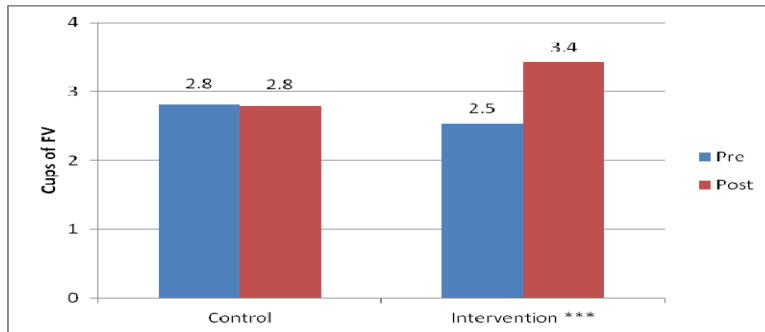


Pursuit of Healthiness: Partners of the *Network for a Healthy California* Deliver Results

Harvesting Health – California SNAP-Ed Programs Lead to Increased Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

The results are in, and they're showing a significant increase in fruit and vegetable intake among adults participating in SNAP nutrition education (SNAP-Ed) in California. California's SNAP-Ed program operates through the state public health department, local agencies such as school districts and local health departments, and the Cooperative Extension. The local agencies are conducting impact evaluation to



Change in Adult Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

assess the changes occurring as a result of their efforts. For the past few years, they've focused on evaluating nutrition and physical activity skill-building interventions with adults and students. A comparison of control versus intervention adults (N=641) showed a statistically significant increase in fruit and vegetable consumption of almost one cup (0.9) after the nutrition intervention. Broken down further, this change was an increase of 0.45 cup fruit and 0.45 cup vegetables. There were no changes in

fruit and vegetable consumption in comparison group adults, who completed the survey without participating in the nutrition intervention. Consumption of fruit and vegetables was measured before and after the intervention with the *Food Behavior Checklist (FBC)* and *Fruit and Vegetable Checklist (FVC)*.

Does one cup really matter?

MyPlate – the new dietary guidelines symbol – communicates that half of what we eat should be vegetables and fruits. So this one extra cup gets our priority population closer to meeting those guidelines and more importantly, gives them nutrition benefits that are unique to vegetables and fruits, aiding in the fight against chronic diseases and obesity.

Fruit and Vegetable Consumption in Children

Half of the *Network* partners working with children (grades 4-8) achieved significant increases in reported consumption of fruit, vegetables, or both. This includes 27 percent of partners that found statistically significant increases in fruit and vegetables, 18 percent in fruit, and 9 percent in vegetables. All partners measured consumption with the *Network Youth Survey (NYS)*, which was adapted for use by the *Network* from the School Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey.

Healthier Choices in Children

In addition to fruit and vegetable consumption, the *NYS* asks about intake of snack foods, sweets, and sugar sweetened beverages. Children participating in nutrition education reported a significant decrease in their consumption of sweets, such as cookies or cake, while comparison group children reported no change. In contrast, comparison group children reported a significant increase in consumption of sugar sweetened beverages, which was not found for the children participating in SNAP-Ed. Participation in nutrition interventions appears to have helped children to make healthier snack and beverage choices.



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Local Efforts = Statewide Results

Sierra Cascade Nutrition & Activity Consortium Embraces “Let’s Move!”

SCNAC presented Michelle Obama’s Let’s Move! Initiative to the Chico School District (CUSD) Wellness Committee in February as a vehicle for the district to partner with the city of Chico for policy change. As a result of the efforts spearheaded by Let’s Move! Chico, the following occurred:

- CUSD amended their Wellness Policy to read, “no unhealthy foods for school fundraisers shall be used”
- The Healthy Parent Pledge was sent to all district parents for the 2011-2011 academic year
- Two new “Chef in School” programs were initiated
- School gardens were planted at two additional schools
- A Garden Team Sub-Committee formed to facilitate the start-up of additional school gardens

(CA State University Chico Research Foundation)



Shasta County Schools Are Rethinking Their Drinks

The “Rethink Your Drink” campaign has highlighted the correlation between excess sugar intake and weight gain. In response, various schools in Shasta County have now eliminated chocolate flavored milk during lunch or are offering it only once per week. Schools have excluded soda during the school day and banned energy drinks from school grounds. In addition, one hundred percent fruit and vegetable smoothies are now being offered in school cafeterias at breakfast. One teacher approached the nutrition education staff asking, “Can you please make the green smoothies in my class again with kale and spinach? The students will not stop talking about them and asking if they can have them again.” (Shasta County Office of Education)



Central Coast Schools: Growing Healthy Students

Students participating in *Network* nutrition education are “paying it forward.” Not only are they reporting that they eat more vegetables and fruits in meals and snacks, they are teaching their families how to prepare and cook fresh foods in tasty and nutritious ways. Students are learning the importance of eating a variety of foods from all of the food groups. They are learning how to pay attention to serving sizes by reading the nutrition facts on packaged food they buy and helping their parents to make smarter food choices. Students are even having some impact on changing the eating habits of their siblings. One fourth grade student reported that he is running every day. He never drinks soda, only water and milk. Recently he shared that he is helping his teenage sister break a “chips addiction,” and they now run together twice a week.

