P3 (continued)

Return on investment (ROI) was calculated using both tray waste as well as the direct and indirect costs indicated on the foodservice budget for the school.

Results: The CMTS event provided a savings of 8¢ per serving of lunch entrée offered during the event. The ROI of the event for the school was 5.86% indicating that the time spent on the event resulted in more benefit than cost to the school.

Conclusions and Implications: While initial investment in participating in the CMTS program appears high and is often a barrier for school involvement, CMTS events increase consumption and selection of targeted entrees in school lunchrooms.

Funding: USDA

P4 A Mixed Methods Study of the Effectiveness of an After-School Cooking Club Curriculum for Middle School Students

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Objective: 1. To examine the effect of an after-school cooking intervention for 6th-8th grade students on knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and parental interaction. 2. To determine the most effective teaching strategies(s) to promote change.

Study Design, Setting, Participants, and Intervention: This study utilized the parallel convergent mixed methods design. Participants (n=10) were recruited using convenience sampling from one Midwestern middle school. The intervention was an after-school, eight-week course, with one session per week. Each session introduced one cooking skill through a lecture-format lesson, interactive cooking activity, food tasting, and discussion. Data collection tools included expert-reviewed pre- and post-survey, observation matrix, freehand observation sheet, and focus group script.

Outcome, Measures and Analysis: Due to small sample size, statistical significance could not be reliably calculated; quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Qualitative data was coded, categorized, reduced to themes, and triangulated. Quantitative and qualitative data were merged for common themes.

Results: Mixed methods results of the intervention identified the following themes for students: increased cooking skill knowledge, positive attitude/engagement toward cooking, no behavior change, and little to no parental interaction. Results identified the following themes for effective teaching strategies, which were utilized sporadically: group cooperation and interactive teaching methods.

Conclusions and Implications: Results indicate that this intervention increases cooking knowledge in adoles-

cents, but not behavior. Results on effective teaching strategies have been used to generate the following recommendations for future interventions: utilize interactive teaching style consistently, allow student autonomy with cooking, increase group discussions, and encourage skill practice to increase self-efficacy. These recommendations should be tested in a future study to determine their impact on behavior change.

Funding: Transdisciplinary Childhood Obesity Program

P5 Farm Explorer™: Impacting Food Choices Through Farm-To-School

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Objective: The short-term objective proposes an impact evaluation using a randomized controlled study design. The long-term objective is to disseminate Farm Explorer™ as an evidence-based, sustainable, cost-efficient program to improve dietary intake and increase interest in environmental stewardship and urban sustainability.

Target Audience: 3rd and 4th grade students will be included in the impact evaluation.

Theory, Prior Research, Rationale: Farm-to-school programs show promise in preventing childhood obesity by improving students' food preferences and dietary intake. However, farm-to-school programs can present financial burden for school districts due to labor costs associated with preparing raw foods and arranging visits with local growers. This barrier is amplified in low resource schools, paradoxically-where children could benefit the most.

Description: Greener Partners' Farm Explorer™ is a hands-on mobile farm that travels to schools delivering experiential nutrition, gardening, and ecology education. This 24-foot custom-built trailer contains garden beds and a mobile kitchen.

Evaluation: Six schools will be randomized to a 12-month intervention (two visits by Farm Explorer™, four visits by the Seed to Snack® program) or a wait-listed control group. Baseline and post-intervention surveys will be used to: assess baseline exposure and preference for fruits and vegetables, asking behaviors and home consumption; measure changes from baseline to post-intervention; and compare outcome variables between schools.

Conclusions and Implications: Suggesting a deficit in formal evaluations, a review of 15 farm-to-school programs reported that four appeared in peer-reviewed publications. Our results will fill gaps in the literature, provide a baseline for comparative research, promote development of best practices, and lead to increases in the hours/year dedicated to school nutrition education.

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