

Uplifting Comunidades



Uplifting:

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INTRODUCTION

Project Purpose & Description

The Uplifting community project seeks to reduce food insecurity for residents of Huntington Park (HP). This consisted of four one-hour Spanish workshops at Miles Elementary. The project uses culturally responsive psychoeducational workshops to promote healthy eating and food resource management.

Social Problem & Target Population

Food insecurity is a major public health concern in the U.S. and a prominent issue in HP. The target population for this project focused on low-income Latinx families, older adults, and undocumented immigrants.

Scope of Social Problem

Community Stakeholder Interviews

- Food insecurity emerged as a significant social issue for Huntington Park throughout the community assessment and interviews.
- A food drive volunteer of HP stated firsthand, “The increasing need for food assistance among middle-class individuals; it’s no longer just the lower-class that needs help.” Intersectional factors such as race, ethnicity, culture, gender, immigration status, and socio-economic background significantly influence this community’s access to resources and power.

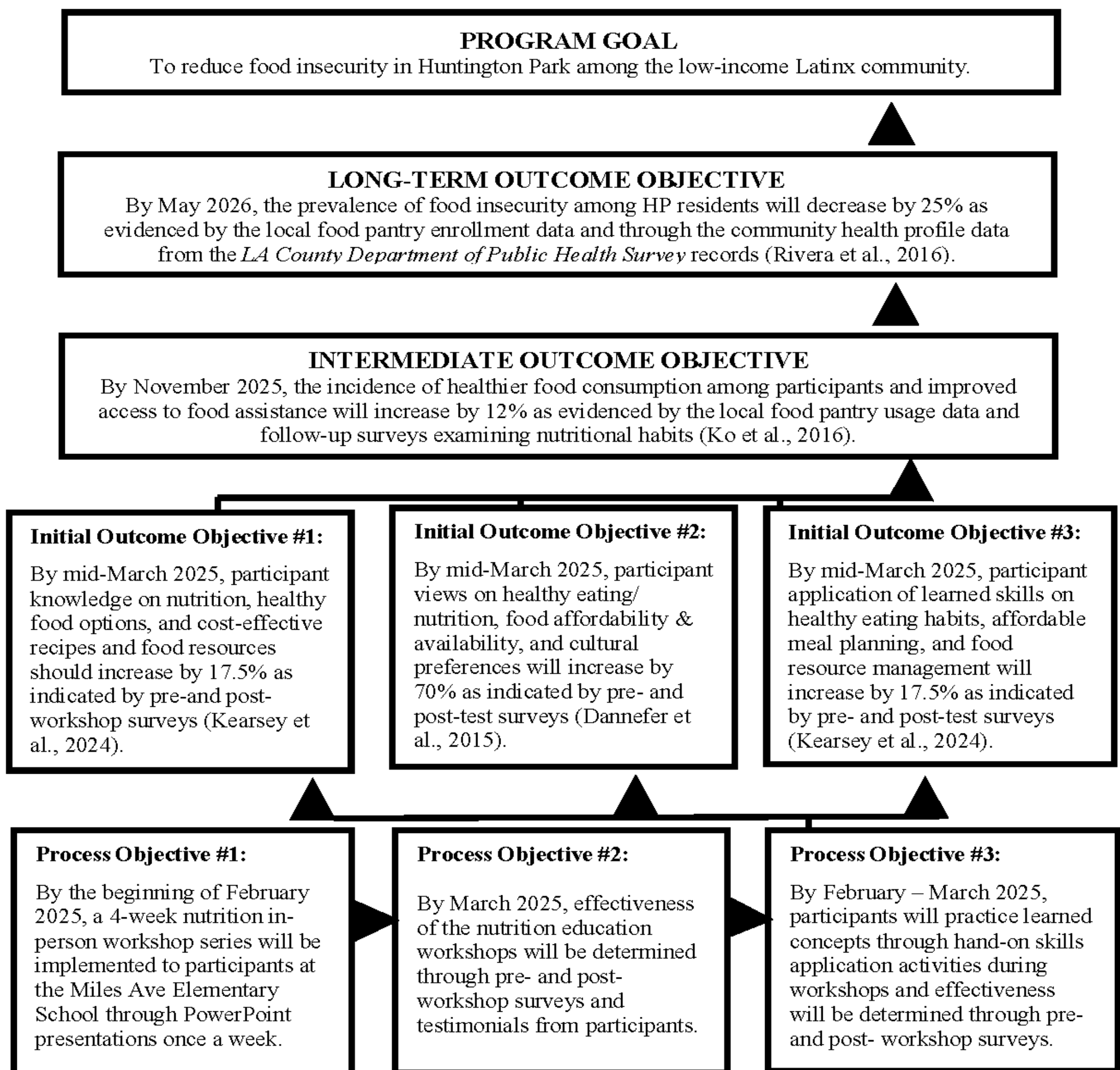
Secondary Data

- Huntington Park has a population of 61,348 residents, an annual average household income of \$27,000, and 58,636 residents who identify as Hispanic.
- HP has 17.6% of residents living below the poverty line (HPCA, n.d.).
- Food insecurity is the leading nutrition-related healthcare crisis in the U.S. (Gundersen & Ziliak, 2018).

Alignment to Specialization

The nutritional workshops support the child and family welfare specialization by promoting healthy development through nutrition education.

