library's community room. The final community event, also held at the library, was Lean-N-Green Family Night where community members were able to participate in fun interactive booths that featured a different part of "MyPyramid" and included physical activity. Community events were promoted through flyers, radio spots, radio remotes, live interviews, and free local media such as a parent magazine and community events calendar. All community events included an evaluation component to help with planning future campaigns.

School events included meeting with school nutrition services to provide them with resources and recipes to add beans to the school lunch menu. Bean consumption was promoted in the schools via school newsletters, cafeteria taste tests, staff meetings, bean nutrition display boards, and a chili cook-off amongst school staff. Each Monday a healthy bean entrée was on the school lunch menu.

This campaign definitely had an impact on the audiences. The *Network* staff as well as the community, students, and school staff saw this campaign as a success. Many students, school staff, and community members were surprised that putting beans into a recipe tasted so much better than they thought it would. Several mentioned that they did not know they could use beans in so many different ways. The school audience was very engaged in this event and a healthy bean entrée recipe was so popular it was added as a regular menu item to a high school lunch menu.

SCPH will continue to utilize this campaign format to promote healthy eating and physical activity in schools and the community during National Nutrition Month. We will support schools that want to be a part of promoting next year's event through their cafeteria and classroom settings. We hope to expand the campaign to include local restaurants and health care providers during federal fiscal year 10.

For more information, please contact Michelle A. Sabol at [msabol@co.shasta.ca.us](mailto:msabol@co.shasta.ca.us).

### **DRW Elementary Eats Brain Foods**

Students at Del Rey Woods Elementary School (DRWE) meet the United States Department of Agriculture's free and reduced lunch criteria. Families in this area have difficulty affording and providing fresh fruits and vegetables. With no physical education teachers on staff, classroom teachers have to find enough time to take their students out on the playground for physical activity. The schools test scores were not up to state standards. Therefore, teachers were not able to spend as much time providing *extras*, for example; art, music, gardening time, nutrition and creative play, and movement to the students.

In early spring, the principal at DRWE called the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* staff to help him bring an idea to reality. His idea was to have students consume foods that would stimulate their learning and brain development and help increase state test scores. *Network* staff researched brain foods, specifically fruits and vegetables, and for two weeks prior to testing, provided Harvest of the Month taste testings and lesson plans. The Power Play! Coordinator and Physical Activity Specialist provided physical activities to students. For example, *Network* staff collaborated with food service personnel on orders for breakfast/lunch foods to include brain foods. Local farmers also donated fresh fruits and vegetables to the school for the students. Per the principal, parents were encouraged not to give children junk foods but to offer healthy choices. Classroom teachers provided nutrition education lessons about healthy foods and worked on projects with students designing fruit and vegetable cut-outs for the classroom windows, thank you cards with fruits and vegetables to the local companies that donated, and garden projects focused on super foods also.

Entering the school after state testing, students would stop *Network* staff and ask them to provide all of these nutrition education activities again. *Network* staff received extraordinary information from the principal in the beginning of this school year that state test scores were 32 percent higher than the previous year. Several classroom teachers have continued to adapt nutrition lessons into curriculum and other programs within the school are requesting more nutrition education.

The principal at DRWE wants to do it again. The principal is requesting a community health day at the school to incorporate local businesses and provide resources to families and students about health and nutrition. Principals from other schools are now requesting more nutrition education about healthy foods and asking how they can incorporate nutrition education into curriculum to help increase their schools test scores.

For more information, please contact Niaomi Hrepich at [hrepichns@co.monterey.ca.us](mailto:hrepichns@co.monterey.ca.us).

San Joaquin County Public Health Services  
Contract #: 08-85155

### **Gold Award Recognition**

San Joaquin County Public Health Services is a local health department, serving the Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) eligible residents within the county jurisdiction that collaborates with Manteca Unified School District's (MUSD) Nutrition Food Services Department.

MUSD currently serves more than 23,000 students. The Nutrition Food Services Department provides healthy food choices to their students and is known for their excellent "salad bar" project.

It is with great pride that MUSD is the first district in California to apply for and receive a Gold Award Certification for seven of its schools as part of the United States Department of Agriculture Healthier United States School Challenge award program.

MUSD went through budget cuts in 2008-2009 that resulted in hundreds of teachers being laid off, hiring freezes, and increased class size. According to the Food Services Supervisor, many parents applied for the free or reduced school breakfast and lunch program at each of the school sites. The district had 5,000 applications this year alone for their breakfast/lunch program. This is an increase of more than double that of their previous year.

Also, the district has a new Food Services Supervisor and *Network* staff met with the new management of the Food Services Department to continue successful implementation of the "Harvest of the Month" program and other nutrition and physical activity events in MUSD.

During the new fiscal year 2009-2010, *Network* and food services staff will continue to work together to promote nutrition and physical activity. Also, the *Network* staff will provide the on-going training and technical assistance to the teachers, food services staff, and parents at selected school sites. The "Train the Trainer" is a model to increase learning among community leaders like teachers and parents to promote awareness on eating healthy foods and physical activity, such as food demonstration, taste testing, community family health events, and nutrition education to their families.

For more information, please contact Shene Bowie at [sbowie@sjcphs.org](mailto:sbowie@sjcphs.org).

### **Children advocating for health...proud agents of change**

Women in our programs often complain about men being very resistant to dietary changes and feeling disempowered. While they are advocating for drinking more water and less soda, the men continue to bring soft drinks into the home, giving children double messages, and creating conflict in the family. The mothers felt that the men also needed nutrition information which would help motivate the men to support their wives efforts to make changes.

Challenge: How to get low-income men to attend a nutrition education program and accept the information and begin switching to healthier alternatives.

“No junk food,” “Drink water,” “Eat fruits and vegetables,” “Sleep,” “No drugs,” “Exercise,” “No shooting.” These were some of the powerful messages voiced publicly by East Palo Alto children to their fathers, grandfathers, big brothers, and other male heroes in their life during the “My Hero Program,” held on March 13, 2009, at City Hall. The program consists of two parts. Part one honors the men who support the children in our community. The children nominate their personal hero by writing a letter. All “Heroes” nominated are invited to attend the program. During this part of the program, some of the heartwarming letters are read and each “Hero” is honored with a medal. The children are then asked what can their Heroes do to have a long live ...powerful and startling responses are heard by everyone. Part two provides nutrition education and local resources for physical activity. It includes presentations and displays on: vegetable gardening and includes the distribution of vegetable seedlings donated by local master gardeners; how to grill fruits and vegetables, slide presentation on local parks; nutrition presentation on sugar and fat content of various foods; how to make water infusions and “hot veggios.” Even though the program was designed specifically for men, the entire family enjoyed the event; the women loved seeing their family members recognized and the children were proud to be honoring their heroes.

The child’s letter to their hero will have lasting impact. The “Hero” now sees himself as a role model by someone who admires him and thinks so highly of him. The “Hero” is now more likely to support the *Network for a Healthy California’s* message of eating healthy and being active which the children as a group so strongly voiced. The “Hero” now feels a stronger sense of responsibility for modeling healthy behavior. Changes reported as a result of program: “We planted our first vegetable garden;” “We go outside to play;” “We go to the farmers’ market;” We make “Hot Veggios;” “I want to stay healthy for my children;” “We drink water.”

The heroes will be receiving our low literacy news bulletin and will be followed up to support behavior changes they wish to make. Many requested more information and would attend another program if invited. This program supports the family in changing the home environment ...where change begins.

For more information, please contact Lydia Guzman, M.P.H., R.D., at [lquzman@co.sanmateo.ca.us](mailto:lquzman@co.sanmateo.ca.us).

### **Fruits and Vegetables-It is All about Me**

Harvest of the Month (HOTM) was welcomed by the principal of La Cumbre Junior High School (Grades 7 and 8) beginning in 2005. The challenge is always how to make fruits and vegetables fun and cool to this age group, to facilitate acceptance of and learning about them.

Each month, an art class uses the featured HOTM to practice an artistic technique, the cafeteria manager plans and serves a menu item with HOTM, and the staff is served tastes, and receives the HOTM packet of information. Photos of activities are taken and shown to the staff, administration, and the Parent and Teacher Association (PTA) parents.

This school year 2008-2009, three unintended opportunities featured HOTM and added to the fun and cool factor. First, the art class made huge apple collages in November and these were placed on the cafeteria walls for a colorful display that rewarded the student artists with recognition and enhanced the cafeteria.

Secondly, a photo of student art work, watercolors of persimmons, was chosen for the cover of a widely distributed annual Public Health Department publication for Santa Barbara County. The inside cover gives credit to the art class and the school, bringing public recognition. The title of the publication is *Community Health Status Report 2009*.

Thirdly, at a PTA meeting during updates on HOTM activities, the assistant principal suggested making a HOTM display in the school hallway. The PTA parents and the Science teachers also encouraged this. The final display was located in the most prominent and largest glass display case for five months beginning in April 2009. The display featured HOTM from the year by displaying student art work, the demo fruits and veggies and large photos of students tasting, doing HOTM artwork, and teachers teaching about HOTM.

Students searched for photos and art work of themselves and their friends. This made HOTM all about them. Cool. Staff, parents, and School Board members also commented on the beautiful and informative display.

Working successfully in a school depends on building relationships. The goodwill of the staff and administration at La Cumbre Junior High led to opportunities to expand HOTM.

The added HOTM visibility and the rewarding recognition for the school for featuring healthy eating gives relationships an added boost of goodwill toward *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* and pride in promoting student health.

*Network* has been invited to continue HOTM activities in the new school year.

For more information, please contact Caro Stinson at [caro.stinson@sbcphd.org](mailto:caro.stinson@sbcphd.org).

### **Synergy of Partnerships and Data in Creating a Healthier Neighborhood**

People living in lower income communities are disproportionately affected by environmental conditions that often times do not support healthy eating and physical activity opportunities therefore putting residents at higher risk for developing chronic diseases. To address these issues, the Santa Clara County Public Health Department, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention Division (SCCPHD-CDIP), uses its knowledge of communities and builds upon existing partnerships in an effort to combine data findings and best practices to share and engage residents to create and promote healthy neighborhoods, cities, and thus create a healthier Santa Clara County. The challenge in working with local communities is to identify key partners who have both the interest and ability to mobilize their constituencies to shape and create lasting changes that support access to healthy eating and physical activity opportunities.

The SCCPHD-CDIP Division's multidisciplinary approaches to chronic disease prevention and innovative techniques to community involvement and mobilization, such as the Communities of Excellence in Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention Project (CX3), has resulted in SCCPHD building supportive community relationships and the establishment of strong partnerships with city officials, policy makers, neighborhood associations, community organizations and agencies, and community residents. Integrating the work of multiple grants, such as Steps to a Healthier Santa Clara County, Breastfeeding Promotion - First 5 Santa Clara County, and the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* has expanded its resources provided to the *Network* target audience.

To date, one of more successful recent partnerships developed through the *Network* local lead agency (LIA) activities has been the formation of the *Coalition for Health in Nutrition and Physical Activity (CHiN-uP!)* representing the Edenvale/Great Oaks neighborhood located in south San Jose. This predominately Latino community (72 percent) is also identified as a "blighted" neighborhood and is part of San Jose's Strong Neighborhood Initiative (SNI). Edenvale/Great Oaks is one of six neighborhoods in which SCCPHD has conducted neighborhood assessments, utilizing the CX3 tools. Discussions between the SCCPHD, SNI, and local community-base organizations (CBOs) resulted in the coalescence of a new group, each with similar goals, but without specific data to identify best strategies to address their goals. As dialogue continued, this group formalized into the creation of *CHiN-uP!* and their first task together was to assess the community as related to the accessibility of healthy foods and places to play. This mighty group of ten (representing city and county government, SNI, CBOs, schools, retail, and neighborhood association) sponsored a community forum in March 2009 to get buy in from the residents and to solicit feedback on how best to ensure that Edenvale/Great Oaks is providing its residents with physical activity opportunities and accessibility to fresh fruits and vegetables within their neighborhood boundaries. From this community forum, six (6) residents were identified and trained as promotoras.

This group of promotoras, hired by member organization of *CHiN-uP!*, assisted in the CX3 community-based data collection process. *CHiN-uP!* partners have subsequently been trained as trainers, using the *Network's* Toolbox, and have implemented almost 90 classes to low-income residents at the local community center. Through the community engagement process, the GONA Community Center (family resource center) hosts the *CHiN-uP!* meetings, is actively promoting its community garden, serves as a Family Harvest site where the produce mobile now makes monthly fruit and vegetable deliveries. The *Network* LIA has also helped to recruit a new retailer to the Regional Network efforts through this new *CHiN-uP!* partnership. The synergy that has developed among partners and community has resulted in the formation of a coalition, education in both school and community settings, has increased access to fruits and vegetables, and offers new opportunities for residents to be involved in creating a healthy neighborhood.

Establishing a coalition with committed city, county, community non-profit organizations, as well as local residents has created a dialogue and action plan focused on how to increase access to healthy foods and opportunities to engage in physical activity in this south San Jose neighborhood. Training partners increases the reach of nutrition and physical activity messaging to Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) residents in schools, afterschool programs, and in the larger community. Finally by integrating "health" into the ongoing SNI neighborhood priorities (updated every three years) helps to ensure that residents will continue to have access to fresh fruits and vegetables and places to play.

*CHiN-up!* is currently formalizing their structure, with development of a vision, mission, and objectives and will be identifying two co-chairs to continue efforts begun. The data from the CX3 assessment will be compiled into a fact sheet, similar to the other neighborhoods assessed by SCCPHD, to be used for community and policy maker education and as a basis for potential grant applications. On a larger scale, plans also include the continuation of CX3 data assessments in additional neighborhoods; in that manner, *Network LIA* can further the community engagement process used to prioritize issues related to healthy foods and physical activity access. The *Network LIA* continues to support coordinated efforts by providing nutrition education to the FSNE audience, reinforcing the environmental, systems, and policy changes taking place in Santa Clara County and continuing to be a voice for the needs of the FSNE population.

