



# UC CALFRESH NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

**T**he vision of the *Let's Eat Healthy!* Program, UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program is to educate food stamp eligible children and parents throughout Placer and Nevada Counties to lead healthier lives through wise food choices and physical activity.

The purpose of *Let's Eat Healthy!* is to promote healthy lifestyles as outlined in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This program targets schools and community programs with

large numbers of children from food stamp households. This is done by teaching students about the importance of physical activity, healthy food choices and what these foods do for our bodies. Eligible schools receive UCCE nutrition curricula, resources, and teacher trainings.

This is extremely important in light of the fact that childhood obesity has tripled in the past three decades. One in three Americans younger than 18 is overweight. The likelihood of developing type 2 diabetes, high blood cholesterol, and high blood pressure at rates that raise their heart disease risk are greatly increased in the overweight child. The rapid rise in childhood obesity, if left unchecked, could shorten life span by as much as five years.

Physical activity, good nutrition, and good education go hand-in-hand. Well-nourished children have higher test scores, better school attendance, and fewer classroom behavior problems. Research shows that knowledge and skills children learn today help them choose healthier foods tomorrow and into adulthood.



## Program Highlights

- ◆ Over 4,400 low income Placer and Nevada Counties school children received nutrition education
- ◆ Over 5,000 adults learned about nutrition through newsletters and our website
- ◆ Program representatives brought **Let's Eat Healthy!** to 15 preschool and 111 elementary school classrooms
- ◆ **\$231,478 USDA grant** to provide UC CalFresh programs to low income Placer and Nevada Counties children and youth



## *Learning Leads to Healthy Behavior Changes*



*Students at the Hennessy Elementary After School Program make a healthy snack during a nutrition lesson.*

***Dear Mrs. Carter,  
Thank you for coming  
and teaching my  
class about nutrition  
and germs. Thank  
you for showing us  
the machine that  
shows germs. It  
taught us to always  
wash our hands for  
20 seconds to be rid  
of germs. We enjoyed  
the snack that you  
brought us. It was  
very good and  
nutritious. I hope that  
we can see you next  
year and learn more.***

### **Issue**

Over the past three decades, childhood obesity rates in America have tripled, and today, nearly one in three children in America are overweight or obese.

### **What Was Done**

This year 111 elementary and 15 preschool classrooms received an introductory lesson at the beginning of the school year and a hand-washing lesson in the spring. Many fifth grade students have received lessons since they started preschool! All teachers received research-based curriculum to continue the learning throughout the school year. The program reached over 4,400 low-income children.

### **Impact**

- Hennessy School fourth grade teacher's email: I always require "brain" food for snack and one of the boys wanted a "bar" so I told him to check the nutrition label to see if he could have it. Another girl wanted Top Ramen and we checked the label for her. Your lesson taught them how to read and interpret the label. GOOD JOB bringing awareness to my students!!
- A teacher at First Street School asked her 5th graders to come up with a list of healthy snack ideas. One of the students said "those orange sticks that Mrs. Carter brought for us to taste. They were good!"
- Ready Springs teacher's email: I loved the lesson and so did my students. It was the kind of information they need- and it tied in nicely to math and science topics, too.



# Hand Washing Education



*This student at Cirby Elementary, like most, was surprised when he saw highlighted spots where germs stuck around even after he had washed his hands for 20 seconds with soap and water. "But I did a really good job!"*



*All second and third grade students made and took home tissue box covers to remind their family to wash their hands after blowing their nose.*

## Issue

An estimated 48 million Americans become sick due to a food borne illnesses each year. Children are more susceptible than adults to becoming ill.

## What Was Done

Hand washing lessons were taught to students from preschool to 5th grade. Through interactive lessons, students learned about how germs spread, how germs can make people sick and the importance of hand washing and food safety practices.

Germie the Germ Bug, a purple colored germ prop with a black light was used as a hands-on teaching tool. After applying a "special" lotion, students placed their hands under the black light. Germie showed "glowing" spots on hands where germs were hiding. Students re-examined their hands after washing with soap and water for 20 seconds. Many were surprised when they saw highlighted spots where germs stuck around even after they had washed their hands.

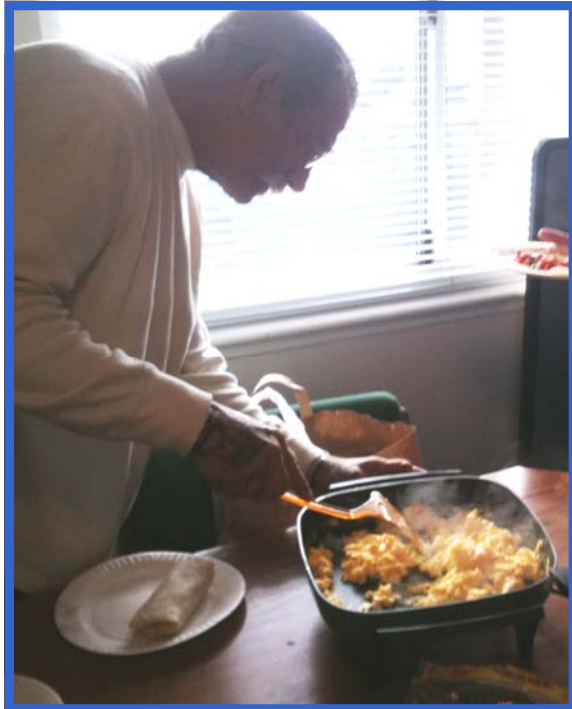
A hand washing demonstration was also done at Rock Creek open house.

## Impact

Over 2,000 students participated in the hand washing lesson. Parents at the Rock Creek Elementary Open House event were excited to see Germie the Germ Bug after hearing about it from their children. They told UCCE staff that their children changed their habits and began to wash their hands more often.



# Adult Education



*A Home Start Inc. parent helps prepare a low cost breakfast burrito during a cooking demonstration. Using skills acquired from cooking professionally, he was able to share cooking tips with others in the group.*

***“I have been reading the labels on the foods I buy and it’s helping me cut down on my sugar. I hadn’t ever thought about it before, but after measuring how much sugar is in a soda I started to.”***

## Issue

Parents are the number one role model for their children and make decisions on what they eat at mealtimes. In Placer and Nevada Counties, 36,123 adults qualify for CalFresh benefits. Purchasing and planning healthy meals on a limited budget can be a challenge to many families.

## What Was Done

The nutrition education series, Plan, Shop, Save and Cook was taught to parents and caregivers. This 2 to 4-part series focused on eating healthy within a limited budget.

Lessons topics included:

- Meal Planning & Shopping Lists
- Understanding Food Labels
- Saving Money
- Menu Planning for a Week

A tasting was also provided during each lesson as examples of healthy, low-cost recipes. Parents tasted raw and baked sweet potato sticks, low-fat yogurt parfaits and fruit smoothies. Parents commented on how tasty and simple the recipes were and many tried them at home with their family.

## Impact

Over 30 parents and caregivers participated in the nutrition education series. After completing a retrospective survey, 67% of participants compare prices and read the Nutrition Facts Label more often.