



Journal of Trauma-Informed Community
Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity

Volume 3, Number 2, July 2025

2025

CalFresh Healthy Living Virtual Training Week Poster Book

Spring Forward with
PSEs & Partnerships



CFHL 2025 Virtual Training Week Poster Book

Authentic Community Engagement.....	4
Sprouting Seeds in Early Childhood.....	5
Healthy Together: Celebrating Community Wellness.....	8
with the Healthy Me Jubilee.....	8
Beard Elementary Teens As Teachers.....	11
Building Capacity For Fun And Movement With Youth During School Breaks.....	14
Developing Healthy Life Skills at Mt. Tallac High School.....	17
Empowering Student Wellness: Comprehensive Health Programming at Redding Elementary School District.....	20
Cultivating Health and Community: Enhancing Wellness Through Garden Initiatives at Fort Yuma Health Center.....	23
Household Food Waste Reduction Pilot Program.....	26
Partnership Receives National Cooperative Extension Health Equity Award.....	30
Bringing the Community Together: Physical Activity Stencils in School-Wide Open Spaces...	33
Building Community Connections and Healthy Living One Step at a Time with Wiser Dining.....	36
Cal Poly Pomona Hydroponic Gardens: Making Gardening Accessible in Los Angeles County.....	39
Making Moves Toward Holistic Health: Catholic Charities of Los Angeles’ Comprehensive Programming at El Santo Nino Center.....	42
Empowering Wellness: A Transformative Journey for Older Adults with “Exercise While Sitting”.....	45
Community Meal Night.....	49
Empowering Future Educators: Internship Programs for Career Readiness in CFHL.....	52
Enhancing Nutrition Literacy, Cooking Skills, and Self-Efficacy Among College Students Through CalFresh Healthy Living Classes.....	56
Enhancing Student Wellness: A Coordinated Approach to Child Health Curriculum Training Experience.....	59
From Health Educators to Honorary Cerritos Wildcats: Nutrition Education and Zumba Series at Cerritos Elementary.....	62
Growing Together: Connecting Local Farmers to Schools to Promote Fresh Produce.....	65
Happy Heart Campaign: A Community-Informed Approach to Address Hypertension in Alameda County.....	68
Innovative Approaches to Playground Stencils in ECE Settings.....	72
Learn By Saving: Putting Money Back Into College Students’ Pockets Through Market Match Promotion Initiatives.....	75
Microwave Access for Healthier, Budget-Friendly Campus Meals at CSU Northridge.....	79
Refreshing Fun: Rethink Your Drink at Fairview and C.K Price Field Days.....	83

Sacramento State's Cultural Garden: Leveraging Diverse Student Input to Enhance Year-Round Accessibility to Cultural Foods at the ASI Food Pantry.....	86
SLM Reduces Food Waste and Increases Student Choice at Lo-Inyo Elementary.....	90
Cross-Sector Partnerships.....	93
Addressing Food Security Through Data-Driven Outreach and Community Engagement.....	94
Cultivating Change: Nourishing Communities in San Francisco's Urban Metropolis.....	98
Increasing Food Access while Reducing Food Waste: Free Little Pantry Installations in Solano County.....	101
Empowering Older Adults: Glenn County Senior Resource Expo.....	104
Siskiyou Fall Prevention Coalition.....	107
What Can CalFresh Do for You?.....	110
Building Local Capacity to Reduce Health Disparities in California Communities.....	113
Fueling Success: Synergistic Partnership in Nutrition Education and Healthy Meals in Schools for Fresno Students.....	117
Expanding Garden Partnerships at Arc of Amador.....	120
Partnering with UC Master Gardeners to Enrich Youth Garden Education.....	123
Spring Garden Workshops: Growing Healthy Communities Through UCCE Programs and School District Partnership.....	126
Taste Tests Increase Youth Preferences for Healthy Foods in Los Angeles County.....	129
Filling the Gap: Connecting Families to Food Resources.....	132
Produce Promotions at HomeFirst Bridge Housing Communities.....	135
Enhancing Partnerships and Program Success through Collaborative Training.....	138
Improving Children's Access to Healthy Food During Summer SUN Bucks: Summer EBT Program.....	141
Multisector School Wellness Partnerships Provide Comprehensive Programming at Mammoth High School.....	145
The First 1,000 Days: Supporting Families Through a Digital Dairy Nutrition Program.....	148
Impact over Intent.....	151
Community Health Empowerment and Equity through Collaborative Action with a University Anchor Institution.....	152
CFHL, UCCE Kern: Cultivating Change, Gardening for Rural Students.....	155
CFHL, UCCE Kern: From Seed to Sprout Gardening Education for Migrant Children.....	158
Ella Elementary Serves Up "Cool"inary Cooking Club with Community Support.....	161
Starting with Strengths.....	164
Working Together to Integrate Physical Activity Curriculum in Early Childcare Centers in South Los Angeles.....	165
Alpine County Health & Wellness Coalition Pilots ParkRx Program.....	168
Bishop Paiute Tribe Food Sovereignty Program.....	171

Building Nourished Communities Through The Nutrition Pantry Program.....	174
Building Trust and Empowering Native Communities: The CHC and OTR Partnership Model.....	177
Food Access Community Solutions for Promoting Food Security	180
From Youth Participation to Youth Leadership: Active Transportation in South El Monte.....	184
Innovative Recognition Program Uplifts California Community Leaders in Child Wellness ..	187
Transforming Playgrounds: Fostering Physical Activity and Emotional Well-Being With Stencils.....	190
Oakland Making Moves.....	193
Stanislaus County Convenes Partners to Initiate Park Rx Program.....	197
A Program and a Garden Grows at La Casa Ujima.....	200
Empowering Student Voices Through Photovoice: Redesigning and Reviving Lincoln Elementary’s School Garden.....	203
The Resource Connection and CFHL, UCCE: Fostering Early Childhood Health.....	206
Working Together to Integrate Physical Activity Curriculum in Early Childcare Centers in South Los Angeles.....	209

The background is a solid teal color. It features several abstract, organic shapes in a darker green shade. A large, light green, irregular shape is centered on the page, containing the text. Thin, dark green lines swirl around the central shape, creating a sense of movement and depth.

**Authentic
Community
Engagement**

Sprouting Seeds in Early Childhood

Leticia Flores¹ and Yulieth Velez¹

¹CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Yolo

Community Context

Teachers expressed interest in incorporating gardening at their sites as part of CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California Cooperative Extension (CFHL, UCCE) Yolo's collaboration with the Woodland Joint Unified School District Preschool Program, and the Yolo County Office of Education Head



Start program. The collaboration aimed to provide gardening education opportunities for preschool youth in historically underserved areas and to support them in developing social, emotional, and physical motor skills.

Collaborative Action

Throughout conversations, teachers at Prairie State Preschool and Esparto Head Start expressed the need for gardening tools at their sites, noting a lack of internal funding. CFHL, UCCE Yolo leveraged local partnerships, connecting teachers to a local agency, Yolo Farm to Fork. The gardening initiative also encouraged parents to get involved. Sites received multiple donations in the form of seedlings, tools, and a garden box.



Building on Strengths

Teachers' dedication to providing students with hands-on learning experiences drove the success of this project. They capitalized on parental support to foster a sense of community involvement and utilized existing local resources to enhance current site offerings. As a result, two edible gardens were built, benefiting 38 preschool-aged children in these communities.



Sustaining Success

CFHL, UCCE continues to provide sites with technical assistance in the form of educational resources and in-person support. The garden initiative builds on over ten years of partnership and demonstrates a long-term commitment from CFHL, UCCE to improve the health and well-being of these communities.

“Building this garden has been a dream of mine! The children look forward to going outside and working in the garden.”

– Prairie State Preschool Teacher



**Healthy Together: Celebrating Community Wellness
with the Healthy Me Jubilee**

Breanne Lencioni¹, Sunshine Hawjj¹, Patricia Amezcua¹, Joanna Aguilar¹

¹CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Butte Cluster

Community Context

The Healthy Me Jubilee is an annual event hosted by CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California Cooperative Extension (CFHL, UCCE) Butte Cluster that has been uniting entire school communities to celebrate and promote health and wellness for over a decade. These events highlight the community's role as co-creators in promoting health and wellness, building on their collaborative efforts to create lasting change. Featuring physical activities from the Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) curriculum, they also showcase the dedication of local elementary schools to fostering healthier campuses.



Collaborative Action

Robust community involvement allows our events to thrive! Over 50 volunteers from the Las Plumas High School Asian Club, Princeton High School, Arbuckle Elementary staff, and other volunteers, came together to facilitate activities and give back to their community. Students participated in activities guided by a volunteer who explained the rules and provided support.



Building on Strengths

Each session began with stretching exercises before students took part in games, earning tickets by answering grade-specific trivia questions. This dynamic format kept over 1000 students at seven different schools engaged and learning. A volunteer shared, *“It was amazing to come back to my old school and help out. Seeing my former teachers and contributing to such a positive event was really rewarding.”*



Sustaining Success

To sustain success, the CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Butte Cluster program will continue fostering community partnerships, using proven curricula like CATCH, and engaging schools and volunteers to promote health and wellness. Fun, engaging games will remain key to seamlessly integrate nutrition and physical activity lessons, inspiring healthy habits through memorable and enjoyable experiences.



Beard Elementary Teens As Teachers

Victoria Sandoval¹ and Rosalinda Ruiz¹

¹CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Stanislaus

Community Context

Beard Elementary, within the Modesto City School District (MCSD), provides students with academic and recreational enrichment activities in a supportive and safe environment through the After School Education & Safety (ASES) Program. The ASES program reaches 118 students at this site.



Collaborative Action

The ASES program manager at Beard Elementary contacted CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California Cooperative Extension (CFHL, UCCE) Stanislaus in FFY2022 to re-engage with Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) curriculum in a post-COVID environment. ASES staff and students expressed a desire to expand nutrition and health learning experiences and resources. This led to discussions about complementing active learning opportunities by incorporating a Teens As Teachers (TAT) program at this site.



Building on Strengths



In FFY2024, TAT began at Beard Elementary with 12 sixth grade students elected to participate in the 7-week program. The TAT students completed 2 1.5-hours of training, which encompassed how to teach the My Amazing Body Curriculum and engage with students successfully using key classroom management skills. TAT students taught five, 1-hour lessons to 25 first graders.

Sustaining Success

Thanks to the dedication and hard work of the student teachers, ASES is planning to expand this opportunity to more students in the coming school year, allowing it to impact twice as many youth.

“One thing I do differently now because of these classes is I eat more fruit.”

– Beard Elementary first-grade student

“Great opportunity that prepared them for middle school next year”

– ASES Program Coordinator

Building Capacity For Fun And Movement With Youth During School Breaks

Kelly Hong¹, Mishelle Costa¹, Shannon Klisch¹

¹CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE

Community Context

Schools provide structured physical activity education, classroom breaks, and recess to help children meet the daily physical activity guidelines. During school breaks, however, those resources are limited or unavailable completely. Youth are less likely to exercise when there is a lack of structured physical activity opportunities, access to safe environments to play, and adequate supervision.



Photo by Mouad Bouallayel on Unsplash

Collaborative Action

Trained by CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California Cooperative Extension (CFHL, UCCE) staff, the Santa Maria Recreation & Parks (SM R&P) team can serve different neighborhoods and bring physical activity opportunities to youth in the community. CFHL, UCCE facilitated a 6-hour Coordinated Approach to Children's Health (CATCH) training and a supplemental workshop to train and support SM R&P staff to offer youth a safe place to engage, learn, and play.



Building on Strengths

The city of Santa Maria has a variety of neighborhood parks and community centers that local youth regularly access. Recognizing this, SM R&P provides supervised, fun, and high-quality

physical activity and youth development services through their Rec on The Move program, which is offered during longer school breaks at no cost to families.



Sustaining Success

As a result of this partnership, youth have more opportunities for high-quality and age-appropriate CATCH lessons and activities at their local parks during school holidays. These efforts promote the use of public parks and green spaces, and promote healthy communities while strengthening relationships with community partners and community members.

Developing Healthy Life Skills at Mt. Tallac High School

Cristina Luquin¹, Alejandra Giron¹, Kitty Oppliger¹

¹CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Central Sierra

Community Context

Mt. Tallac High School, a continuation school in South Lake Tahoe, aims to help students gain life skills and accumulate credits needed to graduate. In FFY24, Mt. Tallac High School partnered with CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California Cooperative Extension (CFHL, UCCE) to help students learn healthy lifestyle, leadership, and nutrition behaviors.



This partnership rekindled programming which had paused in 2020 due to COVID-19.

Collaborative Action

CFHL, UCCE educators held weekly nutrition and cooking lessons with small groups of students during Spring 2024.

Students were grouped by culinary interests or shared life events. Fifty-three students participated in experiential learning to hone



kitchen skills while learning about healthy eating. Students with prior cooking experience led their peers through the process.

Building on Strengths

To integrate CFHL, UCCE programming into the school day, students received fine arts credits for participating in nutrition lessons. This partnership took advantage of a shared campus, which allowed students to walk to the lessons.

“It was wonderful to be able to provide lessons in living healthy lifestyles to my students... Learning by “doing” and exposure to future career pathways is invaluable!”

- Mt. Tallac HS Teacher



Sustaining Success

CFHL, UCCE nutrition educators and Mt. Tallac leadership plan to provide small student groups with a series of lessons and internship opportunities. The UCCE’s Youth as Extenders program encourages students to develop their teaching and leadership skills by becoming “sous chefs” and leading younger participants through cooking demonstrations.



**Empowering Student Wellness: Comprehensive Health Programming at Redding Elementary
School District**

Janessa Hartmann¹ and Shawnice Fisher¹

¹CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Shasta Cluster

Community Context

Redding Elementary School District (RSD) is the third-largest district in Shasta County, located 160 miles north of Sacramento. RSD includes seven elementary schools and two partner single-school districts. There are an estimated 3,370 students in grades TK-8, and approximately 70% are eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals.



Collaborative Action

Jointly revitalized the District Wellness Committee by establishing three-year wellness goals based on identified opportunities, and now by holding community meetings. In collaboration with the Healthy Shasta Coalition, RSD opened two schools' playgrounds, asphalt areas, and fields for families to use on the weekends. It began a Student Nutrition Action Committee to engage students by providing input on school lunches.



Building on Strengths

CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California Cooperative Extension and RSD have a long-standing partnership with significant recent growth, including:

- Expanded delivery of nutrition education and a school lunch recipe challenge to all nine district and partner schools.
- Supported gardens at four schools and the Smarter Lunchroom Movement at six schools.
- Provided collaborative training with after-school staff at seven schools. Staff shared tips and successes on physical activity delivery.



Sustaining Success

The re-established Wellness Committee has long-term goals and will keep up the momentum through staffing changes and school breaks. Students engage in fun nutrition and garden education during school and enjoy physical activity in after-school programs.

“Through our partnership more students are eating lunch, increasing their physical activity, and learning how to grow their own food. Together we can achieve healthier communities.”

– Nutrition Services Coordinator



Authentic Community Engagement

**Cultivating Health and Community: Enhancing Wellness Through Garden Initiatives at Fort
Yuma Health Center**

Beatriz Rojas¹, MPH and Arlene Silva¹

¹CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Imperial County

Community Context

The Fort Yuma Health Center serves the Quechan and Cocopah Tribal communities in Southwest Arizona and Southern California. In 2023, the CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California Cooperative Extension (CFHL, UCCE) Imperial County team partnered with the Fort



Yuma Health Center to enhance outdoor space with three garden beds designed for individuals with varying levels of mobility.

Collaborative Action

During the Fort Yuma Health Fair, CFHL, UCCE Imperial staff facilitated a crop transplanting activity that engaged approximately 400 community members. The garden activity promoted seed-saving practices, enabling Fort Yuma Health Center staff to distribute native seeds to local participants. A cooking demonstration using the Traditional Roots Cookbook (Bardarevic,



2024) included vegetables harvested from the garden, reaching approximately 80 attendees. The featured recipes were selected to reflect the community's cultural preferences.

Building on Strengths

The garden's success fostered a stronger relationship with the Tribal communities, leading to greater community engagement. The initiative improved health and wellness by creating a garden area that promoted nutrition literacy through hands-on experiences where families planted,



grew, and harvested produce. Cooking demonstrations utilizing the produce encouraged healthy eating and active living.

Sustaining Success

Tribal members visited the UCCE Imperial office to tour and learn more about the implementation of local CFHL community gardens. Collaborative efforts are underway to establish a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to guide future expansion at Fort Yuma Health Center.



“Thank you for embracing us and our culture.”

– 2024 Health Fair Attendee

References

Amina Bardarevic (2024). *Traditional Roots with Eastern Kitchen: Traditional & Homemade Balkan Recipes*. Independent.