PROJECT OVERVIEW, OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES



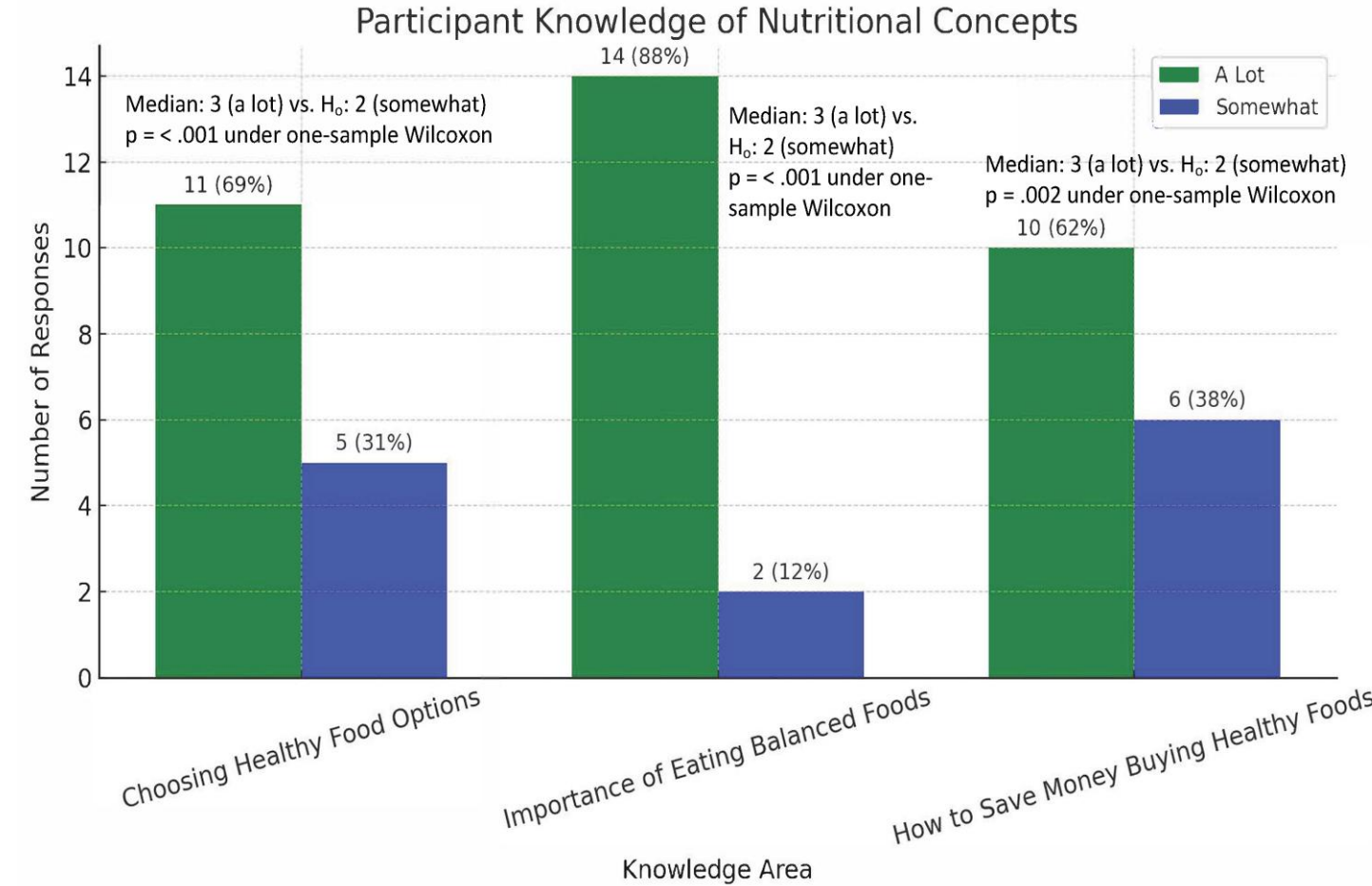
METHODS

- Purpose: explanatory utilizing a pre-experimental design consisting of a one-group post-test only design. A one-group pretest-posttest design for behavior-related items from the Food Behavior Checklist.
- Mixed Methods Approach combining quantitative methods using structured surveys and checklists with ordinal scale responses and qualitative methods through open ended questions. A convenience sampling strategy was used for all 17 participants.
- Quantitative analysis using descriptive statistics to summarize frequencies and percentages of responses. Inferential statistics included one-sample Wilcoxon signed rank tests, related samples Wilcoxon signed-rank tests, and McNemar’s Tests.

RESULTS

Participant Characteristics

Demographics		
Age	Frequency	Percentage
18 – 59 years	16	94.12%
60 – 75 years	1	5.88%
Gender		
Female	17	100%
Ethnicity		
Hispanic/Latino	17	100%
Race		
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	5.88%
White	9	52.94%
Prefer not to respond	7	41.18%
# of Household Members		
3	3	18.75%
4	7	43.75%
5+	6	37.50%
Income		
< \$25,000	6	37.50%
\$25,001 - \$50,000	3	18.75%
\$50,001 - \$75,000	2	12.50%
\$75,001 - \$100,000	2	12.50%
Prefer not to respond	3	18.75%



Descriptive & Inferential Results

Food Behavior Checklist Trends Between Pre and Post Surveys					
Question	Significance Value (p)	Positive Changes	Negative Changes	Yes to No Changes	No to Yes Changes
