

Student Leaders Increase Their Confidence in Cooking: 4-H SNAC Culinary Academy

Completed 

Reporting Periods

SNAP-Ed 2023 (October 1, 2022 - September 30, 2023)

Site

William Rice elementary

Unit

Santa Barbara (County)

Crisis Impact

No Impact due to COVID-19

Program Activity

SNAC Culinary Academy 2023

Keywords

Cooking

Healthy Eating

Positive Youth Development

Comments

Not Specified

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33639

Collaborators

User	Contributor	View Only	View & Edit	Contribution
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Story**Background**

The Issue:

In [Santa Barbara County](#) only about one-third of youth ages 2-17 consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily and among low-income youth that number drops to less than 17%. Youth leaders in the CalFresh Healthy Living, UC Cooperative Extension (CFHL, UCCE) 4-H SNAC (Student Nutrition Advisory Council) program prioritized developing their cooking skills and expanding their knowledge of foods from other cultures as one of their leadership projects. Research indicates that [engaging youth in cooking](#) can increase self-efficacy with preparing meals and promote healthy eating habits that can follow them into adulthood. Further, engaging youth and communities in the interventions intended to impact their health is an evidence-based practice for creating sustainable and realistic changes that can improve people's health and is a primary focus of 4-H SNAC.

Story Narrative

How UC Delivers:

CalFresh Healthy Living, UC Cooperative Extension (CFHL) in Santa Barbara County implemented 4-H Student Nutrition Advisory Council (SNAC) clubs in person this year along with the 4-H SNAC Culinary Academy. SNAC club is a collaborative youth engagement effort between CFHL, 4-H, and local schools and

families which offers a place for youth to enhance their leadership skills and complete projects related to nutrition, physical activity, and gardening. The annual 4-H SNAC Culinary Academy was on hiatus due to schools shutting down during COVID-19, however, this year was the first time since 2019 that clubs from across the county were able to meet in person to learn about different cultures and culinary skills. Students rotate between three different cooking stations to learn how to make a recipe that focuses on a specific cuisine and culinary technique.

40 students from four different SNAC clubs gathered during their spring break and had the opportunity to network and see that when they are involved in 4-H clubs they are part of a much larger network that goes beyond their school campus. Students began the day getting to know one another through CATCH games and introductions. This year was unique to past culinary academy events with the addition of a station led by volunteers from the UC Master Food Preservers (MFP) program. This collaboration connected youth and families with other UCCE resources and cooking skills. The MFP volunteers worked with the youth to make fresh spring rolls and to learn how to preserve a Thai dipping sauce using a water bath canner. Other rotations led by CFHL staff included cultural information about France and Italy where students learned how to make omelets and pizzas respectively. To close out the event, students worked in groups to prepare posters summarizing what they learned and presented their work along with samples of the new recipes they made to their families/guardians.

The Impact:

After participating in the day-long cooking event, students shared that some of the best aspects of participating in the program included: “working with other students and meeting new people”, “learning how to cook new recipes and taste different foods together”, and “having the opportunity to help as a leader”. Youth also completed the “What Did You Learn” open-ended qualitative survey, which asks about changes in knowledge and behaviors. From that survey, 75% of the 32 students who responded to the question related to learning identified that they learned how to cook new and different foods. Other responses included themes

of learning about new countries and their culture and a sense of increased confidence when cooking. One student shared, "One thing I learned from these classes is that meals can be fun and simple." Another participant added, " One thing that I learned is how to cook different foods and where they come from."

Comments about what students will do differently now include, "to be confident and careful on what you are doing" and another "I would hold the knife differently and safely." Overall, the 4-H SNAC Culinary Academy is a space for students to explore different cultures, try new foods, and grow their confidence in cooking healthy food to develop healthy habits that can be a lifelong benefit to their overall health and wellbeing. This programming aligns with the ANR public value of promoting healthy people and communities.

Favorite Quote None

SNAP-Ed Custom Data

Project Name CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE

Related Framework Indicators Healthy Eating (ST1)
Healthy Eating Behaviors (MT1)

Socio-Ecological Frameworks Individual/Family
Environmental Setting

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

Partner Types *Not Specified*
