SUCCESES

- 68% increase in youth participation
- Successful collaboration with the local Health Department to submit a joint plan.
- 3,847 program participants received nutrition education in Yolo County.
- Began expansion into West Sacramento
- Extenders teach 25 hours of nutrition per year on average.

IMPACTS

Youth

- Forty-eight sites sampled different foods; 61% of students said they would ask for the food they sampled at home.
- “...kids loved them (edamame beans) and all of them asked for second servings!” - School teacher

Adult

- After classes, 45% of adult participants noted an increased likelihood of using a grocery list when shopping.
- After classes, 40% of adult participants noted an increased likelihood to use the Nutrition Facts label when choosing food.
- “We really appreciate the value you bring to our program. The clients learn valuable concepts and always enjoy the food as well. We look forward to another class in the near future.” - Chef and Nutrition Educator at an adult rehabilitation center

Yolo County

IMPROVING CALIFORNIA’S HEALTH THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED NUTRITION EDUCATION

County Statement:

Yolo County’s population is roughly 204,000, of which 22% are children under the age of 18. Nearly 11% of the population is unemployed with 19% of residents living in poverty and 10% of households receiving Food Stamp/SNAP benefits. There are 28,671 students, with approximately 37% considered overweight or obese. 15,712 students (54.8%) are eligible for free or reduced priced meals. (US Census, census.gov; Kidsdata, kidsdata.org; California Department of Education, www.cde.ca.gov/). In 2011, an estimated 24.4% of Yolo children lived in food insecure households (First 5 Community Needs Assessment).

Serving the Residents of Yolo County

The program serves 75 sites including schools, daycare centers, after school programs, community based organizations, and public housing. Yolo County had 3,847 direct participants receiving a total of nearly 5,823 hours of nutrition education from 237 extenders. The youth approach is to deliver nutrition education through the use of pre-prepped kits with individual and group bilingual activities that are grade-level appropriate and meet academic standards. With adults, lessons are delivered through bilingual skill-based discussions and activities that provide new life skills that encourage healthy food resource management skills and child feeding skills. An afterschool program director stated, “Our program participants look forward to learning nutritional facts, fun exercise routines and health tips each week. The highly engaging and interactive nature of the learning material combined with how easy it is to implement each lesson truly makes the nutrition education component a must have for our program.”

Serving California Agriculture

The program collaborates with the Agricultural Commissioner, the Food Bank, the Health Department and others to promote locally grown seasonal produce and to increase consumption of these foods in the home. The program hosted a nutrition booth at the Yolo County Food Bank’s Free Kids Farmers Markets, teaching students about the produce they would be taking home for free so it was more likely to be eaten. The program participated in the Ag Connection Day sponsored by the local 4-H program and Yolo County Farm Bureau. Over 2,000 local elementary students and teachers visited booths staffed by local agencies promoting awareness in the areas of health, nutrition, and local agriculture.

Serving Education

The focus of the program is to promote family wellness by educating the teacher, the child, and the parents with the same nutrition messages. By implementing curricula, teachers understand and give nutrition messages to their students which are then taken home to their families through recipes and parent newsletters, and the same messages are then reinforced at parent classes. A first grade teacher stated, “I found the nutrition unit I taught to be very easy and enjoyable to teach. The materials supplied in the unit are easy to execute with little to no prep. Each lesson is well written, easy to follow, and contains clear objectives. To conclude, my students enjoyed the lessons as much as I did; they would ask daily if there was going to be a nutrition lesson at the end of the day or not.”

Building Partnerships

- Food Bank of Yolo: Kids Farmers Markets
- First 5 Yolo: parent nutrition education classes, promoting “ReThink Your Drink” campaign
- Local sites: implementing nutrition education lessons
- YMCA sites: annual teacher nutrition education trainings
- Yolo County Dept. of Employment and Social Services: promoting CalFresh program and enrollment
- Yolo County 4-H and Master Gardener Programs: nutrition enhancements, Ag Connection Day
- Yolo County Ag Department: collaborating to develop and deliver commodity-based lessons across Yolo County as part of the local Farm to School program
- Yolo County Health Department: collaborating to maximize dissemination of materials to residents