

IMPROVING MEAL QUALITY AND NUTRITION EDUCATION IN SEATTLE PARKS AND RECREATION TEEN PROGRAMS

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Background

- Seattle Parks and Recreation (“Parks”) = municipal governmental organization which “provide[s] safe and welcoming opportunities to play, learn, contemplate, and build community”
- Provides a large number of after-school and late-night programming for teens
 - Most involve meals
 - Some involve teen cooking classes
- Although meals and classes already offer opportunities for teens to improve dietary habits, room for improvement
- The teen programs face the following issues:
 - A lack of curriculum in Parks’ teen cooking classes
 - A small budget for teen meal programs
 - A lack of systematization in the procurement of foods for the teen meal programs
 - A lack of efficiency in the preparation of food for the Teen Late Night program



Objectives

- Improve the capacity of teens to cook healthy meals for themselves.
- Obtain outside funding for teen meals to improve meal quality
- Start a path toward forming a sustainable sourcing system for Parks.
- Improve efficiency and lower costs of the Late Night program.
- Collect a set of healthy recipes for teens



Actions

- Conducted independent research on nutrition education curricula, teen-friendly recipes, and sources of donated food
- Interviewed numerous staff members of Parks as well as partnering organizations
- Attended cooking sessions at two community centers



- Reviewed a vast number of documents about Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
 - CACFP is a federal meal-funding program
 - Documents culled from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI—the state institution that decides who receives CACFP funding) website
- Completed a cost-benefit analysis for CACFP enrollment
- Attended a CACFP training in September 2012
- Contacted many Parks staff members via email and telephone
- Looked up nutrition information for recipes

Deliverables

- Baseline cooking guide
 - Comprehensive set of topics that should be covered in any Parks cooking class, for teens and other populations
- 8-week Teen Cooking Curriculum
- Each lesson covers a different cooking skill and integrates nutrition information
- To be used in Top Teen Chef Competition and other cooking classes for teens

- Began enrolling Parks in CACFP for 3 of its Teen Late Night sites (CACFP application nearly complete)
- Sourcing document
 - Potential sources of donated foods
 - Needs of Parks meal programs
- Catering manual: Instructs Teen Late Night staff in how to implement catering
- Teen Cookbook: 30 healthy recipes that appeal to teens



Implication

Helped Parks become a leader in empowering teens to make healthy choices

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