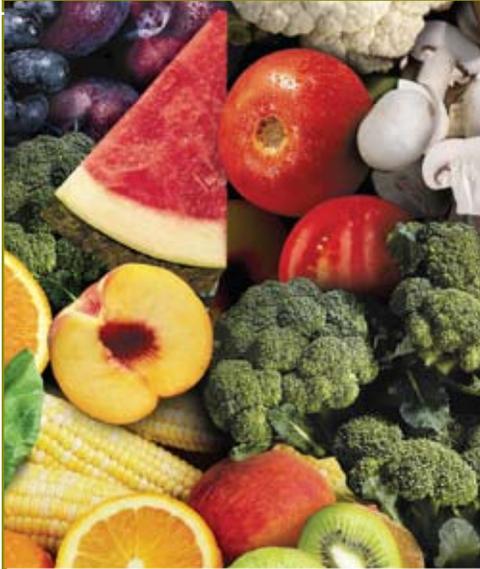


Stories from the Field: Texas



Bringing Healthy Back: Creating the Growing Community Video Series

Nothing tastes better than a succulent, ripe tomato, juicy peach, or ear of sweet corn picked the day you buy it. Faculty and students at The University of Texas School of Public Health Brownsville Regional Campus couldn't agree more. In an effort to fight the deadly complications of obesity, they gathered their troops together to develop and implement one strategy—a farmer's market loaded with fresh fruits and vegetables.

Their efforts are highlighted in one of six short obesity prevention video clips developed by the Texas Department of State Health Services' (DSHS) Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention Program (NPAOP) to help educate and inspire communities into action. The video entitled Growing Community highlights successful community strategies across the state that correspond with the six evidence-based target areas identified by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) for healthy eating and active living. The videos were first unveiled by DSHS NPAOP at its statewide Obesity Summit, where they received positive reviews. The videos were initially distributed to the 2009 Obesity Summit attendees, who were charged to be "catalysts for change" by hosting video screenings. Growing Community has already begun to inspire additional positive changes in Texas communities, such as those in Alice, Texas.

Community Spotlight — Alice, Texas: America's Next Healthiest Community

The Coastal Bend Rural Health Partnership is a 3-year initiative working to improve the health of rural communities through capacity building. The partnership targets the counties Brooks, Jim Wells, Kleberg, San Patricio and surrounding counties in South Texas.

After hosting screenings of the Growing Community series at the January 2010 Health Policy Summit held in Beeville and Alice, Texas, the Partnership incorporated the Growing Community videos into a media campaign to increase community input and engagement in the use of community design to make Alice, Texas: America's Next Healthiest Community.



National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, & Obesity



The media campaign was launched in May 2010 and includes Public Service Announcements, billboards, and print media. The Partnership is currently working with residents of Alice to determine how to use environmental change strategies to make Alice, Texas a healthier community.

Impact of the Growing Community campaign, May 2010

- 317 Growing Community DVDs have been distributed.
- Online version of the video series has been viewed 5,507 times.
- 78 stakeholders have reported hosting community screenings of the video series reaching a total of 2,232 Texans.

How Did They Do It?

“We worked with a social marketing media company to develop, film, and edit the videos and develop an outreach strategy that included statewide screenings with key stakeholders and coalitions, followed by facilitated discussions for initiating local-level change” says Mary Starboard, Program Manager for Texas DSHS NPAOP. “We then, researched and identified community examples in Texas of policy and environmental change related to nutrition and physical activity.... We had a network of partners statewide and staff that extend into all regions of Texas, which was instrumental in identifying examples to highlight in each video.”

