

SNAP-Ed Connection Success Story Submission
Connecticut – UConn Health, Husky Nutrition Programs
Farmers Market Nutrition Education

Organization that runs the program

UConn Health's Husky Nutrition Programs

Title of program

Farmers Market Nutrition Education

Describe how the program changes lives in 1-2 sentences

Farmers markets are a powerful tool in encouraging SNAP-Eligible residents to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, particularly in urban neighborhoods where residents have limited access to large grocery stores. Through Husky Nutrition Programs' Farmers Market Education initiative, Dietitians and UConn students promote and reinforce the value of fresh produce by providing farmers market marketing and free nutrition education to Connecticut residents.

Describe the program in more detail if needed

Many farmers markets in Connecticut accept and even double SNAP/EBT benefits, making those markets a valuable source for affordable, nutritious fruits and vegetables for SNAP recipients. Husky Nutrition Programs promotes Connecticut farmers markets through an online, interactive farmers market map located on SNAP4CT.org (<http://www.snap4ct.org/ct-farmers-markets.html>). A video detailing how easy it is to use SNAP benefits at markets, created by an area foodbank (FoodShare), is highlighted through a page on SNAP4CT.org (<http://www.snap4ct.org/using-snapebt-at-farmers-markets.html>). The video is also used as a



marketing tool through @SNAP4CT social media outlets. Likewise, those social media outlets, which target SNAP-Eligible residents, are used to feature farmers markets that double or triple SNAP benefits.

This marketing also serves to support the direct nutrition education that is provided by Husky Nutrition Programs nutrition educators during peak farmers market season (spring into early fall) at markets where SNAP/EBT and/or WIC benefits are accepted. On a weekly basis, Husky Nutrition Programs' Dietitians and nutrition educators, teamed with UConn students in the Husky Scholars program, offer education and produce-based recipes at farmers markets in cities with the highest SNAP-Eligible populations, including Hartford, Groton/New London, Middletown, New Haven, and Bridgeport.



At these markets, educators interact with shoppers using display boards and activities in order to inform them on the basics of MyPlate, food safety, calcium and healthy snacks, family mealtime, along with various topics related to selecting healthy produce. Where permitted, food demonstrations are also used to engage participants.

In addition, shoppers are offered healthy, budget-friendly recipes (in English and Spanish), as well as, healthy incentive items such as shopping totes, fruit and vegetable brushes, and more, all with the www.SNAP4CT.org website noted so that they can remember how to access nutrition resources online. Postcards containing the web address are also provided for the same reason.

Describe the success of the program. Include as many of the following as possible:

Throughout the FY 2017 farmers market season, Husky Nutrition was able to reach 1102 Connecticut residents with direct education at six farmers markets. Education and resources were very well received by market participants, as well as, farmers market managers, and farmers themselves who were eager to have recipes they could use to market their produce. Furthermore, in FY 2017 the online farmers market map proved to be a popular website feature that was accessed via 4,566 desktop pageviews and 455 mobile pageviews.

During the 2017 National Farmers Market Week, farmers market participants were interviewed and shared the following:



"I love the farmers market because it's a great place to meet people. I come here and meet friends and even meet new people. It's a community thing. When you come here and talk to people you get to learn about the other markets that are going on, learn what other people are buying and what they're going to make with those foods." - Lois

"I love the price and being able to get my money's worth. I love getting delicious fresh fruits and vegetables that are locally grown. I really like being able to support all of the

local farmers." – Maxine

"I love coming to support the local neighborhoods." - Rene

"I love it, I love everything! The food, the atmosphere. I try to come every week." - Babia, Hartford Resident

"I love coming, because they offer a lot of fresh foods that are quality and good price. Also, there's a great variety." - Daijah

"This farmers market is important, because as a North End resident myself too, we all live in a fresh food desert. So it's great when people can come here once a week and get fresh, non-processed, non-salted, non-sugared-up foods. I do all of this for the community." - Shana Smith, North End Farmers Market Manager

Type of program (nutrition education/direct education, PSE, social marketing, etc.)

Nutrition Education / Direct Education, Social Marketing

What year(s) was this program in place?

2011 through the present

How many people participate in the program?

Currently, this program serves between 1000 and 1500 direct participants annually and approximately 5,000 participants via social media/website traffic.

Who is the target audience?

Connecticut residents shopping at farmers markets in low-income areas of the state

How is the program evaluated?

To assess the efficacy of this program, Husky Nutrition Programs conducted a survey of farmers market shoppers who received education at the Billings Forge and North End farmers markets in Hartford, and the Washington Park Market in Groton. Of the 78 shoppers surveyed, 29 reported receiving SNAP or WIC. Of those 29 participants, the following information was reported:

- 79.5% would use SNAP, WIC, double value or other dollar value coupons at market
- 96.5% learned something useful at the nutrition education table, specifically:
 - 82.7% learned useful produce preparation ideas and,
 - 65.5% intended to make the recipe [that was featured]
- 58.6% reported that they will buy 3 or more types of vegetables at the market, while 51.7% reported that they will buy 3 or more different types of fruit at the market on the day surveyed
- 72.4% reported that they usually eat 2 or more vegetables often or always at their main meal daily

If people have questions about the program, who can they contact?

Contact Susan Furbish, furbish@uchc.edu for more information. Visit www.SNAP4CT.org or <http://www.publichealth.uconn.edu/community-engagement.html> to learn more about Husky Nutrition Programs.