



Healthier San Joaquin County Community Assessment 2011

HOW WE'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

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HOW WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

CareVan

In June of 2010 “Marie” became unemployed and among her many hurdles was her inability to afford to pay for private health insurance. Marie accessed the Dorothy L. Jones Family Resource Center and was made aware of the free services provided by St. Joseph’s Medical Center’s CareVan.

The CareVan is a 40-foot mobile health clinic that provides free health services to people in the Stockton area who do not have health insurance or access to primary care. Medical services include: screenings, health education, referral services, medical diagnoses, treatment, pharmacy and testing. The CareVan is staffed with physicians, nurses, an administrative staff person, and an interpreter.



*Photograph Courtesy of
St. Joseph’s Medical Center*

The CareVan treats acute problems such as fever, earache, infections (including upper respiratory infections), sore throat and other illnesses as well as chronic problems such as allergies, high blood pressure, diabetes and joint pain. If the problem can’t be treated at the CareVan or requires ongoing treatment, the mobile clinic staff will refer the patient to a community physician or to one of the area’s many excellent medical facilities.

When Marie became ill last year she was diagnosed as pre-diabetic and was told she had high blood pressure. The staff at CareVan suggested Marie attend Diabetes Basics to a Healthy Life, one of the many classes offered by St. Joseph’s at their various partner locations. It was at this class that Marie learned what it meant to be pre-diabetic and came to understand the importance of exercise and proper portion control. She now has a Diabetic Care Plan which consists of a personalized menu Marie follows to keep herself healthy. Marie also has a primary health care provider now and her provider is impressed with her healthy lifestyle changes that have resulted in lower blood pressure and cholesterol.

Marie is thankful for the support she received from the instructors, St. Joseph’s Medical Center staff, the CareVan, and Dorothy L. Jones Family Resource Center. She plans to continue her involvement with St. Joseph’s Medical Center and will attend the St. Joseph’s Medical Center’s Coping with Diabetes Support Group.

For more information or questions about CareVan services, contact (209) 461-3471 or e-mail Arline.Delacruz002@chw.edu.

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Dorothy L. Jones Family Resource Center

In south Stockton, the Dorothy L. Jones Family Resource Center (FRC) grew out of neighborhood concerns identified through organizing efforts led by congregants of the Open Door House of Prayer Church. As a response to health care and safety concerns identified during early public needs assessments, the Dorothy L. Jones center has purposely focused efforts on physical and mental health, well-being and neighborhood safety since its inception more than ten years ago.

The Dorothy L. Jones FRC's approach to transforming the health of the community starts with individual families. "If you don't have a healthy family, you can't have a healthy community," says Amelia Adams, Senior Deputy Director of Community Partnership for Families (CPF), the group who established and has operated a network of five family resource centers over the last decade to assist low-income and high-risk families in underserved neighborhoods.

The Dorothy L. Jones FRC engages individuals—both young and old—in making individual changes to elicit change on a larger level. A group of young leaders working out of the FRC under the name the Anti-Obesity Krew, or A-OK, have made impressive changes in a neighborhood widely known for blight and crime, abandoned vehicles, poorly maintained public spaces, vandalism, and obesity. To ensure that children have safe places to play, A-OK members spoke with policymakers about the number of dogs roaming the streets. They also adopted a park and are working with the community to ensure its upkeep. Members recently began working on a campaign to educate residents about the health dangers of drinking soda, Gatorade and sugary juices, beverages widely available in their neighborhood. To inform people about the connection between sugar-sweetened beverages and obesity, A-OK is developing brochures, creating public service announcements and encouraging elementary school children to choose water or no added sugar juices.

In addition to mobilizing the youth, the center engages elderly residents to take their health in their own hands by offering them the opportunity to exercise on a regular basis and become healthier along the way. The center has worked to fight the obesity epidemic by addressing the limited availability of fresh fruits and vegetables at existing neighborhood outlets under their work with the Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program (CCROPP). Changes at a small corner store in the neighborhood indicate the positive influence of the work. Not only did the produce area improve, but there was also a significant decrease in outdoor signs advertising tobacco and unhealthy beverages.