For more information, please contact Mary Foley at [mary.foley@hhs.sccgov.org](mailto:mary.foley@hhs.sccgov.org).

### Neighborhood Matters

The Communities of Excellence (CX<sup>3</sup>) project identified four Solano County low-income neighborhoods that are considered food deserts. Corner markets, gas station mini marts, convenience stores, and fast food restaurants are prevalent and are easy access 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 take a taxi to the nearest large grocery store. Not having easy access to large grocery store makes it very difficult for struggling families to shop and prepare simple healthy meals for their families and end up shopping at places that are convenient and easy but which usually does not have healthy options. The healthy choice is not the easy choice in these neighborhoods. The solutions to this are challenging and difficult and important to pursue.

The CX<sup>3</sup> project findings have been presented to several community groups and have been used to apply for several grants. As a result of the presentation to the African American Advocacy Leadership project, a group of four students worked on a project to bring low-income neighborhood residents to the local farmers' market to show them how to use electronic benefit transfer to purchase fresh produce. As a result of discussing CX<sup>3</sup> findings with Kaiser Permanente and the City of Fairfield, they started a pilot project in a CX<sup>3</sup> Fairfield neighborhood apartment complex called Farm to Families in which they bring fresh produce and information about healthy eating and active living. The Food Bank selected three afterschool programs in the Solano CX<sup>3</sup> neighborhoods to distribute fresh fruits and vegetables. Two grants were awarded to increase access for low-income residents to fresh produce using the CX<sup>3</sup> findings. We have provided cooking demonstrations and education about how to eat healthy on a tight budget in CX<sup>3</sup> neighborhoods for over 300 neighborhood residents. Food pantries in the Vallejo neighborhoods have agreed to give out nutrition education and put up posters promoting eating more fruits and vegetables.

So far, the lasting impact or change is that more people have raised awareness about this issue and the solutions are complex and challenging. Three grants have been received to increase funding to work on projects to improve access to fruits and vegetables. More nutrition education opportunities have been available in CX<sup>3</sup> neighborhoods.

We will continue to present our CX<sup>3</sup> findings to increase awareness and increase the nutrition education opportunities in the Cx<sup>3</sup> neighborhoods.

For more information, please contact Denise Kirnig at [ddkirnig@solanocounty.com](mailto:ddkirnig@solanocounty.com).

### **Finding Health in My Life**

In Stanislaus County many low-income residents live in neighborhoods saturated with fast-food restaurants and corner markets. Residents have limited access to larger grocery stores and produce vendors and there is limited open space available where families can safely engage in physical activity. As a result, residents are forced to purchase foods high in fat, and low in nutrients. In addition, they engage in limited physical activity.

Utilizing the morning coffee hour as a venue, the Stanislaus County Health Service Agency local incentive awardee conducted various nutrition promos or “talks” throughout the county. Talks were conducted in both Spanish and English, and approximately one hour in length. These were provided in an interactive format and culturally appropriate to meet the diverse needs of its residents. Topics included but were not limited to MyPyramid introduction, reading food labels, and incorporating physical activity into daily lives. Morning coffee hour talks are traditionally offered at various parent resource centers. As a result, partnering with these organizations to bring health awareness to an already captive audience seemed like the ideal situation.

The results from these talks have been more than positive. Families through our pre/post evaluations report having a better understanding of the importance of consuming more fruits and vegetables and have a continued interest in learning how to help their families’ lead healthier lives. Recently, a male parent wrote to thank our Community Health Worker for the recent talk he attended. He commented on the fact that approximately a year prior, he attended a similar class offered by our program. Since then, he has lost 78 pounds taking him from 247 pounds to 169 pounds. Finding health for this participant has not only changed his life but also the lives of his family. He quotes that “because of the information he was provided he and his family have become aware of the poor nutrition habits they were accustomed to, but now my family and I enjoy leading a healthful life.”

More amazing than this transformation, is the spark that ignited within this champion participant, he is now helping coordinate wellness talks at a local community center that will help communities take control of diabetes, heart disease, and obesity. His work is primarily focused on the Latino population as he feels they are most vulnerable to these types of diseases as a result of their poor nutritional habits.

This program activity has empowered an individual to act as a catalyst for change by continuing to carry out health awareness in his community. In addition, although not mentioned as the success story, community educator tool box training was also hosted this year. Participants that attended this training represent many local agencies that currently offer morning coffee hour talks such as the one our male success story attended.

The end result is that there is a tremendous potential for sustainable change to occur if participants such as those that attended the training continue to carry out health messages in their communities as did our male champion participant. With that, the Stanislaus County Health Service Agency proudly concludes its final year of service after eight consecutive years of participating in the *Network for a Healthy California* Program. The seeds have been planted and there is great hope that this work will continue in Stanislaus County. As the program coordinator of this grant, it has been a great joy and honor to serve Stanislaus County residents in this capacity.

For more information, please contact Rocio Huerta-Camara at [rhuerta@schsa.org](mailto:rhuerta@schsa.org).

### **Si Se Puede/Yes we Can**

In March 2009, the project had the opportunity to bring classes to a neighborhood in the City of Oxnard, known as La Colonia. Several families residing near and around the area participated. La Colonia is a low-income neighborhood where there is very little access to healthy foods and streets and parks are perceived by many residents as not safe for families to go out and enjoy outdoor activities. Some of the women participating in the classes lived in the Colonia Housing Projects, Rose Park Housing, and others were renters living in houses in La Colonia. As the series of classes progressed, the women began to express motivation to improve their lifestyles. As they learned how to eat and feed their families in a healthier way, they started to see some changes in their level of energy and feeling of wellbeing. The women formed a wonderful relationship of support among themselves, and they did not want it to end. As the class series came to an end, the women wanted to continue practicing what they had learned, so they formed a walking club. The walking club would serve different purposes. First, they did not have to be alone anymore when they had a problem. Second, they would support each other with their ideas, struggles, and commitments. And, third, they just wanted to be held accountable to a consistent commitment to having a more active lifestyle. Weight loss was one of the added benefits. Also, they started to notice less aches and pains as a result of the exercise and weight loss. For some of the women, the need for prescription medications had lessened and their blood sugars and blood pressure had become more stable as a result of walking. Relationships with their family, spouse, and friends have been more productive and their self-esteem has improved. Most of these women were depressed and did not believe they could not do anything to change that. The women are involved in community events, and recently participated in a neighborhood walking tour, supported by the Nutrition Education Project and community police officers. They grow their own chilies, tomatoes, and flowers in pots or in the 2'x4' foot dirt areas in their backyards. They meet every month for an activity or class that introduces topics of health and awareness. They are motivated to empower others to join the walking club by speaking at meetings, groups, and at community gatherings.

One of the many successful stories like the one of Maria is now being shared among themselves and with others. Maria is a young stay at home mother of a beautiful toddler girl. For Maria the two biggest challenges she mentioned when I first met her, were not having the support of her husband to be physically active and not having that many healthy food choices in the neighborhood.

Maria, after participating at a farmers' market health fair, was advised to make some lifestyle changes that included adding more physical activity and more fresh fruits and vegetables to her diet. Her blood pressure was 134/84, body fat 41 percent, BMI 38.3 and her weight was 230 pounds. After sharing the results from the health screening with her husband, Maria says he became more supportive and began motivating her to make some changes. Maria joined the walking club and finished the Nutrition Class Series in June 2009. Since joining the walking club, Maria lost 15 pounds. She now weights 215 and has a goal to lose at least 16 pounds in the next few months. More importantly, she now wants to do whatever she has to do to improve her health and that of her family.

Maria has established a regular exercise routine, it is now easier for her to live a healthy active lifestyle and practice healthy eating habits with her family. She now has more energy to do house chores and play with her kids. She is aware of what and how much she is eating while enjoying a variety of foods. Maria says, she feels better about herself.

For more information, please contact Silvia Lopez-Navarro at [silvia.lopez-navarro@ventura.org](mailto:silvia.lopez-navarro@ventura.org).

## **NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

### California Association of Food Banks Achievements

During 2008-2009, the California Association of Food Banks (CAFB) and its 20 sub-contractors, delivered over 2,500 nutrition education classes or activities at qualifying sites to reach over 170,000 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance eligible children and adults. CAFB distributed nutrition education materials to over 300,000 eligible individuals and families. During the year, the project has grown while increasing the accountability and integrity of both fiscal and programmatic documentation and reporting. We have offered resources, training, and a venue to share best practices to our 20 Food Bank and non-profit partners. Finally, we have worked with our statewide partners to put in place a plan for future sustainable growth. Below we have outlined several areas of importance to CAFB's nutrition education activities and offer a narrative of this year's activities:

- In October 2008, a full time staff member was assigned to the nutrition education program. Terry Garner was appointed Statewide Program Manager, 100 percent full time equivalent for technical support and contract management.
- CAFB has created opportunities for nutrition education sub-contractors to share best practices with each other and has been a conduit of information from the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)*, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and other nutrition education partners. The first peer-to-peer training for nutrition education partners was held following the *Network's* Annual Conference in March 2009.
- CAFB in partnership with the *Network* published a Nutrition Education Case Study in August 2009 and *Farm to Family Out the Door* in Spring 2009
- CAFB managed the supply and coordinated the distribution of Network approved nutrition education materials to our 20 partners. We are working toward providing approved materials and resources on a continuing basis to our sub-contractors.
- CAFB had the opportunity to present on the best practices achieved by its sub-contractors at regional and statewide conferences including the Childhood Obesity Conference in June 2009.
- CAFB improved its Semi-Annual Activity Report collection and reporting methods to meet Network deadlines.
- CAFB has been approved by the *Network* for \$3.29 million contract for nutrition education for 2009-2010.

- CAFB negotiated a simplified report, using standardized data to facilitate the transition to the USDA's new education and administrative reporting system. Two webinars were held for sub-contractors in October 2009.
- This year, CAFB nutrition education program reached over three hundred thousand eligible children and families in 15 counties. Fresh fruits and vegetables are now the largest single source of food distribution among California's food bank.
- CAFB has worked to fully integrate nutrition education into the Food Bank community, especially in conjunction with CAFB's new Farm to Family Program. We have offered best practices and education through publication of case studies and distribution models. The number of California food banks providing nutrition education at food distribution sites has doubled in the past five years.

For more information, please contact Jessica Bartholow at [jessica@cafoodbanks.org](mailto:jessica@cafoodbanks.org).

### **Farmer of the Month Videos Enhance Harvest of the Month Tastings with Virtual Farm Field Trips**

In spring 2009, the Sierra Cascade Nutrition and Activity Consortium (SCNAC) received *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* approval for the development of a 5-7 minute Farmer of the Month (FOTM) video. The video expands the existing FOTM newsletter and Harvest of the Month (HOTM) tastings by providing a virtual farm field trip to help students understand connections between agriculture, their HOTM tasting, and the important role of fresh fruits and vegetables in healthy eating habits. It is challenging to bring farmers as guest speakers into classrooms and school districts have greatly restricted field trips in response to budget shortfalls. FOTM videos can help students engage in a farm experience as a method of mitigating the loss of field trip opportunities. SCNAC produced, field tested, and implemented our September 2009 FOTM video showcasing an area apple farmer and the apple harvesting, processing, storage, and transporting steps required to provide students with their apple tasting.

SCNAC worked with *Network* staff and students from SCNAC school sites to identify questions to ask the farmer to be highlighted in the FOTM video and used these questions and suggestions from students to develop a video script. Part of the success of this project emanated from the decision to not script what the farmer said during the videotaping sessions. Information from the HOTM apple newsletter was incorporated. An original song was written and recorded gratis by local artists. The video was field tested at a K-8 school and was well received. Subsequently, the video was distributed to SCNAC teachers as part of the September 2009 HOTM and FOTM program. As an anecdotal example of success, one of our SCNAC program managers was in a school staff room discussing the video with an 8th grade and a kindergarten teacher. Both opined that the video was relevant to their students. The 8th grade teacher said that his first thought was that the video wouldn't be age appropriate for his middle school students, but was pleasantly surprised at how it held their attention and provided the impetus for a productive class discussion. At another school, a 5th grade class watched the video once, then watched it a second time taking bullet point notes, and followed up by writing thank you notes to the farmer showcased in the video and the supplier for their HOTM apple tastings. So far, the word from SCNAC teachers is that, "We want more!"

It is not too early to make a statement about lasting impact and change, nor do we yet have the results from an impact evaluation. However, SCNAC teachers have requested additional videos and many students have written thank you notes to the farmer featured in the FOTM video. Both are strong signs of a positive impact.

Based on the feedback received for our first FOTM video, we plan to proceed with the development of additional videos. We hope to partner with media students at a SCNAC high school for the incorporation of special animation features for subsequent videos.

For more information, please contact Cindy Wolff, Ph.D., R.D., at [cwolff@csuchico.edu](mailto:cwolff@csuchico.edu).

### **The Choice is Yours**

For most teens in our community, eating healthy and being active is not only “uncool” but unavailable specifically in the underserved rural communities of Merced County. Consuming cheap fast food items is more accessible and affordable than creating a healthy meal. The decline in physical activity can be attributed to the environments our youth inhabit. Too often, local parks are infested with graffiti, drugs, gang activity, homelessness and loose violent dogs roaming their streets. Livingston Medical Group’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education and CCROPP staff, joined in with CANFIT, a Project of the Tides Center to hear directly from our youth in our communities. The Mo (Stands for More) Project was a chance for our youth to show their media creativity (making a video, public service announcement (PSA), poem, or poster) about how they can improve the health of their community. The youth got to think about what’s working in their community, what’s not working, and make recommendations to make it better.