Q1. Do you eat fruits or vegetables as snacks?	0.527	4	3		
Q2. Do you drink fruit drinks, sport drinks, or punch?	0.096	5	1		
Q3. Did you have citrus fruit or citrus juice during the past week?	1			1	1
Q4. Do you drink regular soda?	0.02*	6	0		
Q5. Did you drink milk or use milk on cereal during the past week?	0.375			2	7
Q6. Fruit: How much do you eat each day? (cups)	0.101	7	3		
Q7. Vegetables: How much do you eat each day? (cups)	0.226	5	3		
Q8. Do you eat more than one kind of fruit each day?	0.564	2	1		
Q9. Do you eat more than one kind of vegetable each day?	0.034*	0	5		
Q10. Do you drink milk?	1	2	3		
Q11. Do you take skin off chicken?	0.059	4	0		
Q12. Did you have fish during the past week?	1			1	6
Q13. Do you eat 2 or more vegetables at your main meal?	1	2	2		
Q14. Do you use the nutrition label when food shopping?	0.008**	8	0		
Q15. Do you run out of food before the end of the month?	0.046*	8	2		
Q16. How would you rate your eating habits? (scale 1 - 10: 1 = poor and 10 = excellent)	0.085	9	2		
Q17. Do you eat whole grain foods (e.g. tortillas, bread, pasta, whole oats, brown rice, etc.)?	0.655	3	2		
Q18. What type of milk do you drink most of the time?					
Q19. Usually, how many cups of bottled or tap water do you drink each day? (1 cup = 8 oz)	0.414	2	1		
Q20. Do you make a list of ingredients before you go grocery shopping?	1	2	1		
Q21. Do you buy foods with lower added salt/ sodium?	0.059	6	1		
Q22. Do you buy foods with lower added sugar or no added sugar?	0.007**	8	0		