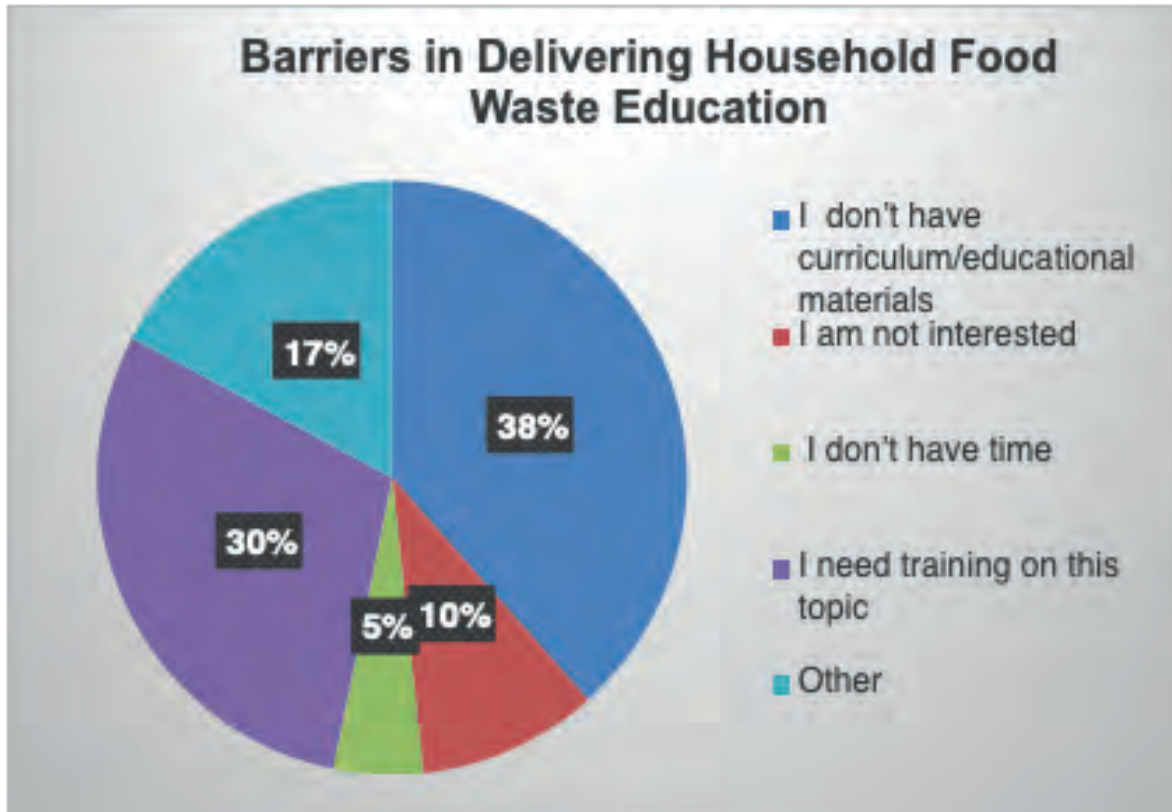
Household Food Waste Reduction Pilot Program

Yu Meng¹ and Marisa Neelon¹

¹University of California Cooperative Extension

Community Context

Limiting household food waste can improve food security and help the community better align with Senate Bill 1383 to reduce emissions of short-lived climate pollutants. Our needs assessment shows that community education specialists and volunteers are looking for evidence-based curricula and training to help their participants reduce household food waste.



Collaborative Action

University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Advisors from six regions representing northern, central, and southern California, rural, and urban counties recruited parents in the community who qualify for CalFresh to have group discussions about their household food practices, barriers, and motivations for saving food. Informed by community input, we co-developed the Household Food Waste Educator Toolkit.



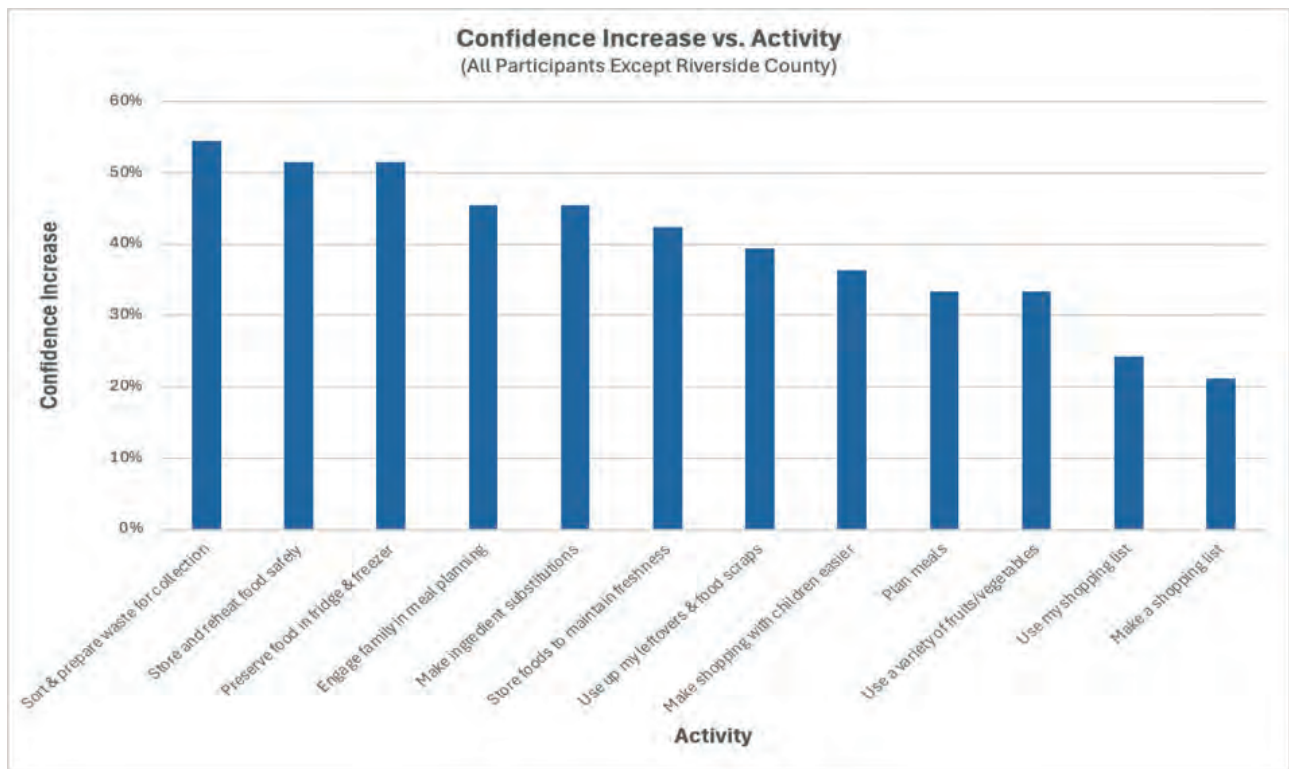
Building on Strengths

Through community partnership, Advisors were able to pilot a series of household food waste reduction lessons in seven counties. Sites include First 5 Family Center, Community Health Center, Elementary School Site, Family Resource Center, Low-income Housing Site, and Veteran Site.



Sustaining Success

Preliminary analysis of pre/post-pilot survey data for all counties showed a statistically significant increase in participant confidence to perform twelve food-related practices covered in the pilot lessons.



"To always make a shopping list. And freeze the food that I'm not going to use just to keep it fresh. I learned so much in this class. It was so amazing." – Program Participant

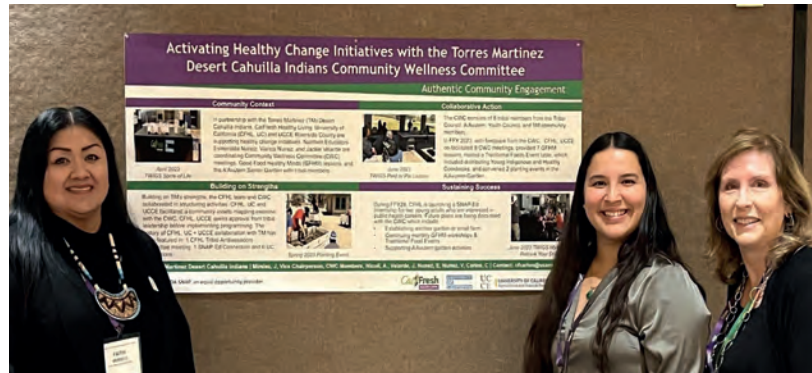
Partnership Receives National Cooperative Extension Health Equity Award

Joseph Mirelez¹, Andra Nicoli², Jackie Velarde², Esmeralda Nunez², Vianca Nunez², Claudia Carlos²

¹Torrez Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians

²Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indian Community Wellness Committee

Community Context



The Torres Martinez (TM) Desert Cahuilla Indian Community Wellness Committee (CWC), CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL), University of California, Davis and Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Riverside County are supporting the development and advancement of health initiatives on the Torres Martinez Reservation. Over the last four years, CFHL, UC and UCCE Riverside:

- Facilitated 44 CWC meetings
- Reached 453 tribal members with indirect education
- Taught 13 Good Food Healthy Minds lessons
- Offered 15 food tastings and 4 planting events

Collaborative Action

In FFY24, activities included Tribal Council & General Meeting presentations, reaching 70 tribal members, 9 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families classes, reaching 22 tribal members per class, and indirect education at 9 TM Events. Through TM



referrals, UCCE received requests for services at nearby reservations and at the California Indian Nations Tribal College.

Building on Strengths

Braiding a Center for Disease Control and Prevention ACORNS grant with CFHL, UC funding, the CWC structured educational events and activities tailored to tribal interests, such as a Traditional Foods Event and asset mapping exercises. Lesson activities were paired with farm and nutritional health webinars. UCCE Master Gardener and Farm Advisor offered education, garden support, and resources for the tribe.



Sustaining Success

In 2024, partnership members received the first National Cooperative Extension Health Equity Priester Award, heralding sustained engagement for over a decade. The Jeanne M. Priester Extension Health Award “recognizes extraordinary programs and professionals that are modeling next-generation work in the area of health and well-being.”

Future planning includes continuing to develop and fortify comprehensive, culturally appropriate programming through ongoing engagement from the Tribal Council and CWC.

“We are planting seeds for the next 7 generations to be the ones who will grow food to be our medicine, harvest the medicine to be our food, and fill the food baskets to feed our tribe and community.” – Tribal Council Secretary

Bringing the Community Together: Physical Activity Stencils in School-Wide Open Spaces

Gabrielle Lofink¹, MS, RD and Tracy Nunez-Mercado¹

¹Center for Healthy Communities

Community Context

In an effort to support Tehama County students' 90% sedentary rate, Metteer Elementary School partnered with the Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) to enhance physical activity opportunities. After a Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) training, the school adopted the CATCH physical activity curriculum, aligning with school efforts to integrate physical activity into their daily routines.



Collaborative Action

Metteer Elementary and CHC collaborated in creating a plan to continue the physical activity initiative through stenciling, painting the school for movement. A walkthrough of the campus was conducted, and teachers provided input on the type of stencils that would best fit different open spaces. CHC proposed a stencil layout based on these discussions, but it was refined by the principal to best fit the needs of the students, ensuring they had a role in shaping the project.



Building on Strengths

The stencils transformed learning spaces near classrooms, providing opportunities for brain breaks and active play. Teachers, parents, and students collaborated to paint the stencils, adding both beauty and function. The community's involvement in the physical labor of painting signaled a



deep commitment to enhancing students' well-being by integrating physical activity into their daily lives and strengthening their wellness initiatives.

Sustaining Success

The school community's contributions showed true interest in healthy living and set an example for their students. These stencils will help sustain Metter Elementary's ongoing efforts to integrate more physical activity into the students' everyday routines. Looking forward, CHC continues to collaborate with the principal and staff to identify other opportunities to actively enhance their school's commitment to wellness.



Authentic Community Engagement

Building Community Connections and Healthy Living One Step at a Time with Wiser Dining

Lura Jones¹ and Leah Quinn¹

¹Leah's Pantry

Community Context

Centro Latino de San Francisco (CLSF) is a congregate meal site serving Latino older adults and adults with disabilities experiencing economic hardship. Leah's Pantry partnered with CLSF on the Wiser Dining Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) initiative to create a more community-centered meal site while improving nutrition standards and physical activity opportunities.



Collaborative Action

Leah's Pantry worked closely with CLSF staff to conduct a comprehensive assessment. Through the assessment, it became clear that there was a desire for more onsite physical activities and opportunities for authentic social connection. These findings highlighted the importance of fostering a supportive environment where individuals could engage in meaningful interactions while also participating in activities that contribute to their overall well-being.



Building on Strengths

Before the pandemic, CLSF hosted a popular weekly walking group that had not reconvened since 2020. Through Wisser Dining, Leah's Pantry and CLSF decided to prioritize the creation of a new walking group, gathering client feedback during lunch to confirm interest and schedule preferences. Leah's Pantry began



leading a bi-monthly walking group with routes and times tailored to clients' abilities and interests.

Sustaining Success

Clients enjoyed the opportunity to explore their neighborhood while staying physically active. To ensure that everyone could participate, the walk routes were varied during the first few sessions to accommodate different fitness levels and abilities. Eventually, CLSF clients took on a leadership role within the group, promoting a sense of ownership and ensuring the long-term success of this initiative.



Authentic Community Engagement

Cal Poly Pomona Hydroponic Gardens: Making Gardening Accessible in Los Angeles County

Venicia Santana¹ and Marysol Mendoza¹

¹California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

Community Context

Cal Poly Pomona (CPP), located in Los Angeles (LA) County, serves nearly 27,000 students, many of whom face space and food insecurity challenges. To address this, the Care Center introduced three hydroponic tower gardens. These soil-free, space-saving systems were locally sourced from LA Urban Farms, a company that promotes sustainable growing practices and fosters an online community for hydroponic growers.



Collaborative Action

The towers are housed at the Care Center, where students apply for CalFresh and other resources. The target audience is students who are food insecure, interested in healthy living, or curious about growing their own produce. Students learn about growing, storing, and eating their produce in collaboration with campus partners such as the Lyle Center, College of Environmental Design, and the Cesar E. Chavez Center for Higher Education.



Building on Strengths

Building on strengths, CPP partnered with LA Urban Farms to inspire local food growth. Fresh basil was grown and ready for October cooking demonstrations, and lettuce and kale were harvested in the fall. With help from the agricultural plant science students, understanding of the food consumed deepened. Students are engaged in hands-on nutrition education, fostering sustainability, and community resilience.



Sustaining Success

The Care Center serves as a hub for student well-being and basic needs. Of the 2,790 visitors in 2024, 18% were food insecure. The campus pantry provides students with free groceries; however, there is often a need for fresh produce. The hydroponic towers help meet this need, offering students access to fresh produce while also providing peer-led nutrition education. This reinforces CPP's commitment to sustainability and community health.



**Making Moves Toward Holistic Health: Catholic Charities of Los Angeles' Comprehensive
Programming at El Santo Nino Center**

Nina Ames¹ and Alejandra Reyes¹

¹Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc.

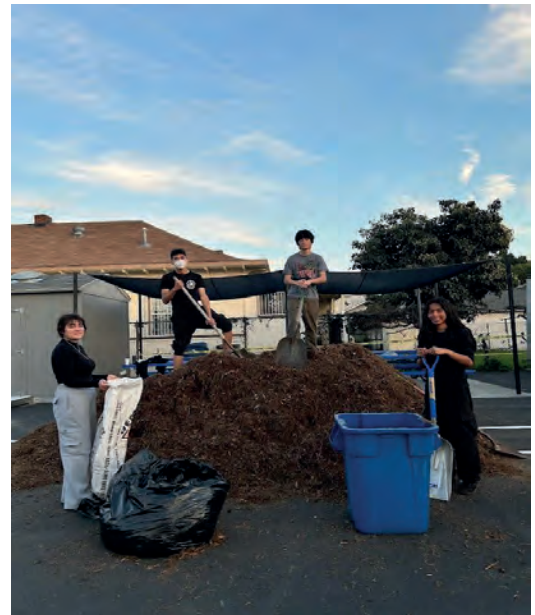
Community Context

In the South-Central Los Angeles (LA) community of El Santo Nino (ESN), finding stores that carry fresh, affordable produce has been difficult for years – liquor stores, fast food outlets, and storage facilities dominate the neighborhood. The COVID-19 epidemic only exacerbated the difficulties, with the unemployment rate in LA County rising to 19.4% by June 2020, reducing residents' income and purchasing power. As prices began to skyrocket and stores shuttered, supply chains were disrupted, and inflation set in.



Collaborative Action

Acting in response to the community's expressed desire for access points to fresh produce, as well as support in creating safe spaces for physical activity, Catholic Charities of LA's CalFresh Healthy Living (CCLA-CFHL) team got to work. In partnership with community members, the urban agriculture team prepared the site for the installation of donated fruit trees, beds filled with donated soil, and pollinator plants. Meanwhile, a group of participants in on-site nutrition classes started a weekly walking club at the ESN Center.



Building on Strengths

The community at ESN continues to take active steps to improve their health holistically by participating in nutrition and garden classes and workshops, utilizing the walking club, and accessing the garden. Teens in the ‘My Club’ after-school program at ESN join in garden activities, such as weeding, applying compost and mulch, and direct seeding and watering. Participants who are growing at home bring photos to share of the shiny, healthy fruits and vegetables they’ve produced!



Sustaining Success

As the garden at ESN matures, harvests will increase, and succession plantings will ensure an ongoing and ever-changing variety of fresh seasonal produce for clients. CCLA-CFHL will continue to support the community with gardening workshops, providing nutrition classes and meeting spaces, and providing filtered drinking water for the walking club. CCLA-CFHL looks to replicate this model of co-creating multi-layered interventions in partnership with the community and is currently working towards full implementation at several sites.



**Empowering Wellness: A Transformative Journey for Older Adults with “Exercise While
Sitting”**

Maria Morales¹ and Paola Camacho¹

¹Catholic Charities of Orange County

Community Context

The Journal of Health Psychology reports that older adults are the least active age group, averaging 9.4 hours of sedentary behavior daily (de Rezende et al., 2014). UC Irvine’s 2022 Health Needs Assessment shows Orange County has a higher population of older adults than California, with 24.7% having disabilities affecting mobility. Adults who are sedentary are more at risk for chronic conditions such as diabetes, obesity, heart disease, and high blood pressure.



Collaborative Action

In response to expressed desire for safe physical activity opportunities from CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL) older adult participants, the CFHL team introduced an “Exercise While Sitting” program, a physical activity program designed to promote safe movement through a full-body workout, primarily done while seated. It is a low-impact activity, ideal for those unable to engage in medium or high-intensity exercises due to age or mobility limitations.



Building on Strengths

The CFHL team has introduced this program at seven partner locations, reaching an average of 64 participants across all sites. Feedback received included that the programming was helpful in alleviating stress and that participants felt that it improved their overall health and physical activity levels.



Sustaining Success

As activities grow, community leaders will be engaged based on their group's requirements and enthusiasm. The goal is to form additional partnerships that provide ongoing physical activity opportunities, eventually without CFHL team involvement.



References

- de Rezende, L. F., Rey-López, J. P., Matsudo, V. K., & do Carmo Luiz, O. (2014). Sedentary behavior and health outcomes among older adults: A systematic review. *BMC Public Health*, *14*, 333. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-14-333>

Community Meal Night

Reyna Solis¹ and Garrett Frice¹

¹Public Health Agency San Luis Obispo County

Community Context

Community Meal Night

showcased collaboration and community strength, uniting 250 attendees of all ages.

A locally sourced meal, prepared by school staff and shared outdoors at picnic tables, set the tone. Families connected with staff, enjoyed nutritious food, and

accessed resources, emphasizing the key takeaway: strengthening ties between wellness and community.