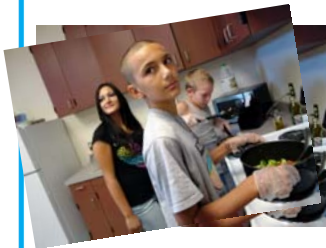
In April one parent excitedly shared that her children now **love** to eat asparagus. She continued saying that in the past she had to cut up the vegetable and hide them in rice. Now, she explained happily, they ask me to buy more asparagus because they love to eat them! What was the *Harvest of the Month* produce tasting in March? **Asparagus!** (Alisal Unified School District)



Move Over Mom – Teens Are in the Kitchen

The Teen Center is a place where the teenagers in one rural California community can go to hang out, have fun, socialize, be safe, and learn new skills. Toward that end, the Teen Center has been providing weekly cooking classes open to all teens. Taught by a volunteer, the teens learn to cook a variety of different foods, often with a limited supply of ingredients and choices (a situation that teens from low-income

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families often encounter at home). A local organic farm often donates produce for the class. On one occasion, the teens used this donated produce to cook an amazing dish using only vegetables.

Since the cooking classes have been going on, the teens have been able to come into the Teen Center and cook for themselves, unassisted. They request healthful, fresh ingredients. This is a big change from the days when all they asked for was high calorie, highly processed foods. When teens want more vegetables, you know your nutrition education program is successful! (Central Valley Health Network)

Orange County Takes a Family Approach

A group of committed Orange County moms who had been attending fitness classes at the local elementary school expressed interest in doing more for their community. They suggested making over the “Family Movie Night” to “Family Fitness Night.” This group linked with Orange County *Network* staff for support in planning this event. The *Network*’s Physical Activity Specialist mentored the moms in providing fun and age-appropriate activities as well as helping them to plan complementary nutrition education at the family-focused event, and 18 moms participated in *Network* training sessions designed to allow them to successfully lead fitness and healthy eating activities. The family fitness night event was a great success, reaching nearly 200 adults and children. Just as important as this successful event is the ongoing changes occurring at this elementary school:

- The moms who attended training are also promoting walking groups
- Several moms are leading recess activities with the elementary school students to help them reach the physical activity recommendations for children
- A couple of the moms began supervising an after school running club for the elementary students

(Orange County Community Health Care Agency)



Nutrition Education That Keeps on Giving

School-based *Network* partners are always finding ways to do more with less. As they refine their programs in schools and districts, they take their model to new qualifying sites. And they’ve found that the legacy of nutrition education classes goes beyond the new knowledge, skills, and habits participants glean in workshops. One example is in Monrovia Unified School District where a nutrition education series was offered to parents for several years. Over the past year, although the nutrition education classes weren’t offered, the nutrition program staff found many positive environmental changes were still occurring. For



example, PTA and administrative meetings featured water instead of sugar sweetened beverages and offered fruit for snacks. In addition, school site fundraising included non-food items as rewards and a few of the schools hosted jog-a-thons instead of one of their usual food-related fundraisers. And one of the best signs of new practices and attitudes in the district was observed by the new Nutrition Services director who commented at the end of the last school year that he’s never worked at a school district where school personnel favor ordering AND consuming fruit and vegetable platters over cookie platters at his catered

events. (Monrovia Unified School District)

Champions Making Change in Alameda County

Alameda County Public Health Department convenes healthy Living *Champions for Change* parent (“Champion Parents”) groups at elementary schools throughout the County. Each group focuses on nutrition education and exercise promotion and each conducts assessments to identify the pathway to improve their personal, family, school and/or community health. Some examples of the successes they have brought about:

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- At several schools in East Oakland, Champion Parents have organized themselves to form Walking Clubs that utilize the school playground for a safe environment for exercise.
- At other schools, Champion Parents have worked with school principals to find space to hold Zumba classes for parents.
- Brookfield Bridges Elementary schools now have school salad bars thanks to Champion Parents who petitioned Oakland Unified School District (OUSD). Each salad bar is managed by parent volunteers who help provide students with a daily choice of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Champion Parents at several Oakland schools are also volunteering at a new school-based produce market as a way of conveniently providing fresh fruits and vegetables for the school population and their neighborhood. (Alameda County Public Health)



Roosevelt Elementary – Assembling Health

2010-2011 was a challenging year for nutrition education due to district-wide budget cuts, lay-offs and increased classroom sizes - teachers were discouraged and overwhelmed. Despite the changes, *Network* nutrition educators found ways to incorporate nutrition education at the school sites. They chose to promote school-wide campaigns that involved all of the staff: teachers, administrators, office staff, noon aides and cafeteria workers. At Roosevelt Elementary, the school community decided on a Healthy Habit campaign with a different focus every month on topics such as breakfast, drinking unsweetened milk, healthy eating during the holidays, Rethink Your Drink, eating a rainbow, drinking water, and others. Every month the principal introduced the topic at a school-wide assembly and the site coordinator distributed information on the topic along with lesson ideas and messages for the teachers and the school staff (cafeteria workers, noon aides and office staff). Among the first changes documented was a change in snacks for staff meetings. Instead of donuts and pastries, more fruit, vegetables, bagels and yogurt were offered. This change also carried over into the principal's meetings at the District Office. Best of all were the positive changes among the students such as an increase in the consumption of white milk and water facilitated by cafeteria staff encouragement and by making water available in the cafeteria. (Los Angeles County Office of Education)



The Face of a Movement



In every corner of the nation, people are recognizing that health and wellness can be improved and health care expenditures reduced by making healthy eating and active living easy and accessible. There is an increasing recognition that in order to reverse obesity trends and diet-related chronic diseases, we need to change both the food environment *and* nutrition knowledge and skills. In California, we've grown a movement that is addressing these twin needs by involving parents, students, and educators, recruiting leaders and champions, building partnerships and programs, and putting healthy food and physical activity on every agenda

to make change happen. For more information on this brief or to reach one of the contributors, contact CAN-Act (530-759-0875).

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