



UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program

Program Highlights

- Over 3,200 low income Placer and Nevada Counties school children received nutrition education in their classrooms
- Over 5,500 adults learned about nutrition through newsletters, our website, and Facebook.
- During the past year, approximately 750 youth and adults participated in our community events.
- \$210,007 USDA grant to provide UC CalFresh programs to low income Placer and Nevada Counties youth and adults.



Kindergarteners play MyPlate Bingo as a fun review lesson in the spring.

The University of California Cooperative Extension has two nutrition programs- UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program (*Let's Eat Healthy!*) and the Nevada County Innovative Grant Program. The vision of these programs is to help CalFresh eligible children and families in Placer and Nevada Counties to maintain healthy lifestyles through wise food choices and physical activity.

These programs are extremely important due to 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 are greatly increased in overweight children. If left unchecked these risk factors and associated diseases could shorten a child's life span by as much as five years.

The purpose of these programs is to promote healthy lifestyles, as outlined in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010, in schools and community programs with large numbers of CalFresh and CalFresh eligible participants. This is done by teaching students about the importance of physical activity and healthy food choices. Eligible schools receive nutrition lessons, UCCE nutrition curricula, resources, and teacher trainings. We reach parents through adult workshops as well as family events at participating schools.

Physical activity, good nutrition, and high quality 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.

In these difficult economic times families have to deal with stretching their food dollars to feed their families. Trying to make these meals nutritious adds to the challenge. Through nutrition workshops adults are learning how to plan and cook nutritious meals for their families while saving money and time.



Let's Eat Healthy in School



Kindergarteners learn about MyPlate - a guide to healthy eating.

*“Excellent job! Students really benefit from the program.”
- quote from a teacher*



Kindergarteners having fun participating in a physical activity routine.

ISSUE

Parents are children’s first role model. Home is where they develop their eating habits or behaviors. As they enter school they have additional role models – peers and teachers. The American diet is long on fat, sugar, and excess calories and short on many of the key nutrients for optimum health. For this reason children need outside guidance to make good food choices. By providing nutrition education on a continuing basis from kindergarten throughout the elementary school years the likelihood that children will develop healthy eating habits greatly increases.

WHAT WAS DONE

During the 2012-13 school year, eight elementary schools participated in the Let’s Eat Healthy! program. In the fall, a program representative went to each classroom to present a nutrition lesson. Kindergarten through third grade lessons focused on MyPlate, designed by USDA to help Americans eat healthfully. Fourth graders learned how to read the Nutrition Facts Label and calculate sugar in snacks and beverages. Fifth graders took label reading a step further and analyzed food packages to determine if the snacks were healthy choices. In the spring a program representative returned for a review lesson in the form of a game. Program Representatives made a third visit to three of the elementary schools to conduct a tasting of blood oranges.

IMPACT

Many fifth grade students have received lessons since they started kindergarten. Most have a clear understanding of the importance of eating a variety of foods from all five food groups. Comments made during lessons show that they are making an effort to eat a healthy diet.

An evaluation was given to teachers at the end of the school year.

- 95% of teachers agree/strongly agree that compared to the beginning of the year, more students now can identify healthy food choices.
- 68% of teachers agree/strongly agree that compared to the beginning of the school year, more students now bring fruit and/or vegetables as a snack.
- 70% of teachers now offer healthy food choices to students at parties, and as snacks and rewards.



Collaborating with other UCCE Programs



Students had fun tasting blood oranges. Picture courtesy of Ann Stokes and The Roseville Press Tribune.

“The program helped tremendously in my efforts to educate my students and their families about the benefits of healthy meals, snacks and exercise.” - quote from a teacher



Master Gardener’s created a May Day salad with lettuce from the school garden and served it to Rock Creek students.

ISSUE

The average American diet is high in processed foods and low in fruits and vegetables. Fast food is a daily occurrence, not a treat. Changing nutrition habits doesn’t happen overnight. It often takes multiple contacts from different approaches to help our participants make healthy food choices.

WHAT WAS DONE

The Let’s Eat Healthy! Program has worked with Specialty Crops Grant, Innovative Grant, Nutrition BEST, and Master Gardeners to find new avenues to teach nutrition and help change the dietary habits of the CalFresh audience.

Specialty Crops Grant supplied the blood oranges for tastings at Auburn, Rock Creek, and Woodbridge Elementary schools. They also gave farmer’s market vouchers to participating teachers, who in turn purchased produce for the class.

The Innovative Grant facilitated a Family Fun Fair at Scotten and Bell Hill Elementary Schools. Activities included food art, making a tasty snack, and gardening. Let’s Eat Healthy! had a display on sugar in beverages, an infused water tasting, and a smoothie bike. Kids rode the bike and made their own drinks.

Nutrition BEST gave KidzKount families CSA boxes from Natural Trading Company. At each pick up, parents participated in nutrition workshops taught by Let’s Eat Healthy! staff. Topics included cooking with fresh produce, budgeting, meal planning, and label reading.

