

Creating Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change: Success Story



From Certification to Inspiration: How One Pantry Site in Lancaster Paved the Way for New Partners

Program

Setting: Food Banks/Food Pantries

Sub-Strategy 2A: Nutrition Pantry Program- Implement NPP Strategies in food bank and/or food pantries.

Social and Community Context

[Define the community challenge as part of a larger narrative that includes its historical context and describes the structural/social context. Describe why the activity or strategy identified in this Success Story was implemented with the community you serve.]

Antelope Valley is home to many families seeking to spend quality time together without leaving the community, while also wanting greater access to services and equitable opportunities. The City of Lancaster, part of the Antelope Valley, understood the need for access to services for its community members. This need inspired the idea of Community Impact Homes, which are homes strategically selected throughout the community to provide services within walking distance in that neighborhood. The services provided vary from home to home and are based on community feedback.

Guyman Community Pantry (Guyman) is one of the star Community Impact Homes. By utilizing a client needs survey, not only did it determine the types of services community members wanted to see provided, but also ensured that the community had a voice in shaping the offerings and addressed their unique needs. The drive to continue working to meet the needs of the community led Guyman to become part of the Nutrition Pantry Program (NPP).

Community Assets

[Identify existing assets of your community (community-based programs, community partnership, etc.) that are supportive of the activity or strategy you are writing about. How has your CFHL work built upon these existing assets?]

Guyman has a strong partnership with Antelope Valley Partners for Health (AVPH). AVPH aims to improve the lives of people in the Antelope Valley by leveraging community strengths and resources, initiating a coordinated effort with food providers, known as the AV Food Access Network (AVFAN) to address local health policies that promote equitable food access for all. AVPH has worked in tandem with Guyman and other AVFAN partners to implement the Nutrition Pantry Program (NPP).

One focus area of the NPP is Community Connections. AVPH and Guyman utilized the insights from the client needs survey which established the outreach to other service providers in the area. The community connections that were secured by Guyman are: CalFresh enrollments, vaccinations for children, donations of school supplies, after-school support, and a community garden.

Thanks to the community and their support for the services provided, successful implementation of the NPP led Guyman to achieve Gold Certification from Leah's Pantry, the organization overseeing the national NPP network. In that achievement, Guyman also received acknowledgement by the City of Lancaster for its commitment to community wellness.

Collaborative Action

[Identify the collaborators/partners involved in helping you implement this activity or strategy and describe the action behind your combined efforts. Describe how the collaboration is moving towards the vision and shared measure of success.]

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health partnered with AVPH to implement the NPP through the CalFresh Healthy Living program. The NPP supports policy, systems, and environmental changes at food pantry sites that lead to client-centered, health-focused distributions. The NPP strives to enhance each implementing site's processes by providing resources, technical assistance and sharing best practices.

The NPP serves as a guide to food pantries to develop site-specific changes to become a client-centered, health-focused distribution through six focus areas that include pantry environment, nutrition education, inventory, cultural and dietary accommodations, community connections, and pantry policies & procedures. Through the NPP, AVPH has engaged with various pantry partner sites, fostering communication and collaboration that have led to successful certifications and showcasing community achievement. With Guyman's Gold certification, the City of Lancaster is inspired to encourage the certification of any new pantry sites, reinforcing the importance of connecting with the community to sustain ongoing success.

Sustaining Success

[Describe community strengths, strategies, and ownership that will help to sustain success for the activity or strategy that you are writing about.]

With a strong focus on community connections at Guyman, there continues to be new collaborations to provide more access to fresh and healthy options and continue the work of the other NPP focus areas. Guyman has inspired another community partner, New Horizon 4 Life, to start a food pantry site in an area of Lancaster where residents would like to access fresh produce while strengthening community support.

New Horizon 4 Life reached out to the City of Lancaster to secure space at one of their Community Impact Homes for a new food pantry site. This collaboration would further the City's vision of ensuring that essential services are accessible and within walking distance for residents, strengthening community support and engagement in the neighborhood.

By continuing communication of the NPP progress through the AV Food Access Network and receiving community member feedback, there will be ongoing support for local food access initiatives and potential for new collaborators in the AV.

Participant and Partner Quotes

[Use quotes from partners and community members to make the story more powerful. Before using a quote, ensure consent is given.]

"I am the Director of a Community Impact home in Lancaster, California. My pantry went from serving 10 families to now serving over 60 families twice a month. The NPP program taught me so much about making a pantry successful. Without the guidance of the NPP program, my pantry would just be another drive thru, grab and go pantry. By having a garden in the backyard of the house, the families have taken a great interest in growing the vegetables and being a part of the program. The NPP has been a huge support. I would suggest to anyone interested in joining the NPP program that they lean on the partners for support and listen to their ideas." – Guyman Pantry Director

"I am currently in the process of joining the NPP program, where I will be consulting with fellow NPP member, Director of Guyman Community Pantry. I look forward to collaborating with the Director as both a mentor and partner in addressing community needs. We share similar values regarding the welfare of children, families, and the community, with a shared focus on safety, nutrition, and education. I hope to gain valuable insights from the Director on how to successfully establish my community house. Given her experience in managing her own community house, I am confident she will provide guidance and support to help me create a successful model." – New Horizon 4 Life Pantry Director

Photograph (optional)

[If possible, include a photo that pertains to your Success Story. If including photos, make sure you obtain a photo release form from any person in the photos (DPH photo release forms are attached in English and Spanish).]



Contact information about this Narrative

Author's Name: Jacqueline Johnson
Phone: 661-361-4196
Email: jjohnson@avph.org