

CFHL UCCE *Growing with Nutrition* Newsletter Reaches 2,270 Students in South Lake Tahoe During COVID-19 Pandemic

SUMMARY

Before the state of California went into lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, CalFresh Healthy Living, (SNAP-Ed). Central Sierra was in full swing offering nutrition and physical activity programs for elementary schools. One of the programs offered was Harvest of the Month (HOTM), a program designed to increase exposure and consumption of local fruits and vegetables. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person programming in schools were not able to continue. A new educational approach took shape to provide students and families with nutrition education. The HOTM program continued through virtual newsletters. With the help of the local school district, CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE educators were able to reach 2,270 students.

BACKGROUND

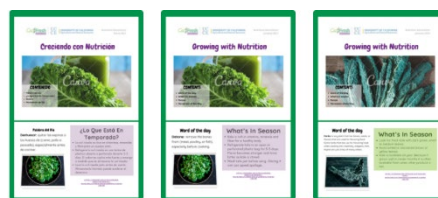
In March 2020, California issued a Stay-At-Home Order due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to this order, schools were close. This inspired movement of our program to pivot into distance learning platforms. HOTM lessons previously implemented in school cafeterias were transitioned into a virtual format serving as a resource for students, families and teachers.

The *Growing with Nutrition Newsletter* was inspired by this challenge. The newsletters were available in English and Spanish and included physical activity, a vocabulary word, and a recipe. The recipes were simple, budget friendly, and included staple food ingredients. In addition, hard copies of recipes were added to meal bags that around 70% of students were receiving at school. The newsletter began in one 3rd grade classroom and by the end of April 2021, was being circulated at three elementary schools. By the end of the 2021 school year, the *Growing with Nutrition Newsletter* reached a total of 2,270 students.

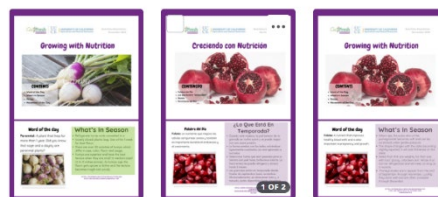
SOLUTION

In April 2020, the newsletter was sent to one school reaching a total of 523 students. By the end of the month, the newsletter was also being circulated to Sierra House Elementary reaching 526 students, Tahoe Valley Elementary reaching 427 students, and Bijou Elementary reaching 451 students. By the end of the 2019-2020 school year, the newsletter was being sent to 1,404 students, in three elementary schools.

For the school year 2020-2021, the Elevated Academy and South Tahoe Middle School began circulating the newsletter, in addition to three elementary schools. This increased the reach to an additional 1,005 students.



(2) Boletín de Nutrición E... (2) January Nutrition Ne... January Nutrition Newsle...



December Nutrition New... Boletín de Nutrición Novi... November Nutrition Ne...

"Thank you for sharing the nutrition newsletters. I shared the recipes with my class. Their videos and recipes were so cute, and a few of the kids did all recipes and loved it. Thank you for those."

-Maestra Magallanes-

OUTCOME

During the COVID-19 pandemic, students and families were provided a resource to help guide their food choices and encourage physical activity at home. Future plans for the *Growing with Nutrition Newsletter* are to increase circulation to all schools in the South Lake Tahoe Unified School District. Other interactive media programs are also being explored to enhance future content in the newsletter.

For more information or to get involved, contact [Katie Johnson, Nutrition Family and Consumer Sciences Advisor for the University of California Cooperative Extension](mailto:ekjohnson@ucanr.edu), [Carmela Padilla Program Supervisor for the CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE program](mailto:Carmela.Padilla@ucanr.edu) in the Central Sierra at ekjohnson@ucanr.edu or Carmela.Padilla@ucanr.edu.



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California's CalFresh Healthy Living, with funding from the United States Department of Agriculture's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – USDA SNAP, produced this material. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. For important nutrition information, visit www.CalFreshHealthyLiving.org