* significance at p < .05

** high level of significance at p < .01

Qualitative Results

Thematic Summary of Participant Feedback		
Theme	Summary	Example Quotes
Practical and Helpful Information	Participants valued easy-to-understand, useful content especially on reading labels, calories, and healthier food choices. Many felt the information was directly applicable to their daily lives.	"I learned how to read the nutrition food labels!" "It made me realize the importance of eating as a family and making better choices."
Desire for Continuation and Expansion	Strong interest in continuing the workshops, with requests for more time, more sessions, and broader access. Many expressed that these workshops should be offered to more families.	"Please continue offering these workshops!" "More information and workshops would be great."
Positive Experience with Presenters and Format	Participants praised the clarity and engagement of presenters, noting the sessions were well-organized and impactful.	"The presenters were highly capable and did an excellent job." "Everything was good. Thank you very much."

RESOURCES

- For those interested in volunteer work, please visit <https://global.tzuchi.org> or email the Parent Community Representative, Alejandra Pineda, at Alejandra.pineda@lausd.net
- Gundersen, C., & Ziliak, J. P. (2018). Childhood food insecurity in the U.S.: Trends, causes, and policy options. The Future of Children, 24(2), 1–19.
- Huntington Park, CA. (n.d.). Data USA. Retrieved October 30, 2024, from <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/huntington-park-ca/>

CONCLUSION

Analysis of Findings

After analyzing the comparison of pre- and post-test data, the results demonstrate significant increases in participants’ nutrition knowledge, skills, and behaviors following the workshop. Participants showed improved ability to read nutrition labels, plan balanced meals, and identify affordable healthy foods. Significant behavior changes included reduced soda consumption, greater use of nutrition labels, and improved food security. A significant decrease was noted in the number of participants reporting that they consumed more than one kind of vegetable each day. This unexpected finding may indicate a shift in interpretation or barriers to variety. Slight, non-significant improvements were also observed in fruit and vegetable intake, water consumption, and making grocery lists, indicating positive trends that may strengthen with more time or support. Descriptive data also showed a shift in milk choices, with increased consumption of healthier milk choices, including 1% or non-dairy milk, and a decline in whole milk and “no milk” consumption. Attitudes toward healthy eating were positive, with a significant increase in agreement that “eating healthy is important.”

Limitations & Improvements

- The evaluation was limited by a small sample size, self-reported data, and short-term measurement only.
- Future evaluations should include larger and more diverse samples, long-term follow-up, and objective health or dietary indicators to strengthen findings.

Recommendations & Implications

Practice Implication: Schools are effective sites for delivering health education to underserved families.

Practice Recommendation: Expand workshops to multiple schools and train parent leaders to ensure sustainability.

Policy Implication: Underserved families face systemic barriers to accessing health resources.

Policy Recommendation: Advocate for inclusive policies that expand food access regardless of immigration status.

Research Implication: Limited follow-up restricts understanding of long-term behavior change.

Research Recommendation: Conduct longitudinal studies to evaluate sustained impact and guide future improvements.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Miles Ave Elementary School Parent Partner

Mission/Purpose: Foster a strong collaborative partnership between families, educators, and the school community to support the academic, social, and emotional success of every student. We aim to create an inclusive environment where parents are empowered to engage, advocate, and contribute meaningfully to their children’s educational journey.

Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation

Mission: To help those in need with love and compassion through humanitarian efforts.

Name of Collaborator	Contributions
Alejandra Pineda, <i>Parent and Community Representative</i> Miles Ave Elementary Parent Partner Alejandra.pineda@lausd.net	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assisted with outreach and engagementProvided AdvocacyHosting Parent workshopsOrganizing Supplies
Kit Ho, <i>Organization Volunteer</i> Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation Kit_ho@us.tzuchi.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hosting monthly food banksCreating Volunteer Opportunities for Parents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our gratitude to the Tzu Chi Foundation and the Parent Partner for their support and collaboration in making our Applied Community Project a success. Through your generosity and commitment to service, our stakeholders were empowered to engage meaningfully with their community, develop nutritional skills, and experience the profound impact of giving back.