As part of this project, direct contact was made with local youth from our communities through middle and high schools, community events, church groups, health fairs, individual and group teaching, and the promotion of food taste-testing demonstrations. CANFIT provided one-day training to over 75 youth from various areas of Merced County. The training consisted of how to utilize technology, photos and the internet to create messages to advocate for healthy foods and healthy environments. Fifteen local entries were submitted to the CANFIT MO Project web site. Two of our local youth were selected as the finalists for the grand prize plus a trip to the National Childhood Obesity Prevention Conference in Los Angeles. “Adrien” from Planada won the overall “*Spoken Word*” category and presented his masterpiece at the 2009 Obesity Prevention Conference live to over 1,000 people. The memorization of his spoken words which highlighted access to healthy foods and lack of physical activity won him a standing ovation from the crowd and the grand prize.

The MO Project helped our local youth understand the concept of “Creating healthy communities by changing systems” that affect two of our most basic needs: food and physical activity. Perhaps most importantly they learned valuable advocacy skills and training that may be utilized throughout their youth and onto adulthood.

The CANFIT Project will continue to utilize the winning submissions along with the honorable mention videos, PSA’s, and posters to education and present to local and statewide representatives to advocate for changes in the area of obesity prevention. Locally, Adrien’s video may be utilized and presented to our local city council, county board of supervisors, and assemblywoman for further awareness of youth involvement in obesity prevention.

For further information, please contact Cynthia Peshek at [cpeshek@cvhnclinics.org](mailto:cpeshek@cvhnclinics.org).

### **Community Collaboration to Combat Obesity**

Choosing healthy food and physical activity is not easy choices for low-income Chinese families living in San Francisco due to limited residential space, access to recreational facility or parks, as well as limited culturally and linguistically-appropriate nutrition and physical activity education 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 is to empower low-income Chinese living in San Francisco to improve their nutritional and physical well-being and thus reduce the risk of serious health problems. 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.

*Network* Chinese Project has partnered with over 30 community agencies and leveraged multiple communication and outlet channels to reach over 50,000 clients. In federal fiscal year (FFY) 2009, 16 *Network* funded press articles and interviews were published resulting in 1,813,000 impressions. In addition, Nutrition Services at Chinatown Public Health Center was awarded funds from California HealthCare Foundation to launch the *Eat Right! Get Fit! Get Healthy!* initiative to combat childhood obesity among Chinese youths. The intervention program adapts the National Institute of Health “We Can” obesity prevention program, making it culturally appropriate to Chinese children and youth. *Network* Chinese Project has conducted a series of two nutrition and physical activity summer workshops for the Chinese families in the community. These workshops not only focused in promoting healthy eating, increase of physical activity, and decrease in screen time use, but the education materials, presentation and discussions were culturally and linguistically-tailored to Chinese families and their lifestyle practices. In addition, the workshops were conducted to the parents/caregivers and their children simultaneously in two separately groups with different adult and youth-oriented teaching approach.

Evaluations from the two workshops showed participants were motivated to eat more fruits and vegetables, read food labels, and do more physical activities after attending the workshops. One of the mothers, who attended both workshops with her husband and two children, was very grateful and excited about the lifestyle changes her family has made. She happily said, “My family has made many changes since the workshops. My husband and I have started watching less television; and taking our overweight son earlier to school for him to participate in sports before school, and playing tennis with him on the weekends and after school; my older daughter who attended the youth workshop has been eating a lot healthier; and the whole family has had more weekend

family walks.” After attending the workshops, this family has found food labels easier to understand, and has increased physical activity to fit their family lifestyle.

In FFY 2010, *Network* Chinese Project will continue to collaborate with partner agencies to launch the “We Can” interactive workshops and seek additional funding to do more culturally-appropriate materials and media outreach. Our goal is to empower low-income Chinese families to embrace long-lasting healthy lifestyle choices. *Network* Chinese Project will continue to recruit new community partners including schools, family associations, 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, R.D., M.P.H., at [ckwwong@aol.com](mailto:ckwwong@aol.com).

# **PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENTS**

## **Fear and Friends**

My name is Matt Monge and I was a member of the city of Duarte's 2008-2009 Teen Nutrition Council (TNC). As a member of TNC, it was pretty much guaranteed that you would, at one point or another, run into a challenge of some sort. I had more than just one challenge to overcome while working on the TNC and the challenges I had to overcome were all the children I worked with. I remember anxiously anticipating my first day of work, with a flurry of questions buzzing through my mind. What would the kids think of me? Would they like me? Would they listen to what I had to say? Would they ignore me, would I bore them to death? I have no problem speaking with people but I, like most other people, get nervous when placed before an audience even if that audience consists of children six years younger than me.

All I can remember upon entering the classroom on my first day of work is nervousness. One of my greatest fears is bombing a presentation in front of people and, at the time, that seemed like a very likely possibility. Standing at the front of the classroom presenting felt like an eternity though it was over before I knew it. A huge weight felt as if it had been lifted off my shoulders. After presenting, I was surprised—the kids seemed genuinely interested in what I was teaching them, and they were very hospitable. My nervousness, fears, and uncertainties were gone. In the coming weeks, I would begin to feel much more at ease around them. Getting up in front of the class was no longer an issue for me, and with time I actually began to enjoy it. Not only did I feel comfortable at the front of the classroom, but I also began to develop friendships with the children at each of the elementary schools in the city of Duarte.

My success story was, and still is, a work in progress. I plan to return to TNC next year and continue to better myself as I teach younger children.

My success while being a member of TNC is truly unforgettable, and the lasting impact that these children have had on me is undeniably priceless. The confidence I have gained will not only help me during my high school years, but will benefit me when I attend college. As for the children I have touched, I hope that the impression I have made on them will encourage them to continue to learn about good nutrition and put into effect the skills they have learned.

For more information, please contact Donna Georgino at [georginod@accessduarte.com](mailto:georginod@accessduarte.com).

City of San Bernardino Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department  
Contract #: 06-55112

### **Healthy Habits at Hernandez**

Target audience was the two-eight year olds at the Rudy C. Hernandez Center. Children are limited to food and physical activity that their caretakers provide for them.

The children's nutrition education class at the Rudy C. Hernandez Center helped to create a successful change by exposing the children to a variety of fruits and vegetables through cooking classes and food demos. The children also were provided with opportunities to participate in age appropriate physical activities.

This program has had a lasting impact on the participants. The children now request age appropriate games from the center staff and participate in the cooking class. There has also been an impact on their families because they have gained knowledge about healthy habits for their children.

Since we have had such a positive response for the program, we will continue to do the program throughout the year.

For more information, please contact Glenda Martin-Robinson at [robinson\\_gl@sbcity.org](mailto:robinson_gl@sbcity.org).

## **SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

## **Empowering Parents to Make Healthy Changes**

With approximately 31 percent of ABC Unified students identified to be overweight or obese, and one out of every two Latino children predicted to develop type 2 diabetes in their lifetime, parents at Melbourne Elementary school knew they had to do something to address this health issue.

Through the efforts of the dedicated parents on the school wellness council, a new policy was developed regarding holiday and birthday celebrations. Previously, parents brought in cake, punch, chips, and cookies to celebrate their child's birthday. Parents wanted to develop a policy that would limit parents from sending such items. They came up with a list of approved foods such as fruit, vegetables, low-fat cheese, yogurt, pretzels, or popcorn. Parents also wanted to encourage the use of non-food items such as stickers, pencils, or crayons to distribute in the classroom.

Much to the surprise of the principal, the school did not receive any objections when the new policy was implemented. In fact, parents have thanked the principal for easing the financial pressure of purchasing sweets for their child's class.

The *Network for a Healthy California (Network)*, ABC Unified School District, regularly sends teachers recipe ideas to celebrate holidays in a healthy way. These recipes have been well received.

Parents also knew that that they had to be good role models for their children. Through the *Network*, they participated in nutrition classes, where they learned how to read a food label and measure the amount of sugar and fat in commonly consumed beverages and snacks.

The school also partnered with the District's adult school, and was able to offer aerobics, pilates, and yoga for parents. Participation remained high throughout the year, and parents enjoyed being physically active.

Parents at Melbourne Elementary want to share their experiences and success with other parents. Two champion parents and the principal of Melbourne Elementary were asked to present at the Parents in Action! parent conference, which was organized by the Los Angeles Collaborative for Healthy Active Children. They were also asked to speak at the Regional Sharing Forum in Los Angeles about strategies to approach school administrators regarding making healthy changes at their school.

The parents at Melbourne Elementary continue to promote healthy eating and physical activity at their school. In the upcoming school year, they would like to start a walking club for students before school, as well as with parents after they drop their kids off. They are also looking forward to learning how to make low-fat recipes from the *Network*.

For more information, please contact Judith Dunaway at [judith.dunaway@abcusd.k12.ca.us](mailto:judith.dunaway@abcusd.k12.ca.us).

### **Champion Fever, Its Catchy**

Alhambra Unified School District (AUSD) is no different from any other school district faced with budgetary challenges, added pressures for striving academic achievement, and rise in children being at risk for overweight and limited time in the classroom for nutrition education programs. The challenge is sustaining momentum and continued participation with our District's *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* program. Harvest of the Month, supermarket tours, walk to school week, and nutrition nights are just a few activities all known to the school community. We strive for creative ways to integrate nutrition education and physical activity programs that continue to capture the enthusiasm of school administrators, teachers, students, and parents as they share strategies for promoting healthy lifestyles.

School sites voluntarily participate in our *Network* program; in efforts of creating healthier school environments for students, teachers and parents. School sites meet the minimum components of our program; although many excel above and beyond the programs offered. Many of our school sites have chosen not only to be a *Network* school site, but to participate in the California Governor's Fitness Challenge, plan school wide nutrition festivals, seek community involvement to support activities occurring at the school site, and support school gardens. What is the incentive and driving force for these added programs? One site principal shared, "after being a *Network* school, it jump started our school to take charge of our student's well being. It's the satisfaction we receive that all our efforts support the creation of a healthy school environment involving everyone in our school community. Participation in these activities validates all we do. We can see the change in our students eating habits, as well as being more active on the playground." As a result of the *Network* activities, we have five bronze level elementary schools as part of the Alliance for a Healthier Generation (Alliance) Healthy Schools Program. This past summer Ramona and Fremont representatives attended the Alliance Healthy Schools Forum and received bronze recognition. The Alliance awarded nine Healthy Schools Champion Awards, one of which went to Alhambra Unified School District, Judy Huffaker.

As a result of our efforts, we were able to share our programs with many others at the Alliance for a Healthier Generation Healthy Schools Program. At a National level and in the celebrity arena, the Alliance also implemented similar programs to combat the obesity epidemic. Recently there was a phone call from a local restaurant owner in our community with an inquiry. The restaurant owner learned of our *Network* program reading the local newspaper and wanted to know how we can be involved with promoting health and creating a healthier restaurant menu. This left an impression that there are many more champions to come.

This is just the beginning. There is much more to do and AUSD would like to find ways to gain additional support from the community and student empowerment.

For more information, please contact Judy Huffaker at [huffaker\\_judy@alhambra.k12.ca.us](mailto:huffaker_judy@alhambra.k12.ca.us).

Alisal Union School District  
Contract #: 06-55068

### Here's Josh

Our project works mainly with the students of the Alisal Union School District. We have also been providing professional development for teachers in the school district in an effort to get more teachers excited and enthusiastic about helping their students become healthier individual. One of our challenges has been determining whether our professional development is having an impact on teachers and the way they view their role in the development of healthy habits in their students.

Last year, we were fortunate that one of our nutrition educators had an Ameri-Corps student, Josh at her site. Josh's main role was to increase literacy abilities in students. Whenever Josh had any free time, he helped our nutrition educator with her classes and frequently helped with garden activities. All the while that Josh was helping the nutrition educator he was also learning about the *Network for a Healthy California* Program.

When Josh came to our district he had already made a decision to become a healthier individual and he decided to do this by eating healthier food and by being physically active. The knowledge he gained from experiencing our program helped to validate his decisions about his health and he has now lost over 100 pounds and continues to be physically active every day.

Josh came to our coordinator and asked if there was any possibility of volunteering for the program since he strongly believes in educating students on making healthy choices in their lives. We asked Josh if he might be interested in filling in for a nutrition educator that was to take a leave and he agreed.

The teachers at the school site have been writing to our coordinator to say that he is doing a great job. One teacher wrote, "This young man came into our classrooms today and gave an engaging presentation about whole foods versus processed foods. He presented the material in a way that was understandable and interesting to our very young kindergarten students. They were taken in fully by his approachable demeanor and they were eager to listen and learn with him. We hope that you are able to keep him on staff with the Nutrition Network program. He would be a fine asset to any school site..."

Josh is a unique individual, but he is a success story because of the changes he has made in his life. He is an example and model of what can be accomplished with healthy habits. His success is our success because he has followed the ideas we represent through our program and because he is now passing on his knowledge to our students.

For more information, please contact Petra Martinez at [Petra.martinez@alisal.org](mailto:Petra.martinez@alisal.org).

### **Bringing Healthy Choices to the Family**

Berkeley's youth face a variety of socioeconomic and environmental barriers that impact their ability to make healthy choices and stay physically active. Students of low-income families often have less access to affordable and healthy foods and safe places to be physically active. In a study of Alameda, Contra Costa, and Santa Clara counties, only 52 percent of people living in low-income areas live within a half a mile of a grocery store.

In order to provide students with access to fruits and vegetables and opportunities to learn first-hand about healthy choices and nutrition, the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* program provides 14 *Network* eligible school sites with monthly hands-on garden and cooking-based nutrition education classes. BUSD *Network* program also organizes school-wide nutrition education events at all eligible school sites and parent cooking classes at four sites.

