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We Worked Together to Build A Better Community In 2004

Better Access to & Utilization of nutritious foods

Low-Income persons can purchase fresh fruits and vegetables with their food-stamp card at the large weekly Selma flea market (*the first in the nation, to our knowledge*)

Children and youth in Southeast Fresno have a year-around lunch available five days a week at Burroughs School because the Burroughs “New Leaders For Better Health” volunteer their time serving the meals. (*FUSD, Burroughs staff, and Burroughs parents worked together with Metro to make this happen.*)

Children and youth in Fresno Unified School District will likely eat and exercise better and be healthier long-term as FUSD now has a community-involved Healthy School Environment Policy Committee that will promote a comprehensive district-wide policy to help prevent diabetes and obesity (*ending soda sales, candy sales, reducing fat in school meals, more time for exercise and for eating are some hoped-for ingredients in this local recipe for healthier children*)

More families are providing more and better food for their children through use of the EBT food stamp program (*Two Congressional Hunger Fellows working with two food banks and with Metro have been getting out the word as to how food stamps can help.*)

Sacramento legislators learned on Hunger Action Day about the effects of hunger, malnutrition, and poverty and what they could do to help from fifty-one multi-ethnic low-income Fresno residents. (*Metro’s New Leaders For Better Health*)

Fifty Fresno residents were trained to do food assessment surveys, completing 375 consumer surveys and 75 retail surveys, helping us better understand food access and hunger issues.

People are being assisted in growing their own food by forming the Fresno Community Garden Coalition to save existing community gardens and build new gardens in neighborhoods.

The community became more aware of hunger and nutrition issues and needs through information, networking, and news stories through eleven Hunger and Nutrition Forums. Task groups follow-up for action.

**Better leadership development in helping the voice
of the unserved and the underserved be heard**

Over 120 individuals gained skills in telling their stories to others and to the press related to health care access, hunger and nutrition, and air quality. They met with Assemblywoman Sarah Reyes, Public Health Officer Ed Moreno, University Medical Center administrators, California Endowment President Robert Ross, and with others. Some of them stepped forward to volunteer at the Burroughs School lunch program. Others participated in the Hunger Action Day or Air Quality Day in Sacramento. Those of you at Metro's 34th Anniversary Dinner met three of the New Leaders as they introduced Sarah Reyes. The New Leaders also learned about voting in October, and held a sample election.

Better Health Care Access and Better Public Health

Up to 80 children may have health insurance as Metro provided outreach and application assistance for the Kaiser Child Health Plan

Thousands of Fresno County Children may gain health insurance in the future as a result of the groundwork in 2004 by a number of organizations for the Children's Health Initiative. A business plan has been completed. The First Five Commission gave the launching of CHI its support. Strategies to insure that children are linked to a physician will be a major focus, as well as coverage. The implementation phase is scheduled for 2005.

The "New Leaders For Better Health" are learning and teaching about health care access and public health issues. A "Navigator" project is planned with New

Leaders for 2005 to help them navigate and improve the health care system that is there to serve them. During 2004 New Leaders met twice with University Medical Center leaders, and some issues were resolved while others weren't.

Start-up activities are underway for a Joint Powers Authority for a multi-County plan for inpatient child and adolescent psychiatric care in the Valley. The recent passage of Proposition 63 will provide mental health funds and appears to be increasing the financial feasibility of this much needed service.

Every month sixty to seventy persons learned more about health access and public health needs, issues, and achievements in the monthly Community Health Care Roundtables. The Roundtables provide information, communication, problem-solving, and networking opportunities. Fresno Bee articles on some of the Roundtables increased community knowledge of needs and solutions.

Better Air Quality

Local groups dedicated to clean air work together and communicate with one another through the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition.

The voices of health advocates and other clean air advocates are now present in issues at the Air Quality Board, joining those long-established voices of industry.

The voices of those affected by asthma were heard by Sacramento legislators on Air Action Day, as well as the voices of twenty-five New Leaders for Better Health

People who have been exposed to pesticides can now receive state help for their medical care as the Governor signed the Pesticide Drift Bill.

Better Multi-Cultural and Multi-Religious Understanding

Individuals and hospital personnel learned more about other cultures and relationships were built through Cross-Cultural Clusters at University Medical Center, Juvenile Hall, Pan Valley Institute Tamejavi Festival, and New Leaders.

450 persons celebrated the religious, cultural, and music traditions of other faiths in Metro's Thanksgiving Concert

Viewers on Channel 49 learned about other religious perspectives and community needs as Metro staff participated on many of the Interfaith Alliance's New Forum for Better Understanding and on the Grapevine show.

Better Community Helping Services

Persons can match needs with resources through use of Metro's "Making Connections Community Resource Directory. Most of the 4,000 copies have been distributed.

We also help with telephone referrals for services.

Better Website

www.fresnometroministry.org

Internet users can search our website by topic including Health Roundtable and Hunger Forum notes. Better yet, financial contributions can now be made on our website!

and

Celebration of Those Who Make a Positive Difference in our Community through our 34th Anniversary Dinner and Program

**And
Much
More**

**For a Better Community,
Better Join us in 2005!**