

Intergenerational Learning in the Garden

SUMMARY

In Calaveras County, CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California Cooperative Extensive (CFHL UCCE) began efforts towards intergenerational learning at the Calaveras Master Gardener Demonstration Garden. The CFHL UCCE program partnered with UC Master Gardeners, CalaverasGROWN farmers, Calaveras high school students and teachers, and the San Andreas Senior Center to develop this opportunity.

BACKGROUND

Connecting people from different generations provides an opportunity to unify communities, especially in rural areas where households are spread out and don't always have the chance to interact. Intergenerational efforts also have the ability to build capacity in communities as generations learn from each other and knowledge is shared.

In Calaveras County, about 28% of the population is 65 years or older, and around 17% are children under age 18. This age distribution offers an excellent opportunity to bring together different groups to help promote healthy behaviors for people of all ages.

SOLUTION

Over this past year, a group of community members from the San Andreas Senior Center participated in regular nutrition education and physical activity lessons provided by CFHL UCCE. This group has been able to apply what they have learned from each educational series personally, as well as within their church when preparing free community meals. As a result, the seniors wanted to extend this knowledge further into the community by inviting a Calaveras High School special education class to an intergenerational event at the Master Gardener Demonstration Garden.

"I was happy to be a part of this special event and look forward to events in the future. Both groups worked together so nicely while playing instruments, cooking, and gardening."

-Lois Conklin, Senior Participant



San Andreas Senior Center participants and Calaveras High School students learn to create a nutritious in-season meal from the garden.

OUTCOME

Together, CFHL UCCE, UC Master Gardeners, CalaverasGROWN farmers, and school staff helped to coordinate a successful educational event. There were 30 attendees in total who received direct nutrition education, and the seniors and high school students worked together to create a delicious, seasonal dish made primarily from local produce – some picked fresh from the garden.

Both groups shared that they enjoyed the sociocconnectivity of the event, and would like to continue with other garden events in the future. In the meantime, the high school students invited the seniors to participate in ongoing cooking classes and the seniors invited the high school students to join them for physical activity lessons. These classes were curtailed due to COVID-19, but there will be opportunities to resume when in-person education is possible again.

9/22/2020 For more information or to get involved, contact Katie Johnson, Nutrition Family and Consumer Sciences Advisor for the University of California Cooperative Extension in the Central Sierra at ckrjohnson@ucanr.edu