The Dorothy L. Jones FRC has also worked to increase awareness to local decision makers regarding the need for policy and systems change to improve the social environment surrounding food in southeast Stockton. As a testament to their work, the City of Stockton proclaimed September 2010 as Childhood Obesity Awareness Month.

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Family Wellness Program

Funded by First 5 of San Joaquin County, El Concilio's Family Wellness Program strives to empower the Hispanic community by helping its members to improve the quality of their lives and the lives of their children by providing them with comprehensive health and developmental screenings and referrals, health education, and group parent meetings.

Since its inception in July 2010, the Family Wellness Program has served approximately 450 families with children 0-5 from Stockton, Lodi, French Camp, Lathrop, and Manteca. By June 30, 2011, the program expects to serve 600 families.

Family Wellness Program staff is trained to use an effective, age-appropriate health curriculum from the University of California Cooperative Extension in Stockton. The expectation is that a healthier lifestyle from an early age can prevent future medical challenges and increase a child's ability to be successful in learning environments.

Program staff reported that client families are demonstrating healthier practices. Families that typically drank sugar filled juice and soft drinks are choosing water instead. Families are also more likely to read food labels, less likely to purchase unhealthy foods, and are using the food pyramid as a guide when planning "balanced meals."

Lorena participated in the program along with her 4-year-old daughter Glenda, who was both overweight and struggled with asthma. After their six-week participation in the program, Glenda had lost weight and her asthma symptoms had greatly improved.

Lorena now sets aside exercise time and joins in when her children race up and down the stairs. Lorena said that after learning about the amount of sugar in soft drinks, Glenda began to reprimand her father, who is diabetic, for drinking "too much soda." Glenda has embraced eating healthier foods, even discouraging her sister from eating large quantities of potato chips. When asked what kinds of healthy food she now eats, Glenda couldn't remember what it was called but said, "the kind that make my eyes sparkle and my hair shine," referring to carrots.

Azucena also participated in the program with her two-year-old son David, who, at the time, did not like fruits or vegetables nor spoke much. After the six-week program, David not only enjoyed eating fruits and vegetables, but made his mother very happy when he asked for a banana on his own. By the end of the program, David was also able to name the colors of many fruits and vegetables.

To contact the Family Wellness Program call (209)644-2600 or visit www.elconcilio.org.



Photograph courtesy of El Concilio

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First 5 San Joaquin

Children's health and school readiness levels improve when they have healthy lifestyles and habits that promote nutrition and physical activity. Through a partnership with the University of California Cooperative Extension, First 5 provides funding to community agencies for home visiting programs. The goal of the home visits are to improve health and well-being outcomes for children and families in over sixty-five school attendance areas throughout the county. Using trained Health Educators, First 5 San Joaquin provides research-based curricula to increase parent knowledge and promote healthy lifestyles and habits.

Overall, parents are reporting that they have seen a change in their children's eating habits, as well as a greater awareness of what they're eating. Some specific examples of success seen by the Health Educators include:

- A mother of a two-year old whose husband is deployed in Afghanistan stated that she is more aware of nutrition labels and now offers her son more fruits and vegetables.
- A mother of a preschool child commented that she previously wasn't aware of how many servings of vegetables and fruits her child should eat in a day. She has changed family food menus and has become more physically active.
- One young child who was a constant soda drinker, began drinking milk and lost 15 pounds.
- Another young expectant mother was sleeping until noon and reported no physical activity. Once the Health Educator visited her, she began to walk with her husband and began eating a diet that included folic acid.
- Another family made the healthy commitment to walk 5 days a week for 30 minutes after dinner.
- One mother said that her child refused to eat birthday cake because it had too much sugar and that he wanted to eat apples or carrots instead!

First 5 San Joaquin exists to serve and improve the community through our children. First 5 works in partnership with agencies and organizations under contract, and fosters the active participation of parents, care-givers, educators, and community members. Together, we develop programs benefiting our children, ages 0 to 5 years old.