Collaborative Action

The event showcased the strength of collaboration, with contributions from the school, “Let’s Eat Healthy” grant, food service director, wellness committee, health specialists, and volunteers. Middle school students led physical activities, promoting fitness and leadership, highlighting teamwork in creating meaningful, community-centered experiences.



Building on Strengths

The event featured a resource fair offering essential services from local organizations, including CalFresh enrollments, lead prevention, literacy programs, and bike safety. For rural San Miguel, where transportation is limited, hosting the fair locally allowed families to access these resources within walking distance.



Sustaining Success

Community Meal Night promoted health and wellness while fostering long-term impact. Activities like the Coordinated Approach to Child Health curriculum encouraged physical activity and leadership. The event empowered families with tools for healthy habits. Its success led to plans for an annual celebration, with more local organizations involved and lasting connections formed, including families enrolling in after-school nutrition classes.



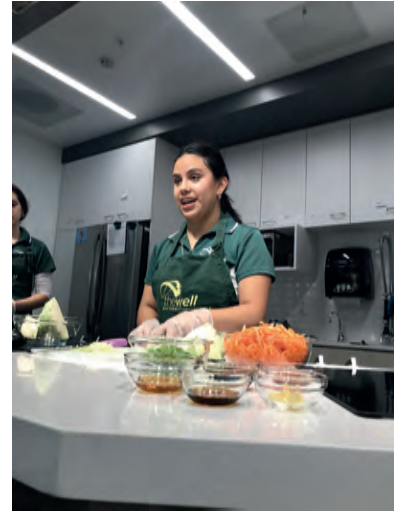
Empowering Future Educators: Internship Programs for Career Readiness in CFHL

Michele Buran¹, Alyson Wylie¹, Jessica Medina¹, Marisela Mendez¹, Kelsey Kyllonen¹

¹Center for Healthy Communities

Community Context

The internship initiative is designed to prepare college students for careers in nutrition and public health by blending academic learning with real-world applications. Focused on implementing CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL) activities, the internship provides hands-on experience in community engagement, program facilitation, and health education in both college and surrounding community settings.



Collaborative Action

Interns play vital roles in addressing food and nutrition security and creating meaningful connections between campus resources and local communities. Students were surveyed to evaluate the impact of their internship experiences at two California State University campuses. The results revealed increased career confidence and skill development. The overwhelming majority of participants reported gaining practical tools and self-belief to turn their goals into reality.

CalFresh Healthy Living Network FFY 2022–2024



Building on Strengths

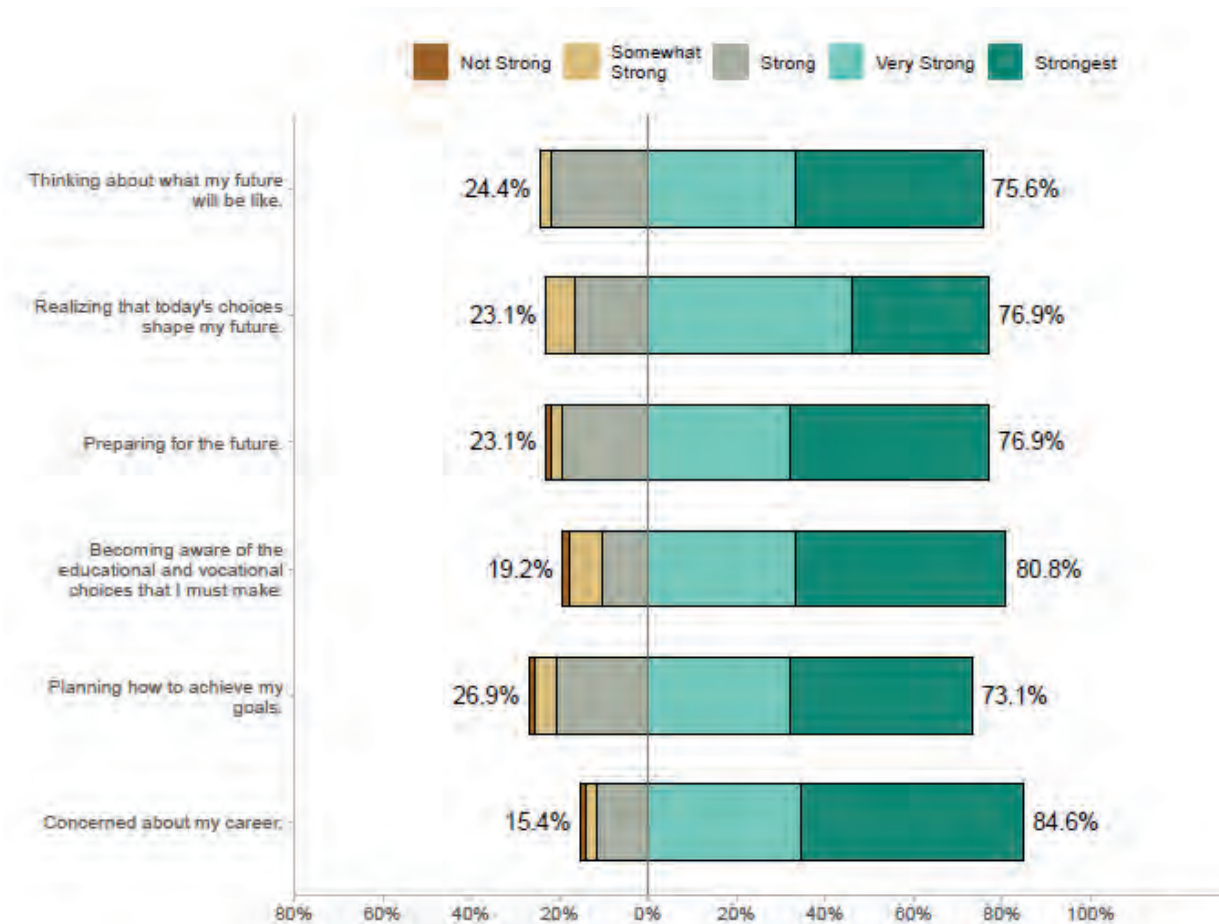


Figure 1.18: Career Concern Questions

The majority of interns indicated that they learned skills that will help them be aware of the importance of planning for the future.

Through structured opportunities in diverse settings, this program fosters career readiness while empowering students to bridge gaps between higher education and public health. This bridge drives change in both on-campus and community environments. Between Spring 2022 and Fall 2023, 92 interns took this survey at the beginning of the semester, while 78 interns took this survey at the end. The survey was completed by students at California State University, Chico.

Sustaining Success

This year, students from four CFHL on-campus sites submitted posters for the CFHL 2025 Virtual Training Week. Students were also featured in the Stocking the Pantry podcast, focusing on CFHL and next-generation health educators. A student leadership cohort, started in 2024, aims to connect students to CalFresh's vision through virtual meetings, storytelling, best practices, and event planning. Students will assist in developing specific college Days of Action, inspiring ongoing engagement, and community involvement.



This experience has been personally enriching and contributed significantly to my professional growth, opening doors for interviews with other organizations that wouldn't have been possible without the support and guidance from CHC.

**Enhancing Nutrition Literacy, Cooking Skills, and Self-Efficacy Among College Students
Through CalFresh Healthy Living Classes**

Arturo Delgadillo¹ and Erika Ireland¹

¹Fresno State University

Community Context

Approximately 22% of undergraduate students report low or very low food security, which tolls for 3.9 million undergraduates experiencing food insecurity. Fresno State students in rural Fresno County can participate in CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL) classes led by staff



or policy, system, or environmental change (PSE) dietetic interns. These classes provide nutrition education, cooking skills, and self-efficacy development. They equip students with essential life skills and introduce them to CalFresh, helping them determine eligibility for assistance.

Collaborative Action

Fresno State students in rural Fresno County have the opportunity to participate in CFHL classes, facilitated by staff or PSE dietetic interns. These classes are designed to provide valuable nutrition education, enhance cooking skills, and foster self-efficacy. By equipping students with essential life skills, the program also introduces them to CalFresh, guiding them in determining their eligibility for assistance.



Building on Strengths

Fresno State dietetic interns often serve as nutrition educators, offering participants a chance to engage directly, ask questions, and gain hands-on experience. Students and participants consistently enjoy the classes, which feature a variety of meals prepared in Fresno State's kitchen lab, including snacks, breakfasts, lunches, dinners, and desserts.

One participant shared, "This was the first time I've tried a banana split!" These sessions introduce easy, approachable recipes that participants can recreate at home, promoting confidence in cooking and trying new foods.



Sustaining Success

7.3 million U.S. college students were eligible for CalFresh benefits due to their low-income status. However, only 2.26 million students were enrolled. One significant barrier is the perception that the application process is stressful and complex. By increasing funding for CFHL, Fresno State can provide greater exposure and



support to encourage students to apply for CalFresh. Additional challenges include limited availability of the campus kitchen lab, as it is shared with other classes and labs.

**Enhancing Student Wellness: A Coordinated Approach to Child Health Curriculum Training
Experience**

Jennifer Murphy MS, RD¹ and Daniel Martinon¹

¹Center for Healthy Communities

Community Context

Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) partnered with Colusa County Office of Education (CCOE) Early Childhood Education (ECE) program to improve the preschool's access to seasonal produce, physical activity, and garden initiatives. CCOE's ECE program is dedicated to enriching the lives of all students and enhancing education quality, prompting CHC to support their physical activity efforts after seeing success and commitment with garden education.



Collaborative Action

In response to CCOE ECE program's need for more physical activity resources, CHC introduced the evidence-based Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) curriculum. A training session was provided to equip CCOE staff with tools to integrate physical activity effectively into lesson plans. This helped them meet program requirements, like locomotor skill milestones and fostering collaboration among staff for better curriculum implementation.



Building on Strengths

The training emphasized the critical role of physical activity in early development, fostering staff collaboration. Teachers gained hands-on experience, discussing ways to integrate CATCH into lessons. This shared engagement empowered staff to apply the curriculum effectively, enhancing their capacity to promote physical activity in their classrooms. This engagement was a positive indicator of the training session's effectiveness.



Sustaining Success

At the end of the training, CHC provided teachers with CATCH materials and equipment, empowering them to incorporate physical activity into their daily routines. CCOE staff immediately began using the curriculum, demonstrating a strong commitment to sustaining a healthy environment for their students. The integration led to increased student engagement, reinforcing the positive impact on health and education.



From Health Educators to Honorary Cerritos Wildcats: Nutrition Education and Zumba

Series at Cerritos Elementary

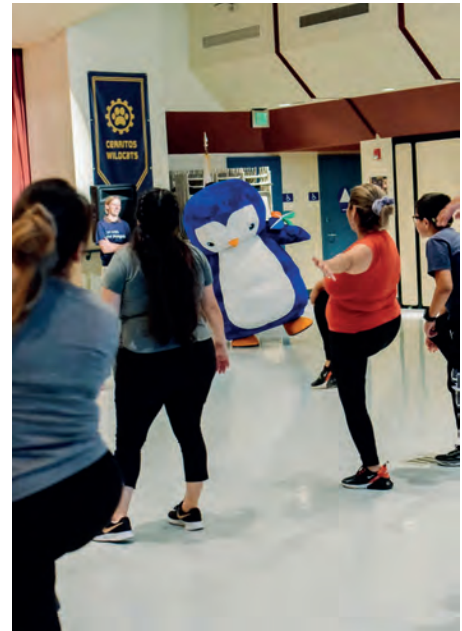
Rita Rena Mozian¹ and Daniel Rodriguez²

¹Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

²Adventist Health Glendale

Community Context

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL) Program partnered with Adventist Health Glendale (AHGL) and Glendale Unified School District (GUSD) to provide nutrition and physical activity education in GUSD schools, including Cerritos Elementary. AHGL and GUSD conducted classes to serve families who rely on walking and public transit and scheduled classes during student drop-off or pick-up times.



Collaborative Action

The school community has taken initiative on decisions that will positively affect their health and showed increased interest in resources on how to live healthier lives, including attending nutrition education and Zumba classes led by AHGL. The success at Cerritos can be attributed to the school's Champion Principal and Teacher Specialist, who developed a school community network of caregivers who volunteer and promote events.



Building on Strengths

The partnership between AHGL and GUSD evolved from conducting classes on virtual platforms to hosting adult and youth classes in person. Caregiver classes were modified to align with GUSD’s Smarter Lunchroom Movement efforts, creating a



connection of healthy habits with both students and caregivers. Health educators promoted healthy options that are easy and affordable, empowering families to adopt these practices.

Sustaining Success

With the success of AHGL’s classes, a GUSD CFHL Champion Parent became certified in Zumba Kids to continue efforts. AHGL’s staff have built great rapport with the school community and were declared “honorary Cerritos Wildcats” exhibiting respect, responsibility, and making the right choices through healthy living.



Growing Together: Connecting Local Farmers to Schools to Promote Fresh Produce

Jennifer Murphy, MS RD¹ and Daniel Martinon¹

¹Center for Healthy Communities

Community Context

Yuba Environmental Science (YES)

Charter Academy partnered with the Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) to improve local fresh produce access and help address community food insecurity. CHC's past collaboration with nearby Che Vang's CN Farm was leveraged to launch a Harvest of the Month (HOTM) program to promote healthy eating and local produce access among students.



Collaborative Action

The collaboration between CHC, CN Farm, and YES Charter Academy involved mutual support for sustainability. CN Farm facilitated the farm-to-school program by directly supplying fresh produce to the school, which distributed it to the students. CHC shared HOTM resources with staff, ensuring broad engagement and managed logistics. This teamwork empowered local stakeholders to drive community-based nutrition security efforts sustainably.



Building on Strengths

This partnership strengthened the local economy by supporting agriculture and providing fresh produce to the school. This helped the school become a Blue Zone Project Approved school, an initiative to make healthy choices easier for all. Highlighting the benefits of such community-focused efforts, it fostered a sustainable model where the community could take active roles in improving nutrition and health outcomes.



Sustaining Success

Today, CHC, CN Farm, and YES Charter Academy continue this collaboration successfully. Building on strengths, the partnership with CN Farm aims to expand the initiative by promoting a sustainable approach that benefits local farmers in connecting with more Yuba County schools. This will increase fruit and vegetable intake among Yuba County youth, support local farmers, and create a sustainable model that can continue for years to come.

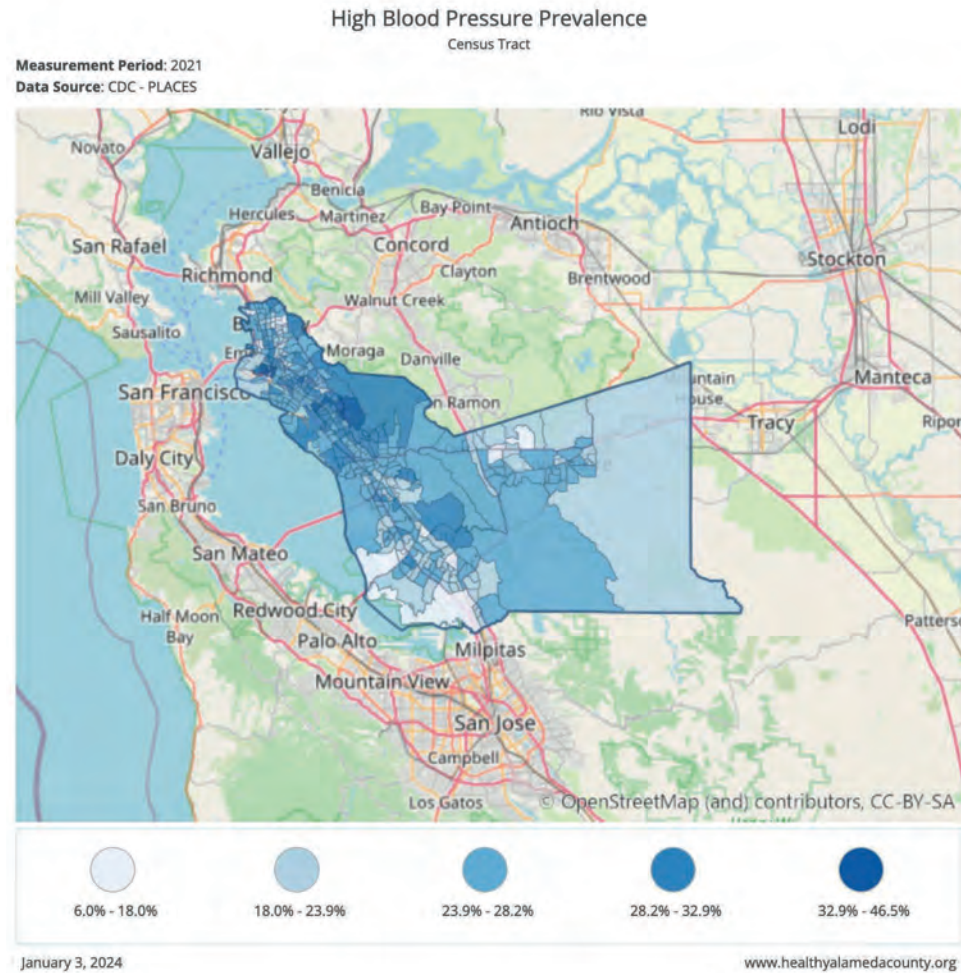


**Happy Heart Campaign: A Community-Informed Approach to Address Hypertension in
Alameda County**

Nori Grossmann, CHS¹

¹Alameda County Public Health Department Nutrition Services Program

Community Context



Hypertension (HTN) is a significant public health concern in Alameda County, particularly in Oakland and Hayward where populations are heavily impacted by HTN. Their prevalence of HTN was 47.9% and 30%, respectively. This inspired our inaugural Happy Heart Campaign with three messages: Check your blood pressure, Eat more whole foods, and Eat less processed foods.

Source- CDC Places- 2021

Collaborative Action

Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) stepped up to support the effort by having Public Health Nurses vet blood pressure guidelines, the Division of Communicable Disease Control & Prevention (DCDCP) add free blood pressure screenings to their services, the Diabetes Program teach hypertension education classes, and ACPHD Leadership invest in large community billboard messages throughout Oakland and Hayward.



Building on Strengths

Participants from a Bingocize SNAP-Ed program offered advice on the logo, title, and nutrition education materials, which were translated into multiple languages.

Partners included County Nutrition Action Partners (CNAP) members, churches, new community health organizations (CBOs): La



Familia, Umoja, Regional Pacific Islander Task Force (RPITF), and El Timpano, which all held Happy Heart events with blood pressure screenings and shared nutrition education materials.

