Dialogue4Health Webinar: Addressing Obesity In The Latino Community Through Community-based Advocacy In Baldwin Park

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Rosa Soto, Regional Director
California Center for Public Health Advocacy
Our Mission: To raise awareness about critical public health issues and to mobilize communities to establish effective state and local policies.

Our Vision: A California of communities without health disparities, where physical, social, and economic conditions nurture the health of all.

Our Strategy: To empower community members to be agents of change by creating an environment where making the healthy choice is the easy choice.
San Gabriel Valley
Baldwin Park – 15 miles east of Downtown Los Angeles
Case Study: Baldwin Park, California
Creating a Healthy Community

Demographics:
- Total Population: 78,747
- Latino: 78.7%
- Median Age: 26.9

Percentage of Population By Age:
- 0-14yrs: 29.7%
- 15-24yrs: 17.1%
- Total > 18 yrs: 35%

*2000 US Census Data*
Challenges

- Built out community - Minimal green space per capita
- Language barriers
- Lower socioeconomic status than other areas in LA County & CA
- Freeway congestion - bad air quality
- Limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables in corner stores
- Walkability and bikeability challenges
Creating People on the Move (POTM)

**Vision:** Improve the food and physical activity environments for school-age children and create momentum for widespread changes in policy and practices that contribute to the rising rates of childhood obesity.

**Goal:** To reduce disparities in obesity and diabetes among school-aged children by improving the food and physical environment in Baldwin Park.

The People on the Move was funded by The California Endowment to implement the Healthy Eating, *Active Communities* (HEAC) Initiative.
POTM Developed Systems of Shared Leadership

• Ability to bring community members into contact with various sectors and to invest and develop a long-term resident and youth engagement strategy

• Community representation at the People on the Move and city meetings developed community based mechanisms for implementing funding, developing systems change, policy adoption and cross-sector collaboration
People on the Move: Connection to a Larger Vision

State and Local Policy Platform

- Partnership Building
- Policy Maker Education
- Community Mobilization
- Research
- State & Local Data
- Media Advocacy
- Expert panel Advice
Recruiting Advocates

- Community events
  - Health fairs
  - City council meetings
  - Community forums
  - Concerts in the park

- Introduction by partner organizations
  - Preschool and childcare organizations
  - Other CBO’s
  - Community Leaders
Preparing Advocates For Action

• Train Advocates – *Change Starts With Me*
  • Understand levels of advocacy
  • Knowledge of civic structure
  • Speak on behalf of an issue
  • Leadership skills
Elements For Successful Community Engagement

- Be clear about the purpose and goals of community engagement and the community to be engaged
  - What are the parameters of funding and determine whether funding supports community engagement (short-term vs. long-term)

- Learn about the community
  - Who do residents identify as the decision makers, allies and opponents?
  - How do they perceive themselves? Barriers? Opportunities?
Community Driven Data Approaches

When advocates use photographs and evaluation tools to assess the conditions and problems “from the eye of the community” to define for themselves what works and needs to be changed, they develop a deeper level of ownership and investment in the process and outcomes.

- Testimonials
- Walkability Assessments
- Crime and Safety Park Audits
- School Campus Marketing Audits
- Vending Machine Audits
- Corner store Marketing Audits
- Photovoice
- Resident and youth focus groups
Corner Store Marketing Audit

• To understand retail landscape, youth and residents, equipped with disposable cameras and paper surveys, mapped out corner stores and found 17 of them within a two mile radius of schools.

• Community Members assessed:
  • Marketing aspects (signage, product placement, cash register
  • Store products (types, quantity and quality)
  • Alcohol and tobacco placement
Prioritizing Issues
Creating Access to Healthy Food

**Lessons learned:**
- Community members and youth want to see change in their retail environments.
- Business owners often do not have the resources or support to determine customer needs and implement innovative marketing strategies.
- Store owners often were not aware of resources to create healthy floor plans, application process to participate in the WIC program, and business incentive loans available to off-set initial costs for conversion.