This past year, a grandparent of three students participating in the *Network* garden and cooking program provided a shining example of the impact the nutrition education classes have on students' ability to make healthy choices at home:

"I want to let you know what a big difference the *Network* program has made in my personal experiences with my grandchildren. This summer my daughter and I were on vacation with Iniko (going into third grade) and Tivon (going into high school). Both these boys have been part of the (*Network*) programs throughout their school careers. Tivon volunteered that he would like to plan a meal with a shrimp and pasta dish. He suggested adding broccoli and asparagus and maybe some pesto as a light sauce. By dinner time he thought through his recipe and with everyone pitching in with the chopping and tasting we had a delicious dish of Tivon's invention that we all continued to make variations of throughout the vacation. Iniko decided to take over salad dressing making then frequently throughout the vacation would make a dressing, experimenting with different ingredients. He also became the blueberry pancake maker.

Our group grew bigger including the arrival of Damani who has been part of the *Network* through Malcolm X from K-5. Coming home from the beach in answer to the adult question of what shall we have for lunch, Damani suggested pasta salad and added that he would be happy to make it and indeed he did, complete with chopped peppers, green onion, celery, carrots, and a special dressing that he put together."

"What a testimony to the value of the *Network* program and its lifelong affect on eating habits and skills. It was with such joy that all of the adults watched these three boys actively engage in planning and cooking as a cooperative part of family life. Thanks to all of you for helping this happen."

With such positive examples of students making healthy choices at home, we plan to continue offering the garden and cooking-based nutrition education classes at *Network* eligible sites and expand our parent nutrition education program to include more *Network* sites.

For further information, please contact Mia Villanueva at [mia\\_villanueva@berkeley.k12.ca.us](mailto:mia_villanueva@berkeley.k12.ca.us).

Calistoga Joint Unified School District  
Contract #: 08-85123

### **Harvest of the Month Connecting the Dots**

Harvest of the Month (HOTM) has been a component of the Nutrition Education Program at Calistoga Unified School District for several years. The goal this year was to bring an awareness of the featured fruits and vegetables to more students, teachers, and community members. The challenge was to connect the HOTM from the bulletin board in the cafeteria to meals served to lessons and tasting in the classroom. The final link was getting the HOTM message from the students to parents and community.

As a team effort, the Nutrition Education Program and the Food Service Director update the bulletin board featuring HOTM and the current menu. Materials on the monthly bulletin board are student friendly with bright pictures and fun line drawings of the monthly feature. Information is displayed in both English and Spanish. When the HOTM feature is served in the cafeteria, it is highlighted on the menu.

At the beginning of the month, all teachers receive the HOTM Educator's Newsletter and the HOTM Family Newsletter is sent home to the parents.

Nutrition education taught in the classrooms incorporates HOTM into the curriculum. Kindergarten through second grade sample the HOTM feature prepared by different methods (example: raw and cooked spinach). Grades three to six have the opportunity to attend cooking classes in the Nutrition Education Room. The curriculum includes preparing and tasting the HOTM produce using various cooking methods. When students see additional ways to prepare the produce, they are encouraged to try new fruits and vegetables.

The Nutrition Education Program has received extremely positive support and feedback from the teachers and staff. The enthusiasm of the students in the classes is rewarding. Students state they are eating more fruits and vegetables at home.

Recently in September, the Nutrition Education Program teamed with a local grocery store to display and distribute the HOTM Community Newsletter to the store's customers. Students will continue to discover and taste healthy fruits and vegetables in nutrition education classes. The nutrition education classes taught to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program parents will include the HOTM produce with the *Network for a Healthy California* approved recipes for preparation.

We look forward to a successful year using HOTM to meet our goal to increase consumption of healthy fruits and vegetables by students, parents, and community members in Calistoga.

For more information, please contact Joan Bruno at [jbruno@calistoga.k12.ca.us](mailto:jbruno@calistoga.k12.ca.us).

Compton Unified School District  
Contract #: 06-55081

### **A Night of Champions**

Compton Unified Elementary schools provide evening functions for parents, students, and families to support literacy, math, and science. The *Network for a Healthy California* is often “invited” to these events as an afterthought.

Lincoln Elementary School volunteered to host a Nutrition Night during Turn Off the Television Week. The Nutrition Advisory Council (NAC) students planned an evening of nutrition educational activities to showcase healthy choices for students and their families. The showcases allowed students free rotation of nutrition stations. Stations included Nutrition Jeopardy, where students competed against one another in jeopardy style questions on nutrition; Weigh It and Pay It, situation where students weigh food items and calculate the cost, pay for it and enjoy; and Super Size It, a power point presentation of various food size changes over the decade where the students are challenged to calculate the mathematical differences. The event was attended by the families of the afterschool enrichment program, Lincoln student body, their families and a board member. Stations were supervised by Lincoln teachers and support staff as well as NAC members. The games were so interactive and informative that the games were featured at other events throughout the year.

The Nutrition Night was such a success several schools used the stations at their schools for events. Parents learned important information about providing their children with healthy choices. It was a fun filled night with healthy food. It encouraged families to be away from the television. During Super Size Math, parents and children were able to compare the sizes of food and beverages. Families became aware of the daily choices that they make concerning fast foods. Administrators were able to see that Nutrition Night is a viable event that parents and staff will support.

The goal is to encourage at least three schools per semester to commit to having a Nutrition Night. Schools that are not willing to dedicate a night solely to nutrition can include the components into a Literacy Night, Math Night, or Science Night.

For more information, please contact Tracie Thomas at [trthomas@compton.k12.ca.us](mailto:trthomas@compton.k12.ca.us).

### ***Harvesting Teacher Potential***

During the 2008-2009 school year, two school sites Redwood and Mary Peacock became *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* qualifying schools for the first time. This presented a challenge to our staff in that we had a number of teachers and whole student populations who had not experienced our program. Additionally, these are two of our largest school sites and starting them out with programs like our Harvest of the Month (HOTM) was not only going to be a staffing challenge (providing nutrition education lessons in the classroom as well as using gardens as outdoor classrooms) it was going to be a fiscal challenge as well.

With new opportunities to introduce our program and objectives, the *Network* staff, (Nutrition Program Coordinator and Nutrition Education Specialist) arranged with the Redwood school principal to host an on-site Harvest of the Month Educator Training in their school's computer lab. This was our first attempt at taking staff development and training to the teachers at their respective school site. Thirteen out of 14 teachers attended the training. The *Network* staff utilized the HOTM Training Module and focused on helping teachers utilize the monthly educator newsletters. Having the training in the computer lab allowed teachers to experience all of the ready-to-go tools, resources and monthly elements available to them to carry on the goal of increasing student's knowledge and preference for fruits and vegetables and physical activity. In addition, the *Network* staff introduced garden-based nutrition education opportunities, provided a basic overview of the *Network* rebranding, goals, and objectives as well as reviewed the state share/in kind contributions and guidelines. Additionally, the staff experienced a demonstration and taste testing of a HOTM recipe that could be easily replicated in their classroom. Finally, the staff was introduced to the DVD "Instant Recess" and the importance of promoting and incorporating physical activity throughout the school day.

The feedback/evaluations completed by the teachers indicated that they really thought the training was excellent and that they would be very inclined to use the HOTM Educator Newsletter with their students. Their understanding and comfort level with utilizing this program and resources available was significantly increased. Teachers enjoyed the fact that we brought the training to them at their site and used their facilities (computer lab) to conduct the training. We were able to see an increase in teacher participation with HOTM classroom lessons and garden-based nutrition education with their students. This increase in nutrition education was also reflected in the increase of state share contributed by the Redwood teachers.

As a result of the success of this training, the *Network* staff will be offering HOTM teacher trainings at other school sites this next school year. We know that this is the best way to harvest out teacher potential.

For more information, please contact Deborah Kravitz at [dkravitz@delnorte.k12.ca.us](mailto:dkravitz@delnorte.k12.ca.us).

## **Enjoying the Harvest**

The challenge for our target population students was to get them excited about eating fruits and vegetables. Not just to eat fruits and vegetables, but to enjoy and be excited about the experience. We wanted this to happen not only in the classroom, but in a variety of settings.

Our end of the year evaluation tool is to have teachers comment on any changes in the behavior of students that they see as a result of the Harvest of the Month (HOTM) program. Every year we get a fabulous response, but this year was exceptional. The trend in the responses this year was not only the acceptance of the produce items when trying with their peers in the classroom, but an excitement when they have additional opportunities to experience the HOTM produce outside of the classroom. Teachers have written on evaluations that students will enthusiastically tell them that they told their moms about how good the produce was and they bought it for them at the store. They were thrilled to be able to enjoy the very same produce items at home that they did in the classroom. Other teachers comment that students excitedly come in the classroom after lunch to tell them that the HOTM items that they have been learning about in the classroom was featured in the cafeteria. This was the achievement of our goal to have students enjoy eating the HOTM produce in the classroom, cafeteria, and at home.

The lasting effect of the HOTM program is that students are not only learning about produce items, but they are excited about consuming the produce in the classroom, cafeteria and at home. This program is developing life-long habits of not only eating fruits and vegetables, but actually being excited about them as well.

At Downey Unified School District we will continue to expand the impact of the HOTM by connecting to as many programs as possible. This will include continued expansion to the after school programs as well as parent programs. We will work with other school districts to share developed materials in order to reach as many students as possible with a variety of educational tools.

For more information, please contact Colleen Anderson at [cmanderson@dusd.net](mailto:cmanderson@dusd.net)

### **Elk Grove Students Get Cooking**

Fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students learn about making healthy food choices and the importance of eating fruits and vegetables in school through school site *Network for a Healthy California* activities, classroom curriculum, and cafeteria promotions, but once home, they find they do not have the hands-on practical skills to prepare a healthy meal or snack. Even if students are motivated to eat healthy they often are not taught how to turn this motivation into healthy food. They have never been taught how to read recipes, gather ingredients or cooking techniques such as safe knife use and stovetop directions. They have had little hands-on experience of taking raw whole food, such as chickpeas, bell peppers, apples, and onions and transforming it into a healthy meal that can feed the whole family. In addition many parents are unaware of the importance and benefits of including their child in menu planning, food selection, and preparation at home or even the importance of engaging their child in healthy conversations about foods thus furthering the gap between classroom nutrition education and the reality of healthy eating.

Students attended a series of four cooking assemblies where each student gained hands on cooking experience in measuring, cutting, slicing, dicing, mixing, and cooking. Each cooking assembly featured a new recipe that built on previously taught skills. Students made: Apple and Chicken Wraps, Lemon Hummus with Fresh Vegetables, Gingered Vegetable Stir-fry, and Black Bean and Corn Pitas. Parent involvement was encouraged and family newsletters were sent home containing recipes, cooking tips, and nutrition information about fruits and vegetables.

Students gained confidence in preparing healthy foods. They sampled foods they had never tasted before and found they liked the taste of fruits and vegetables. Students also learned skills so they can cook for themselves and their families.

More cooking lessons will be incorporated in the future.

For more information, please contact Anne Gaffney at [agaffney@egusd.net](mailto:agaffney@egusd.net).

### **A Step Ahead**

The *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* at the El Monte City School District has been an active collaborator along with partnerships with the El Monte Police Department and the city of El Monte, Parks and Recreation Department. Nevertheless, our community is surrounded by fast food restaurants and local liquor stores that limit the availability of access to fruits and vegetables. The current economy has forced many of our families to feel the tightness in their budgets and opt for lower cost, nutritionally low quality foods. This challenge has led to difficulties and struggles to eat healthier and be physically active.

Despite the challenges previously listed, the *Network* has been successful in incorporating nutrition and physical activity into the El Monte City School District and the surrounding community environment. Some of our successes lie with the purposeful integration of nutrition education with parent groups at various school sites that have not participated in the past. Parents are very excited to share what they know about nutrition and love to share this information with other parents and our staff. There is also a bigger emphasis to teach the parents information that their children are learning in the classroom, including Harvest of the Month tie-ins in lessons and recipes.

Many of our parents are also proudly involved in the *Network's* Champion Mom activities. In fact, five of them attended the luncheon recently and were very active and plan on sharing the information with other parents. The parents in our community are our success and a great resource for our students and our program.

Parent group participation is on the rise. Parents are requesting more in-depth information and instruction. They feel empowered and want information that is meaningful. At El Monte City School District, we will continue to provide our parents with the tools they need to make healthy changes in their home and in their community for years to come.

This year we will continue to update and improve our parent nutrition education curriculum to target what the parents need and request. Our goal is to reach as many families and encourage them to be passionate about nutrition and physical activity.

For more information, please contact Corina Ulloa at [culloa@emcsd.org](mailto:culloa@emcsd.org).

Fresno Unified School District  
Contract #: 06-55090

### **Got Milk**

Although the majority of our high school students in Fresno Unified School District are qualified for a free or reduced breakfast, many do not take advantage of the opportunity to eat a nutritional breakfast. When students were interviewed during focus group activities they shared they were unaware of the nutritional value of breakfast, did not know what was offered on the school menus, and usually did not take the time to eat breakfast unless their friends were in the cafeteria.

Student Advocates from seven of our high schools came together to help plan the Producers Dairy Got Milk Breakfast Challenge. Our district's Nutrition and Food Services Department and Producers Dairy staff met with student advocates and staff to plan a Breakfast Challenge. The goal of the challenge was to increase breakfast consumption and nutrition awareness in a competitive event. The winning high school will be awarded \$2,500 from Producers.

Students from each high school increased their awareness of the value of eating breakfast, increased breakfast consumption, and became aware of the school sites nutritional breakfast offerings. McLane High School increased breakfast consumption by 65 percent, winning the contest.

The district's Nutrition and Food Services Department will continue to look for additional ways to include students in activities to increase nutrition awareness.