Sustaining Success

New CBO partners serving underrepresented populations helped us advance health equity and increase reach to underserved residents. They also provided valuable feedback to improve future campaigns.

A new evaluation survey was added to our upcoming 2nd Happy Heart Campaign in February 2025 to help analyze success and sustainability.



Innovative Approaches to Playground Stencils in ECE Settings

Laurel Chambers¹

¹County of Sonoma, Department of Health Services

Community Context

The Healthy Apple Program works with daycare providers in Sonoma County to improve nutrition and physical activity policies and practices. Stencil projects are an affordable and flexible option for transforming ordinary areas into vibrant, engaging play spaces. County of Sonoma, Department of Health Services (Sonoma, DHS) collaborates with daycare providers on creative solutions that allow any site to benefit from the stencils, even ones with limited space or rental restrictions.

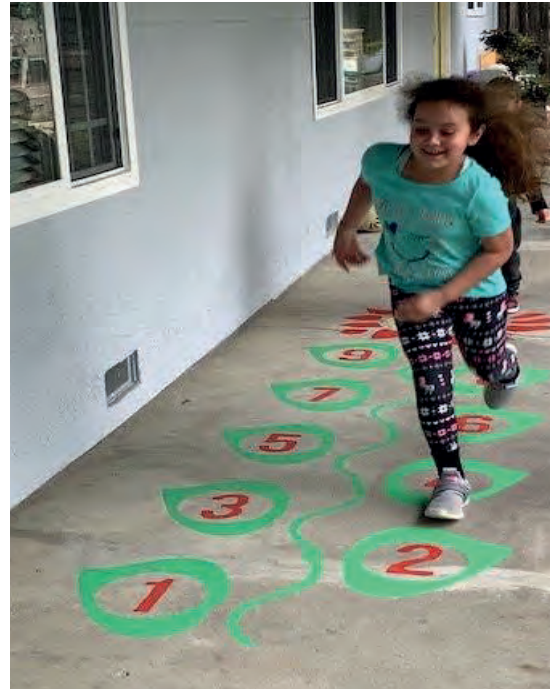


Photo courtesy of Sandra Chavarin

Collaborative Action

The daycare providers are involved in every step of the process. The stencil catalog gives ideas for how to paint the stencils, including non-permanent and space-saving options. Providers choose the design and colors they want, then work together to tailor the stencils to their unique sites. For example, a provider came up with the idea to paint the bulls-eye stencil on a canvas tarp because she could not paint the fence.



Building on Strengths

Providers use their early childhood knowledge when designing playground stencil projects. One provider painted hopscotch numbers on plywood for outdoor activities and later created hopscotch stepping stones from concrete pavers. She hosted a workshop for others to make their own. Sonoma, DHS also hosted a workshop where providers painted foam mats for physical activity, using bright colors and creative designs.



Sustaining Success

Playground stencils, both permanent and non-permanent, will last for at least a few years. Paint kits are provided for providers to touch up their stencils when the paint begins to chip or when they want to add additional stencils. Completing the projects with providers, instead of for the providers, builds the capacity of providers to enhance their play spaces on their own.



Learn By Saving: Putting Money Back Into College Students' Pockets Through Market

Match Promotion Initiatives

Olivia “Liv” Watts¹ and Roxy Hudson¹

¹California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

Community Context

Students at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo (Cal Poly SLO) are participating in CalFresh at record-breaking rates. As of November 7, 2024, 4,425 Cal Poly students (~20%) are actively enrolled in CalFresh (San Luis Obispo Department of Social Services, SLO Department of Social Services). Awareness and utilization of Market Match (MM), a nutrition incentive program, among Cal Poly SLO students remains unknown. Cal Poly SLO leveraged CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL) funding to investigate MM use amongst Cal Poly students.



Collaborative Action

The Cal Poly SLO CalFresh Outreach (CFO) team was a key partner in social media promotion and tabling. Both the CFO and CalFresh Healthy Living teams tabled on Dexter Lawn, a high-traffic, centrally located, space on campus, to hand out food and drink samples featuring seasonally available ingredients from the farmers' market. Students were then invited to take a short, ten-item survey on MM usage. In an effort



to expand the use of MM among college students, the CFHL team created Instagram reels and informational posts that informed students of this vital resource.

Building on Strengths

SLO County is rich in locally-sourced foods. On any given day, there are multiple farmers' markets throughout the County, making for bountiful and abundant consumer choice. The Thursday Downtown SLO Farmers' Market is most accessible to Cal Poly students, especially those without cars. By dedicating efforts to promote the use of MM among Cal Poly students, they are incentivized to eat locally sourced, fresh foods and are saving money in the process; a win for students and the local economy.



Sustaining Success

The results of the survey indicated a need for MM education and promotion on Cal Poly SLO's campus. Survey respondents (n=67) reported the following key findings:

- A. 50% answered "no" to knowing what the MM program offers.
- B. 58.6% answered "no" to having used electronic benefits transfer at the market before.

- C. When asked their likelihood of using MM in the future, 63.4% of CalFresh participants answered, “very likely” and 52.8% of those not actively enrolled in CalFresh answered “very likely.”

Microwave Access for Healthier, Budget-Friendly Campus Meals at CSU Northridge

Christel Bowen¹, Darren Tan¹, Nathan Kauma¹

¹CSUN with a Heart Basic Needs Office

Community Context

California State University, Northridge (CSUN) is one of the largest universities in the United States. The university has over 36,000 enrolled full and part-time students. More than 90% of students commute to campus! Students may not bring food from home due to



limited knowledge of where they can heat it up. This may prevent them from bringing their own meals and result in more frequent on-campus purchases, which can be pricier, thereby negatively affecting their food budget and sometimes, their food choices.

Collaborative Action

The CSUN Basic Needs Office collaborated with interns from the Department of Health Sciences to create a map of where microwaves are located across campus to address the issue. The list facilitates student access to microwaves by providing a convenient guide for students to locate microwaves at CSUN. This allows students to confidently bring meals that require heating to campus, promoting home cooking, saving money, and this may support healthier food choices.



Building on Strengths



The Microwave project allowed the Basic Needs Office to develop a useful guide that can be distributed to CSUN students. Partnering with the Department of Health Sciences interns through the CalFresh Healthy Living on Campus program allowed the interns to complete this project, which wouldn't have been possible without the additional support.

Sustaining Success

CalFresh Healthy Living on Campus interns will be tasked each semester with reviewing and checking the access to listed microwaves to ensure the sustainability of future progress. Moreover, CSUN is set to increase access to microwaves, as well as add dry and cold food lockers, with the completion of Valera Nurturing Environment for Students to Thrive (NEST). The NEST is scheduled to open late Fall 2025!



Refreshing Fun: Rethink Your Drink at Fairview and C.K Price Field Days

Tracy Nunez-Mercado¹ and Gabrielle Lofink, MS, RD¹

¹Center for Healthy Communities

Community Context

Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) partnered with Fairview Elementary and C.K. Price Middle School to promote healthier beverage choices and physical activity. This collaboration highlights the community's strengths, including active parent involvement and strong partnerships. A color run hosted by the Fairview Parent Club and a field day organized by C.K. Price educators showcased their shared goal of fostering a healthier environment.



Collaborative Action

Collaborative action was key to the initiative, with educators and the parents club taking lead to plan and coordinate the events including the physical activity component, while CHC supported the effort through the Rethink Your Drink (RYD) campaign. Both Fairview and C.K. Price educators, along with parents, lead by example in advocating for health and wellness.



Building on Strengths

CHC worked with the two schools to support their goals through the RYD campaign, highlighting the health risks of sugary drinks while promoting healthier alternatives like infused water. The infused water stations, requested by the schools, sparked creativity and encouraged students and staff to explore healthier hydration options. This set the tone to reinforce healthy habits and encouraged students to make informed choices that can benefit them.



Sustaining Success

The community's collective efforts help students develop positive healthy habits early, ensuring lasting success. CHC, C.K. Price, and Fairview aim to sustain this success through ongoing programming, including the evidence-based Coordinated Approach to Child Health curriculum. The community is leading efforts for change in the health landscape, and in response the schools are actively implementing long-term wellness initiatives.



**Sacramento State's Cultural Garden: Leveraging Diverse Student Input to Enhance
Year-Round Accessibility to Cultural Foods at the ASI Food Pantry**

Jennifer Campbell¹, Alyssa G. Aguinaga¹, Monzerrath Ramos Gonzalez¹, Johnny Yang¹, Brendan

Linehan¹

¹CSUS

Community Context

Sacramento State University has a diverse student population, however, there is insufficient access to cultural produce. Students seeking to prepare traditional recipes often struggle to find the ingredients, leading to increased time, decreased belonging, and expense. Our goal is to enhance access to culturally relevant produce as it



could increase consumption of fruits and vegetables, as students may be more familiar with incorporating these foods into their diets. To address this, our team collaborated with students, Sacramento State Sustainability, and the ASI Food Pantry to improve access to culturally diverse produce to the campus community through the campus garden.

Collaborative Action

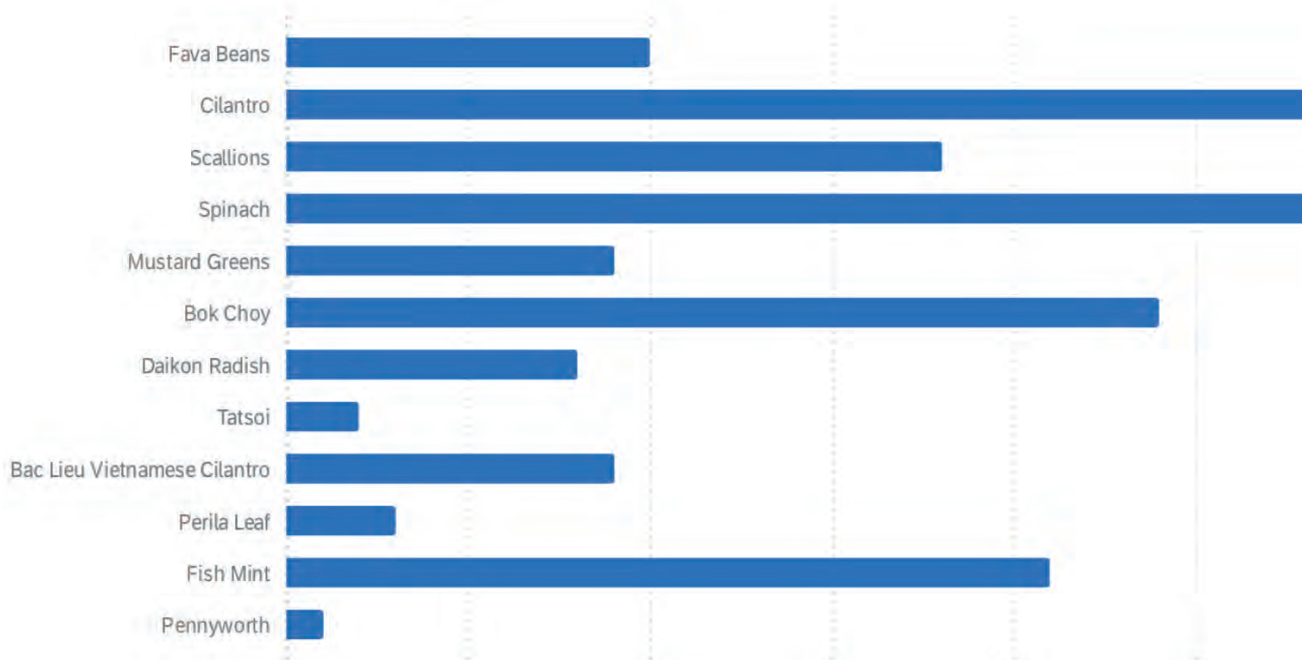
Sacramento State Sustainability generously provided a garden bed for our project at the Cap Radio garden on campus. The garden's accessibility encourages community involvement. Produce grown in the garden will be donated to the campus ASI Food Pantry, enhancing student access to fresh ingredients. This collaboration significantly contributed to the project's success in serving the campus community.



Building on Strengths

As the 4th most diverse campus in the Western United States, Sacramento State embraces a population of many cultural backgrounds. To leverage this strength, we conducted a survey among our students to design a garden that truly reflects their needs and preferences. While we identified culturally significant produce that could be grown in the local climate, it was the students' voices that ultimately guided the selection of crops. Through SNAP-Ed's funding, we were able to purchase the necessary gardening tools and plants needed to translate student input into action.

Winter Produce List: Select 4 Vegetables/Herbs you would like to see in our Cultural Garden 46 ⓘ



Sustaining Success

To ensure the garden remains productive year-round, we have developed a comprehensive plan that includes planting seasonal produce. Currently, winter crops are growing, and students will select the produce for spring and fall, allowing future SNAP-Ed teams to continue the project seamlessly. Our partnership with Sacramento State



Sustainability guarantees the garden's continuity, as their reliable team will maintain it even when students are not present.

SLM Reduces Food Waste and Increases Student Choice at Lo-Inyo Elementary

Jenna McCarthy¹ and Samara Moschiano¹

¹Community Service Solutions

Community Context

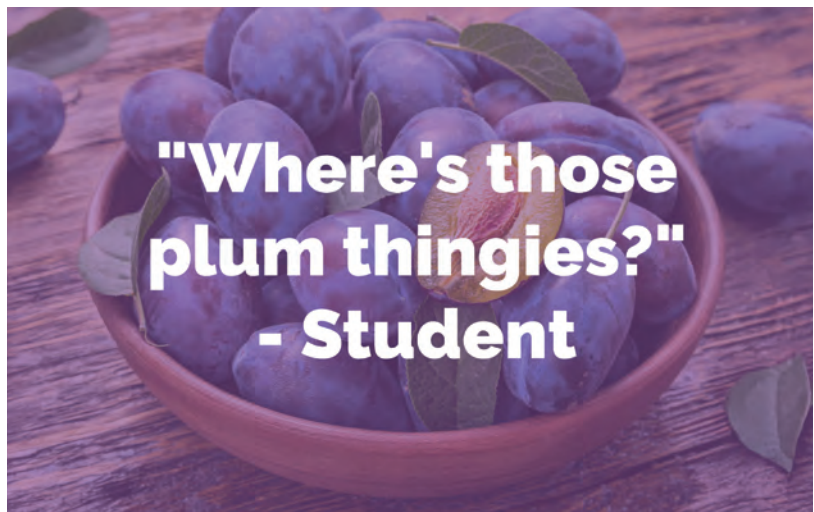
As part of the school wellness efforts, Lone Pine Unified School District's Lead Food Services (LFS) hosted the Statewide training team and CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL) staff in June 2023 for a Smarter Lunchrooms training. After completing the Smarter Lunchrooms



scorecard, the LFS identified goals of increased vegetable options for school lunches and creating a mural in the elementary school lunchroom.

Collaborative Action

The CFHL Nutrition Educator researched mural artist options, and the LFS reinstated a salad bar for 3rd-8th grades, two days per week, at the beginning of the next school year.



Building on Strengths

The LFS notes the food bill was higher at first, but “in the long run it saved money.” For an extra 10-20 minutes on salad bar days, students get more choices, and the school wastes less food because LFS can offer leftover items or ripe



produce. The options change frequently, which keeps students interested. Students take multiple fruits and vegetables—and eat them!

Sustaining Success

The Nutrition Educator, a local artist, and LFS met midyear to discuss mural options, and the LFS began to brainstorm funding sources. She is also considering doing the project with the art teacher, and students will help create the mural. The LFS’s



commitment to student health, the district’s wellness policy, and the students’ enthusiasm for the salad bar will motivate future Smarter Lunchroom Movement efforts.

The background is a solid light purple color. In the center, there is a large, dark purple, irregularly shaped blob. Overlapping this blob and extending towards the edges are several lighter purple, wavy, organic shapes. Thin, light purple lines swirl and loop around these shapes, creating a sense of movement and connection. The overall aesthetic is modern and abstract.

Cross-Sector Partnerships

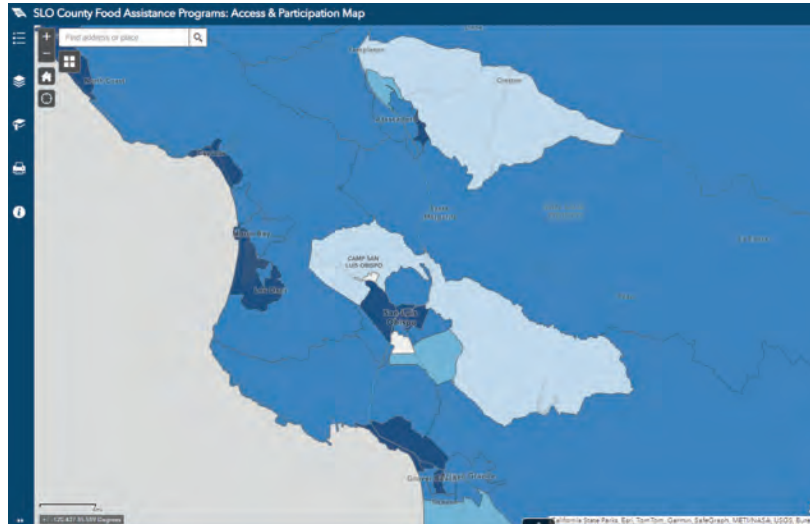
Addressing Food Security Through Data-Driven Outreach and Community Engagement

Maritza Perez¹ and Garrett Frice¹

¹San Luis Obispo County Health Agency – Public Health Department

Community Context

Promoting SUN Bucks (S-EBT) and Market Match helps address food insecurity in San Luis Obispo County, where 31% of residents struggle to meet basic needs (SLO Health Counts, 2025). Market Match doubles electronic benefit transfer (EBT) dollars at farmers' markets, enabling families experiencing poverty to access fresh, nutritious food. S-EBT provides additional food benefits to families with children during the summer, when school meal programs are unavailable.



Collaborative Action



A New Summer Food Program for Kids!

*SUN Bucks is a new food program that will give families \$120 per eligible child to buy groceries during the summer. Children who get SUN Bucks can still receive other food programs like CalFresh and meals at Summer Meal Sites. **SUN Bucks will not affect immigration status.***

CAN MY CHILD GET SUN BUCKS?

