



UC CALFRESH

NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

Program Highlights

Over 2,600 low income Placer and Nevada County school children received nutrition education in their classrooms.

Over 10,000 adults learned about nutrition through workshops, newsletters, our website, and Facebook.

During the past year, more than 1,000 youth and adults attended community events we participated in or hosted.

\$302,250 USDA grant to provide UC CalFresh programs to low income Placer and Nevada County youth and adults.

Let's Eat Healthy! is Placer and 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.



FAMILY FUN FAIR EVENTS



Balance Your Breakfast

"I'm happy to see an event at this school that's all about a healthy lifestyle. It helps reinforce habits I try to teach my daughter at home, about healthy eating and exercise."

–Auburn Elementary Parent



Butterfly Food Art

ISSUE

Children and adolescents make choices about which foods to eat every day at home, at school, and in the community. More than one third of youth are overweight or obese and while teaching the importance of good nutrition in the classroom is important, alone it is not enough to change children's behavior. Parents, teachers, food service, and community members all influence what a child chooses to eat; involving these individuals to create a multifaceted approach is essential to fighting obesity.

WHAT WAS DONE

The **Let's Eat Healthy!** Program put on Family Fun Fair events at Rock Creek, Bell Hill, and Auburn Elementary Schools. The theme of these events was "Nutrition and Fitness Olympics". Activities included making and eating nutritious foods, gardening, and physical activity. The activity called "Balance Your Breakfast" showed parents and kids healthy breakfast choices while incorporating physical activity by having the kids literally balance these foods on their heads and walk around cones. Attendees included students from all grades, siblings, parents, teachers, food service staff, kids from the afterschool program, and preschool.

These events would not have been possible without the collaboration and support from other UCCE programs, local health agencies, and local community stores. Partners from UCCE included Specialty Crops, Nutrition BEST, 4-H, CYFAR, and Master Gardeners. Other partners and sponsors from the community included Walk Sacramento, Safe Kids, NEOP Nevada County, Health Education Council, GVSD Child Nutrition Services, Sierra Harvest, Cal Fresh, Bel Air, Walgreens, Target, Home Depot, Dutch Brothers, The Ridge Golf Club, Safeway, Starbucks, Briar Patch Co-Op, Foothill Mercantile, Jamba Juice, Raley's, Save Mart, Tess' Kitchen Store, and The Wooden Spoon.

IMPACT

This was the third year Family Fun Fair was held at Bell Hill, second year at Auburn Elementary, and first year at Rock Creek.

Each activity done during these events was chosen to complement the classroom nutrition lessons and was a great way to connect parents to health topics their children are learning at school.

These events are an opportunity for students and their families, school staff, and community members to come together and enjoy fun activities while also learning about how to stay healthy. A combined total of over 600 people attended.



TASTINGS

*“Can you ask them to put this
in the salad bar?”*

*– 3rd grade student from
Bell Hill Elementary School*



Tasting Raw Sweet Potato Sticks



ISSUE

The average American diet is high in processed foods and low in fruits and vegetables. People who consume fruits and vegetables as part of a healthy diet are likely to have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases. Changing nutrition habits doesn't happen overnight, and acceptance of a new food could take more than 10 introductions for a child. It often takes multiple contacts from different approaches to help our participants make healthy food choices.

WHAT WAS DONE

During the 2014-2015 school year, six Placer County and three Nevada County elementary schools participated in a tasting lesson. Raw sweet potato sticks were tried by more than 2,400 students. The students were first asked to describe the food based on sight, smell, and touch. They were then given an opportunity to guess what they thought the food sample could be. Next, the students were instructed to take a bite and were asked what they now thought the food was.

Students answered a brief survey and shared their opinions of the sweet potatoes with the class. The tasting concluded with nutrition facts about sweet potatoes. A hand out for parents, including a recipe for baked sweet potato sticks, was sent home. Some teachers took it upon themselves to cook the recipe and have their students sample the cooked sticks during class. The result: 50% of students liked them better raw and 50% of students liked them better cooked.

The sweet potatoes were supplied by the UCCE Specialty Crops program.

IMPACT

Many of the children were unfamiliar with the sweet potato and most had never tried it raw before. Some of the comments from the kids included “I like these better than carrots,” “these are delicious,” and “they taste like dust.”

Results of the survey show:

- 52% of students had tasted sweet potatoes before the lesson.
- 95% of students tried the sweet potato sample in class.
- 60% of students would be willing to eat sweet potatoes again at school.
- 62% of students would be willing to ask for sweet potatoes at home.



LET'S EAT HEALTHY IN SCHOOL



WOW! Having enough jump ropes for both classes is awesome. We did our first jump rope lesson today and the kids loved it.

- ◆ *This program has a positive impact on my students. They are making healthier choices when choosing items to eat at school and home.*
- ◆ *My students now understand the value of exercise.*



Rock Creek Transitional Kindergarten students have fun building their muscles.