Rock Creek students receive nutrition lessons from the Let’s Eat Healthy! program. For the past two years Master Gardeners have been working with students to create a wonderful school garden. Specialty Crops Grant attended Rock Creek Family night providing nutrition information and farmer’s market vouchers. They also brought a smoothie bike which kids rode to make their own drinks.

IMPACT

Students loved the blood oranges. Many shared that they asked their parents to purchase them.

KidzKount parents began incorporating more fruits and vegetables into family meals.

Rock Creek students were able to put their nutrition learning into practice – make half your plate fruits and vegetables. Everyone loved time spent in the garden especially sampling produce they had grown.



Nutrition Education for Preschoolers and Their Families



Students at Sheridan State Preschool enjoyed their apple tuna sandwiches.



Students at Sheridan State Preschool showed off their healthy teeth during the Preschool Nutrition Lesson.



Children enjoyed the interactive nutrition activities at the KidzKount Family Picnic.

ISSUE

Research shows 1 in 7 preschool age children is obese. Children's food preferences and eating habits are developed early in life. Early childhood is the perfect time to teach the importance of healthy food choices, physical activity, and what food does for our bodies.

WHAT WAS DONE

Through the Let's Eat Healthy! program over 500 preschool students in 20 classrooms received an introductory nutrition lesson. The students learned about the different food groups and what foods do for our bodies. The lesson also focused on physical activity with a group exercise and a discussion about what physical activities students can do at home and school to stay healthy. At the end of the lesson, students prepared apple tuna sandwiches. They discussed the importance of hand washing before eating, identified the food groups in the snack, and participated in the tasting.

Winter and Spring Preschool Nutrition Newsletters were sent out to over 100 local preschool educators. These newsletters contain up to date nutrition information, recipes and activity ideas for preschool age children.

Let's Eat Healthy! provided nutrition education to students and parents at two KidzKount Family Picnic Days. Hundreds of low income families attended these events. Parents were shown the amount of sugar in popular beverages and how to make better beverage choices for their children. Children played games using only the sense of touch and smell and clues to identify fruits and vegetables.

IMPACT

- Many children tried tuna fish for the very first time after making the snack themselves. Most enjoyed it and ate every bite.
- Preschool teachers use the Preschool Nutrition Newsletters to extend the nutrition learning throughout the school year.
- After visiting the sugar display booth and learning about the amount of sugar in soda and other sweetened beverages, parents stated that they were going to have their children drink water more often rather than sugary drinks.



Multifaceted Nutrition Education



Mother and son taste a mandarin orange salad recipe and receive a recipe kit at the monthly tasting table. "This is delicious and it saves me from grocery shopping for healthy foods tonight."



Students had a chance to be active by riding the blender bicycle. Smoothie tastings made by the power of each rider was the highlight of both events.

"Again, many thanks to you and your crew. You all did a phenomenal job, and I look forward to holding a Family Fun Fair next year. You bring such an important message to the kids - and families. Keep up the great work! - quote from the Bell Hill Principal"

ISSUE

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

WHAT WAS DONE

Bell Hill and Scotten Elementary schools received nutrition education through three different avenues: nutrition lessons, monthly tastings and recipe kits, and family-centered events.

- Nutrition lessons focused on USDA's MyPlate and the importance of exercise.
- Tastings used Nevada County's Harvest of the Month produce selection to create low cost dishes to be sampled by students of the Scotten After School Program and their parents. Families received the recipe as well as supplies to make the dish at home.
- Family events took place at both schools. Activities included fruit smoothies (created by students using a bicycle blender), food art, make and eat healthy snacks, vegetable sampling, a garden activity, and Zumba.

IMPACT

Nutrition Lessons - Hands-on nutrition lessons were taught in 17 classrooms; reinforcing the importance of eating a variety of foods from all 5 food groups and limiting added fats and sugar.

Monthly Tastings and Recipe Kits - Almost all students and parents sampled the dishes made with fresh produce. An average of 25 families took home recipe kits each month. A survey showed that almost all made the recipe with their families.

Family-Centered Events - 400 people attended the two events. Families participated in activities and were provided with a variety of resources to lead healthier and more active lifestyles.



Websites and Social Media

ISSUE

Families eligible for and participating in CalFresh and community educators lack resources with reputable nutrition information.

WHAT WAS DONE

Nutrition information is provided through two program websites: *Let's Eat Healthy!* and *Nevada County Nutrition Education Program*. The websites offer consumers, educators, and partners easy access to nutrition resources as well as information on research based current nutrition topics.

Several avenues of information are available on the websites including: nutrition newsletters, nutrition links, educational videos, and live Facebook feeds. Viewers can also use the websites to stay up to date on program activities through the calendar of events.

Weekly updates are posted on our Facebook page as a way to share the latest nutrition information, program outreach, and successes.

IMPACT

Followers are instantly connected with their community by viewing photos from local events or downloading the latest program nutrition newsletters. Health professionals, educators and consumers have a reputable portal for nutrition information. Websites have accrued almost 5,000 visits in the past year. Social media efforts through Facebook have connected over 100 people with program updates and resources. Technological outreach provides resources to the community and therefore the means to create healthier lifestyles.

