

Nourishing Families: Family Cook Nights at the Adam Elementary Family Resource Center

Completed



Reporting Periods

SNAP-Ed 2024 (October 1, 2023 - September 30, 2024)

Site

Adam (William Laird) Elementary

Unit

Santa Barbara (County)

Program Activity

AE-staff-Family Night.Adam

Keywords

Nutrition

Parents of Young Children

Parents

Families

Comments

Not Specified

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Collaborators

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Story

Background

The Santa Maria Bonita School District recently established family resource centers at multiple elementary school sites. The Family Resource Centers are a place of support and resources for families that provide targeted services based on specific needs and interests of families. Some of the services provided include supporting families with access to nutritious food, healthcare, parent education through health and wellness groups, and application and school forms assistance. CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL), UCCE in Santa Barbara County has a longstanding partnership with the supervisor of family outreach for the Santa Maria Bonita School District (SMBSD) and Adam Elementary. When approached to organize a nutrition education series for parents and family members, it was a natural collaboration for CFHL, UCCE.

Story Narrative

Family involvement is a crucial component of effective nutrition education amongst elementary aged students. Although a majority of students at Adam Elementary receive nutrition education during the school year, hosting a class series for their families creates an opportunity for parents to further incorporate healthy eating habits at home. CFHL, UCCE partnered with the

SMBSD family outreach supervisor to recruit families to participate in these family-centered classes. Although these classes occurred during the summer, over fifteen families attended the series to gain nutrition knowledge. CFHL, UCCE staff in Santa Barbara County provided four, ninety-minute lessons for Spanish-speaking families using the Healthy, Happy Families curriculum. Topics covered during the sessions included food safety, food groups, reading a nutrition facts label, tips for involving children in the kitchen and establishing healthy routines.

At the end of each session, SMBSD provided families with healthy shelf-stable foods to practice what they learned at home. The CFHL, UCCE staff showcased to families the diverse range of recipes they could create using the food items they received. For example, one session involved demonstrating to families how to make a peanut butter yogurt dip with fruit, using the large containers of peanut butter they received. In another session, families learned how to prepare a "cowboy salad" using the cans of beans they received, offering them new recipe ideas and inspiration. Throughout each lesson, families were encouraged to participate in the recipe preparation process. This involved working together to chop and prepare ingredients, which not only fostered a sense of community but also allowed everyone to bond over the shared experience. SMBSD addressed the challenge of families needing childcare by offering an on-site staff member to engage younger children in activities, enabling parents to fully engage in the nutrition lessons.

The classes received positive feedback from the attending families and the resource center staff. The supervisor of family outreach shared "The parents were so excited to learn the recipes and try new dishes! This program helped families discover healthy eating habits and learn new recipes that were both nutritious and delicious. They gained practical skills to make informed food choices as they prepared meals for their families. The classes shared fundamental basics and tips for preparing meals, as well as hands-on cooking which parents and children really enjoyed. They were dedicated to showing up every week, even after long hours of work. Look forward to continuing with these classes!!!".

Even months after the series concluded, families approached the nutrition educator at Adam Elementary's back-to-school night stating that they gained valuable knowledge about nutrition and establishing healthy routines as a result of the classes. In the 2024-2025 school year, CFHL, UCCE is already planning to expand these classes to more family resource centers, aiming to equip families with nutrition knowledge and skills and to help further foster a sense of community at the school sites.

Favorite Quote

"Thank you for all the information, this program is magnificent because it teaches us to eat healthier and helps us with more information about how to live as a healthy family. Excellent program it helps and educates us in different ways to eat healthier. Thank you so much". – Adam Elementary parent

SNAP-Ed Custom Data

Project Name

CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE

Related Framework Indicators

Healthy Eating (ST1)
 Food Resource Management (ST2)
 Healthy Eating Behaviors (MT1)
 Food Resource Management Behaviors (MT2)

Socio-Ecological Frameworks

Individual/Family
 Environmental Setting

Approaches

Individual or group-based nutrition educators (e.g. direct education)

Partner Types

Community-based program(s) working with the SNAP-Ed target audience
