

HEALTH LEADERSHIP NETWORK
Farm to School Meeting Notes
Wednesday, April 6, 2011

In attendance: Tammy Alakszay, AmeriCorps; Cindy Leonard, Cobb Elementary School; Lorrie Gray, Hunger Task Force; Marla Peterson, Konocti Unified; Susan Jen and Bonnie Schall, HLN.

HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT TRAINING: Cindy attended a two-day training that was designed for school personnel and community partners. It provided tools to support an increase of fresh fruits and vegetables on school campuses through fun, skill building activities, explored sources for grant funding, and nutrition education in schools and school gardens. One of the activities that Cindy participated in was a hands-on pot making class using juice cans and newspapers. The training offered many ideas, but one in particular caught Cindy's attention was having First Graders start pumpkin seeds in small pots. The teacher would make prior arrangements with a farmer to allow the First Graders plant their pumpkin plants in a garden before school closed for the summer. And in the fall the children would return to the farmer's garden and harvest their pumpkins.

Day two involved with improving the school lunch program through the Nation-wide Healthy School Environment. The overview of the national movement consisted of Healthier US School Challenge, Fresh Fruits & Vegetables, and Know Your Farmer Know Your Food. Cindy indicated the Fresh Fruits & Vegetable Grant application was extended for those who want to participate. Marla stated the unreasonable extensive mandatory Survey piece in the grant was the key factor as to why many recipients declined the grant.

Fresh Fruits & Vegetables promotion is being used by Sysco, the largest foodservice distributor in North America. Sysco is currently providing region-specific local growers for their produce whenever possible, which indicates the value of direct-marketed fruits and vegetables is increasing.

The Know Your Farmer Know Your Food campaign is a USDA-wide effort to create new economic opportunities by better connecting consumers with local producers. It is also the start of a national conversation about the importance of understanding where your food comes from and how it gets to your plate. This is a USDA-wide effort to create new economic opportunities by better connecting consumers with local producers. At the training there was a discussion on a networking program similar to the "speed dating" concept that connects farmers to buyers in a round-robin approach. Primarily, the practice involves multiple people that gather in a single space in order to exchange information. The farmers and buyers greet each other in a series of brief exchanges during a set period of time. During an interaction, farmers share the products they can make available and the buyers share their specific product needs. Networkers are generally seeking exposure to new markets and/or to expand their pool of vendors.

The farm-to-school program started about 15 years ago, and now there are 2,000 programs in more than 40 states. Getting kids to eat farm fresh vegetables is still a challenge, but San Diego Unified kitchen's personnel started handing out farmer trading cards to students featuring the local farmer of the month. For more information on the trading cards idea go to:

www.sandi.net/20451072011452577/Blog/browse.asp?a=398&BMDRN=2000&BCOB=0&c=6862

Cindy concluded her report with the Cobb School Garden Club Work & Pay Days will be April 10th and May 1st from 10 am – 2 pm. Susan indicated she would like pictures and/or a video for promoting the school gardens.

SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM UPDATE: Marla reported that there will only be a three week summer food program this summer at Burns Valley School. She indicated that last year's compliance issues along with the budget cuts were the underlying factor that the program would be limited. Butte County Office of Education is sponsoring the 3-week program utilizing three of her cooks from Konocti School District. Marla is hopeful that some of the churches in the area will pick up a portion of the food program to provide breakfast along with a summer reading program.

Marla indicated there will be a need for someone to take care of the school's garden. Lorrie stated she would check on the status of their garden.

SCHOOL GARDENS UPDATE: Lorrie reported that Burns Valley Elementary now has a garden where students will start planting this spring.

Lorrie announced that the California Hunger Action Coalition will be holding a Hunger Action Day on the north steps of the Capitol on May 17th. She stated that each May, hundreds of anti-hunger advocates from all over the state meet in Sacramento to educate their legislators about hunger and support anti-hunger legislation. She indicated several people from Lake County are attending and there is a car pool group if anyone was interested in participating in the rally.

RETHINK YOUR DRINK CAMPAIGN: Tammy reported that California WIC is conducting a coordinated statewide "Rethink Your Drink" education campaign from May through August 2011, focusing on the contribution of sweetened beverages to increasing rates of overweight and obesity. WIC will provide information and practice to help participants decrease consumption of sweetened drinks and increase water consumption.

The afterschool programs are using the TAP slogan, "From the **tap**, it's a snap!" to increase water consumption.

Marla indicated there was a resistance to offer bottled water on school campuses due to the maintenance cost of cleaning up empty bottles and factor of recycling, which needs to be hauled away from the schools.

The idea of students having a new source of water on campus is the hydration stations that allow students to refill bottles with cool, filtered water. There is a possibility of grant money available to fund the hydration stations, which are hooked up to the school's main water source. A filtration system removes sediment, chlorine taste and odor. The system is operated by a sensor and releases

water when an empty bottle is placed under the nozzle. A fundraising idea came about to encourage use of the stations might be where the schools' parent/teacher groups could sell reusable stainless steel bottles.

CATCH UPDATE: Tammy reported the CATCH after school programs are going well. Tammy stated that she provides the program for a couple of teachers from Upper Lake Elementary. Students are fascinated about the CATCH activities, which is making a difference in their nutrition learning and physical activity. Tammy stated that she continues to reach the teachers who are curious about the program. After reviewing the program with them, they realize that it is a fun and easy program to keep up their classrooms. She indicated that five sites are doing the program every day. Susan indicated the need for public awareness by capturing the schools that are participating in the program in a video graph of CATCH in Action! She encouraged Tammy to make this awareness happen.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.