

Federally-Recognized Tribes Extension Program
2008 HIGHLIGHTS

FRTEP UNIT: Nevada

PROGRAM AREA (Ex. Agriculture, Nutrition etc.): Nutrition and Horticulture

PROGRAM TITLE: Veggies for Kids

ISSUE(S) ADDRESSED: Native American children have a greater risk for obesity, attendant development of diabetes, and other chronic diseases, than any other ethnic group. Findings from the Strong Heart Study and related studies show that, in Native Americans, intakes of vegetables and fruits are significantly less than recommended, variety is limited, and use of traditional foods – derived largely from plant sources, fish and lean wild game – is waning. It is recognized that exposures in youth can help shape food preferences later in life. Awareness of the health benefits of traditional foods, promotion of their consumption and subsistence or supplementary vegetable gardening are other methods cited to promote the desired intake of vegetables and fruits recommended in the Dietary Guidelines 2005 and USDA's MyPyramid food guide.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: The target audience for the Veggies for Kids program is 60 second and third grade students at two Nevada schools having a high percentage of Native American students, one in Wadsworth (Washoe County) and one in Schurz (Mineral County). This program addresses the nutrition needs identified above and that of childhood obesity. Project goals are to 1) increase awareness of and exposure to a variety of vegetables and fruits, including traditional Native American varieties via classroom nutrition lessons and a school wide fruit tasting event, 2) provide an introduction to plant growing with in-class" gardening" experiences, and 3) engage the parents through take home assignments and newsletters.



PROGRAM IMPACT: In the last year the program resulted in 32 contact hours of nutrition instruction, reaching 59 students. 250 students and 25 teachers participated in the school wide fruit tasting event. Pre- and post-test data was collected on 57 students. Preliminary data analysis showed an improvement in recognition and identification of the MyPyramid food groups, identification of selected vegetables, and increased preference (from baseline to post-testing) for selected vegetables. Statistical analysis for significance is in progress. Response to the program from the participating teacher, principals and school food service staff was positive and has enabled continuation of the program. A second year curriculum is being developed.

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