Powerful People: Building Leadership for Healthier Communities in California’s Central Valley

8TH ANNUAL CHILDHOOD OBESITY CONFERENCE – SAN DIEGO, CA

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Acknowledgements

*Powerful People* was developed by:

![Cultiva de Salud Logo]

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About *Cultiva La Salud*

- Work in eight counties of California’s Central Valley
- Dedicated to creating healthier environments
- Our efforts center around environmental, policy and systems change
- Core areas: Improving access to healthy food/beverages; improving access to physical activity opportunities; strengthening community leadership development
Goals & Objectives

At the end of this presentation, you will be able to:

• Gain a deeper understanding of how advocacy and community leadership are a catalyst for change
• Learn the components of an effective community leadership model that can be used to create healthier environments
• Discuss the tools used in planning and training participants to advocate
• Identify non-traditional partnerships that are essential in making this work a success
• Understand how this work leads to collective impact
• Learn about best-practices and also key challenges
Why Community Leadership?
Leadership makes positive things happen.
Central Valley issues

• Experiences dire social and health inequities

• Small, impoverished, isolated communities

• Unincorporated towns with no voice, easily overlooked and under-resourced

• Low tax base “justifies” minimal county services
About “Powerful People”

- Increases participants capacity to advocate for environmental, policy and systems changes within food and physical activity environments
- Based on a “bottom up approach”
- Established under framework of PSE and HEAL but can be adapted to other issue
- 12 session training ; 2-hr sessions
- Target audience: emerging grassroots community leaders
- Target communities: low-income, rural and communities of color
Methodology

• Trained nearly 300 community leaders to date
• Real-life experiential training in English & Spanish
• Project- specific
• Expert speakers
• Homework
• Train the trainer program
• Can serve as the framework for other community issues
How did we engage community

• **Focused on places where parents are already involved**
  ◦ For example: schools, afterschool programs, Migrant Program, Head Start, community-serving organizations, community centers, churches, etc.

• **Asked two critical questions to help begin conversation and relationship with community**
  ◦ How easy or difficult is it for you and your family to access healthy foods and beverages?
  ◦ How easy or difficult is it for you and your family to be physically active?
Overview of Program

Local government, media advocacy, what is policy, systems and environmental change, building consensus, assets and challenges, organizing meetings, working with decision makers, building your case, creating allies, evaluating your work, sustaining your efforts
How does this fit in with collective impact?
Building Partnerships for Change
Evaluation & Findings

Evaluation Components:
- Cross-site evaluation
- Case studies
- Participatory evaluation

Strategies:
- Parks and recreation
- Farm's markets
- Convenience stores
- Street design standards and improvements
- Nutrition standards in child care settings
- Physical activity standards in child care settings
- Joint use of recreation facilities
- Safe routes to school
- Zoning
- Comprehensive planning
- Grocery stores
- Nutrition assistance
- Gardens/greenhouses

Methods:
- Policy assessment
- Cost assessment
- Environmental audits
- Diac observation
- Photos/videos

Participation:
- Subsets of community partnerships working on these strategies
- HHHC Community Dashboard
- Group model building
- Surveillance/GIS
- Interviews/focus groups
- Partnership capacity survey

All community partnerships

May, 2011
Evaluation & Findings

- Participants gained skills and knowledge about:
  - Obesity and how to prevent it
  - Community building and organizing skills and experience
  - How institutions and political systems work, and how to navigate them in the context of organizing for policy change
  - Communication and media skills

- Leaders also built their self-confidence and built up a sense of community morale and demonstrated the ability to participate in the local planning process.

- Powerful People leadership development program functions as a vital pillar of obesity-prevention work

- Leadership training may be integral to achieving environmental policy change in communities like those in the Central Valley
Improving School Food Environments

Before

After
School Gardens
School Farm Stands

Locations:

- Hidahl Elementary
- Caswell Elementary
- La Rosa Elementary
- Sinclear Elementary
- Cesar Chávez Middle School
- Whitmore Chárter Elementary
Other Regional Successes
Improving Access to Water in Schools
Lessons Learned

• Experience some retention with participation
• Difficult to engage in multiple languages at same time
• Challenging to keep community leaders engaged in homework opportunities
• Ongoing capacity building after the completion of program is challenging
Resources

More information and a copy of the Introduction and Session 1 of the Powerful People curriculum can be found online at: http://www.ccropp.org/Leadership_Development.html

For more information, call (559) 498-0870 or send an email to powerfulpeople@ccropp.org.
Contact

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Thank You!