Your child will automatically get SUN Bucks if:

- Your family got CalFresh, CalWORKS, or Medi-Cal during the 2023-24 school year.
- Your child is experiencing homelessness, living in foster care, or is part of a migrant family.

 **Make sure your mailing address is updated with your county so your SUN Bucks are sent to the right place!**
You can do it online at BenefitsCal.com, or call or visit your local social services department.



San Luis Obispo County Health Agency (SLOCHA) collaborated with the Department of Social Services, schools, libraries, and food system partners to promote SUN Bucks and Market Match, reaching over 70,000 residents. Using the ArcGIS Food Access Map, high-need areas were prioritized, and bilingual toolkits were distributed with Mixteco-language videos and flyers. Outreach at back-to-school events and through social media boosted engagement and access.

Building on Strengths

This project built on the strengths of community collaboration, leveraging partnerships with schools, the Department of Social Services, food banks, libraries, and local farmers. By using tailored outreach materials, SLOCHA maximized local engagement and ensured efforts reached those who needed it most, creating a strong foundation for continued success.



Sustaining Success

To sustain the success of SUN Bucks and Market Match, SLOCHA will continue expanding outreach in collaboration with food system partners. By leveraging local networks and expertise, SLOCHA aims to reach more high-need communities, promote nutrition security, and increase access to fresh food.



Ongoing partnerships with schools, libraries, and food banks will help ensure long-term impact.

References

SLO Health Counts. (2025). Social context. SLO Health Counts. Retrieved January 22, 2025, from <https://www.slohealthcounts.org/social-context>

Cultivating Change: Nourishing Communities in San Francisco's Urban Metropolis

Brendan Rea¹ and Jerry Waki¹

¹Catholic Charities San Francisco

Community Context

San Francisco County, renowned for its innovation and wealth, grapples with a lack of access to fresh produce and the prevalence of food deserts. Residents face challenges in accessing and affording nutritious food in their neighborhoods. Moreover, the average lot size, a mere 25 ft. wide by 100 ft. deep, is predominantly occupied by towering buildings, leaving minimal space for



personal gardens. Moreover, the high cost of living, 86.5% higher than the national average, exacerbates the struggle for food security among low-income residents.

Collaborative Action

Catholic Charities of San Francisco's (CCSF) CalFresh Healthy Living program has partnered with Fork Farms to provide hydroponic gardening systems to urban schools that lack space for traditional in-the-ground gardening. The Flex Farm systems can yield up to 50 pounds of fresh produce each month and 6,800 plants each year. In collaboration with school leadership, students, and teachers, these systems have been installed at two school sites. After students help plant the seed and transplant the sprout into the



Flex Farm, the students help harvest produce at the end of the growing cycles with the assistance of teachers and CCSF's CFHL staff.

Building on Strengths

School sites with installed Flex Farms systems harvested over 100 pounds of both romaine lettuce and basil. This large influx of fresh produce into the communities CCSF serves has not only brought new fruits and vegetables directly into the classroom during nutrition education classes but has also provided a much-needed access point for fruits and vegetables for food-insecure families. In combination with nutrition education classes provided each month, CCSF has improved access to produce and garnered immense excitement from the students and their families about eating what they grow and trying new healthy recipes. Participants have become more excited and eager to try produce that they have helped grow in the Flex Farm from seed to plant.



Sustaining Success

To spark even more interest in the farm-to-table model promoted by the Flex Farm, CCSF aims to start gardening clubs and seek champions to maintain the hydroponic systems. In the future, CCSF hopes to expand its partnership with Fork Farms and partner with additional schools and community sites, such as community centers.



**Increasing Food Access while Reducing Food Waste: Free Little Pantry Installations in
Solano County**

Alexandria Willingham¹, Kimberly Gastelum¹, Monica Ayala-Macias¹

¹Catholic Charities Yolo-Solano

Community Context

Feeding America reports that Solano County has 63,390 food-insecure residents, with over 45% without consistent access to nutritious food. Additionally, the USDA reports that 42% of food waste comes from households, compounding food insecurity challenges. Catholic Charities Yolo-Solano's



(CCYS) CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL) team recognized the potential for community-driven solutions and responded to assessed needs by launching the innovative Free Little Pantry Project.

Collaborative Action

CCYS partnered with the Fairfield-Suisun Adult School carpentry program to construct seven pantry boxes. This enabled students to enrich their educational experience while giving back to the community, fostering a sense of purpose. Collaborations with seven host sites—including Child Start Inc., Leaven Kids, and affordable senior housing sites—further amplified the community



impact, creating essential access points for food and nutrition education throughout the county.

Building on Strengths

The Free Little Pantry provides a vital safety net, operating on a "take what you need, leave what you can" principle. This project cultivates community engagement, allowing residents to support one another, and reduces food waste by encouraging the redistribution of surplus



food items. CCYS's CFHL team ensures pantry maintenance through "Site Agreements" and "Donation Item Guidelines," while promoting healthy eating with nutrition messaging.

Sustaining Success

Sustainability is central to CCYS's mission. CFHL staff offer initial donation support and conduct check-ins to connect sites with local food pantries. Site coordinators are encouraged to complete CCYS-sponsored food safety training, ensuring standards are met. Partner sites share user testimonials, strengthening community bonds and highlighting the project's enduring impact.



Empowering Older Adults: Glenn County Senior Resource Expo

Samantha Line¹ and Noelle DiSano¹

¹Center for Healthy Communities

Community Context

Celebrating and supporting older adults is a shared goal in rural Glenn County. This commitment inspired the launch of the inaugural Senior Resource Expo. Centered on the theme 'Helping Our Seniors Stay Empowered,' the event served as a one-stop shop for individuals aged 55+ and their caregivers, connecting them to resources and addressing their needs.



Collaborative Action

The Expo was organized by the Community Action Department, Glenn County Health and Human Services, and Tri-Counties Community Action Partnership. Over 100 agencies participated, including the Center for Healthy Communities Area Agency on Aging (AAA) CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL) in collaboration with the AAA - Passages Adult Resource Center, and CalFresh Outreach program. AAA CFHL staff presented on nutrition and brain health.



Building on Strengths

Over 500 attendees received complimentary meals, medical services, resource bags, legal aid, hygiene kits, and food boxes while participating in presentations and low-impact exercises. Since the Expo, attendance at the local senior center for meals and physical activity classes has increased, highlighting the importance of continued collaboration among local agencies.



Sustaining Success

The Expo's success paved the way for future initiatives, including a Veterans Stand Down planned for January 2025 to address the need for expanded veteran services. Glenn County partners remain committed to enhancing efforts that keep older adults informed, supported, and connected.



Siskiyou Fall Prevention Coalition

Michelle Harris¹

¹Center for Healthy Communities

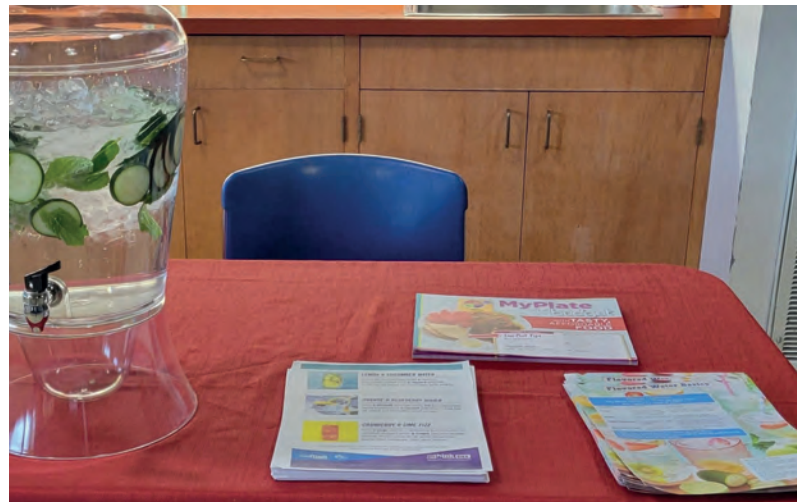
Community Context

Diverse organizations have joined forces to form the Siskiyou County Fall Prevention Coalition, led by Siskiyou County Public Health and the Siskiyou Family YMCA. This coalition brings together partners dedicated to improving older adults' health by offering resources, support, and fall prevention strategies. Together, they aim to foster a safer, more supportive, and connected community for everyone.



Collaborative Action

Coalition members have developed comprehensive informational and referral packets, which are widely distributed by medical providers, first responders, and community-based organizations to individuals who have fallen or are at risk of falling. Additionally, the coalition hosts annual community education events, such as Siskiyou Fall Prevention Day and YMCA Senior Fitness Day.



Building on Strengths

Relationships built through the coalition have enabled the Center for Healthy Communities AAA CFHL team and the YMCA to collaborate in offering "Walk with Ease." This evidence-based program, facilitated by the YMCA, combines health education, walking, stretching, strengthening exercises, and motivational strategies while fostering social engagement opportunities.



Sustaining Success

The Coalition is dedicated to expanding outreach events, educational opportunities, physical activity classes, and programs to remote rural areas throughout Siskiyou County. These efforts aim to help older adults stay active, build confidence, develop fall prevention skills, and effectively manage chronic diseases.

the **Y** YMCA

FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENTSM
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

New Fitness Class:

Active Striders

Come join our **INDOOR** walking fitness class! Do you need motivation or a friend to walk with? Does the winter cold restrict you from exercising? Don't let excuses stop you from the health benefits that come with walking regularly.

Location: YMCA Gymnasium
Days: Mondays & Wednesdays

Dates: Starting January 6th
Time: 1:00-1:45 PM.

What Can CalFresh Do for You?

Tiffany Greer¹ and Michelle Harris¹

¹Center for Healthy Communities

Community Context

Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) has the unique opportunity to strategically align CFHL and CalFresh Outreach (CFO) programs to better meet the food security and nutritional needs of northern rural California older adults by offering trauma informed education in a trusting environment.



Collaborative Action

The CFHL team have been partnering with CHC's CFO team, CFO subcontractor, Shasta County Office of Education, and local county CalFresh offices to table events and facilitate nutrition education outreach activities called 'What Can CalFresh Do for You?'



These activities unite shopping-on-a-budget concepts and CalFresh messaging along with offering CalFresh application assistance.

Building on Strengths

By incorporating budgeting and nutritious food choices into interactive classes, participants gain essential skills to stretch their budgets and make healthier choices, all within a supportive environment that empowers them to enhance their food security. Cross-team



collaboration allows us to deliver hands-on, practical resources that directly benefit older adults.

Sustaining Success

Recent food insecurity reports have highlighted the opportunity and necessity of CFHL programs serving older adults to intentionally embed CalFresh into their lessons and activities. The CFHL-CFO partnership lays a strong foundation for integrating CalFresh



resources and budgeting tools into programming, equipping older adults with essential support for food security and well-being.

Building Local Capacity to Reduce Health Disparities in California Communities

Andra Nicoli¹, Tammy McMurdo², Lorena Hoyos², Annabelle Factura², Melanie Alexander²

¹CFHL, UC

²CFHL, UCCE

Community Context

CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL), UC State Office trains UCCE Local Implementing Agencies (LIAs) in program delivery and evaluation. In turn, CFHL, UCCE LIAs collaborate with teachers and community members to build community capacity that addresses health disparities. These efforts can include experiential learning opportunities that integrate nutrition lessons with gardening, physical activity, and youth engagement interventions. In some settings, CFHL, UCCE educators deliver lessons directly. In other settings, lessons are taught by “extenders” who are teachers, youth/students, or community members.



Extender Models in CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California

A Best Practices Guide



Collaborative Action

Enhancing local “extender” knowledge and skills through educational capacity building strengthens technical and local organizational ability in nutrition and health. These efforts assist early childhood education (ECE), schools and community organizations



to mobilize resources, achieve their goals, and influence broader systems change. It is an iterative approach that includes:

- Providing customized training and technical assistance, meeting partners where they are at
- Adapting our interventions through ongoing learning from evaluation results and participant engagement.

Building on Strengths

For example, in FFY 2024, CFHL, UCCE San Joaquin County partnered with a total of 85 different organizations and agencies (98 direct education and PSE sites). These included schools, preschools, non-profit organizations, public housing sites and shelters.

The team actively worked with early childcare extenders for 8+ years to build capacity in the delivery of direct education. Through annual training and technical assistance, 118 extenders were trained to deliver direct education in ECE settings reaching 1,486 participants at 46 ECE sites, such as:

- First 5, Stockton Unified School District (SUSD) Preschools
- Migrant Education
- Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAP-K) Early Head Start.

Sustaining Success

Volunteer extenders can be classroom or youth teachers. In FFY 2024, 64 youth teachers supported direct education delivery in the ECE setting. CFHL, UCCE San Joaquin will continue to provide:

- Nutrition and physical activity trainings annually for new SUSD teachers

- Refresher trainings and technical assistance offered on an ongoing basis

“There are several aspects that I enjoy about our partnership. One is the trainer's expertise in various areas and their willingness to share it with my students. Their expertise has led to additional inquiry and exploration into related fields and better wellbeing practices.”

– Career & Technical Education Teacher

**Fueling Success: Synergistic Partnership in Nutrition Education and Healthy Meals in
Schools for Fresno Students**

Nancy Zumkeller¹ and Irene O. Padasas, PhD¹

¹CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Fresno and Madera Counties

Community Context

Fresno Unified School District's (FUSD) Nutrition Services Department serves 69,327 students - 60,790 of these students coming from families experiencing poverty as reported in the 2023 CA Schools Dashboard Data Files. CFHL, UCCE Fresno County partners with FUSD Nutrition Services to deliver nutrition education in SNAP-Ed eligible schools.



Collaborative Action

Farm to Summer is a week-long event in June that highlights the nutritional benefits of local foods in school lunches. CFHL, UCCE Fresno County collaborated with FUSD Nutrition Services to deliver MyPlate nutrition education lessons at 23 FUSD summer school sites, reaching 2,624 students. The initiative supported the FUSD Farm to School Grant Program and was featured in local and state media.



Building on Strengths

CFHL, UCCE Fresno and FUSD Nutrition Services Department’s synergistic efforts to deliver nutrition education classes and balanced meals in the school setting are underpinned by their strong commitment to support students’ health and success in and outside the classrooms. This collaboration advances efforts to eliminate barriers to student learning and ensure access to nutritious food.



Sustaining Success

CFHL, UCCE and FUSD Nutrition Services Department will continue to collaborate to provide nutrition lessons coupled with healthy meals. “CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE is great and supports us by interacting with the students and providing the nutrition education....we use the information they collect from the surveys to inform our department on foods to add to our menus.” – Tacu Vang, Farm to School Coordinator.



Expanding Garden Partnerships at Arc of Amador

Kathleen Carter¹ and Noah Cooke¹

¹CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Central Sierra

Community Context

For over 50 years the Arc of Amador and Calaveras has provided support services to individuals with disabilities so that participants can better work, learn, live, and recreate in everyday life. The day program in Amador County focuses on building independent living skills aligned with an individual's life goals.



Collaborative Action

CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL), UCCE collaborates with Arc of Amador, offering garden-enhanced nutrition education and cooking lessons at the site. A compost project involving multiple organizations was suggested to develop sustainability and create educational opportunities that bridge gardening and cooking classes. Harvesting and composting can facilitate a sense of responsibility and a better understanding of plant life cycles and local food systems.



Building on Strengths

In partnership with UCCE Master Gardeners, CFHL, UCCE coordinated the donation of two Geobin composting containers from Amador Solid Waste and CalRecycle. Six participants at Arc of Amador established these compost bins with UC Master Gardeners and CFHL, UCCE staff. These participants established and utilize two Geobin composters, adding “greens” from their cooking classes and “browns” from their garden work.



Sustaining Success

Arc of Amador added compost maintenance as a “house job”, a paid practice where participants choose a job they are responsible for every quarter. CFHL, UCCE supported this effort by adapting a Composting 101 document and training Arc of Amador staff in an adapted version of the Teams with Intergenerational Support (TWIGS) composting lesson. In combination with direct education programming, these sustainability strategies support Arc of Amador staff and 60 participants as they integrate healthy activities into their daily lives.



Partnering with UC Master Gardeners to Enrich Youth Garden Education

Abbi Marrs¹, Mishelle Costa¹, Shannon Klisch¹

¹CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties

Community Context

Research indicates that gardening interventions among youth can increase fruit and vegetable consumption and positively influence overall dietary intake. CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California Cooperative Extension (CFHL, UCCE) and UC Master Gardener programs work to promote healthy people and communities by increasing knowledge of gardening.



Collaborative Action

In Santa Barbara County, CFHL, UCCE saw the opportunity to expand partnerships with the UC Master Gardener program and train volunteers to implement the Teams With Intergenerational Support (TWIGS), a garden-based curriculum, with youth audiences.



Building on Strengths

CFHL, UCCE staff hosted a four-hour training session for local UC Master Gardener volunteers interested in working with youth. Volunteers learned basic classroom management, nutrition, food safety, and TWIGS lessons, demonstrated by CFHL, UCCE staff. Leveraging the UC Master Gardeners extensive garden knowledge helps to enhance the delivery and sustainability of garden lessons and programs.



Sustaining Success

Through this collaboration with volunteers in the community, local youth will continue to gain skills surrounding healthy eating and gardening and promote valuable intergenerational knowledge sharing, which supports and strengthens community health. By offering these lessons at a public library, these local youth are gaining valuable skills they might not have access to in the school setting.



**Spring Garden Workshops: Growing Healthy Communities Through UCCE Programs and
School District Partnership**

Karina Macias¹ and Irene Padasas, PhD¹

¹CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Fresno and Madera Counties

Community Context

Increased interest in garden lessons offered opportunities for CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL), UCCE Fresno/Madera's program expansion in FFY 2024. CFHL, UCCE hosted the annual Spring Garden Workshops in Madera and Fresno Counties in collaboration with internal and external



partners. These partners include Master Gardener Program (MGP), Master Food Preserver (MFP) Program, Madera Unified School District (MUSD) Parent Resource Center (PRC), and Hamilton Elementary in Fresno County.

