



HEALTHY YOUTH PROGRAM

RECAP FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2020-21
SEPTEMBER THROUGH MARCH

DEBRA'S HEALING KITCHEN
DHK WELLNESS STRATEGIES INC

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Project Summary - 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR

The Healthy Youth Program will create a fun and engaging learning environment for high school students per school year, to learn the benefits of how a healthier diet will significantly impact their overall mental and physical health. Students will participate in an interactive curriculum that will educate them on food, healthy cooking, and consuming foods for optimum physical and emotional health and wellness.

WHAT WE LEARNED

At the beginning of each semester session, students were asked basic questions about how diet impacts health. Many were concerned that parents and other close relatives were unhealthy. There was limited knowledge regarding the positive impact of fresh fruits and vegetables in the prevention of chronic diseases. Most were willing to try different vegetables and vegetarian recipes. In many instances, they requested second and third servings after the cooking demonstrations. Healthy breakfast recommendations were well received, which included fresh fruits. During the last cooking demonstration class in March 2020, students picked collard greens from the school garden. The cooking demonstration taught them how to lightly season and maintain the nutritional value of the greens. This was the most well received recipe. For many students, this was the first time they were introduced to collard greens.

These are some of the initial findings during the 2019-2020 school year

- A number of students wanted to improve their ability to focus
- It was a task to get the students to focus and complete the pre and post surveys
- Several students had emotional concerns
- Many did not eat breakfast
- There was a limited knowledge about how fresh produce could improve their health
- Students did not understand the negative impact of junk foods and sugary drinks on their physical and emotional health

- Over half of the class had problems sleeping or lacked energy
- After a voluntary blood pressure and glucose screening, approximately a quarter of the students had borderline readings based on the report by the registered nurses

Positive Impact at the End of the 2019-2020

- Students reported better sleeping habits and more energy
- There was some weight loss reported
- Several students made a commitment to either stop eating or decrease consuming junk foods
- Students increased drinking water and decreased sugary drinks
- More students began reading product food labels
- Students requested more cooking demonstrations and more food availability during class
- Three students were hired part-time to help cultivate the school garden during the summer
- Students and their families living within walking distance received fresh vegetables from the garden and from DHK Wellness Strategy during the COVID-19 quarantine
- The teachers in the program changed their diets as well as their families

PROJECTED IMPACT

Moving forward, the Healthy Youth Project has forged relationships with 8 schools in the Oak Cliff area of Dallas in addition to Lincoln High School which is projected to impact over 800 students in the upcoming school sessions. DHK Wellness Strategies is seeking to increase its funding in order to expand the curriculum and garden developments. Adjustments are being made to provide virtual instruction for Lincoln High students as well as the new schools with limited in class instruction to comply with the Covid-19 safety protocols.

Testimonials

Thank you very much for inspiring my students to make healthy food options. The little things count. I saw a few of my students making better food choices, for example two of my students brought some frozen fruit and apple juice to school so that I could show them how to make smoothies. I was so amazed by their determination to make better choices. These students would come to class eating hot chips and sugary drinks for breakfast. All thanks to Mrs. Haynes these students are making better choices for a healthier life. As a personal confession, I have made changes in my home for my family and myself. I have made a few recipes from Mrs. Haynes cookbook and my family had no idea that they had eaten meatless tacos and chili. Thank you Mrs. Haynes for the inspiration that you have given my students and myself to live a healthier life. - Paula Lewis, Culinary Program Instructor

I wanted to say I learned so much from you. When you left Lincoln, I took home so much information that has helped me transform my life, health and look. I learned about eating clean, along with using different types of seasonings to improve my quality of life. For instance, I use ginger in everything to help reduce inflammation. I use turmeric to help with our memory and blood vessels. I spread this information to my family, friends and students. Also to my students. Since we met I have lost a total of 78 lbs...and still losing. Thank you so much for the information you give and your dedication to the cause. - Charlene Freeman, MA. Ed.

It was good having you come and teach us to be healthy. I started doing what you told me to do, which was to go to sleep earlier and stay off the games and get a good night's sleep. I did well on the STAAR test and I was focused. I drank some of that tea you gave us. I was up the whole test and I think I did good. Thanks for coming and taking your time out of your life to come. HOPE YOU COME BACK!!" ~ Brandon, High School Freshman

Thank you, Mrs. Haynes, for the great food you cooked for us. You helped us very much with our health. From now on, I'm going to eat healthy and build up my protein. This summer I'm going to work out a lot and eat more vegetables. I'm very grateful for your speeches and health guidance. I hope to see you again. ~ Kyshon, High School Junior

Mrs. Haynes, thank you for coming in and trying to help change our life. You really taught me that the way I eat has an impact on my life. Thank you for the gift card to a healthy food store and teaching us how to do stuff. I learned that snacks have a lot of white sugar and hot cheetos cause people to have heart issues. I stopped eating snacks with white sugar and stuff. I want to be healthy. I don't want to get sick trying to eat all those sweets and stuff. - Sheliah, High School Junior