

Sutter County Students receive Lunch to Grow from Butte Cluster CalFresh Healthy Living UC

SUMMARY

In response to school closures due to COVID-19, Yuba City Unified School District (YCUSD) Student Nutrition Services set up drive-thrus at seven schools to serve free breakfast and lunch to all children ages 18 and younger

BACKGROUND

Yuba City, California is a small town about 45 miles north of Sacramento where 64% of students ages 5 - 17 are eligible for free school meals.

On March 26th 2020, CalFresh Healthy Living, UC (CFHL, UC) partnered with YCUSD at one drive thru site, Andros Karperos Elementary School where CFHL, UC has provided nutrition and garden education for the past five years. To add a little extra sunshine to their drive-thru, CFHL, UC distributed "Lunch to Grow" kits, which resemble a paper-bag lunch, and include:

- one vegetable plant seedling
- zip lock bag of potting soil
- small pot
- instructions for planting

One kit per family was distributed to any family that wanted one, while supplies lasted.

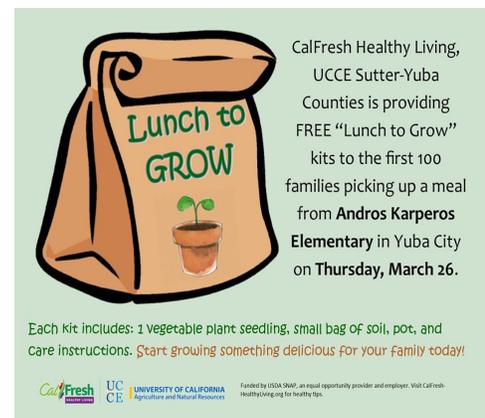
SOLUTION

Right before the sudden school closures, The CFHL, UC team and UC Master Gardeners purchased 125 vegetable plant seedlings for school gardens throughout Butte, Glenn, Sutter and Yuba counties to prepare to teach "Ready, Set, Grow", a lesson from the garden curriculum, Teams with Intergenerational Support. Although the lessons were cancelled, it didn't take long for the CFHL, UC team to come up with a creative

way to use the seedlings to meet the urgent requests from parents for activities to do with their kids at home. The team discussed "Lunch to Grow" kits during a remote, online meeting and within three days they were at Andros Karperos drive thru, prepared with gloves and hand-sanitizer, distributing the kits to families.

"Parents and students were really excited about planting their plants. They said they were going home and planting them right now."

- Yuba City Unified School District Food Service Area Supervisor



Social Media Flyer for Lunch to Grow Kits from Yuba City Unified School District

For more information or to get involved, contact Katie Johnson, Nutrition Family and Consumer Sciences Advisor for the University of California Cooperative Extension in the Central Sierra at ckjohnson@ucanr.edu

OUTCOME

Of all seven school sites in Yuba City, Andros Karperos had the most drive-through participants the day that CFHL, UC distributed “Lunch to Grow” kits to 125 families. Overall, the response from kids and parents was enthusiastic and grateful.

To get the word out, CFHL, UC created a post on social media. The CFHL, UC “Butte Cluster Nutrition” Facebook post to feature the “Lunch to Grow” event was one of their most shared posts to-date.

After seeing the post on social media, The Public Relations Coordinator for Colusa County Office of Education reached out to CFHL, UC to ask about bringing “Lunch to Grow” kits to their school drive-thrus. CFHL, UC coordinated with Colusa County Office of Education’s Local Implementation Agency, Center for Healthy Communities, to provide them with information to assemble the kits for their sites.

Inspired by the success of the “Lunch to Grow” kits, CFHL, UC is now planning to assemble more kits to distribute to families at school drive-thrus, including “to go” kits with materials that promote physical activity at home.

For more information or to get involved, contact Hector Ochoa, Nutrition Education Program Manager for the University of California Cooperative Extension in the Central Sierra: (530) 543-2319 x1112 or hcochoa@ucanr.edu.

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