For more information, please contact Sally Fowler at [sally.fowler@fresnounified.org](mailto:sally.fowler@fresnounified.org).

### **Linking Cafeteria to Classroom Activities**

As part of our scope of work, we had fourth and fifth grade students participate in nutrition activities during lunch which consisted of healthy taste testing with Harvest of the Month fruits and vegetables. In the past it has been a challenge to have access to the students during their lunch time as the cafeteria staff feared that it would interfere with their lunch.

This year we finally have the cafeteria staff on board for lunch time activities such as this one. It took several years for this change to occur. I think since the School Wellness Policy was implemented, it has helped school staff (especially the cafeteria staff) to be more open-minded about our nutrition activities. Slowly, through the past few years our cafeteria staff has been more involved in the Shaping Health as Partners in Education meetings and learned about Harvest of the Month. In the past years we have been able to link cafeteria staff to classroom only through a poster contest. The poster contest has been a lot of fun. Last year we were amazed with a wonderful poster from a Special Day Class at one of our school sites. Each year the winning class wins a healthy pizza making party and they get their poster printed on a book mark to be distributed through out the whole school. We are so excited that we get to work more closely with the cafeteria staff and we are able to add the taste testing with HOTM fruit and vegetables activity this year.

This has been a great activity to link cafeteria to classroom, because when the students taste test a fruit or vegetable we can keep a tally of what the kids liked and did not like, and we can share the information with the Director of Nutrition Services. This is very helpful since she does not have a Nutrition Advisory Council (NAC) at this moment. It is also a great opportunity for the kids to let the director know what fruits or vegetables they want to eat in the cafeteria. The Director of Nutrition Services stated that the cafeteria staff could offer support by lending us any utensil needed for nutrition activities, and offered to order the fruits and vegetables we need for taste testing a month in advance when cafeteria orders are placed.

Our next steps are to have a taste testing activity to link cafeteria to classroom at each of our school sites and to work with the Director of Nutrition Services on restarting a new NAC.

For more information, please contact Nora Ortiz at [ortizn@gfusd.k12.ca.us](mailto:ortizn@gfusd.k12.ca.us).

## **A New Harvest**

Harvest of the Month (HOTM) has been one of our most successful programs on several fronts. It provides the opportunity for taste testing in classrooms throughout Hawthorne. It has empowered our teachers to conduct nutrition education during the school day, while meeting standards in language arts, math, science, and health. The program is well received by district administrators, principals, teachers, students, and parents. In many ways, it is the cornerstone of our program, the source from which other nutrition education efforts can grow. Across the state, other school-based local incentive awardees (LIAs) report the same – that HOTM is the basis of school LIA nutrition education efforts.

However despite these truths, the HOTM development team at the State felt that from a materials development standpoint, change was necessary. Due to lack of time and manpower, they felt it necessary to shift from developing new HOTM materials for every month of the year to a seasonal cycle, in which only six months' worth of new material would be developed annually. We, as did other LIAs, felt that this would short-change our teachers, with whom we have built relationships and have expectations for one another: we provide new materials each month, and they use them.

In February, we found ourselves at a crossroads and wondering aloud – how will we continue to make HOTM a living, growing program that teachers not only continue to use, but do so willingly, with enthusiasm and a sense of fun? What could we do to get the HOTM train moving in the right direction again, delivering new, high-quality teacher and family materials on a monthly basis, without causing too much stress on an already overburdened HOTM development team at the State?

The answer was simple. We chose to be part of the solution, to partner with the HOTM development team and help with materials development for the coming year.

We led the recruitment of a group of stakeholders, comprised mostly of the State *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* staff and LIAs in multiple regions, to help develop the HOTM monthly cycle for the 2009-2010 school year. Once the cycle was in place, six LIAs were recruited to research and assemble content for the educator and family newsletters. Hawthorne assumed the role of editor, reviewing, and editing content before sending materials to the state HOTM team. We went through multiple revisions of each document, until the final versions were approved and eventually forwarded for content layout and design.

In total, five months' worth of material was developed. At the time of this writing, materials are being released by the State as the layout and graphic design is completed. All materials are scheduled to be completed by January 2010.

The process of HOTM materials development was a team effort, initiated by LIAs and accepted with open arms by state staff. Ties with state staff have been strengthened; relationships have been built that I hope will extend to other opportunities. Virtually all LIAs in California that utilize HOTM as a means for delivering nutrition education will benefit from having the materials.

The future of HOTM is in flux. As the state Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) plan progresses, we must make room for HOTM to grow, make provisions for the HOTM team so that they have the ability to continue delivering the high-quality materials and resources that teachers have come to expect. LIAs must be involved in the process – at the very least, working as part of a larger group in an advisory capacity. Additional HOTM resources are needed – for instance, worksheets and lesson plans that align with standards and that augment the information provided in the educator newsletters; materials that link to larger campaigns (such as Champions for Change); workbooks, calendars, and other materials that are currently developed by a select few LIAs and utilized throughout the state.

If given the resources, we (the State HOTM team and supporting LIAs) have demonstrated that we have the necessary expertise to build on the success of this important program. The materials will be used by teachers in *Network* schools to educate the next generation of leaders and empower families to make choices that support health. We have not hit the ceiling on what teachers are willing and able to do with HOTM; in fact, we have just scratched the surface. We need to give them what they need so they can continue to provide nutrition education opportunities for their students.

Again, we find ourselves at a crossroads. LIAs are here as partners. The next steps are clear, and they lie in the hands of the *Network*.

For more information, please contact Steve Baldwin, M.S., R.D., at [stbaldwin@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:stbaldwin@ph.lacounty.gov).

### **Orange County Champion Educator of the Year**

One challenge Huntington Beach Union High School District (HBUHSD) faces is the lack of teacher interest and involvement in the efforts to educate students on making healthy food choices and being more physically active. History shows when principals are supportive the overall participation of the teachers increases, creating a more successful program.

The 2008-2009 school year started off with meeting each of the principals of the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* schools in the Westminster School District (WSD). A meeting with one of the elementary school principals opened up many doors for the *Network*. Throughout the school year this principal demonstrated her commitment to nutrition education and increased physical activity in a number of ways. She volunteered her school to be a pilot site to provide breakfast in the classroom for every student. Nutrition messages were broadcast via pod casts in every class each week to reinforce the importance of breakfast, good nutrition, and physical activity. She also strongly encouraged her teachers to conduct additional nutrition education in the classroom. As a result, the teachers have asked *Network* staff to conduct activities such as Kindergarten Tea Parties, Chef in the Classroom, and Nutrition Olympics. In addition to providing nutrition education to the students, the principal placed importance on educating teachers and parents. Numerous teacher trainings have been presented to help sustain nutrition education in the classroom. The principal also encouraged teachers to model a healthy lifestyle for their students. To stress the importance of continuing nutrition education in the home, she has invited *Network* staff, Children's Power Play Campaign, and the Latino Campaign to conduct parent meetings.

Due to her commitment to nutrition education, she was nominated for the School Nutrition Education Committee of Orange County's first Champion Educator. A panel of judges read numerous nomination forms to choose the best candidate. She was awarded the title of Champion Educator of the Year as she proved to advocate for the link between good nutrition and academic achievement. She was recognized at an Orange County Department of Education Board meeting as well as at a WSD Board meeting. Many WSD principals and staff members were present to witness her accomplishments with the *Network*.

Her elementary school recently received their Academic Performance Index scores for the 2008-2009 school year which showed an increase of 32 points. In addition, records show less health office visits. As a result of this principal's dedication to nutrition education, other WSD principals have recognized her commitment to nutrition education and the success that has followed.

Since then, other principals have shown interest in being more involved with *Network* activities with an emphasis on teacher training and parent education.

HBUHSD will continue to build strong relationships with the principals and other staff members of each school. A stronger focus will be on teacher training and parent education.

For more information, please contact Nancy Wikes at [nwikes@hbuhsd.org](mailto:nwikes@hbuhsd.org).

Kernville Union School District  
Contract #: 08-85134

### **You are Never too Young to Teach Nutrition or too Old to Learn**

Living in a rural, low-income, outlying area in Kern County seems to make nutrition a hard sell. We have to get past “healthy” food costing more and lasting a shorter period of time. We are able to teach the students; but most of the parents have a tough time implementing nutritious foods/diets into their homes. We also have less safe areas for walking and bike riding on the majority (99 percent) of our streets.

Nutrition education in the after school programs are intense and frequent. School gardens are utilized for taste testing and “cooking” classes as much as possible. Taste testing Harvest of the Month produce several times during the month helps students with consumption as well as giving them options to try foods prepared in different ways. This year we used after school students to present some of what they learned to their parents at Wallace and Kernville Open House nights. It was exciting to watch parents respond to the kids and in turn learn some new facts and foods. We felt like proud parents listening to the students talk about how important nutrition and physical activity are to adults. They even conducted taste testing of fresh asparagus; it was wonderful.

Students really seem to get the connection between good health and nutritious foods and the importance of physical activity. Many have parents and grandparents who are suffering the consequences of poor nutrition and sedentary lifestyles and they see that. During one of the Open House presentations I overheard one girl telling her parent “Mom, you’ll feel better and won’t be so tired, it’s easy and it tastes really good.” Student enthusiasm is catching; we watched it take over the entire room.

We are using older students this year to mentor the younger ones and promote consumption of fruits and vegetables. We have reserved one day a week to connect the grade levels to the garden and “cooking” classes in our after school programs. We are also putting together a group of students who will participate in the School Wellness meetings which focus on nutrition, promoting Harvest of the Month produce more frequently in the cafeteria, and increased physical activity opportunities during the regular school day.

For more information, please contact Alisa Hinkle at [alhinkl@zeus.kern.org](mailto:alhinkl@zeus.kern.org).

Lamont School District  
Contract #: 07-65324

### **Stay Alive, Stay Healthy and United Against Hunger**

Lamont is a rural community where access to quality, low cost food and fresh produce is difficult. Families struggle to make ends meet and they report that buying enough produce to give each member of their family the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables is beyond their means.

The youth empowerment group Stay Alive Stay Healthy team from Mountain View Middle School had set a goal of increasing availability of fruits and vegetables in the community. The team became involved with other youth groups and agencies in starting a student run food pantry in Lamont (and named it United Against Hunger Food Pantry) where local, needy families could pick up some food. During the pantry, the students presented information about healthy eating and active living. Due to some fundraising efforts by the food bank, the team, and other youth groups involved, produce was purchased and given out at the pantry. This enabled families to fix the healthy recipe of the week. By the end of the weekly project that lasted approximately eight months, the teams were able to serve and reach 888 households totaling over 4,000 individuals.

The families that came to the pantry were given information about the amount of fruits and vegetables each member of their family should be consuming for better health. They were also given cookbooks and recipe cards along with recipe demonstrations. Sometimes they were even given the ingredients to make the healthy recipe at home. The students that gave the presentations were also learning first hand about the healthy lifestyle changes that they recommended to the participants. Many team members later commented on the changes they themselves were making at home.

The United Against Hunger Food Pantry project will start again for the new school year in partnership with the local food bank and other youth groups. By getting youth involved, they are not only learning about the healthy living and active living messages, they and their families are becoming more involved in their communities. The energy and enthusiasm that youth bring to the project has been very rewarding and has helped promote the *Network for a Healthy California* messages to a greater extent and degree.

For more information, please contact Yolanda Ramirez at [yramirez@lesd.us](mailto:yramirez@lesd.us).

### **Continuing to Fit It All In**

Teachers continue to face the challenge of providing nutrition education within an impacted teaching day that focuses on language arts and math. In addition, they face the constraints of a severely impacted education budget: little time set aside for professional development and a freeze on the purchase of instructional resources and supplies. The teachers see the impact of a strained economy on the nutritional status of students and their families. The teachers express a desire to provide appropriate nutrition education, request assistance in “fitting everything in,” and desperately want to support the nutritional needs of children and families. They know that students need to understand how to choose healthy foods and be active, and are aware that students who choose healthy foods and are active learn better.

During the course of this year, Long Beach Unified School District’s (LBUSD) *Network for a Healthy California (Network)*-funded Health Educator (C.H.E.S.) and Child Nutrition Specialist (registered dietitian) provided 48 trainings to 856 teachers, 20 more trainings and 472 more teachers than last year. Schools scheduled one or all 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 provided current information with a focus on health skills (accessing information, analyzing influences, decision-making, goal-setting, interpersonal communication, self-management, and advocacy). A concerted effort was made for each training to highlight the California Health Education Content Standards. Trainings were held at the school sites, with compensation for the teachers’ time outside their contract day. Teachers were provided with a multitude of instructional resources and lesson plans. This year trainings were also offered during the summer months at the Teacher Resource Center, where teachers from *Network*-eligible schools could participate in professional development.

In addition to the successes of teacher training, there was an increased interest in the Harvest of the Month (HOTM) program. Teachers seemed eager to highlight produce, link it to children’s literature, and discuss increasing fruit and vegetable consumption at school and home. Teachers requested an expansion of the program into the upper grade levels (third, fourth, and fifth) which had not previously been served.

Teachers continued 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, that they felt their students have increased their knowledge about nutrition and activity, and that their students expressed intent to increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables and involvement in physical activity. Teachers reported that the materials provided “fit in” with their classroom focus on language arts and math, focused on skills-based nutrition education, and provided a sequence for instruction so that students build their

knowledge and skill competency. They continued 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 reported that nutrition education had become a regular part of their instructional program with 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. In addition, the HOTM program will be expanded to the upper grade levels, on a pilot basis at request of the school.

For more information, please contact Robin Sinks at [rsinks@lbusd.k12.ca.us](mailto:rsinks@lbusd.k12.ca.us).