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 2014-2015 school year, nine elementary schools and 12 preschools participated in the **Let's Eat Healthy!** program. In the fall a Nutrition Educator went to each classroom to present a nutrition lesson. Preschool lessons focused on MyPlate. First through third grade received lessons based on new interactive curriculum developed by UCANR to teach nutrition while also meeting common core principals. 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. All students received a jump rope to reinforce the importance of daily exercise. Nutrition Educators visited all elementary schools to conduct a tasting of raw sweet potatoes. In the spring elementary students played Jeopardy to review each nutrition lesson.

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.

- 94% of teachers agree/strongly agree that compared to the beginning of the year, more students now can identify healthy food choices.
- 66% 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.
- 87% of teachers agree/strongly agree that compared to the beginning of the year, more students now are willing to try new foods offered at school.



SHAPING HEALTHY CHOICES PROGRAM

ISSUE

From infancy through early elementary school most children eat those foods served by their families. By fourth grade, children have an increased opportunity to choose the foods they want to eat. Whether they are out with friends or in charge of feeding themselves and younger siblings at home there are a variety of choices ranging from healthy to those high in fat and/or sugar with little nutritional value.

WHAT WAS DONE

The Shaping Healthy Choices Program (SHCP), a comprehensive evidence-based approach to health, integrates activities within four components, that work together to sustain positive health outcomes in students:

1. Nutrition education and promotion.
2. Family and community partnerships.
3. Foods available on the school campus with an emphasis on regional agriculture.
4. School wellness policies.



Produce from the garden

The SHCP was piloted in two fourth grade classrooms at Rock Creek Elementary School. The nutrition education portion used an inquiry-based, garden-enhanced nutrition curriculum, Discovering Healthy Choices. The objective of this curriculum is to facilitate understanding of nutrition concepts and development of problem-solving skills so students can make evidence-based decisions about the foods they eat. Students investigated nutrition concepts, including roles of nutrients, MyPlate recommendations, physical activity, reading food labels, understanding how food companies market their products, and making healthy snacks.

A Family Fun Fair was held on campus for students and their families. Activities were chosen to complement the nutrition education in the fourth grade as well as the UC CalFresh nutrition lessons provided to all other grade levels. A cooking demonstration of Veg-Out Chilean Stew to highlight a lesson from Cooking Up Healthy Choices (a curriculum of healthy cooking activities that reinforces concepts from Discovering Healthy Choices) was a big hit! This event was a true collaboration with other UCCE programs, local health agencies and local community stores.

IMPACT

At the end of the pilot, students were asked what they felt was the most important thing they learned. Many felt that they now could read the nutrition facts label and determine if the foods were healthy. One student said, "Just because they say it's healthy on the label doesn't mean it is. They will say it's healthy so I'll buy it. I can read the label and see how much sugar is in the cereal and see if it has protein and vitamins".

Through an oral review, students demonstrated knowledge gained on such topics as:

- nutrients and how they help the body
- where our food comes from
- an in depth understanding of MyPlate



*Making Veg-Out Chilean Stew at
Rock Creek Family Fun Fair*



ADULT EDUCATION



Meal planning is one activity in the Plan, Shop, Save & Cook series.

“This class had me thinking of all (the) good things we can do at home. My wife and I like to make or cook food that (is) good and healthy for our 3 year old son. Now, we can actually do it and at the same time be able to save money and time shopping, and (prepare) these great meals for our family.”

- Plan, Shop, Save & Cook participant, Placer County

ISSUE

Parents are the number one role model for their children and make decisions on what food is served at mealtimes. In Placer and Nevada Counties, over 65,000 adults qualify for CalFresh benefits. Eating healthy on a limited budget can be a challenge for these people.

WHAT WAS DONE

Adults participated in a 4-part series of nutrition education workshops called Plan, Shop, Save & Cook. The series focuses on eating healthy on a limited budget. The audiences reached include participants from Mothers in Recovery in Auburn and Roseville, Consolidated Programs and Assessment in Roseville, and CalWorks in Auburn and Rocklin.

Nutrition lessons on the importance of whole grains, vegetables, and limiting sugar were taught at the Placer County Auburn WIC office.

At the Auburn Interfaith Food Closet, monthly tastings of low-cost, nutritious foods were offered to clients. These tastings demonstrated how to create healthy meals utilizing the foods given out at the food closet.

IMPACT

Almost 150 adults have sampled a healthy dish at the Auburn Interfaith Food Closet. About 125 parents attended UC CalFresh classes at the Placer County Auburn WIC office. Over 85 parents participated in the Plan, Shop, Save & Cook workshops. A retrospective survey was given to participants at the end of the series.

- 71% of participants now read Nutrition Facts Labels to make food choices.
- 54% of participants now plan meals ahead of time.



Participants hold crock pots to mark the culmination of a Plan, Shop, Save & Cook workshop.