**Program features:**
- Customized visits with corner store owners.
- Store owner interviews.
- Customer surveys:
  - Customer needs.
  - Store conditions.
Healthy Selections Corner Store Program
Outcome: Olive Square Market

Before

After
Baldwin Park Unified School District lowered BMI scores by 8.79%.

Baldwin Park Unified School District (BPUSD) created and launched a model Physical Education/Physical Activity program throughout all grade levels and completely redesigned their nutrition program which lowered BMI scores by 8.79%.

Results were measured using data recorded through annual California FITNESSGRAM® tests.
Community-driven Efforts to overcome Barriers to Walking and Cycling

- 6 community meetings
- 2 meetings with City Council
- 2 community assessment planning meetings
- Several meeting to discuss potential changes to streets and side walks
Complete Streets Policy

• Baldwin Park city council unanimously pass “Complete Streets” policy – Aug. 17, 2011.

• Baldwin Park - first city in Southern California to pass a Complete Streets policy.

• The National Complete Streets Coalition has deemed the policy the most progressive in the nation.

• The policy creates standards and design criteria for a safe and efficient transportation system and will impact future projects and city agencies responsible for planning decisions.
Outcomes

- Launched Healthy Baldwin Park City Recognition Campaign for “Healthy Selection”
- Developed Mayor’s Workgroup to develop recognition criteria for stores and announce campaign at “Breakfast with the Mayor” with business owners
- Developed “readiness to convert” assessment of corner stores:
  - Evaluated financial stability of stores, contractual obligations, proximity to schools and impact on the community
  - Developed corner store profiles to share with owners about the demographics of their stores, customer preferences (quality, variety and food needs) and retail needs
- Received National attention - Mayor Manuel Lozano was invited to speak at the White House and White House chef came to Baldwin Park to visit to corner stores
- Reduced BMI Scores of 5th-, 7th-, and 9th-grade students by 8.79%
Policy Outcomes

- Health is included in all policies
- Healthy Teen Centers
- Nutrition standards policies
- No Smoking Ordinances
- Moratorium on Drive-thru Restaurants
- Zoning Code Update-Drive thru design standards
- Breastfeeding Accommodation
- Expanded No Smoking Ordinances
- Tobacco Retail License Fee
- Corner Store Conversion Program
- Joint-Use Agreements
- Volunteer Menu-Labeling at Restaurants
- Smoke-free multi-family housing ordinance
- Complete Streets Policies
- Safe Routes to Schools
Elected Officials and City Leadership as Advocates

Make Health *Business as Usual* through:

- Planning
- Programming
- Capital Improvements
- Infrastructure
- Business Engagement
- & Collaborations / Partnerships
To Long Term Opportunities For Growth

- Advocate parents of children ages 0-5 and childcare providers were trained to present assessment findings, policy updates, and highlight community efforts and priorities to elected officials at a local and state levels.
Takeaways

• Developing relationships on the ground builds more traction with policy makers and business community
• The resident voice is more powerful to inspire change
• Empowering advocates to identify needs and make decisions builds ownership in processes and outcomes
• Building relationships with the business community requires leveraging a strong community-base of patrons
• Investing in long-term resident and youth engagement strategies such as resident advisory boards, creates sustainability
It Takes a Village

Traditional Partners
- School Districts: Baldwin Park, Bell Gardens, El Monte
- Mexican American Opportunity Fund
- Los Angeles County Dept. of Public Health
- Hospitals: Citrus Valley, Kaiser Permanente
- City Departments:
  - Policy makers
  - Department of Parks and Recreation
  - City Planning Department
  - City Manager

Non-Traditional Partners
- Cal Safe: Pregnant Teen & New Mother program in high schools
- Women's Clubs: Huntington Park, Pico Rivera
- City of La Puente Little League
- East Valley Boys and Girls Club, La Puente
- Family Healthcare Centers of Greater Los Angeles, Inc.
Healthy Baldwin Park – Healthy Community
Q & A - Thank You!

Rosa Soto
Regional Director
California Center for Public Health Advocacy

Office: (626) 962-5900
Email: rs@publichealthadvocacy.org

www.publichealthadvocacy.org