### **Parents Empowered to Make Positive Lifestyle Changes**

Combating children's health issues such as obesity and overweight, which have risen to epidemic levels, requires a multi-pronged approach. Schools offer an excellent opportunity for children to learn about eating healthy; however, nutrition intervention at only the school level is not enough to make the most effective impact on improving children's dietary habits. After all, once children leave school and go home, who are the ones most likely to buy the food and prepare the food? Effective, positive, and long-lasting changes in our children's dietary habits must include a parent component to reinforce the positive nutrition and physical activity messages children learn in school.

Los Angeles Unified School District's *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* program recognized the need to have a parent component in its scope of work. In the 2008-2009 school year, the *Network* launched its five-week parent nutrition workshop series which reached 507 parents. The *Network* collaborated with the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Public Health, to evaluate the impact of the workshops on parent knowledge, attitudes, and behavior

The results of the evaluation were phenomenal in that it showed that the program was successful in achieving statistically significant improvements in the parents' nutrition knowledge, dietary behavior, and modifying the home food environment. The following is an example of how the workshop affected positive behavioral changes resulting in health benefits:

Patricia brought her *Zumba* exercise-dance DVD for the physical activity portion of one of the workshop sessions and shared, "I now understand how important it is to exercise for good health. Since starting this class, I use my *Zumba* CD every day for 20 minutes. I lost 5 pounds and my blood pressure is better. I take my kids out to the park to play soccer every weekend too." The following is another parent comment that reflects a positive behavioral change: "I always fry my chicken in oil. Now I stopped frying the chicken and my husband and children did not say anything. They like it." In conclusion, parents attending the *Network* nutrition workshop were empowered to use the information they learned to impact themselves and their families

Due to the success of this program, the *Network* will continue to promote this workshop and make it available to as many parents as possible.

For more information, please contact Roberta Acantilado at [Roberta.acantilado@lausd.net](mailto:Roberta.acantilado@lausd.net).

Madera Unified School District  
Contract #: 08-85138

### **Cafeteria Tours**

Madera Unified School District is a K-12 school district with 16 elementary schools. Eight of those elementary schools have students receiving free or reduced meals at a participation rate of 92 percent or higher. The majority of the students eat both the school breakfast and lunch meals.

Our school foods service coordinator was invited to the classrooms during nutrition lessons to discuss with students how school food services develop the breakfast and lunch program. Nutrient food content and healthy food choices were discussed as well. There was a cafeteria tour after the presentations.

The nutrition education the students are receiving works towards making the students more aware of what a healthy diet should be. The cafeteria tours along with the nutrition content information on their school meals helps the students understand what it is they are consuming and how healthy it is.

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 the decisions made at home regarding living a healthy lifestyle.

For more information, please contact Rosa Garcia at [garcia\\_r@madera.k12.ca.us](mailto:garcia_r@madera.k12.ca.us).

Monrovia Unified School District  
Contract #: 07-65329

**Looking for an Energetic, Healthy, Professional Network to Partner Together, for an Innovative, Comprehensive, EL Academy**

Parents of our low level English Language (EL) students face obstacles when shopping for healthy food for their families because of language barriers. The EL Academy gave our program the perfect forum to address these issues for parents who are also language learners.

Due to state budget cuts, our school district was forced to cut the summer school program this past school year. When brainstorming ways, the District could provide some form of summer school for at least the lowest scoring language learners, they developed the EL Academy. The District administrators also desired to have parent participation with hope that they could also improve their English-language skills. Knowing that language learners discover new words best with an all-sensory hands-on approach to learning, the Monrovia Unified School District contacted the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* to put together a hands-on nutrition education class for parents. The District also valued the importance of communicating valid nutrition information to parents, but in a fun and exciting class that parents would eagerly attend. Two one-hour classes were offered for eleven days over a three week time period. Each lesson incorporated skills-based nutrition education and physical activity ideas for parents as well as taste testings that were put together by the whole family. The *Power Up in 10* curriculum was utilized to teach parents simple ways for parents to be active without expensive equipment or a gym membership. Each of the three weeks had a different emphasis. Week one focused on the consumption of fruits and vegetables and the importance of being physically active. Week two emphasized the basics of My Pyramid as well as skill-building activities for parents to help them make healthier choices. Examples of the skill-building activities included meal-planning, reading food labels, shopping tips, and finding sugar content in various beverages. The final week focused on the nutrient density of fruits and vegetables as well as identifying calcium-rich foods.

The success of the EL Academy's partnership with the *Network* demonstrated summative results through positive impact evaluation scores and formatively through feedback we received from parents. One of our graduating parents said, "I never knew how much sugar was in some of the drinks and juices I buy for my family. I will make my kids eat more whole fruits and vegetables." As a result of this successful and comprehensive partnership, the District has already asked us to continue our efforts for the following school year.

We will continue to partner with the District to offer parent nutrition education at the EL Academy. We hope that next summer we will be able to include parents from last year's Academy who will be able to talk about what changes they made in their families eating as a result of what they learned.

For more information, please contact Valerie Parsons at [vparsons@monrovia.k12.ca.us](mailto:vparsons@monrovia.k12.ca.us).

Montebello Unified School District  
Contract #: 06-55103

### **Obstacles are Opportunities**

With so much effort dedicated to classroom nutrition, especially regarding Harvest of the Month (HOTM), we were not getting either the completed records nor the reach (numbers of participating classrooms) we wanted.

We made a concerted effort to recruit school site lead teachers to act as *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* liaisons both promoting and assisting with obtaining records and increasing participation. We also refined our internal staffing structure to provide greater support to these liaisons for building depth of our educational efforts.

We have successfully recruited site leads for every one of our 28 schools. As a result, we have nearly tripled the number of participating classrooms. Further, we have three very strong *Network* consultants to lend expertise and guidance to individual leads. Instructional Services is providing training on coaching to further build capacity of our site leads' abilities to offer the support and guidance we seek to establish well delivered, accurate, effective nutrition education throughout the district.

Our Nutrition Services partner is critical in HOTM success. We continue to refine communication channels and work through logistical details and timelines so that we have a reliable process that supports our ambitious goals to see nutrition education truly institutionalized at Montebello Unified School District (MSUD). To that end, we are getting support from district leaders in Instruction to standardize nutrition education through adoption of MUSD focus nutrition education standards, based on the California Health Education Content Standards and California Department of Education's Nutrition Competencies. For example, we will establish a professional learning community group for high school teachers of Freshman Studies to develop a nutrition education plan with lessons.

For more information, please contact Piper Mattson at [mattson\\_piper@montebello.k12.ca.us](mailto:mattson_piper@montebello.k12.ca.us).

Mount Diablo Unified School District  
Contract #: 08-85141

### **Healthy Behaviors Learning Centers Press Conference Held at Bay Point Garden Project**

The Center for Collaborative Solutions announced the creation of Healthy Behaviors Learning Centers at ten afterschool programs across the state. Mount Diablo CARES is one of those programs. Mount Diablo CARES will coach other publicly funded afterschool programs on how to improve their nutrition and physical activity practices and address the serious health problems that face students in low-income communities throughout California.

On January 29, 2009, the press conference was held in the Bay Point Garden, situated next to Riverview Middle School and on of the Healthy Behavior Learning Centers. The event was attended by representatives from the ten learning centers, local leaders including a State Senator and *Network for a Healthy California* representatives as well.

The event generated a very nice article in the local newspaper featuring the kids who cook in our middle school program. It was nice to have our small unincorporated community get this kind of coverage. There was also a follow up article that ran about the National Alliance that former President Bill Clinton founded and the healthy learning center were referenced in that article and our Riverview program.

To continue to get the word out on the important role the afterschool programs play in the health of the families we serve. We hope to get the attention of President Obama's administration and have him visit our local garden or perhaps visit the White House.

For more information, please contact Ali Medina at [altinez2@yahoo.com](mailto:altinez2@yahoo.com).

### **We Get It**

Within the past year or two, The *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* staff has focused on getting principals involved in planning what the *Network* does at his or her school. At the end of each school year, we meet and review with them various ideas for activities. We also encourage principals to role model and get involved with *Network* activities...and what a wonderful response.

College Park Elementary School has a new principal, Julie McCormick, who has worked with the *Network* in the past. We met with her and she expressed an excitement to work with us again. There is a strong Running Club at College Park and Ms. McCormick decided to get involved with them and show her level of commitment.

One day, she spoke to a student to encourage him to get involved. "Why don't you come and run. You'll feel so much better," she said.

Reluctantly, he started to run. She challenged him, "why don't you leave the principal in the dust," she said with a chuckle.

A little later she saw her student and he had a smile. "You're right! I do feel so much better."

That day, Ms. McCormick ran eight laps and plans to continuing running. In the past, about 200-250 students ran in the Runner's Club. Her goal is to get all students and parents running.

The *Network* partners with the Runner's Club by introducing a fruit or a vegetable to the runners and providing a taste test.

This newfound commitment from Ms. McCormick shows us that she gets the value of the *Network* and its impact on changing the way we live.

We believe that Ms. McCormick will be a partner that gets involved with her student population and that she will work with us in the future to make a difference in the lives of her students.

For more information, please contact Pamela Williams at [pwilliams@nmusd.us](mailto:pwilliams@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 Month (HOTM) three-tier program for over seven years for OUSD students and the community. HOTM tiers include comprehensive fruit and vegetable nutrition education targeted to students from K to 12<sup>th</sup> grades, their families, and teachers/staff. Students learn about the produce and taste it fresh. When teachers sign up to receive the taste test, they are provided a “Guest Chef” who is a credentialed teacher trained to provide a HOTM recipe demonstration and literary connection. Students learn how to incorporate the fruit or vegetable into a recipe. Lastly, students are provided HOTM nutrition education and recipe cards to share at home. From the start of the program, the limited challenges OUSD *Network* faced convinced 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 HOTM 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 HOTM programming.

Over 400 classrooms were reached per HOTM fruit and vegetable feature. Parents recognize OUSD Guest Chefs at the local market, dental office, and at schools and elatedly ask “what have you done to my children?” 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 HOTM featured fruits and vegetables. Teachers have also noticed a profound change in the types of foods brought from home by students especially during snack time. Here are some statements from teachers about their HOTM experiences:

“The activities sent with each fruit and veg 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 veg.”

Teachers state that students are aware of making healthy choices.

Unfortunately OUSD decided to cancel the *Network* program at the end of the 2008-2009 school year. Most if not all teachers, principals, and families were disappointed to have lost such a comprehensive and needed program within the district.

For more information, please contact Katryn Soltanmorad, R.D., at [Katryn\\_Soltanmorad@access.k12.ca.us](mailto:Katryn_Soltanmorad@access.k12.ca.us).

**True Champion for Change- Modeling Healthy Habits within the entire School Community: Students, Parents, and Teachers**

One can only hope when teaching and creating awareness about obesity and chronic disease, that one can impact at least one person in an audience whether student, parent, or teacher. Looking back at the many years of the *Network for a Healthy California* activities with the teachers and students, there are lots of success stories that come to mind.

Three years ago, when a teacher signed up for nutrition education for her Kindergarten class, upon our first visit to the classroom, we began teaching the basic United States Department of Agriculture's MyPyramid guidelines. Students and teacher were listening very intently. During the next few visits to her class, we continue focusing on portion sizes by bringing food models to the class. To make the lesson complete, we brought in a five pound fat model. The students and specially the teacher were taken back by the physical appearance and weight of the five pound fat model as they held it in their hands. Shortly after our visits the teacher made known to us that the five pound fat model greatly impacted her and inspired her to take action in her own life to make healthier food choices. She began to exercise by walking more often and eating more fruits and vegetables as well as increasing the amount of whole grains in her diet. She slowly began to see changes in her health and how much more energy she has. She remains as inspired now as she was three years ago when we first met her. She has kept up with her daily routines and has accomplished many goals, including shedding 80 pounds. She also creates a fun environment in her class by encouraging her students to stay active and eat more fruits and vegetables. She leads by example and applies the knowledge she has acquired from our program to her daily schedule in the class as well as including healthier snack options for her in-class parties. Her passion for a healthier life style as well as teaching makes her a true champion for change.

Parents are empowered with our workshops. At one event a parent approached us and stated that our workshops have done wonders for her family and her. She was struggling to develop healthier habits for herself and her family. She had tried any accessible ideas and nothing worked until she attended our workshops. She implemented healthy eating habits, watch food portions, incorporate more fruits and vegetables into meals and snacks, and make sure the family takes a walk at least three times a week for an hour. She is looking forward to attending our workshops this year. Leading by example makes her a true champion for change.

We empower our students no matter the grade to make healthier choices at lunch or when go shopping with their parents. A room mom pointed out to us how her kindergarten daughter was telling the family how important it is to eat healthy. At the store she pointed out a healthy whole grain cereal and told her mom that she learned to eat healthy in her nutrition classes. Our kindergartener is a true champion for change.

Our program influenced our Special Education classes. We understood the challenge to include children with hearing or sight impairments and made sure we included them in the learning process. After the first lesson, the students were expecting us for the subsequent lessons. The teacher described to us how much the students look forward to the lesson and understand the message as simple as eat more fruit and vegetable. These students are true champion for change.

For more information, please contact Katia Ahmed at [kahmed@pusd.us](mailto:kahmed@pusd.us).

Rosemead School District  
Contract #: 08-85149

### **Cooking after 3 p.m.**

The After School Education and Safety (ASES) Program wanted to do hands-on cooking and learn more about nutrition. They approached the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* program to implement nutrition education and cooking demonstrations to all five ASES school sites. The classes were a hit with the students and staff. Students requested the cooking demos monthly. However, due to the cost of labor for food service staff and limited number of *Network* staff, it was impossible to conduct monthly demos to all five targeted school sites.