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Sutter Tracy Healthy Connections Resource Center

Sutter Tracy Healthy Connections Resource Center has been providing assistance to the greater Tracy community for the past six years. The resource and referral services provided are tailored to meet the identified needs of the community which are established from the Healthier San Joaquin County Community Assessment. As the economy continues to produce an increasing unemployment rate, the need to improve access to health care becomes more predominate. Therefore, in addition to the standard programs and services provided by the resource center, the improvement of health care access has become a major focus.

Ongoing programs of the resource center include health insurance enrollment assistance, Mommy & Me support group, Parent & Me playgroups, parenting classes, case management, cancer support services, prescription assistance (PAPrx) and resource referral for any personal need. As a department of Sutter Tracy Community Hospital, the resource center has developed a streamlined referral process with other hospital departments to assist uninsured patients with continuum of care. This process helps ensure that patients are provided with the needed health and social service assistance after their hospital visit. Through this process, 100% of the individuals referred to the resource center from the Emergency and Case Management Departments have received follow up services and several of those referrals have resulted in some great success stories.

One example is 57-year-old “Robert,” referred to the resource center by the emergency department. Robert is one of many who fall through the cracks of the current social service system. His employer went out of business leaving him dependent on unemployment, but most importantly out of medical insurance to assist him in managing his severe hypertension and Type I Diabetes. As a client of the resource center Robert was introduced to resources that he was not previously aware existed. He was referred to the Tracy Free Clinic for follow-up care along with ongoing medical attention and new prescriptions for his medications. Healthy Connections also provided resources for employment, diabetes support, and free prostate screening. Due to his income level, Robert qualified for the patient assistance programs (PAPrx) for his medications. The resource center assisted with completing all the applications and enrolling him to receive his life saving medications for just \$5 for a three month supply, and continues to provide support as needed to make sure he does not run out of his medicine. Robert’s medical conditions are stable, and although he continues to search for work in this difficult economy, he is comforted in knowing that his health and well-being needs are being met. Robert is grateful in knowing that he always has a place to turn for additional support.



In 2010, Sutter Tracy Healthy Connections met the needs of 1,769 local households. Through continuous building of partnerships and collaborations, the resource center strengthens its ability to provide services to the underserved community. The tireless efforts of the resource center staff are perfectly summarized by its mission statement; “to strengthen families’ ability to make healthy choices for themselves, to care for family members in need of support, and to promote the well-being of the community.”

For more information on Sutter Tracy Healthy Connections Resource Center visit www.suttertracy.org/resourcecenter.

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Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program provides free income tax preparation services to underserved San Joaquin County residents, including individuals with limited-English skills, the elderly and disabled, and families with incomes of less than \$54,000.

In partnership with the Internal Revenue Service, VITA has helped thousands of San Joaquin residents file their income taxes over the past eight years. In the last tax season alone, 2,515 individuals received free assistance to secure their tax refunds, bringing more that \$2.6 million dollars back to the local economy.



Photograph courtesy of the Community Partnership for Families

The benefits of the VITA program extend beyond the individuals and families that take advantage of the service available to them. As the income tax refunds are spent in San Joaquin County, they spur sales for local businesses, create needed jobs, pay new wages, and bring in tax revenue to boost the economy in meaningful ways.

The VITA Program helps families to secure a financial boost that many of them then utilize in their quest to lead healthier, more stable lives. A significant number of individuals and families served by the agency over the years have and continue to utilize their refunds (an average of \$3,036 in 2010) in responsible and highly advantageous ways. VITA also provides financial literacy

workshops where families are encouraged to use their income tax refunds to meet basic needs such as food and housing, purchase insurance, secure needed health and dental check-ups, pay off credit card debt, and establish savings and checking accounts. “We want them to invest this money in their future versus blowing it,” said Phyllis Grupe, Board Chair of Community Partnership for Families (CPF), the group who established VITA in San Joaquin County.

CPF is a collaborative organization representing neighborhood groups, faith-based organizations, schools, businesses, and public and private health agencies. The agency’s mission is to create strong families and neighborhoods by supporting families to build on their own strengths and become self-sufficient. One focus of the agency is to build financially independent and stable families that are well prepared to build financial futures for themselves and their children, and thus reducing their reliance on government services.