



# UC CALFRESH

## NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

### Program Highlights

Over 2,000 low income Placer and Nevada County 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.

\$209,500 USDA grant to provide UC CalFresh programs to low income Placer and Nevada County youth and adults.

*Let's Eat Healthy!* is Placer/Nevada Counties name for the UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program. The vision of *Let's Eat Healthy!* is to help CalFresh eligible children and families in Placer and Nevada Counties to maintain healthy lifestyles through wise food choices and physical activity.

*Let's Eat Healthy!* education is 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 *Let's Eat Healthy!* 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 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.

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.



# COLLABORATING WITH OTHER UC—ANR PROGRAMS

## 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 Eat Local Placer Nevada Project, Nutrition BEST, Master Gardeners, 4-H and CYFAR 4-H Afterschool Project to find new avenues to teach nutrition and help change the dietary habits of the CalFresh audience.

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

**Let's Eat Healthy!** put on Family Fun Night at Auburn and Bell Hill Elementary Schools. Activities included food art, making a tasty snack, and gardening. The Bell Hill Family Fun Night was held as part of a statewide Day of Science and Service effort by the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Kids and parents went through Germ City. This fun activity demonstrates the importance of hand washing. Kids also got to ride the smoothie bike and make their own drinks. It took the collaboration with other UCCE programs - Specialty Crops Grant, Nutrition BEST, 4-H, and CYFAR - to make these events a success.

Nutrition BEST gave KidzKount families CSA boxes from Natural Trading Company. At each pick up, parents participated in nutrition one minute messaging, taught by **Let's Eat Healthy!** staff. They learned that not only was the produce delicious but also important to maintain a healthy body.

## IMPACT

This was the second year for the Bell Hill Family Fun Night. It provided an opportunity for families to come together and enjoy fun activities as well as learn about staying healthy. This much anticipated event was almost rained out. But the rain did not stop over 100 families from enjoying the event.

Children at Kaseberg, Rock Creek and Woodbridge had fun figuring out what those "green things" were as they tried sunflower sprouts and thought of creative ways to incorporate them into a meal.



*The Bell Hill Family Fun Fair was part of a University of California's Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Statewide Day of Science and Service on May 8th. The event was used to promote science literacy, eating and drinking healthier, and buying locally grown food.*



*Day of Science and Service at the Bell Hill Family Fun Night featured a bike whereby children could pedal their way to making a smoothie. The ingredients were locally grown and the booth was manned by our Eat Local Placer Nevada Specialty Crops program. There was always a long line to ride the smoothie bike. Samples of bike smoothies were available after pedaling!*



*Rain didn't dampen the fun at Bell Hill Family Fun Night.*





# ROCK CREEK-MULTIFACETED APPROACH TO FIGHTING OBESITY



*Students at Rock Creek Elementary use the dot survey to voice their preferences for soup made from ingredients from the school garden.*



*Soup gets a BIG THUMBS UP!*

## ISSUE

More than one third of children and adolescents are overweight or obese. Teaching the importance of good nutrition in the classroom is important but on its own cannot change children's behavior. Parents, teachers, school districts and food service all need to be involved.

## WHAT WAS DONE

Teachers and students have been participating in the **Let's Eat Healthy!** Program since 2001. In 2006 Rock Creek became our pilot school for the development of the Farm to Fork curriculum series for kindergarten, first and second grades. At that time a salad bar was introduced as well as a more comprehensive program with the school garden. The garden continues to thrive with education from Master Gardeners volunteering their time and expertise. Master Gardeners and Nutrition Educators worked together to prepare tastings from the garden and offered the samples to students during the lunch hour.

This past year a Nutrition Educator taught nutrition workshops to parents as part of the ELAC meetings four times during the school year. These workshops reinforced the learning students were receiving in the classroom.

We have also become a member of the District Advisory Committee for Auburn Unified School District. The committee's goal for the coming year is to revise the Student Wellness Policy and involve the entire district and community. We will be an integral part of the project.

## IMPACT

Students have been learning about the importance of eating from all five food groups. Their parents are now taking an active role in making this happen. At one of the parent workshops on healthy snacks, parents received supplies to make the snacks at home. The principal reported that throughout the week she observed students bringing these snacks to school.

Children love working in the garden and are excited to try the vegetables they grow. One Master Gardener reported that she had to limit the amount of broccoli the students were eating so that she would have enough for the remaining classes.



# LET'S EAT HEALTHY IN SCHOOL



Students learn healthy foods go on MyPlate and treats go "on the side".

## 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 2013-2014 school year, nine elementary schools and 22 preschools participated in the **Let's Eat Healthy!** program. In the fall a Nutrition Educator came to each classroom to present a nutrition lesson. Preschool 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 elementary students learned the importance of hand washing through a fun interactive lesson. Nutrition Educators made a third visit to three of the elementary schools to conduct a tasting of sunflower sprouts.

## 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, snacks and rewards.

*Teacher quote (5<sup>th</sup> grade):  
"I have been participating in this program for a few years now and I feel as though it helps me to talk about healthy choices in my classroom."*



After a hand-washing lesson at Woodbridge Elementary School, a first grader told her mother, "I can't hurry because I have to sing the happy birthday song to be sure all the germs are gone!"





# WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

## ISSUE

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

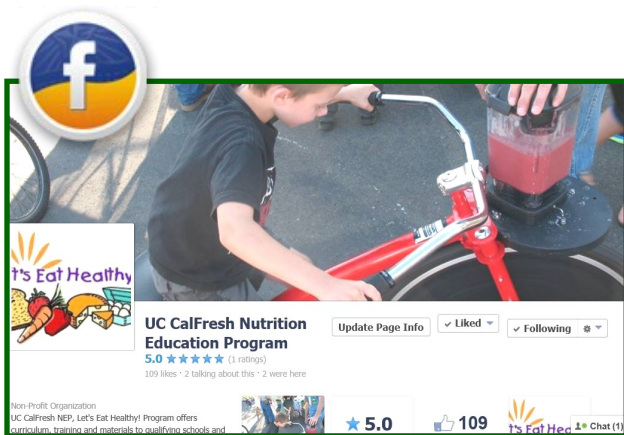
## WHAT WAS DONE

Nutrition information is provided through the *Let's Eat Healthy!* Program website. The website offers consumers, educators, and partners easy access to nutrition resources as well as information on research based current nutrition topics.

Several sources of information are available on the website including: nutrition newsletters, nutrition links and educational videos. Viewers can also use the website 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. The website has accrued over 13,000 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.





# ADULT EDUCATION



WIC workshop –Meal Planning using CSA produce

*A parent comments after tasting a beet and carrot salad. “I have always seen beets in the store, but haven’t ever tried them. I really like them now and include them in my dinners.”*



Parents browsed a variety of fruits and vegetables during a field trip where they used Farmers’ Market vouchers.

## 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 these adults and their families.

## WHAT WAS DONE

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

Workshop topics include:

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

UC CalFresh partnered with UCCE’s Nutrition BEST Program to enhance the series by offering tastings using local produce and CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) boxes or Farmers’ Market produce vouchers. Tastings during each workshop included healthy, low-cost recipes from the Nutrition BEST *Bountiful Harvest Cookbook*.

## IMPACT

Over 90 parents and caregivers participated in the workshops. A retrospective survey was given to participants at the end of the series.

- 52% of participants now plan meals ahead of time.
- 52% of participants now read the Nutrition Facts Panel to make food choices.