In the second year of collaborating with the ASES program, the cooking demonstrations adopted the “Train the Trainer” model in order to reach all five schools sites on a monthly basis. The Nutrition Consultant held monthly training with the ASES Leads from the five school sites. They received training on making the recipe and teaching the nutrition lesson plan. The cooking demonstration was simplified by using Harvest of the Month (HOTM) “Tasting Trio” recipes (only three ingredients). This made it easy for the ASES Leads to purchase the ingredients and conduct the cooking demonstrations. All five school sites were reached and students were able to try a new recipe each month based on the HOTM fruits and vegetables.

The students made simple and healthy recipes that they can share with their family members. “I am now eating more veggies – Thank you,” training evaluation comment from an ASES Lead.

The *Network* plans to continue to collaborate with the ASES program using “Train the Trainer” model and add physical activity to the nutrition classes

For more information, please contact Lily Voong at [lvoong@rosemead.k12.ca.us](mailto:lvoong@rosemead.k12.ca.us).

### **Power of Collaboration**

Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy is an elementary school of approximately 275 students in San Francisco. The school is diverse and pulls from all over San Francisco. There are a high percentage of students who are bused in across the city from public housing projects. Often students either miss the bus or are tardy to school and arrive too late to participate in the school breakfast program. The challenge has been to encourage students to arrive on time, having the opportunity to eat a healthy breakfast, and participate in a productive day of joyful learning.

Breakfast Club at Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy is a morning program designed to encourage kids to come to school early, move their bodies, and eat a well-balanced breakfast. Students take part in fun physical activity challenges, cook a supplemental healthy breakfast tasting, engage their minds in various nutrition education activities, and socialize with friends. Special invitations are sent out to students who regularly arrive late to school; those students are recruited to lead the various activities.

Not only do all students benefit from the nutrition education and physical activities, but the targeted students are motivated to arrive on time in order to help facilitate the activities.

The Breakfast Club has been quite a success and is now in its second year. It is an excellent example of a successful collaboration between the Student Nutrition Services (SNS), Nutrition Education Project, Parent Liaison, ExCEL Site Coordinator, and parents. Funding for the club came from the before school program, who pay the SNS staff member to arrive early to prepare and help teach the nutrition lessons. The *Network for a Healthy California* funded program pays for food for the cooking activity and tasting.

A side benefit from the Breakfast Club has been the relationship-building that has developed between students and the SNS. Parents drop by casually to sample the tasting and take home the recipes. Students report that they often make the recipes at home.

The Breakfast Club continues welcoming new students to help facilitate Breakfast Club activities. Additionally, campus staff will be involved next year, including the school custodian and the school nurse.

For more information, please contact Mark Elkin at [elkinm@sfusd.edu](mailto:elkinm@sfusd.edu).

### **HOTM Parent Cooking Class and Physical Activity Demonstrations**

The main challenge in Santa Ana, CA is a lack of space for physical activity. The City of Santa Ana is comprised of 17, 408 acres however; the city only has 373 acres of park space. That averages out to .9 acres/1,000 people. Some pockets in Santa Ana where the population is even denser only have 0.00-.50 acres/1,000 people. Safety is also a concern, families do not want to send their children outside to play after dark due to gang activity and now with day light savings, the days are becoming even shorter. There is also the restriction in some apartment buildings that children are not allowed outside to play because they might damage the property. These are huge challenges when 34.8 percent of Santa Ana children are obese.

Parents from the Harvest of the Month (HOTM) Parent Cooking Class volunteer their time participating in physical activity demonstrations at health fairs. The most recent demonstration they provided was for a group of parents at the Head to Toe Diabetes Conference at Santa Ana High School this past Saturday. The parents presented appropriate serving sizes, provided their personal testimonials regarding how HOTM has changed their lives and the lives of their families. The parents did a physical activity demonstration on stage and closed their presentation with a taste testing. They handed out pedometers and encourage parents to walk 10,000 steps daily. This is an example of one event. The parents also provide physical activity demonstrations at their schools sites particularly if there is a carnival, fairs etc. They also provide demonstrations at health fairs. So far the total population of parents that they have reached is over 5,000 participants.

HOTM Parent Cooking Class Volunteers are supported by the *Network for a Healthy California's* Regional Network however; the parents come up with their own routines. They spend many hours practicing on their own getting the routine down. The routine is then approved by the Regional Network.

Last year, since recording the parents' testimonials at the Parent Cooking Class, the testimonials have been running since summer break on the District's local cable television (TV) station, Channel 31: "Education First." The parents are now "celebrities" and they are recognized around Santa Ana from their TV appearances.

Due to parent participation in these events we now have a neighborhood in Santa Ana which has started a walking club for the entire family; they walk on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. On Sundays, the neighbors now get together, pick a HOTM recipe and each neighbor contributes one ingredient for the meal. They then share the meal together.

The parents are now scheduled to participate in a “Train the Trainer” presentation at the Fullerton School District. They will be training other parent leaders in Fullerton on the HOTM Parent Cooking class. They will speak about how to start a cooking class at their school site and how to sustain it. They will also prepare a taste test for the parents.

We will continue to use and rotate our parent leaders so they do not get burned out. These parent leaders are helping us reach a much larger audience since our school district has approximately 54,000 students. We do not have the man power to have all of our parents attend cooking classes. Our parent leaders help with getting the *Network* message to a wider audience.

For more information, please contact Frances Byfield at [frances.byfield@sausd.us](mailto:frances.byfield@sausd.us).

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

### **Nutrition Advisory Council Presents MyPyramid**

Our Nutrition Advisory Council (NAC) students do a great job as peer educators for healthy food and activity choices, by sharing information, primarily with their own classroom/grade level. We are challenged to reach more students at each school and are always looking for opportunities to expand peer reach within their school.

Our NAC Advisor at Newhall Elementary was also the Assembly Coordinator this year. She suggested that the NAC students present a Nutrition Assembly to the entire school and the MyPyramid Assembly was created. We adapted MyPyramid for Kids, Grades 3 and 4, Lesson 1 to be presented as an interactive play, with students playing the “roles” of each food group, as they are led through the Pyramid by “Pyramid Pal” (nutrition educator). Students identify food groups and how to get the right amount of food from each food group. As a check for understanding, near the end of the assembly, teachers identify students to participate in relay race using food models and MyPyramid.

The MyPyramid Relay: two teams of 12 students each compete in a pyramid relay. Each student is given a felt food model. At the start, they run to the first of three stations and perform an activity (i.e., five hops side-to-side, five knee-raises, five jumping jacks). After the third station, they run to the large felt MyPyramid and place their felt food model on the corresponding food group stripe. The audience may help them by shouting out the food group. Once placed, the student runs back to the start, to tag the next student in line. After all students have placed their food models, Pyramid pal (nutrition educator) reviews the completed pyramids with the audience for correct placement and gives them an opportunity to make corrections.

As a follow up, teachers receive MyPyramid for Kids black and white handout (free from MyPyramid.gov) to distribute to students for a take-home lesson.

Curriculum connections include Language Arts: listening comprehension, writing, thinking skills (categorizing), and physical education. We re-formatted the text of Lesson 1 into a script for a 40 minute assembly, usually presented twice at a school (divided by grade level: 1-3 and 4-6). We are able to reach 200-300 per assembly. This school year we have done eight assemblies (two each at four different schools).

NAC students master the content and are able to effectively communicate nutrition and activity messages in an interactive manner.

MyPyramid Assembly information was shared at the spring Shaping Health as Partners in Education meeting. We plan to schedule the assembly at the two eligible schools that have not yet received it.

For more information, please contact Tracy Fiscella at [tfiscella@scvsfsa.net](mailto:tfiscella@scvsfsa.net).

Santa Cruz City Schools  
Contract #: 08-05158

### **Persimmon Day and Pea Pod Day: Taste It, Know It, and Be Active**

The challenge was to find a creative way to integrate physical activity and nutrition education at Bay View and Gault Elementary Schools.

We created Persimmon Day and Pea Pod Day to involve K-5 students, parents, the Life Lab garden, and the cafeteria in a fun and active nutrition education event. These Harvest of the Month (HOTM) theme days integrated the Nutrition Olympics physical games with a tasting of HOTM produce. On Persimmon Day, students tasted two varieties of persimmons, Hachiya and Fuyu, and voted on their favorite. They participated in a persimmon fact hunt in the school garden. In the cafeteria, Fuyu persimmons were served as part of the school lunch. And, students competed in the persimmon relay, the persimmon toss, and other physical games with a fruit and vegetable theme. Parent volunteers staffed the physical games and garden stations. During Pea Pod Day, students found the peas growing in the garden during the scavenger hunt, harvested a pea pod, and tasted two varieties of peas (sugar snap and snow) at the tasting station. Physical games with a nutrition theme included the pea pod javelin, the pea pod relay and the pea pod hop. The pea pod costume drew kids to the tasting table and garden.

Enthusiastic students asked all year when we would do another fruit and vegetable theme day. The voting results between different varieties of persimmons and peas were posted in the school cafeteria on the HOTM display for students to see as they waited in the cafeteria lunch line. We gave presentations on these theme days at two different network trainings this contract year.

A Pepper Day and Citrus Day are planned for next year.

For more information, please contact Jessica Silverman Curcio at [jcurcio@sccs.santacruz.k12.ca.us](mailto:jcurcio@sccs.santacruz.k12.ca.us).

Ukiah Unified School District  
Contract #: 08-85163

### **Healthy Classroom Environments**

Ukiah Unified and Fort Bragg Unified School Districts have been working on improving the classroom environment through taste testing nutritious foods, nutrition education, and healthy rewards and parties. This is a challenge because schools have always been places where parents can bring cupcakes and candy for parties and rewards and people think they are doing a good thing for their students and the entire class when they bring sweets and less than healthy foods for students to eat.

The Wellness Policy Committee in Fort Bragg and Ukiah Unified School Districts met and decided to focus on healthy classroom environments for the year of 2008-2009. Though they both went about this in different ways, the outcomes were both very positive. Fort Bragg has a comprehensive wellness policy with many people involved in disseminating information to teachers, staff, and parents. They have built their nutrition education program into a well respected program, where the nutrition educators are listened to in the community. When it was time to “roll out” the healthy celebrations portion of their wellness policy, they did classroom nutrition education around what healthy “treat” alternatives could be for celebrations. The nutrition educators also did this for parents and administrators. Fort Bragg is celebrating in healthy ways these days, with physical activity rewards, smoothie parties, and healthy nutrition booths at carnivals and festivals.

Ukiah Unified School District decided to approach parents and teachers with a flyer and commitment sheet for healthy classroom parties. The nutrition educators went into classrooms and did lessons on how to incorporate the food guide pyramid into healthy rewards. For example, for grains they talked about having granola bars instead of cupcakes. For the fruit group, they talked about having fruit kabobs and fruit smoothies, etc. Then the Ukiah Unified School District rolled out the next step with the flyer, giving information to administrators and staff and then sending home the Healthy Classroom Parties flyer for parents to read, sign, and return. The Ukiah Unified School District had such a positive response from parents, and teachers said they felt supported by the District because everybody was giving the same message.

Teachers, staff, administrators, parents, and students all report that they appreciate the direction and leadership the nutrition education program provides in helping our classrooms to be healthy environments. Parents have been involved with getting healthier snacks and party goods to classrooms. Administrators are arranging healthy celebrations such as physical activity assemblies and rewards, as well as smoothies for 100 percent attendance parties.

The other lasting impact has come with a monthly e-mail to all staff called “Caught in the Act.” These little e-mails report those people who are following our wellness policy by doing healthy things. One example is a teacher who lets students eat fruits and vegetables any time in her class for snack. Those who bring less than healthy snacks have to wait until recess to eat their snacks, therefore giving some recognition to the students who practice healthy behaviors. We have found that people are reporting healthy activities for our “Caught In the Act” on a consistent basis. It lets others see how easy it can be to practice healthy eating and physical activity.

We are continuing our “Caught in the Act” e-mails and have shared this at our Regional Network meetings as a strategy to develop healthy classrooms. We will be doing more nutrition education with parents, encouraging them to send healthy snacks and rewards throughout this school year.

For more information, please contact Terry Nieves at [tnieves@usd.net](mailto:tnieves@usd.net).

### **Middle School - Making It Happen**

We are a PreK through 12<sup>th</sup> grade independent charter school. When we first participated in our *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* program, we were only an elementary school. We designed our *Network* program to fit the needs of elementary school students with traditional programs. This included identifying staff who would provide nutrition education activities and staff training for self-contained classrooms. Since then, we have added middle school and high school and their various departmental designs. This means the secondary do not have self-contained classrooms where all teachers are responsible for nutrition education and physical activity. How can one get a math teacher to teach nutrition or support the increase of physical activity in his math class? A challenge has been providing activities and training appropriate for the secondary grades where all can be included.

Our program design includes a Middle School Student Nutrition Advisory Council group where nutrition education is done by student peers throughout the school and reinforced by teachers formally and informally. Our Middle School Nutrition Team Leader designed a program that added the component of increasing physical activity throughout the middle school. To begin, she met with all middle school teachers to get buy-in for the participation of middle school in the Governor's Challenge and continued to provide strategies incorporating exercise with core subjects within the classroom and at other staff development meetings. The middle school had Mobile Monday's where every teacher took five minutes of instruction for physical activity. They had Fitness Fridays where every student was active at the various fitness stations which were led by middle school teachers from all departments. These activities and the healthy attitudes were even extended into the activities for the middle school after school program. Approximately 300 students completed the Governor's challenge this year. Their goal for next year is 100 percent.

Students and teachers are accepting the focus on nutrition and increased physical activities as the norm for our middle school. The middle school program has become a model for the rest of our charter school.

The Nutrition Team Leader will continue to develop awareness and skills throughout the middle school this year. She has already started a ½ marathon teacher training group to start out the academic school year. This group of teachers is becoming the models for increasing physical activity among our students. Their planning now includes teachers from the different content areas.