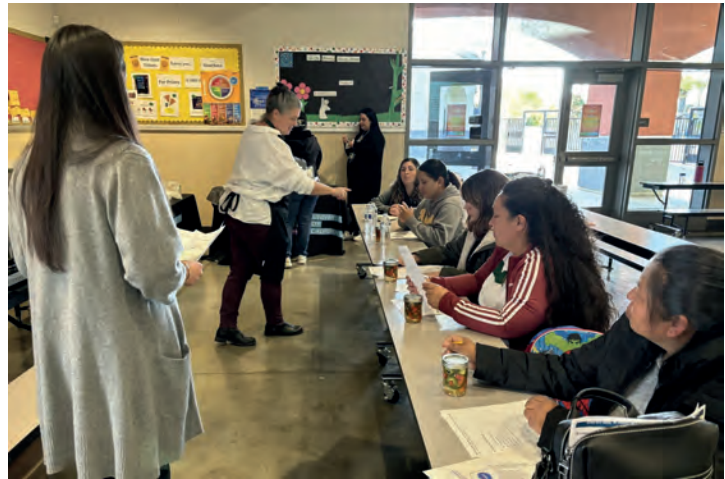
Collaborative Action

CFHL, UCCE Fresno/Madera, MGP, and MFP programs collaborated with Fresno and Madera Unified School Districts to host the Spring Garden Workshops using the Fresh From the Garden curriculum. The Spring Garden Workshop in Madera reached 14 families and the pilot workshop at Hamilton Elementary School in Fresno reached 17 families.



Building on Strengths

Leveraging internal and external partnerships, the workshops created a fun educational learning experience for the participants. In the workshops, MGP volunteers answered gardening questions and shared tips for solving simple garden problems, MFP volunteers discussed



basic home food preservation and safety, and CFHL, UCCE nutrition educators linked gardening to healthy eating and prepared a recipe for participants to try.

Sustaining Success

To ensure families could put into practice what they learned, all workshop participants received a garden kit that included a tomato plant, seeds, instructions for pickling peppers, and a healthy recipe. CFHL, UCCE will continue working with the schools in Fresno and Madera Counties and share relevant UCCE resources provided by MGP and MFP.



Taste Tests Increase Youth Preferences for Healthy Foods in Los Angeles County

Natalie Price¹, Ben Melendrez¹, Daisy Valdez¹, Ingrid Alarcon¹

¹CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Los Angeles

Community Context

In 2023/2024, the CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California Cooperative Extension Los Angeles (CFHL, UCCE LA) program provided youth from communities with limited resources the opportunity to taste-test unfamiliar or under-consumed healthy foods as part of nutrition education. The program focused on exposing students to four items: broccoli, pears, sparkling water and zucchini. Produce items were served raw as part of a mixed dish, such as a salad.



Collaborative Action

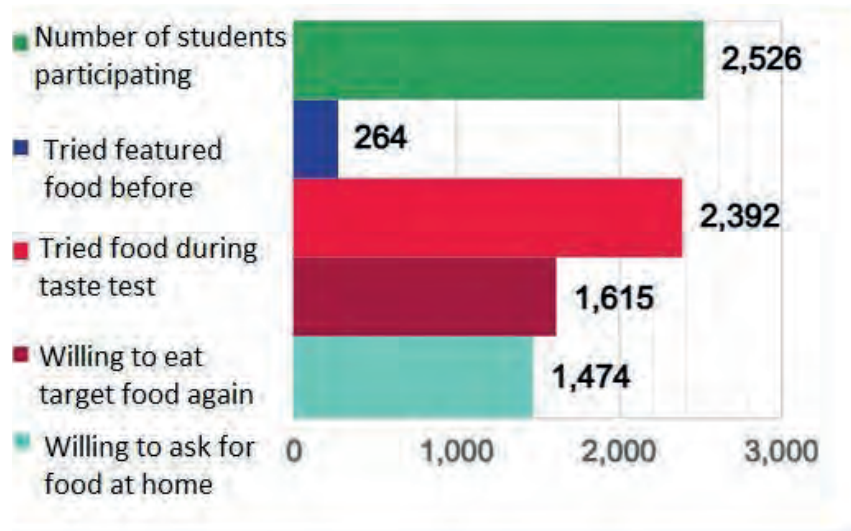
The CFHL, UCCE LA program has built lasting partnerships to promote youth healthy eating and deliver taste tests. Partner organizations such as school districts, afterschool programs, and early childhood education centers are seeking engaging, multisensory learning opportunities to improve student health, and are enthusiastic about student taste-testing activities.



Building on Strengths

CFHL, UCCE LA reached students in grades preschool through sixth with taste tests of targeted foods during the 2023/2024 school year. Taste tests were provided along with lesson(s) from age-appropriate SNAP-Ed approved curricula focused on healthy eating. Social Emotional

Learning was integrated into the taste tests. Educators administered a Taste Testing Tool following 103 food tastings and received 2,526 responses.



Sustaining Success

The food tastings were successful in increasing student preferences for targeted foods and created the engaging learning experience sought by youth-serving partners. On average 66% of students surveyed said they would be willing to eat the featured food item again and 60% were willing to ask for the featured food item at home. Positive student engagement with the program has prompted partner organizations to request services year after year.



Filling the Gap: Connecting Families to Food Resources

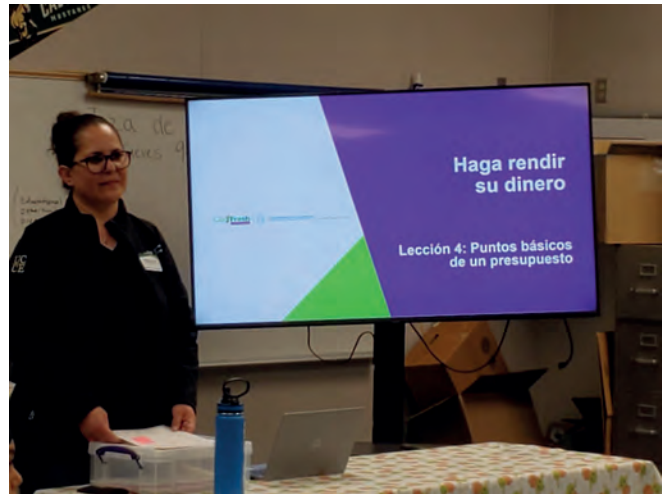
Lorena Hoyos¹, Maricarmen Anaya-Rodriguez¹, Ana Guzman²

¹CFHL, UCCE San Joaquin

²CFHL, Catholic Charities San Joaquin

Community Context

While leading adult nutrition education lessons focused on food resource management CalFresh Health Living, UCCE San Joaquin County (CFHL, UCCE) educator, Maricarmen Anaya-Rodriguez, observed classroom discussions with participants citing that they did not intend to apply for CalFresh. The various reasons given were based on myths or misinformation prevalent in the Hispanic/Latino community she serves.



Collaborative Action

CFHL, UCCE and Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Stockton have teamed up for nearly two years to deliver CalFresh information and CFHL education in one convenient location to SNAP-Ed eligible



populations. In this innovative partnership CFHL, UCCE offers series based adult nutrition education focused on healthy eating & food resource management while Catholic Charities CalFresh Outreach Program and Food Pantry Program members address misinformation about applying for CalFresh food benefits and offer a resource to food access.

Building on Strengths

Catholic Charities Outreach Workers are invited to the graduation class of a direct education series given by CFHL, UCCE. The outreach worker provides a short 10-minute presentation on the CalFresh application services they provide as well as their Food Pantry services. During the presentation the



CalFresh application process is explained, questions are answered, and common myths and misinformation are dispelled. Participants are provided the opportunity to enroll in the Food Pantry Program and all participants receive a bag of food from the pantry.

Sustaining Success

When participants enroll in the Food Pantry Program, they provide the number of individuals in the household by age category. In Federal Fiscal Year 2024, the Catholic Charities Food Pantry Program provided food to approximately 370 individuals across six sites. Of the 370 individuals, 185 are between 0-18 years of age, 179 are between 19-59 years, and 6 are 60 years or older.



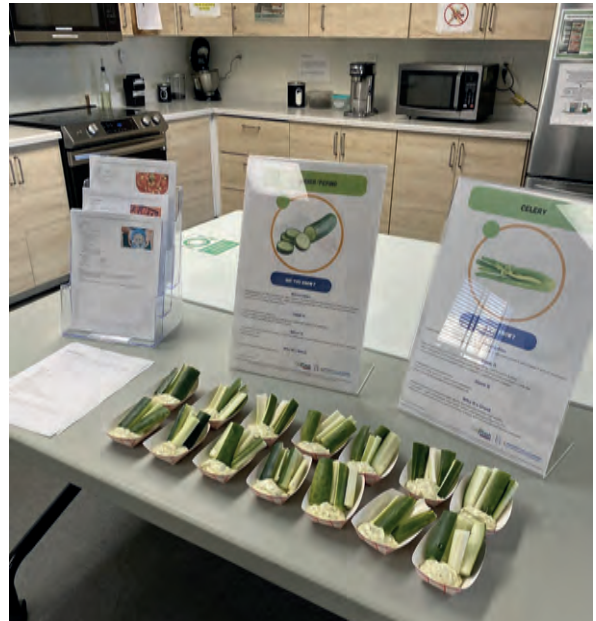
Produce Promotions at HomeFirst Bridge Housing Communities

Mariah Van Ardenne Peterson¹

¹CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Santa Clara

Community Context

HomeFirst offers temporary, interim, and permanent housing to unhoused individuals without any preconditions in Santa Clara County. In addition, HomeFirst provides various support services in collaboration with community partners to give residents the opportunity to acquire new skills and healthy habits. One of HomeFirst's valued partnerships is with Kind Hearts For You, a charity and social welfare organization focused



on human services to empower families during times of crisis. Kind Hearts For You distributes fresh produce to HomeFirst Bridge Housing sites on a regular basis.

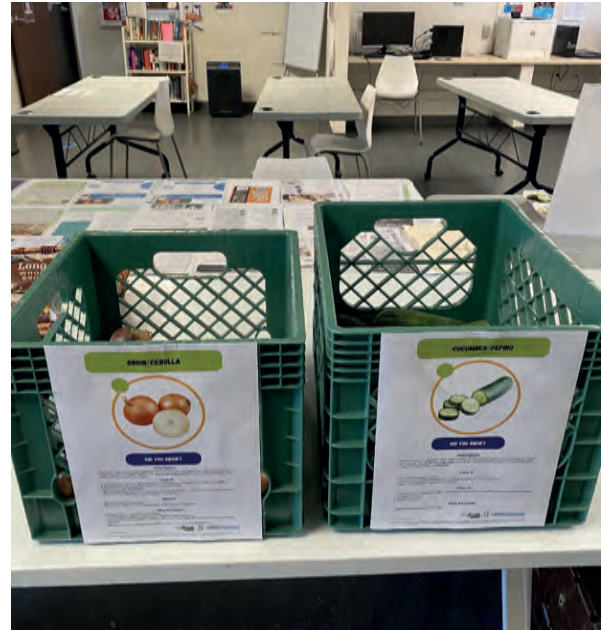
Collaborative Action

Though each month diverse produce options were delivered to the sites, it was found that much of the donations were being sparsely utilized by HomeFirst residents. CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL), UCCE Santa Clara and HomeFirst have worked together to create ways to inspire residents to better utilize the donated produce in a collaborative effort to create healthier communities.



Building on Strengths

CFHL, UCCE supported the community through policy, systems, and environmental change strategies to assist in the utilization of the donated produce. These strategies include ongoing monthly produce promotions to highlight and introduce produce to residents. This is done by conducting cooking demonstrations, supplying culturally-relevant taste tests, displaying produce in a more appealing manner, and presenting



produce-specific nutritional information to create ongoing decision prompts to make healthier choices.

Sustaining Success

This unique community partnership is strengthened with consistent engagement and collaborative efforts that work towards a mutual goal. CFHL, UCCE Santa Clara has ensured that community needs are prioritized and their voices are acknowledged. This has cultivated trusting, dependable relationships with residents and staff who look forward to the monthly produce promotions.



Enhancing Partnerships and Program Success through Collaborative Training

Gabrielle Lofink, MS, RD¹ and Janessa Hartman, MS²

¹Center for Healthy Communities

²University of California Cooperative Extension

Community Context

Center for Healthy Communities (CHC), a subcontractor of Tehama County Health Services Agency, and University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) partner with Safe Education and Recreation for Rural Families Expanded Learning Program (SERRF ELP), serving seven



schools. Both Local Implementing Agencies (LIAs) support SERRF ELP sites by implementing the Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) curriculum.

Collaborative Action

The LIAs provided technical assistance and training to enhance CATCH curriculum confidence and boost student engagement. To promote county-wide improvement of physical activity in the afterschool setting, CHC, UCCE, and SERRF ELP organized a CATCH training



for SERRF ELP staff. The training covered the curriculum, routine demonstration, implementation tips and practice, group management, and lesson development.

Building on Strengths

CHC and UCCE staff coordinated training roles to ensure an unduplicated, collaborative approach, allowing LIA partners to leverage strengths and support the initiative at SERRF ELP sites. UCCE led CATCH introductions, while CHC explained the curriculum and led activity demos. Dedicated to the goal, SERRF ELP purchased CATCH kits for all seven sites. Together, partners drive shared success for improved youth physical activity county-wide.



Sustaining Success

After the training, LIA partners reinforced the CATCH curriculum at their seven SERRF ELP schools with demonstrations, lesson instructions, and recommended activities. The collaborative training built a base level of knowledge for all SERRF ELP staff, boosting their commitment to daily physical activity and supporting sustainable implementation. CHC and UCCE continue to provide support for long-term success and strong partnerships.



**Improving Children’s Access to Healthy Food During Summer SUN Bucks: Summer EBT
Program**

Osmar Meza¹ and Steven Ellenberger¹

¹California Department of Social Services, Family Engagement and Empowerment Division

Community Context

In California, the Universal Meals Program ensures all children have access to nutritious meals during the school year. However, during the summer break, many underserved children lose access to these critical programs. In 2023, 3.5 million out of the 5.9 million children in public schools met income eligibility for the National



School Lunch and Breakfast programs. SUN Bucks bridges this gap by providing support during the summer months. In 2024, 5.3 million children statewide are expected to benefit, helping families across California ensure their children have access to healthy meals.

Collaborative Action

California Department of Social Services (CDSS) works closely with community partners such as Nourish California, the California Association of Food Banks, and Share Our Strength. These partnerships have enhanced SUN Bucks operations planning and strengthened community outreach efforts. Through coordination



with the California Department of Education, Local Educational Agencies, and Community-Based organizations, we've aligned messaging to maximize impact. CDSS also provides outreach

materials on its webpage, enabling partners to promote children's access to healthy summer meals through social media and other channels.

Building on Strengths

CDSS partners with CBOs to serve as vital information hubs. These partnerships gather and share valuable community feedback with CDSS while spreading awareness about SUN Bucks. By reducing barriers for underserved youth, these collaborations enhance outreach and shape effective policy development, ensuring more children gain access to healthy food through strategic SUN Bucks initiatives.



Sustaining Success

CDE data indicates nearly 5.9 million children attend public schools in the 2022-23 year. Efforts between CDSS, CDE, Counties, and CBOs have resulted in nearly 5.3 million underserved children receiving SUN Bucks in 2024. CDSS will continue work with CBOs through monthly meetings to share information and identify opportunities to further improve the way SUN Bucks operates via addressing the issues our communities report. These partnerships



will also help increase SUN Bucks awareness through shared outreach efforts at the State and local level.

**Multisector School Wellness Partnerships Provide Comprehensive Programming at
Mammoth High School**

Jenna McCarthy¹ and Samara Moschiano¹

¹Community Service Solutions

Community Context

As part of the school wellness efforts, Mammoth High School's (MHS) Health Education teacher has been teaching the Around the Table curriculum to her 9th grade students each semester since fall 2022. Her class also received a hydroponic gardening tower from Town of Mammoth Lakes (TOML) and Mammoth Disposal (MD) via a CalRecycle grant during the 2022-2023 school year.



Collaborative Action

Several partners contribute to continue providing students a healthy educational experience. CFHL provides the curriculum and taste test materials. TOML and MD provide garden tower maintenance and education each semester to discuss SB 1383, its local impact, food waste prevention, gardening, and composting. The MHS teacher teaches the curriculum and oversees gardening efforts.



Building on Strengths

The garden and nutrition education complement each other by increasing access to healthy food while teaching students the importance of nourishing their bodies, how to prepare healthy foods, and ways to increase their sustainability efforts. Students actively engage in this process by choosing recipes, leading discussions, and caring for the garden.



Sustaining Success

Student surveys showed improvement in several healthy behaviors, including cooking skills and increased vegetable consumption. This has been a successful program for two years due to leveraging partner strengths, and the wellness committee members are committed to continuing it to support the district's policy.



The First 1,000 Days: Supporting Families Through a Digital Dairy Nutrition Program

Sandra Torres¹

¹Dairy Council of California

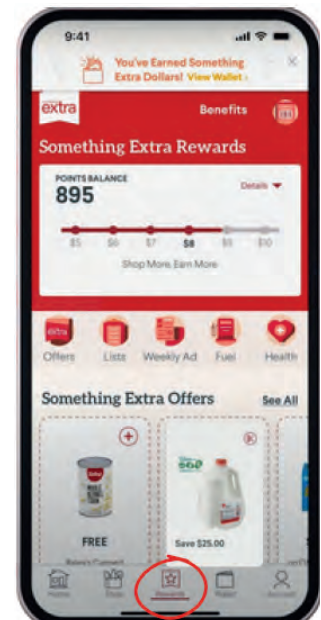
Community Context

In Gustine, Newman, Santa Nella, and Crows Landing, families are dedicated to their children's health and well-being. Despite challenges in accessing affordable, nutritious foods, they are resilient and resourceful, driven by shared values of care and nourishment. The "My First 1,000 Days" initiative supported these families with \$25 digital vouchers, education, and resources to meet children's nutritional needs during a vital developmental stage. The initiative addressed nutrition gaps while celebrating culturally relevant dairy foods.



Collaborative Action

Legacy Health Endowment funded a pilot project that enabled Dairy Council of California to create partnerships with healthcare centers, community organizations, schools, and Raley's in Merced and Stanislaus counties. Raley's integrated the \$25 digital voucher into their app and website for easy family access. Collaborations with Golden Valley Health Center, WIC, Head Start, and local school districts supported family outreach and engagement. Together, these partners mobilized local strengths to bring affordable, nutritious options to families.



