Encouraging Healthy Behavior Through Environmental Conservation Awareness: A Pilot Study in Economically Disadvantaged Communities

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Project Description

A deeper understanding of the connections between healthy behaviors, disease prevention and conservation of our natural environment can increase motivational social change and improve health.

We incorporated health prevention into an environmental conservation framework with the aim of improving knowledge and encourage adoption of healthy behaviors among youth in economically disadvantaged middle schools. Service learning for Stanford University students, and experiential learning at Stanford’s Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve (JRBP) were important components of this project.

Results

Figure 1: Percent change in pre-post knowledge scores at Hoover (intervention) and Kennedy (comparison) schools with p values*

Table 1: Select Post Field Trip Reflections

Sustainability

- This model is sustainable, and has the potential to aid schools towards adopting positive health behaviors. By becoming agents of change and advocates of environmental conservation, youth could be more eager to engage in healthy behavior.
- We plan to continue offering Service Learning opportunities to Stanford students, and provide the program to Hoover 6th grade children with support from the Haas Center for Service Learning. We will seek external funding to scale-up the project.
- Ongoing improvements e.g. revision of web-based modules and reinforcement of key concepts by docents during field trip.

Acknowledgements

Funding provided by Spectrum Innovation Accelerator Seed Grant Program, 2013-14 and Center for Latin American Studies.

Stanford students Chelsea Shannon, Amelia Dryer and Estevan Santiago were involved in service-learning activities and made important contributions to the project’s success.

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