

## Poster Session: Wellness and Public Health

The Back to the Kitchen, Healthy Cooking Series Builds Community Capacity to Impact Childhood Obesity

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Learning Outcome: List five questions to explore in developing a curriculum to promote healthy cooking skill building within the at risk community, to be implemented by lay agency staff for a variety of age groups.

Background: The Registered Dietitian (RD) in a local childhood obesity prevention project, one of 44 Robert Wood Johnson Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities Grantees dedicated to building community capacity to impact obesity trends, provided leadership in the development and implementation of: *Back to the Kitchen: Healthy Cooking Series and Cooking Skills/Terminology DVD*, designed for lay agency staff use.

Methods: RD formulated project guidance questions, Leader's Guide with 10 step program planning checklist, talking points, five agendas with recipes for each section of Choose MyPlate, and evaluation tools. Community center with Dietetic Intern, piloted curriculum and developed cooking skills/terminology DVD. RD conducted presentations at coalition meetings and the Round Robin Staff Training. Follow-up survey revealed curriculum uses.

Results: Curriculum was piloted with summer program youth. All recipes and handouts were well received. Implementation costs were moderate, totaling \$175-\$250 for all five sessions. 22 individuals representing 19 agencies attended the coalition presentations and 19 individuals attended the Round Robin Staff Training. 35 curriculums were distributed. Some uses from follow-up surveys: hands-on class activities with teen parents; cooking classes through the Recreation Department; posting recipes and healthy eating ideas on information boards; tasting/distributing recipes at monthly family nights.

Conclusion: The Back to the Kitchen Healthy Cooking Series and DVD increased community's ability to promote nutrition education and healthy cooking skill building by lay agency staff.

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Teaching Gardening and Food Choices to Children Living in a Food Desert

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Learning Outcome: To identify education strategies used in a community garden program to teach children about healthy food choices and the healthy impact of garden grown fruits and vegetables.

A Food Desert is a geographic area without a mainstream grocery store, leaving an imbalance of food choices for residence. A community project, a Specialty Crop Demonstration Farm, was planted to educate and provide food choices to residents living in a Food Desert. The project was conducted from May to August. Learners included 21 African-American children, aged between six and 13, who could walk to the school site where the garden was planted. The program lasted five hours each day for four days a week. The children, community volunteers, university students, professors and Seed to Table work groups united together to plant, harvest, prepare and eat the fruits and vegetables from the garden. The school provided USDA approved daily summer meals for the children using the garden produce. University students directly mentored the children. A nutrition curriculum was developed and presented by a Dietitian, which taught the children and students about the importance of fresh produce in making healthy food choices, with weekly taste testing and recipe development. Qualitative ethnographic data was collected through journals written by the students and children. The findings reported that the Specialty Crop Demonstration Farm successfully met the goals of educating and providing food to residence living in a Food Desert. The children unanimously enjoyed tasting their vegetables in different dishes, like bean salsa, and making smoothies with kale, spinach and peanut butter. Plans to sustain this program and add gardens to other Food Deserts are ongoing and a positive venture for the entire community.

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Fostering Community Health through Community Gardens

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Learning Outcome: Translate evidenced-based research on policy, systems, and environmental change to community gardens.

Objective: Evidence based strategies through policy, system, and environmental (PSE) changes have been shown to create long-term sustainable change and support healthy behaviors. A Wellness Coalition awarded 17 organizations funding for their community garden efforts to build a culture for sustainable health through the availability of fruits and vegetables and physical activity through gardening.

Research Questions: 1) How do garden administrators perceive community gardens a) benefitting sponsoring organizations, garden volunteers, and populations served? b) meeting the aims of the garden initiative while contributing to environmental change? 2) How can wellness coalitions assist organizations in developing PSE changes through community gardens?

Methodology: A mixed method approach was utilized that included community garden site visits and a web-based post-survey.

Participants: Fifteen of the 17 (88%) community garden grant administrators of the gardens funded through the Wellness Coalition participated.

Procedures: Site visits during the growing season and a survey in the fall were used to collect data.

Major Findings: The results support community gardens as a strategy to create sustainable positive change for health. The administrators' most perceived benefits for the population the garden served included increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, fostering healthy living, and increasing willingness to try fruits and vegetables.

Conclusions: Food and nutrition experts need to collaborate with key stakeholders to translate evidenced-based research on PSE change and initiatives such as community gardens. Wellness coalitions and nutrition leaders can support community gardens by locating financial resources, developing collaborative learning opportunities for garden caretakers, and forming on-line connections among stakeholders.

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Food Ecology Promotes Efficient Use of Science Education Community Resources

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Learning Outcome: As a result of this presentation, listeners will be able to identify key components of camp development and design as well as discuss techniques for implementation.

In the summer of 2012 and 2013, FoodMASTER (Food, Math, and Science Teaching Enhancement Resource) offered two 1-week summer camps to Boys and Girls Clubs (BGC) of Pitt County, North Carolina. The focus of the camp was on food, nutrition, and gardening. At the same time, L.A.S.T (Love A Sea Turtle) and A Time for Science (ATFS) were offering a 1 week camp called UpStream-DownStream Connection (UDC) to BGC of Pitt County. Knowing the importance of community volunteers and efficient use of financial resources, program staff began working together to construct a new approach that would best utilize all organizational resources. Collectively, the organizations involved realized that the content covered in both camps could be merged through a food ecology approach. Food ecology as overarching thematic content lends itself to a wide variety of STEM (Science, Technology, Education, and Mathematics) subject matter. This allowed camp curriculum developers to draw from a wider variety of community science education resources without overburdening any one specific scientific discipline. Subsequently, all organizations involved have merged resources to create SMART Works (Science and Mathematics Aimed at Relevant Thinking Works) Summer Enrichment program for the summer of 2014. The purpose of this presentation is to illustrate the prior structure of the two camps and the new 2014 model that will merge the camps together with an overarching food ecology content approach. Researchers will also compare and contrast the features of the two models and discuss potential benefits of the new model.

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