For more information, please contact Suzanne Llamas at [sllamas@vaughncharter.com](mailto:sllamas@vaughncharter.com).

### **Mom, Can We Buy Tomatoes**

One of the biggest challenges we find with our target audience is the purchase and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables in the home environment. Price and experience with fresh produce are the major roadblocks. Our goal is to provide education and experience in preparing and using fresh fruits and vegetables for the students and parents.

In addition to the Harvest of the Month (HOTM) taste testing, each month a HOTM salad is prepared with the students in their cooking class. We use the HOTM salads to help link home, garden, cafeteria, and classroom.

Students and teachers were encouraged to grow HOTM produce in their gardens. Garden educators provided a garden enhanced nutrition lesson each month for the HOTM produce.

In the cooking classes, students prepared the HOTM salad. Nutrition educators taught students how to make the salad with an interactive nutrition lesson. Nutrition educators also repeat and reinforce throughout the lesson how easy the healthy salad is to make. They encourage students to make the salad again at home with their family. Nutrition educators and students have an interactive conversation about making the recipe again at home and how the recipe might be adapted to use other ingredients.

To connect the family with the HOTM, calendars were sent home with each student in the beginning of the year that list the cafeteria menu, feature the HOTM produce using student artwork, interesting facts about that month's produce, and the HOTM salad recipe. Students are encouraged to dialogue with their families about the HOTM produce and to make the HOTM salad with their families. Families also receive information and education on eating fresh fruits and vegetables at our fun and interactive Growing Healthy Families nights. The Growing Healthy Families nights are a great way for parents and students to learn together with the different dynamic activities offered during the evening.

The cafeteria connects with the student and the HOTM lesson by offering the HOTM salad on the salad bar once a week each month.

The Healthy Schools Project has received positive feedback on the HOTM lessons from students, teachers, principals, and parents. Students are going home and talking with their families about the HOTM salad that they made at school and asking to make it again at home.

While shopping at the grocery store, a second grade student came running up to me, gave me a big hug, and introduced me to his mother. Her response was, "Oh, you are the reason we are here." I hesitated for a moment not sure of how she felt and then she smiled and thanked me. They were at the store buying the HOTM salad ingredients to make the salad to go with their dinner that evening. She was happy that her son was asking to have a healthy salad and even happier that he was offering to make it for the family. Our team has many similar stories of parents and students sharing that they went home and made the salad again with their family. It is very rewarding to hear the success stories along with the happy, often surprised, moms explaining their child is asking for fruits and vegetables.

The Healthy Schools Project team will continue to model and encourage the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. It is a message that needs repeating and encouragement to help become a part of the student's (and hopefully families) lifestyle. With the new Women, Infants and Children fresh fruits and vegetables program, the team is encouraged and hoping easier access to fresh fruits and vegetables will help families incorporate them more into their daily lives.

For more information, please contact Anne Thille at [anne.thille@venturausd.org](mailto:anne.thille@venturausd.org).

### **Look What I have in my Lunch**

Many families attending our schools have limited funds to purchase food and are very careful to purchase only what they know will be accepted and eaten by the family members. Fresh fruits and vegetables must be eaten fairly soon after purchase and if not the families' limited food dollars are wasted. Fruits and vegetables are also not typically the foods requested by family members.

As the Nutrition Promoter walks on the school campus, she is greeted by students who participated in her second grade nutrition classes last year. "Look what I have in my lunch," says one student as he pulls out a bag of carrots, "I have vegetables with my lunch." Another student greets her munching on an apple, "Look what I brought for snack."

It has been so positive to see that students not only remember the information taught in the second grade nutrition classes but are making changes in their diets. Learning about the importance of a healthy diet and then having the opportunity to taste these healthy vegetables and fruits has made a difference. We have received positive feedback from students, parents, and teachers. Following behind one student and her mother on the way to the parking lot after a class, the student, who did not know I was there, declared "I like broccoli now." When her mother asked her why she decided she liked it now she responded, "I tried it and now I like it." Parents have also shared that their students have asked them to buy the ingredients for the yogurt parfait so they could make it at home.

Parents are more likely to use their food dollars to buy fresh fruits and vegetables when their students are asking for those items and when they are assured that the food will be eaten.

We plan to continue providing opportunities to students and their families to taste test these foods in a positive environment. We also offered more opportunities this year to promote Harvest of the Month, seasonal, fresh produce at events with students and their parents. We have found that parents are more likely to buy the food again when they see their children enjoying it and have tasted it themselves.

For more information, please contact Neva Wright at [nwright@visalia.k12.ca.us](mailto:nwright@visalia.k12.ca.us).

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSIONS**

The Regents of the University of California on behalf of Cooperative Extension in  
Alameda County  
Contract #: 08-85165

### **Parents Make Changes**

The lack of financial resources to purchase healthy food makes it difficult for families to obtain nutritious food on a consistent basis in addition to limited access and unsafe neighborhoods making it impossible for families to participate in any physical activity outside of their home.

A nutrition education assistant with the Nutrition Education Training Academy (NETA) joined the program at a time when she needed to control her high blood pressure. Her doctor warned her of the need to change her diet and increase physical activity but she did not have the tools or knowledge to make those changes. Through the NETA program, she found an outlet of nutrition and wellness information for herself and her preschool children. She took a series of trainings to become a nutrition education assistant, conducted cooking demonstrations in the community, and taught cooking classes on vegetables, fruits, whole grains, using less sugar and fat, and eating on a budget. However, she did not realize the difficulty in changing the way she eats and her physical lifestyle. Small steps were taken in the beginning to increase her physical activity and as she grew more confident, she became more enthusiastic about getting up early in the morning to exercise. Now she has more energy and enthusiasm during her daily exercise. She now has a daily routine of exercise of one hour per day.

Currently, the “NETA” mom is a soccer coach for her daughter’s team. She recently created a “Zumba” program at one of the neighboring parks. Zumba integrates salsa dancing and physical activity. She offers these classes at the park three days a week while promoting others in the community to get involved.

Another reason to continue to have a healthy lifestyle is her nine year old daughter who is overweight. The “NETA” mom was so ashamed to take her daughter to the doctor for fear of what he might tell her. Now, she focuses on providing her daughter with healthy nutritious food and getting her more physically active. She says, “I’ll do anything for the well being of my daughter.”

These results will affect our work to focus our efforts and concentrate on targeting mothers and their families by providing cooking classes in the community and teaching other parent leaders how to effectively send the message of consuming more fruits and vegetables.

For more information, please contact Lucrecia Farfan-Ramirez @ [cdalameda@ucdavis.edu](mailto:cdalameda@ucdavis.edu).

Regents of the University of California on behalf of Cooperative Extension (UCCE)  
in Alameda County (Nutrition Family and Consumer Services)  
Contract #: 06-55120

### ***Healthy Eating Promotes Family Pride and Hope for the Future***

The UCCE Alameda Food Stamp Nutrition Education and Outreach Program targets underserved families in blighted areas in communities surrounding east Oakland low-income housing units. The goal is to improve family food behaviors: daily fruit and vegetable intake, healthy eating and lifestyle practices, safe food handling, and food resource management. Change in family food behaviors are measured by pre/post Food Behavior Checklist (FBC). Affecting behavior change in multiple areas is a very difficult task especially if families have limited food resources. For at-risk families to eat healthy over time they need to learn and practice smart resource management and shopping skills. After learning what and how much to eat, families need to be able to handle food properly to prevent contamination, spoilage/waste, and to make creative uses of leftover food.

UCCE Alameda tries to prepare families to manage their limited family resources and the food in the kitchen to get the most nutrition out of their food dollar. This requires more time than a one contact activity. As I walked door-to-door and on the streets of the east Oakland communities offering nutrition education and food stamp information, I found many families wanted help to understand how to eat healthy for less. Most families we serve may be on food stamps but are still running out of food. I found increasing numbers did not have enough food or were out of food and needed to be referred to emergency food sites on a regular basis.

FBC data collected after about three months on 53 families completing six hours of education showed the daily fruit and vegetable intakes of adults had increased by 14 and 16 percentage points respectively. Increases in acceptable food behavior practices by indicator: Nutrition – 65 percent reported a change in one practice and overall increased from 17 to 32 percent; Food Safety – 38 percent reported a change in one practice and overall increased from 32-56 percent; Money Management – 49 percent reported a change in one practice but overall the rate was constant; and improvement in all three indicators increased from 5 -12 percent.

Follow-up FBC data collected on 206 families who had received nutrition education about a year prior and also completed a Shopping Survey reflected sustained improvement. These families showed sustained changes over time: 95 percent reported a change in one practice and overall a 51 percentage point improvement in desirable money management practices (21 percent to 72 percent); 97 percent reported a change in one practice and an overall 15 percent improvement in nutrition practices (15 percent to 30 percent);

69 percent reported a change in one practice and overall 41 percent in desirable food safety practices (53 to 94 percent); 21 percentage points improvement in overall desirable practices in all three areas (4 percent to 25); and families reporting increases in the intake of fruits by 70 percent and vegetables by 67 percent.

Follow-up FBCs (collected after about 12 months) on 206 food stamp eligible families who had received six-eight hours of nutrition education showed sustained improvement in desirable practices in nutrition, food safety, and money management over time. The number of families reporting acceptable food behaviors by all three indicators increased from 4 percent at baseline to 25 percent; eating a variety of fruits daily increased from 16 percent to 67 percent, and vegetables from 27 percent to 76 percent. We have observed increased: a) feelings of pride and a sense of hope among families for practicing a healthy lifestyle; b) willingness of families to seek out nutrition classes in the community -- people have called the library to find when another nutrition class will be held; c) interest of community sites to offer nutrition classes and promote healthy eating and lifestyles; d) Interest in growing fruits and vegetables and flowers to beautify their homes; and e) interest of several participants in the study of nutrition and wellness --one enrolled in a class at Laney College, another a Kaiser- Health training program, and another is studying phlebotomy.

UCCE Alameda promotes food stamps as a nutrition education program and support the family unit as the place where healthy attitudes and nutrition practices can be nurtured and passed on to the next generation. We will continue to promote increased fruits and vegetable intake for family meals, outreach to needy families to promote the use of food stamps to stretch food dollars, and encourage families to apply for nutrition programs. In the fruit and vegetable classes, Women, Infants and Children recipients learned that some were throwing away their farmers' market vouchers because they did not want to make an extra trip to the farmers' market. Participants said they could buy everything from the store in one stop while they had a ride to get home. UCCE Alameda will conduct tours to grocery outlets and farmers' markets, will emphasize that one needs to conduct the affairs of the home and run their kitchen like a business to save money, and encourage farmers' markets to conduct nutrition education and exercise classes at farmers markets to stress healthy eating and to prevent chronic diseases like obesity.

For more information, please contact Mary L. Blackburn at [mblackburn@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mblackburn@ucdavis.edu).

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
SISTER PROGRAMS**

California Department of Education  
Contract #: 08-85136

### **Standards-Based Nutrition Education Trainings Now Online**

School districts are currently facing an unprecedented financial crisis that limits the opportunities for teachers and other district staff to participate in face-to-face nutrition education training. Moreover, busy lives add to the challenge of attending workshops and conferences. Online training provides relevant standards-based nutrition education training free of charge to the participants at a time that is convenient to them.

In collaboration with the California Department of Education, the California Healthy Kids Resource Center (CHKRC) developed an online standards-based nutrition education professional development training that is now available on their Web site at: <http://www.californiahealthykids.org>. The course is titled “Standards-Based Nutrition Education Online Training.” It has three modules:

- a. Introducing the Standards
- b. Skills-Based Instruction
- c. Taking the Standards to the Classroom

Teachers and other district staff now have the ability to educate themselves about standards-based nutrition education without spending precious district funds. CHKRC provides technical assistance via phone and e-mail and can address any questions that may arise from the course or subsequent integration of the material into the classroom. Although too early to assess, we anticipate that the online courses will make it easier for teachers to integrate standards-based nutrition education into their classrooms.

CHKRC will adapt more standards-based nutrition education professional development courses into online modules as funding allows. They will use the online training database to assess the modules using participation data and participant comments.

For more information, please contact Deborah Tamannaie at [dtamanna@cde.ca.gov](mailto:dtamanna@cde.ca.gov).

California Project LEAN  
Contract #: 08-85117

## Youth Engagement Success Stories

Due to budget and project delays and approval for the Youth Engagement Project, much of the work began later in the year. The four local incentive awardees (LIAs) which agreed to conduct youth engagement activities as part of their Scope of Work are just beginning their projects after having received one in-person training, two teleconferences, and a site visit to two communities.

California Project LEAN (Leaders Encouraging Activity and Nutrition [CPL]) was charged with providing training/technical assistance to LIAs who opted to participate in youth engagement activities for 2008-2009.

The four LIAs had limited experience working with youth as partners in youth-led action research and nutrition education. With training and the numerous resources and materials provided by CPL, the LIAs now have the capacity to conduct youth engagement activities that include recruiting and engaging youth in meaningful, successful nutrition and physical activity projects in their communities that aim to increase the fruit and vegetable intake and physical activity levels in Food Stamp Nutrition Education eligible youth and others in their communities.

One of the four sites has already successfully recruited youth and is now deciding on their project that will help to increase fruit and vegetable intake as well as increase physical activity opportunities.

Many of the adult allies have learned methods and techniques that will help them to better engage youth in their work that involve youth and adult partnerships.

With the information provided, the adult allies will continue to engage youth in meaningful work that results in an increase in fruits and vegetable intake and increased opportunities for physical activity.

For more information, please contact Katherine Hawksworth at [katherine.hawksworth@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:katherine.hawksworth@cdph.ca.gov).