Building on Strengths

The initiative leveraged local resources and existing nutrition programs, integrating dairy education and voucher incentives to promote affordable, nutritious choices. Families frequently purchased whole milk, cheese, and yogurt with vouchers, selecting items for cultural relevance, nutritional benefits, and appeal to young children. Building on participants' values and priorities, the program provided tools and education that empowered families to meet their children's nutritional needs. 85% of participants expressed high satisfaction with the program.



Sustaining Success

Ongoing partnerships and future funding support the initiative's future and continued success. Plans emphasize sustainability and scalability by expanding services to more communities, providing family nutrition classes, and customizing partner resources. Insights gained will contribute to developing toolkits and advocacy efforts, empowering communities to influence policies that ensure continued access to affordable, nutritious food. Families and partners remain dedicated to promoting a culture of health, utilizing local expertise and collective action.





**Impact Over
Intent**

Impact Over Intent

**Community Health Empowerment and Equity through Collaborative Action with a
University Anchor Institution**

Viridiana Ortiz¹, David Boyns¹, Annette Besnilian¹, Sergio Frausto¹

¹California State University, Northridge

Community Context

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL) Program partnered with Cal State University Northridge (CSUN) to implement a community-driven effort in West San Fernando Valley, leveraging more than five years of local



partnerships to address racial inequities in food access and health through nutrition education, physical activity, and food demos alongside free healthy food events.

Collaborative Action

CSUN partners with healthcare clinics, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) schools, local parks, and food recovery organizations to offer food security resources, nutrition and physical activity education, food demos, and free healthy food events. For example, LAUSD schools serve as hubs



for nutrition and physical activity education, and food recovery organizations provide fresh produce at free healthy food events.

Building on Strengths

CSUN, an anchor institution, provides skilled staff, Dietetic Interns, and Bridge to the Future program scholars, ensuring cultural competence and trauma-informed delivery of CFHL programming while training emerging food leaders. This fosters community ownership and engagement. Since



October 2020, CSUN engaged 3,923 members through 951 classes, 634 demos, and 24 events that distributed 204,107 pounds of produce to 41,275 people.

Sustaining Success

CFHL sustainability is bolstered by Bridge to the Future scholars, Dietetic Interns at CSUN's Marilyn Magaram Center, and student volunteers. This university-community partnership harnesses the community's talent and passion, ensuring CFHL is ever-adaptable to local needs while cultivating a health-centric culture through the development of the next generation of nutrition and physical activity leaders and advocates.



CFHL, UCCE Kern: Cultivating Change, Gardening for Rural Students

Beatriz Rojas, MPH¹ and Andrea Castillo, MPH¹

¹CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Kern County

Community Context

CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California Cooperative Extension Kern County (CFHL, UCCE Kern) partnered with Semitropic Elementary School District in Wasco, California, serving TK-8th grade students. Semitropic Elementary supports rural student well-being through nutrition and gardening initiatives.



Collaborative Action

The CFHL, UCCE Kern educator conducted weekly classes for Kindergarten, 1st, and 3rd grades, and later expanded to 4th and 6-8th grades using the Teams with Intergenerational Support (TWIGS) curriculum, reaching over 122 students by the end of the 2023-2024 school year. Students learned about MyPlate, physical activity, and food origins, promoting healthier choices with hands-on experiences.



Building on Strengths

With the support of CFHL, UCCE Kern, Semitropic Elementary has revitalized a once-dormant garden on campus which had been unused for over six years. Thanks to the superintendent's support and generous donations totaling \$1,500 secured by teachers, the garden serves as a hands-on learning environment for TWIGS lessons and empowers students to cultivate essential skills in teamwork, responsibility, and sustainable gardening practices.



Sustaining Success

CFHL, UCCE Kern County and Semitropic Elementary plan to expand nutrition, physical activity, and gardening education for all students and families. “My students are starting to connect healthy foods, like fruits and vegetables, to the community they come from, which is very exciting now that we have our garden going.”

– 3rd Grade Teacher



Impact Over Intent

CFHL, UCCE Kern: From Seed to Sprout Gardening Education for Migrant Children

Beatriz Rojas, MPH¹ and Andrea Castillo, MPH¹

¹CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Kern County

Community Context

CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California Cooperative Extension Kern (CFHL, UCCE Kern), partnered with the Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo (CAPSLO), which operates five migrant Head Start centers serving families experiencing low-income in the agricultural communities of Arvin, Lamont, Wasco, and Delano.



Collaborative Action

During FFY 2024, 19 teacher extenders were trained in the Coordinated Approach to Child Health Early Care Education (CATCH ECE) curriculum and delivered activities benefitting preschool children. CFHL, UCCE Kern educators provided Go, Glow, Grow lessons in English and Spanish and introduced the Teams with Intergenerational Support (TWIGS) curriculum, teaching students about nutritious foods and gardening.



Building on Strengths

Two preschool sites began cultivating gardens with 85 children learning about seeds, sowing seeds, and nurturing seedlings as they grow. This hands-on experience helps students understand where food comes from while fostering responsibility and appreciation for nature. CFHL, UCCE and CAPSLO aim to expand this initiative to all five sites by FFY 2025.



Sustaining Success

CFHL, UCCE Kern County and CAPSLO will continue to expand nutrition, physical activity, and gardening education for all students and families.

“The garden will be a perfect place for our preschoolers to explore nature, learn responsibility, and watch their efforts bloom.” – Teacher



Ella Elementary Serves Up "Cool"inary Cooking Club with Community Support

Veronica Van Cleave-Hunt¹ and Melissa Ussery¹

¹CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Butte Cluster

Community Context

Ella Elementary School (home of the Ella-Gators!) is in Yuba County, about 40 miles north of Sacramento. In the '23-'24 school year, CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California Cooperative Extension (CFHL, UCCE), in collaboration with the Sutter-Yuba 4-H Program, trained Ella Elementary School's after school program coordinators to use the Cooking Academy Curriculum to develop the "Cool"inary Cooking Club for 60 students in 2nd - 6th grade.



Collaborative Action

Joanna Leal, from Ella Elementary School's After School Program led the development of the "Cool"inary Club. She said, "If it wasn't for community partnerships, we could not have had this huge success. Thank you to the Marysville Police Department who donated about \$250 to help us purchase some materials, and the Yuba Sutter Food Bank who allowed us to shop at the food bank for the ingredients needed for our creations once a month."

Building on Strengths

The After School Program Educators observed the impact their club had on their students and their school's community.

“We love the positive feedback from parents, their kids are more involved at home in the kitchen. They come home from school excited and share what they did. It is rewarding to see how our once small idea of creating a cooking club has made an impact [on] not only our school, but our community.” – After School Program Educator



Sustaining Success

Ella Elementary School received an endowment award of \$10,000 for their "Cool"inary Club and School Garden. In the 2025 school year, they are making plans with CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Butte Cluster Community Education Specialist, Adam Yandel, to incorporate their garden produce into the recipes that they make.

The image features a light purple background with a central graphic of overlapping, rounded purple shapes in various shades. A thin, dark purple line loops around these shapes, creating a decorative frame. The text is centered within the darkest purple area.

Starting With Strengths

Starting With Strengths

**Working Together to Integrate Physical Activity Curriculum in Early Childcare Centers in
South Los Angeles**

Jennifer Clark MS, RDN¹ and Emily Menzer MPH²

¹Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, ²The Children's Collective Inc.

Community Context

South Los Angeles (LA) is a strong community historically affected by disinvestment through systemic racism and economic inequality. This leads to a lack of access to nutritious foods and safe outdoor areas to exercise. Through the CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL) grant, the Los Angeles County Public Health Department partnered with The Children’s Collective, Inc. (TCCI), which hires preschool teachers directly from the South LA community.



Collaborative Action

Identifying physical activity as a priority, the teachers and CFHL team at TCCI worked together to provide the children with CATCH Early Childhood (CEC). The CFHL team trained health educators on the CEC curriculum and became trainers themselves. Teachers were able to increase physical activity levels while having fun, but also encourage the development of gross motor functions, the ability to following instructions, and teamwork.



Building on Strengths

All TCCI teachers are state-certified and committed to helping kids grow healthy bodies and minds. CEC safely increases physical activity throughout the children’s day, while having fun. In 2024, TCCI teachers conducted 667 CEC classes across eight early childhood education centers. Since the community of children and caretakers is predominantly Spanish-speaking, teachers offer instruction in both English and Spanish.



Sustaining Success

With such successful CEC implementation, TCCI leadership incorporated CEC into the organization’s overall curriculum plan in September 2021, ensuring CEC lessons will continue to be taught by invested teachers, who are at the heart of this sustainability. Teachers have championed the curriculum and conduct lessons beyond those required weekly lessons, solidifying physical activity as an essential part of their classroom’s culture.



Alpine County Health & Wellness Coalition Pilots ParkRx Program

Jenna McCarthy¹, Sadie Gastelum¹, Marissa Flanders¹

¹Community Service Solutions

Community Context

Alpine County is one of the smallest counties in California, yet it is home to numerous scenic trails. Inspired by these surroundings and community feedback, the Alpine County Health & Wellness Coalitions piloted a ParkRx program from May-September 2024. The program supported the County Health Improvement Plan and responded to Hung A Lel Ti residents' feedback on a community survey.



Collaborative Action

Behavioral Health Services (BHS), Alpine County Trails Association (ATA), the Alpine County Library (ACL), and Community Services Solutions (CSS), Alpine County's CFHL Local Implementing Agency, planned the program and each led 1-2 events. To help plan the program, the committee distributed a needs assessment and held a listening session for the Hung A Lel Ti community.



Building on Strengths

BHS offered survey incentives and transportation, ATA Provided trail information, and ACL offered a Library of Things with outdoor recreational gear. CSS facilitated meetings and social media, designed assessments and promotional materials, and provided Rethink Your Drink stations at events.



Sustaining Success

Four of the five events took place at different trails in Alpine County, and the final event was a StoryWalk held outside by the ACL in downtown Markleeville. Approximately 30 residents participated, and we heard positive comments at each event. Partners also noted the collaboration helped us better understand how we might support each other with future programming.



Bishop Paiute Tribe Food Sovereignty Program

Raina Aide¹ and Masha Bluestein¹

¹Bishop Paiute Tribe Food Sovereignty Program

Community Context

With the Bishop Paiute Tribe's (BPT) land being reduced from boundaryless to just 875 acres today, one of our biggest challenges has been to maintain sovereign, traditional, and healthy food systems. As a result, Tribal members have lost traditional food systems knowledge, become unfamiliar with many types of produce, and deal with health issues like diabetes and heart disease.



Collaborative Action

The BPT has a Food Sovereignty Program (FSP). At FSP, partnerships with our Food Advisory Board, Bishop Indian Education Center, and contracted dietician help us gather direction, support, & action for our food sovereignty goals. Our bi-monthly volunteer days activate our



gardens and get them flourishing for produce distribution. Food is distributed to our Elders center, community markets, and eventually our own CSA boxes!

Building on Strengths

One of our most loved programs is the Talley Farms CSA box distribution, but we've gotten feedback that many unfamiliar veggies get tossed. To build on this program and make healthy food more approachable, FSP introduced recipe cards and food samples highlighting produce



from the box, which we hand out with the boxes. We've also launched a Cooking Up Healthy Choices cooking class series at the Bishop Indian Education Center!

Sustaining Success

To make food production sustainable year-round, we converted our inactive aquaponics greenhouse into a seed starting area, utilize our new high tunnel greenhouse to grow food in the winter months, and plan to build a drying shed for preserving produce and herbs. These assets



not only allow us to grow year-round but also allow us to host educational programming year-round - winterizing, seed starting, and cooking workshops have all been a hit!

Building Nourished Communities Through The Nutrition Pantry Program

Leah Quinn¹

¹Leah's Pantry

Community Context

The Nutrition Pantry Program (NPP) is a Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) intervention designed to integrate best practices for healthy food distributions with a trauma-informed approach. NPP leverages the strengths of local networks to build stronger connections between food distribution sites and CFHL local implementing agencies. To date, over 159 distribution sites across 40 California counties have participated in the program.



Collaborative Action

CFHL implementers are trained to guide their sites through the NPP process, which involves collaborating with key stakeholders, local agencies, and trusted community partners to strengthen and expand local networks. By working closely with each site, implementers help build strong, supportive relationships, customizing the process to meet the specific needs of the community. Whether that means providing culturally relevant foods or creating a welcoming and dignified space for food security, the focus is always on responding to the unique needs of the community.



Building on Strengths

Implementers begin by conducting a Needs Assessment to identify each pantry's existing strengths. As one implementer shared, "NPP provides a framework that helps pantries meet client needs. It's adaptable to diverse communities, broadening our reach into vulnerable areas." With its flexible work plan



and rollout process, NPP meets sites where they are, celebrates their unique strengths, and supports the implementation of PSE initiatives that foster the pantry's ongoing growth and sustainability

Sustaining Success

The Nutrition Pantry Program empowers pantries to take ownership of changes, supporting long-term, sustainable impact. By placing decision-making in the hands of the site, NPP fosters pride and commitment to future improvements. As one implementer noted, "They take pride in their work and appreciate that we're not adding extra work, but creating lasting, manageable changes." A maintenance plan ensures continued support through yearly check-ins for three years after program completion.



**Building Trust and Empowering Native Communities: The CHC and OTR Partnership
Model**

Noelle DiSano¹

¹Center for Healthy Communities

Community Context

The partnership between Chico State's Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) and the Office of Tribal Relations (OTR) serves as a model for culturally respectful collaboration with Native communities. Emphasizing trust,



dialogue, and community-led decision-making, this partnership centers Indigenous voices, respects Tribal sovereignty, and tailors CalFresh Healthy Living programs to each Tribe's unique needs.

Collaborative Action

Through this partnership, CHC and OTR prioritize listening to Tribal elders and leaders, hosting forums and meaningful discussions to align programs with community priorities. This shift in decision-making power is evident in



a recent initiative at Susanville Indian Rancheria, where elders requested a community garden to improve access to fresh produce. CHC and OTR supported this effort, reflecting their commitment to community-driven action.

Building on Strengths

The collaboration emphasizes trauma-informed care, acknowledging the historical context and unique needs of Native communities. By honoring Tribal traditions and providing respectful, culturally relevant support, CHC



fosters programs that reflect Tribal resilience and autonomy. Together, CHC and OTR offer a responsive model, ensuring wellness initiatives are community-driven and rooted in trust and respect.

Sustaining Success

Through ongoing listening sessions, forums, and collaboration, CHC and OTR ensure wellness initiatives align with Tribal values. This model of respectful, responsive engagement fosters trust and promotes programs shaped by the communities they serve, showcasing a framework for culturally sensitive support that prioritizes Indigenous leadership and autonomy.



Food Access Community Solutions for Promoting Food Security

Tiffany Greer¹ and Michelle Harris¹

¹Center for Healthy Communities

Community Context

Hidden opportunities for growth and innovation are often found in times of crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented levels of food insecurity to Northern California, exposing gaps in existing support systems and the importance of CalFresh Food benefits. Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL) and CalFresh Outreach recognized the need to respond.



Collaborative Action

TRINITY COUNTY

NRHIAV KEV PAB NROG ZAUB MOV

<p>CHAW NYOB POST MOUNTAIN – FOUR CORNERS TRINITY PINES</p> <p>NYOB RAU LUB 12 HLIS NTUJ TIM 18 (DECEMBER 18) THAUM 12:00 TAV SU MUS TXOG 1:00 TAV SU</p> <p>CHAW NYOB TRINITY PINES-FOUR CORNERS YUAV MUAJ KEV PAB ZAUB MOV NTXIV RAU HNUB 1/15, 2/19, THIAB 3/19</p>	<p>CHAW NYOB HAYFORK – FAIRGROUNDS HAYFORK</p> <p>NYOB RAU LUB 12 HLIS NTUJ TIM 11 (DECEMBER 11) THAUM 11:00 SAWV NTXOV MUS TXOG 12:30 TAV SU</p> <p>CHAW NYOB HAYFORK FAIRGROUNDS YUAV MUAJ KEV PAB ZAUB MOV NTXIV RAU HNUB 1/8, 2/12, THIAB 3/12</p>
---	---

Koj puas xav tias koj yuav tau txais nyiaj muas noj (CalFresh)?

Peb muaj neeg uas yuav pab tau koj ua koj li ntaub ntawv ntawm Trinity Health & Human Services.
Hu tau rau peb ntawm tus xov tooj (530) 623-1265. Nias tus lej '3'

Tau Pab Nyiaj los ntawm USDA SNAP, yog lub chaw muab kev pab thiab chaw ua haujlwm uas muaj vaj huam sib luag. Mus xyuas CalFreshHealthyLiving.org rau cov tsaw yim bxog fab kev noj qab haus huv.

With support and feedback from participants and partners, this project has been expanded to address the specific needs of veterans, tribal communities, and older adults, along with removing barriers such as language, with translations in Hmong and Spanish. Flyers are posted weekly on social media, on CHC's website and shared monthly with over 300 partners.

Building on Strengths

Leveraging counties robust network of food distribution sites, CHC created an ongoing list of local food resources, to guide people to nearby food sites in their county. The CHC teams worked together to design up to date easy-to-read flyers for nine California counties. Flyers evolved into a valuable tool, helping residents navigate local resources by day and location and providing linkages to CalFresh application support.



Sustaining Success

Get Connected With
Local Food Sites in your County
 SCAN THE QR CODES BELOW FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Local Food Resources



www.chcfoodassistance.org/local-food-resources

CalFresh Outreach



www.chcfoodassistance.org/calfresh





The created networks continue to work together to ensure efficient communication and strong systems to meet the individual needs of the counties being served. Through collaboration and creativity, CHC teams as well as local partners, not only addressed immediate hunger needs but also laid the groundwork for long-term, sustainable solutions that promote food security for all.

From Youth Participation to Youth Leadership: Active Transportation in South El Monte

Jennifer Clark MS, RDN¹ and Diane Velez, MPH²

¹Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

²Active SGV

Community Context

South El Monte (SEM) is largely designated for industrial use, reflecting its manufacturing strength. One way to mitigate pollution in the area while encouraging physical activity is through active transportation policy. The Los Angeles County Public Health Department partnered with ActiveSGV (ASGV) to advance this approach via Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR), engaging local youth to work toward active transportation.



Collaborative Action

ASGV has worked in SEM to advance active transportation and has built good rapport with city officials and community members. The implementation of the YPAR framework further expanded existing partnerships by creating a network of community leaders. Youth Ambassadors represent a vital community asset, sharing their lived experience, data, and guidance to the community changes they want to see.



