RX for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables through Community Supported Agriculture

2018 Evaluation Report

The Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force partnered with the Family Medicine Residency of Idaho, Peaceful Belly Farm, Global Gardens and Eat Smart Idaho to prescribe 16 weekly boxes of fresh fruits and vegetables. This is commonly known as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares. From May through October, families received weekly boxes of locally grown, fresh, pesticide-free produce at no cost.

To be eligible to participate in the Rx for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables program, families screened positive for food insecurity in a Family Medicine Residency of Idaho clinic, a household member was diagnosed with a comorbid health condition, and a pre-survey was completed. The comorbid health conditions included: hypertension, obesity, diabetes, or failure to thrive.

Clinic and Partner Feedback about Rx for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables:
- Assists clinicians to meet basic needs of a patient in order to better meet other health needs
- Connects the healthcare system with public and community health initiatives
- Removes financial barrier to purchasing healthy foods, and increases participant familiarity with fresh produce and how to prepare it
- Increases revenue for local food producers

Stats from 2018 season:
- 16 households
- 71 unique participants
- Ages: Newborn to 54
- Participant Languages: Russian (1 family), Spanish (4 families), and English (11 families)

Participants were reached from across the Treasure Valley:
- Meridian: 54%
- Nampa: 23%
- Boise: 14%
- Remaining from Caldwell and Homedale

Participants received:
- Access to 16 weekly boxes of fresh, local produce
- A reusable bag of kitchen tools including: potato peeler, measuring cups, measuring spoons, cutting board, a reusable water bottle, nutritional calendar, and a meat thermometer
- Weekly recipes and cooking tips
- $10 cash for completing the post-survey

Participants were also provided info on the following resources:
- Food Stamp application
- Utility assistance and weatherization
- Food literacy materials
- Double-up Food Bucks
- Mobile Farmers’ Markets
- Emergency Food
- Transportation
Program Success:

- Participants reported healthy outcomes including weight loss, increased energy, diabetes control and improved moods.
- 100% of participants reported confidence in maintaining healthy eating and lifestyle changes after this program.
- On average, families tried five new vegetables: eggplant, kale, zucchini, Japanese peppers, melons, fava beans, radishes, turnips, beets, squash, spaghetti squash, collard greens, Swiss chard, beet greens, peppers, and basil.
- Language Line was used to ensure patient equity in access to resources.
- Average increase was 1 cup per day or 7 cups a week per person.

Areas to Improve:

- Review and strengthen pre- and post-surveys for program evaluation
- Increase access by developing a year-round partnership with produce vendors
- Explore videos for seasonal recipes and food preparation
- Increase knowledge on what fruits and vegetables were being picked up each week in advance

Future Plans:

- Expand program into new screening settings
- Increase access to program year-round

86% of families reported an increase in consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables

Contact: info@idahohunger.org Visit: idahohunger.org