

Orange Cove Residents Reap Commitment for a Healthier Community

by: Eva Falk

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

Cultiva La Salud is dedicated to engaging, informing and inspiring residents to actively advance personal, family and community health through healthy lifestyles and civic advocacy. To learn more about Cultiva La Salud and ways you can become involved, visit:

www.cultivalasalud.org. For more information about the Healthy Eating, Active Living Resolution and HEAL Cities Campaign, visit: www.healcitiescampaign.org



SUMMARY

Thanks to the input from community members and the leadership of city officials, nearly 10,000 residents are on their way to having improved access to healthier food and increased opportunities for physical activity. On August 26, 2015, the City of Orange Cove passed a Healthy Eating, Active Living (HEAL) Resolution. The HEAL Resolution serves as a guide for the city to engage in opportunities and work with the community to develop strategies that support healthy eating and active living.

CHALLENGE

In California's Central Valley, just 35 miles southeast of Fresno lies Orange Cove, a small rural and agricultural town with a population of over 10,000 people. Orange Cove is in the midst of a serious chronic disease crisis. Approximately 69% of adults in Fresno County are overweight or obese, compared to 59.8% statewide. More than 1 in 3 children (44.1%) in Fresno County, are overweight or obese compared to 42.1 statewide. Contributing factors to these alarming

obesity rates are the lack of safe places for children and adults to exercise or play and limited options to purchase healthy food and beverages. Studies show that our environments shape our ability to be healthy or unhealthy. With the HEAL Resolution, the city is recognizing their leadership and how they can help to lay the foundation for a city that promotes the health and wellness of their residents.

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SOLUTION

To help foster community engagement and to help lift up the voices of community members to decision-makers, Cultiva La Salud held a Town Hall meeting in Orange Cove where CX3 survey results were presented and community members offered feedback on the challenges they face in leading healthier lives and the changes they would like to see that support healthy food access and fitness opportunities. City decision-makers attended the event and were valuable to the community discussion process. The CX3 surveys, the Town Hall meetings, and input from the community provided valuable data for decision makers to realize the importance and urgency of change and improvements needed in Orange Cove. The resolution acknowledges Orange Cove City Councilmembers

SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

Cultiva La Salud is continuing to work with community members and decision makers to strengthen policies that encourage healthy eating and active living. Town Hall meetings, Cumbia Rides and walking groups engage the community and lead to opportunities for community members to advocate for change themselves. These events provide opportunities for Cultiva to stay connected to the community and lift up their interests. Residents witnessed first hand the response their input had on decision makers and the support they received. Seeing how their participation helped shape city leaders decision to move forward on the HEAL Resolution will have long term affects on how community members can be involved and approach issues important to them in the future.

RESULTS

The discussions and feedback that took place at the Town Hall allowed the city decision-makers to recognize the need for improvement when it comes to their community's ability to access healthy food and be physically active. After acknowledging the barriers that exist, Orange Cove City Councilmembers passed the HEAL resolution by a 3-0 vote. The HEAL Resolution enconces a commitment to health in all policies moving forward. It paves the way for city leaders to discuss revising City plans and zoning ordinances that create barriers to residents around healthy food access. The intention of passing the HEAL Resolution is to prioritize the health of Orange Cove residents. The HEAL Resolution, along with future policies associated to it will impact nearly 10,000 residents.