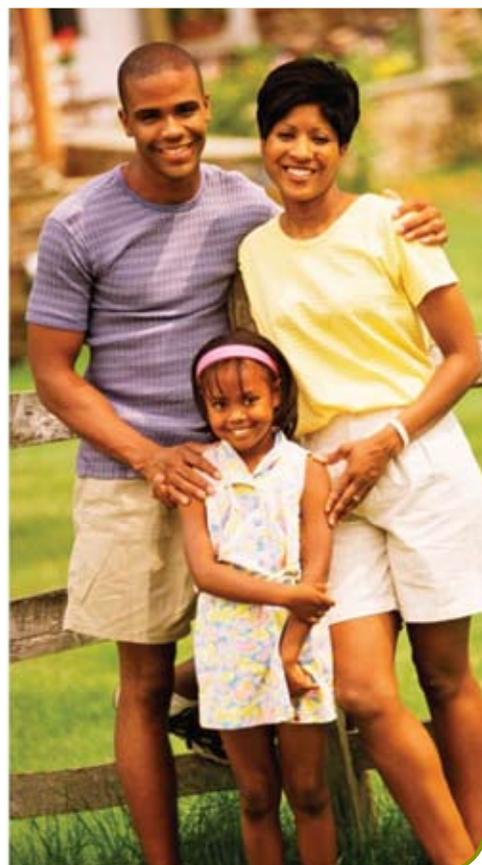
Since strategies that address the policies and infrastructure are new for most communities and partners in Texas, Starboard said that the biggest challenge to the project was positioning the highlighted examples in a way that did not take everything back to the individual level. “The social marketing experts immediately wanted to hone in on personal stories that an audience could connect with... There were many rewrites of the scripts, revisions of questions for interviewees, and many edits before the videos were finalized.” Since DSHS NPAOP staff recognized these were the same barriers they would be up against with statewide partners and community coalitions they benefited from the struggle. “We all agreed that using the individual stories gave the stories a personal feel, but we decided that these should be used as supportive pieces to the larger community/organizational change. We took the time to “convert” the social marketing media company staff from focusing on individuals. Now, the social marketing company has taken the idea to heart, and it has carried over into all the other projects we work on with them.”

The total cost for this innovative project was only \$165,000, which included travel to communities, video production, editing, duplication, promotional strategy development, and language translation. There were also additional costs associated with the significant time DSHS NPAOP Central Office staff spent researching community examples, providing feedback to the media company throughout the project, serving as subject matter experts within the video series and reviewing/editing scripts and drafts.



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— Mary Starboard, Program Manager Texas NPAOP





Importance of Early Success

The video series provides an orientation to environmental changes and policy solutions to the obesity epidemic. In addition, the series advances the Texas NPAOP program by presenting its staff as subject matter experts for the state - a significant move forward in defining and establishing the program's leadership role in obesity prevention. Through researching initiatives and filming the chosen projects, new partnerships emerged. Partners were instrumental in providing trainings to stakeholders, providing input on ideas for revising the state strategic plan for obesity prevention, and becoming active in the Texas Active Living Network (facilitated through NPAOP). All projects highlighted in the videos have expressed interest in using the series as a marketing tool. Some hope to garner internal/organizational support for their efforts; others wish to justify funding requests or report their successes to national groups with which they work.

Lessons Learned

- Be clear about what the message is for the audience. The purpose of the video series was to create a call to action. Keeping this in mind helped DSHS NPAOP to make decisions to fine-tune the final product during all stages of brainstorming, production and editing.
- Be strategic about how the videos will be used and prioritize to whom the videos will be distributed. DSHS NPAOP created a formal and standard process for requesting copies (to use for community screenings), and posted the videos online. Additionally, copies were strategically sent to obesity programs in other states.
- Try to make it as easy as possible for individuals to use the videos as intended. Develop a media kit with guidance for hosting a community screening and facilitating a discussion with stakeholders.
- Create a comprehensive evaluation plan before finalizing the videos to track progress and determine effectiveness of the project. Creating an online tool for logging community screenings is also helpful for determining reach of the project.

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Resources:

Growing Community Media Kit, and Resources:
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/obesity/>

Growing Community Video Series:
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/obesity/growingcommunity/default.shtm>