Building on Strengths

Through a Summer Fellowship Program, four high schoolers became Youth Ambassadors to learn about the importance of active transportation and how it shapes healthier communities. ASGV incorporated the Community Futures, Community Lores



curriculum's themes of research, data analysis, and communication into the program and centered discussions on how Youth Ambassador voices have value in shaping innovative infrastructure ideas.

Sustaining Success

ASGV will continue engaging youth in shaping their community utilizing YPAR to move towards community-led policy change and infrastructure improvements and promoting a cultural shift for safer streets.



Beyond CalFresh Healthy Living-funded work, ASGV is committed to improving and

sustaining a healthier and safer SEM and prioritizing YPAR work so that ASGV can engage more students and their families in shaping the future of their city.

Innovative Recognition Program Uplifts California Community Leaders in Child Wellness

Carolyn Rider¹, Nicole Vital¹, Reka Vasicsek¹, Summer Cortez¹, Amanda Linares¹, Janice Kao¹,
Sridharshi Hewawitharana¹, Miranda Westfall Brown¹

¹Nutrition Policy Institute

Community Context

Leaders in Eating and Activity Practices (LEAP) awards recognize California Department of Public Health –CalFresh Healthy Living partner school, early childhood, & out-of-school time programs for excellence in wellness practices. Comprehensive wellness practices earn a gold, silver, or bronze tier award. Programs also earn badges for best practices in nutrition, physical activity, gardens, family engagement, & breastfeeding support



Collaborative Action

How does LEAP foster collaborative action? By leveraging evaluation data collected by sites via Site-Level Assessment Questionnaires (SLAQ). Through facilitating partnerships between sites and local health departments to identify opportunities for advancing policy, systems, and environmental interventions (PSE). With a joint approach that supports on-the-ground implementation of evidence-based practices to improve children's health.



Building on Strengths

LEAP builds on strengths at multiple levels. LEAP celebrates sites and aims to motivate them to increase impact: 333 awards (86% of sites) in 2023 and 285 (83% of sites) in 2024. It supports Local Health Departments (LHDs). One said, "Thank you for sharing this! This will be super helpful to help identify new/expanded areas for working with schools."



And LEAP strengthens collaborative program planning between LHDs and sites by synthesizing and benchmarking assessment data.

Sustaining Success

In 2023, two-thirds of surveyed LHDs used LEAP's digital promotions package to spotlight their community's health interventions. LHDs used LEAP data to strengthen partnerships and identify new PSE opportunities. This annual program will continue to uplift community assets to promote healthy behaviors among children, illustrating the role of partnerships in fostering sustainable change.



**Transforming Playgrounds: Fostering Physical Activity and Emotional Well-Being With
Stencils**

Kaitlyn Jerrett¹ and Garnette Moore¹

¹Northern Valley Catholic Social Service

Community Context

In Shasta County, lower physical activity rates among youth compared to the state average highlight a need to support movement and holistic well-being. At PACE Academy, a K-8 school located in Redding, students thrive with social-emotional support systems provided by the school. School staff expressed a need to integrate opportunities for physical activity to further support student emotional regulation.



Collaborative Action

The Northern Valley Catholic Social Service (NVCSS) CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL) team worked closely with PACE staff and volunteers to create playground stencils. Community input ensured that the stencils promoted physical activity and provided a safe, engaging way for students to practice self-regulation and emotional grounding.



Building on Strengths

This initiative leveraged the creativity of PACE Academy and the dedication of local volunteers to transform existing blacktop areas. By combining playful designs with sensory pathways, the stencils support both physical activity and emotional well-being in a way that builds on existing school strengths.



Sustaining Success

To ensure lasting impact, CalFresh Healthy Living provides the school with staff training to integrate stencils into daily routines and maintain their use. Regular updates and ongoing collaboration with PACE leadership will expand the project's reach, ensuring it continues to meet the evolving needs of students and staff.



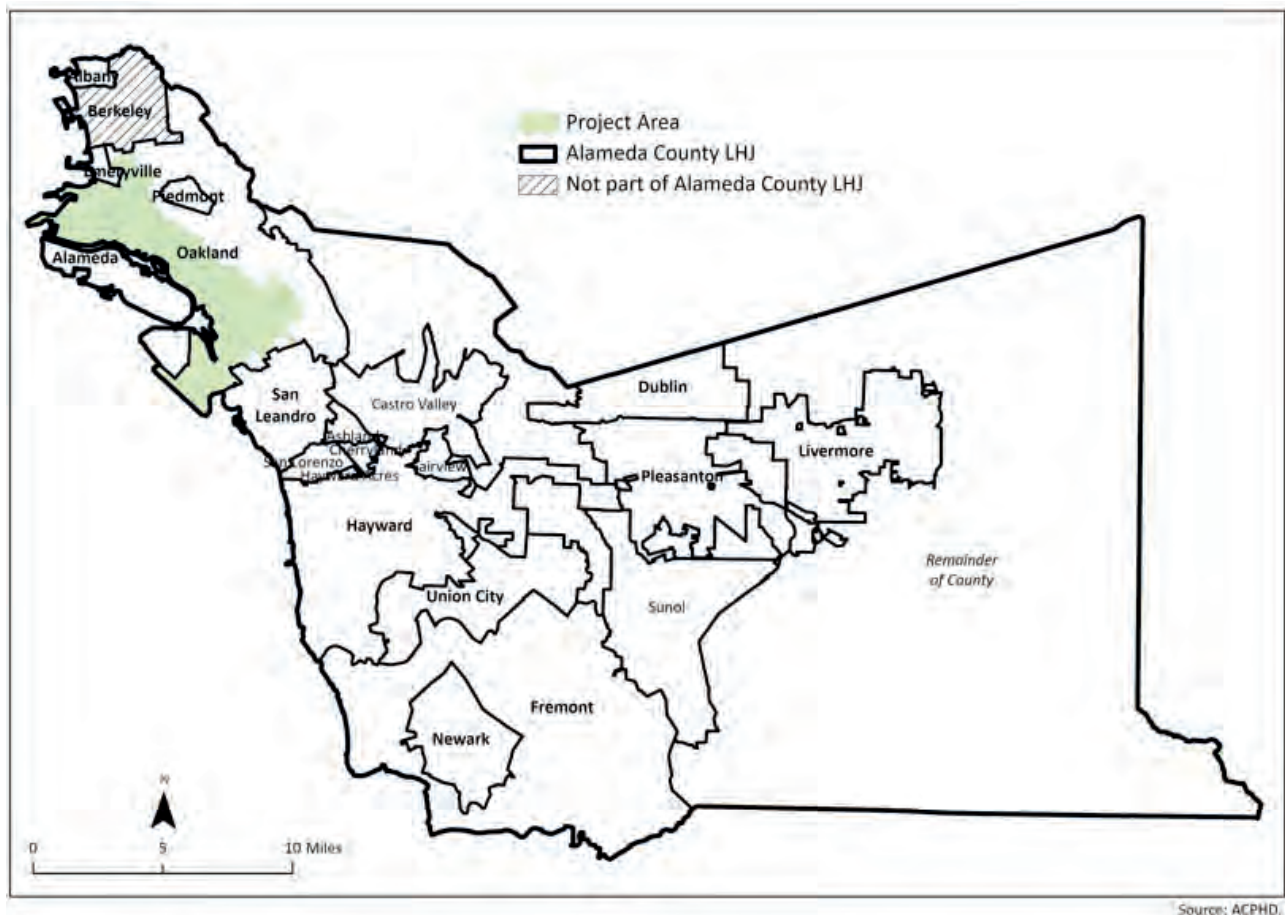
Oakland Making Moves

Rachel P. Paras¹

¹Alameda County Public Health Department Nutrition Services Program

Community Context

Oakland Making Moves (OMM), a safe routes active transportation program for families and older adults at thirteen affordable housing site partners. OMM sites are in “Disadvantaged Communities” by the California Transportation Commission where chronic disease and environmental impacts are prevalent. Alameda County Nutrition Services program has had history of a positive relationship with the housing developers and communities.



Collaborative Action

Partnerships with local non-profits ensure volunteers and interns represent the racial, ethnic, & generational diversity of residents. In response to requests for mental health supports due to

community violence, OMM explores wellness partnerships with community based organization's Cultura y Bienestar for Spanish-speaking residents & Lao Family Services for the Asian community. This holistic approach supports physical activity and the mental and emotional health supporting the whole person.



Building on Strengths

OMM CalFresh Healthy Living Staff collaborate with housing site Resident Services Coordinators and Community Advisors (self-identified resident leaders) on program design, conduct walk audits, and assess community needs. Building on local community knowledge, the team regularly revisits what would make the walking and rolling activities and encouragement events purposeful, and where community assets and health resources are located and what to do next.



Sustaining Success

Site coordinators and resident leaders have been working with public health team this last year to lean into opportunities. Resident leaders and site coordinators are (re)connected to local resources and new healthy living partners. Resident site coordinators are



identifying funding streams to host walking and rolling and healthy living activities. Safety committee established at housing site is a best, community-based practice for other sites to model. All sites will be supported by CalFresh Health Living future campaigns.

Stanislaus County Convenes Partners to Initiate Park Rx Program

Melissa Delgadillo¹ and Erika Gomez-Rodriguez¹

¹Stanislaus County Health Services Agency

Community Context

Stanislaus County's CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL) team has created a multi-sectorial partnership to boost utilization of community parks by initiating a Park Rx program. The team focused its efforts in Oregon Park, located in a low-income neighborhood of Modesto. Oregon Park has new and updated amenities that provide the residents of the neighborhood with more opportunities for physical activity. Despite this, the park has been underutilized.



Collaborative Action

The CFHL team laid the cornerstone of its Park Rx program, with the mission to generate multi-sectorial partnerships spanning from recreation departments to healthcare and community-based organizations to bring more activities to parks as a conduit for healthy, active lifestyles. The CFHL team reached out to several partners to glean information about park utilization.



Building on Strengths

The team conducted key informant interviews (KIIs) with staff from Stanislaus County Parks and Recreation, Modesto Parks and Recreation, Stanislaus County Police Activities League, and the Tuolumne River Trust. In the KIIs, the interviewees shared insightful information about the parks in the communities they serve. Based on these interviews, Oregon Park was selected as the focal point of the Park Rx program.



Sustaining Success

CFHL brought these partners together to leverage resources to start a community garden at Oregon Park. Currently, there are 9 planter boxes at the community garden that will be filled soon. CFHL continues to work with organizations and volunteers to sustain the garden and bring more activities to Oregon Park, including organized physical activity opportunities. CFHL hopes to include neighboring clinics in this project soon.



A Program and a Garden Grows at La Casa Ujima

Karen Maggio¹

¹CFHL, UCCE Contra Costa County

Community Context

La Casa Ujima, a residential treatment program for mothers located in Martinez, CA, reached out to CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California Cooperative Extension (CFHL, UCCE) Contra Costa County in September 2023 to provide nutrition and gardening education



to its residents. The site had a large sunny backyard with ideal weather and picnic tables suitable for an outdoor classroom. “Ujima” means collective work and responsibility.

Collaborative Action

CFHL, UCCE partnered with Contra Costa Master Gardeners (MG) in October 2023 to demonstrate how to build a garden using Grow Boxes supplied by CFHL, UCCE and the Teams with Intergenerational Support (TWIGS) curriculum on soil preparation and garden



design. Twice monthly programming began in October and included Plan, Shop, Save, Cook, MyPlate, Fresh From the Garden and adapted TWIGS curriculum.

Building on Strengths

The first harvest was in November 2023. Residents created a salad and were amazed that what they had planted in October was ready to harvest and eat in just a month. Over the course of the year, they planted and harvested fava beans, tomatoes, strawberries, peppers, carrots, lettuce, kale, chard, beets, sunflowers, radishes, potatoes, peas and turnips for use in their shared kitchen.



Sustaining Success

After one year working in partnership with Contra Costa MG and La Casa Ujima, CFHL, UCCE programming reached over 200 mothers. The garden now has a captain and team assignments that are part of the ongoing La Casa Ujima program. Residents take pride in planting and providing something of value to pass on to the next group. The garden and program continues to grow in 2025.



“I love learning!” – Resident.

**Empowering Student Voices Through Photovoice: Redesigning and Reviving Lincoln
Elementary's School Garden**

Elizabeth Lopez¹ and Irene Padasas¹

¹CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Fresno and Madera Counties

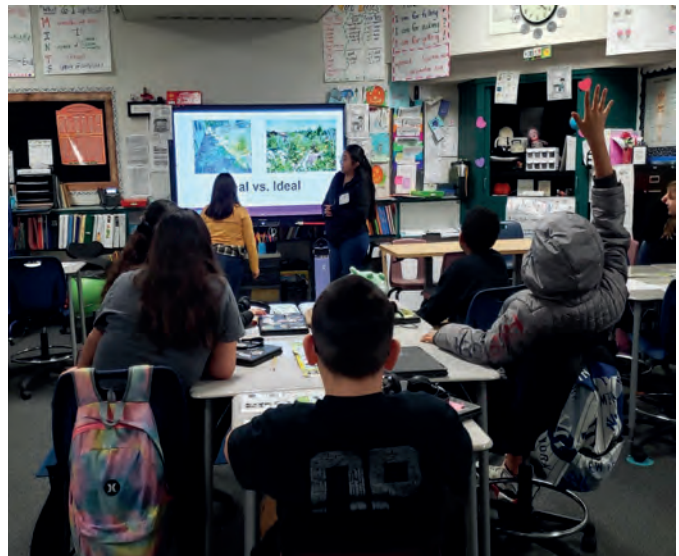
Community Context

Ms. Daily's Special Day Class (SDC) of 15 students at Lincoln Elementary School has been actively involved in CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL), UCCE gardening lessons since 2019. As the primary caretakers of the garden, the students noted that the space was in dire need of improvements – rotting beds, inconsistent watering, insufficient sunlight, and limited space to grow crops.



Collaborative Action

Seeing the students' strong dedication to the garden, CFHL, UCCE discussed with the class the opportunity to start a youth engagement project focused on redesigning and reviving the school garden. With Ms. Daily's support, the students became fully involved in executing the project. To guide their efforts, CFHL, UCCE facilitated a 6-session photovoice project with the aim of empowering the students to capture photos and narratives that reflected their initial impressions of the garden.



Building on Strengths

Using the findings from the data they collected, the students developed recommendations to improve the school garden. Their vision includes replacing the rotting



It needs a sidewalk, benches, and flowers.

We need a trashcan and a new water hose.

I will decorate the garden and there will be new rocks soon because it needs to look nice.

garden beds, fixing the water spigot, expanding the garden for optimal sunlight, adding benches, and enhancing accessibility with sidewalks. Ms. Daily and the students also applied for a grant and successfully secured \$3,000 in garden grant funding to bring the students' vision to life.

Sustaining Success

CFHL, UCCE will continue collaborating with Ms. Daily and her students to provide garden resources and youth engagement opportunities.

“We would like to use this as an opportunity to have our SDC class and our Resource Specialist Program (RSP) students work collaboratively with general education classrooms as well...and have project-based learning across all grade levels.”

– Ms. Daily



The Resource Connection and CFHL, UCCE: Fostering Early Childhood Health

Noah Cooke¹ and Mary Manning¹

¹CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Central Sierra

Community Context

The Resource Connection (TRAC) provides early childhood education services, food bank commodities, crisis intervention, and Children’s Advocacy services to the residents of Calaveras and Amador counties. TRAC early care and education program consists of six Head Start sites, two Early Head Start sites, and a home visitor program. TRAC has built a network of partners who collaborate to address critical health inequities and the evolving needs of the community.



Collaborative Action

TRAC and CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL), UCCE partnered to facilitate a comprehensive nutrition education program at 8 Early Care and Education (ECE) sites in rural Calaveras County. This intervention directly reached 124 preschool students in FFY2024 with direct education, as well as their families and learning sites through indirect education and physical activity-related PSE changes.



Building on Strengths

TRAC utilizes their network of families to share healthy living information via indirect education resources. Eight sites have increased structured physical activity using the CATCH ECE curriculum. The resulting program is a comprehensive health intervention that reaches each Head Start student in Calaveras County, as well as their families and learning sites.



Sustaining Success

Future plans for the partnership between The Resource Connection and CFHL, UCCE include a continuation of direct nutrition education with students, indirect education with families, and physical activity-related PSE efforts. The partnership will expand to include direct education with adults and families at ECE sites, focusing on intergenerational aspects of nutrition and health.



**Working Together to Integrate Physical Activity Curriculum in Early Childcare Centers in
South Los Angeles**

Jennifer Clark, MS, RDN¹ and Emily Menzer, MPH²

¹Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

²The Children's Collective Inc.

Community Context

South Los Angeles (LA) is a strong community historically affected by disinvestment through systemic racism and economic inequality, leading to lack of access to nutritious foods and safe outdoor areas to exercise. Through the CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL) grant, the Los Angeles County Public Health Department partnered with The Children’s Collective, Inc. (TCCI), which hires preschool teachers directly from the South LA community.



Collaborative Action

Identifying physical activity as a priority, the teachers and CFHL team at TCCI worked together to provide CATCH Early Childhood (CEC) to children. The CFHL team trained health educators on the CEC curriculum and became trainers themselves. Teachers were able to increase physical activity levels while having fun, but also encourage development of gross motor functions, following instructions, and teamwork.



Building on Strengths

All TCCI teachers are state-certified and committed to helping kids grow healthy bodies and healthy minds. CEC is used to safely increase physical activity throughout the day while having fun. In 2024, TCCI teachers conducted 667 CEC classes across eight different early childhood education centers. Since the community of children and caretakers is predominantly Spanish-speaking, teachers offer instruction in both English and Spanish.



Sustaining Success

With such successful CEC implementation, TCCI leadership incorporated CEC into the organization's overall curriculum plan in September 2021, ensuring CEC lessons will continue to be taught by invested teachers, who are at the heart of this sustainability. Teachers have championed the curriculum and conduct lessons beyond the required weekly lessons, solidifying physical activity as an essential part of their classroom's culture.





Journal of Trauma-Informed Community Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity

The posters in this book were created as part of the CalFresh Health Living Virtual Training week, held March 10-12, 2025, and approved by the authors for publication in *J-TICH*.