

***Farmers Market Promotion Program
Final Performance Report
For the Period of September 30, 2014 – September 29, 2016***

Date: 26-Sep-16
Recipient Name: Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital Azle
Project Title: Azle's Farmers Market
Grant Number: 14-FMPPX-TX-0161
Project Location: Azle, Texas
Year of Grant Award: 2014
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Texas Health Harris Methodist Azle's mission of improving the health of the people in the communities we serve is more than a statement; it is the foundation for all of the facility's activities. The hospital is located in the tri-county area, resulting in Texas Health Azle being the major source of primary health care to the area's 70,000 citizens since 1954. The rural parts of Parker County provide an economic challenge. In fact, 18.7 percent of households in North Parker make less than \$25,000 a year. Pelican Bay, which is a small town in Texas Health Azle's primary service area, has a median per capita income of \$15,240 compared to the Texas state average of \$25,096. The Parker County uninsured rate has jumped from 14.1 percent in 2007 to 24.8 percent in 2010. The percent of children without insurance is 11.8i percent. Lack of insurance increases their dependence on Medicaid. As a result, 56% of the patients seen in the emergency room at Texas Health Azle were either unfunded or Medicaid. This translates into approximately 13,154 patients.

This tri-county area has many challenges, including no public transportation and limited access to fresh produce. To address these challenges, Texas Health Azle has implemented a Healthy Eating Initiative, including establishing a Farmer's Market to provide the community with easy, consistent access to farmers and their produce. The goal is to 1) establish a farmer's market by May 2015 and 2) increase participation and sales with a marketing campaign by September 2016. Based on historically data, the hospital anticipates serving approximately 150 people at the weekly market. The long term goal of the healthy eating initiative is to increase the number of adults who eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day.

Access to healthy foods, access to physical activity centers and ozone levels combine to form a physical environment ranking for all the counties in Texas. Parker County is ranked as 201st among the 253 counties in Texas in this category. In addition, the purposed Farmer's Market serves a low income/low access area in Tarrant County (Tract 48439114206). We are most excited about the growth from year one to year two. Both Sales and customers increase by 55% and 87% respectively.

In the first season there was \$4,656 in sales. The second season saw a sharp increase in sales to \$7,200, which is approximately 55% increase. In the first season, there were a total of 513 participants, for an average of 27 customers per day. During the second season, this number jumped to 960, or an average of 60 customers per day, which is an 87% increase. Below is a snapshot of the goals and objectives for the Azle Farmer's Market:

- i. Establish one farmer's markets serving Azle and the surrounding areas, including low income/low access area in Tarrant County (Tract 48439114206) to provide easier access and affordability to fresh healthy produce to the community by May 2015.
 - a. Progress Made: **Achieved**. The Azle Farmer's Market opened June 22, 2105.
 - b. Impact of Community: The Farmer's Market was well received by the community. In fact, over 100 people purchased produce on the opening day. Many residents expressed their appreciation, stating, "Azle has needed a Farmer's Market for a long time."
- ii. Recruit six local or area farmers to sell produce directly to the consumer.
 - a. Progress Made: **Achieved**. There were six vendors throughout the year. Unfortunately, due to weather related problems, the vendors did not have as much produce as normal. May 2015 was the wettest month on record for the North Texas Area, receiving over 16.96 inches of rain. Over a foot more than normal. This amount of rain flooded many farms.
 - b. Impact on Community: **Achieved**. The Azle Farmer's Market was able to be open every weekend from June 22, 2015 to the end of October 2015, with the exception on July 4. The second season opened the first Saturday in June through the last Saturday in September. This provided a direct from the farm outlet for the Azle residents.
- iii. Establish the baseline for gross sales of fresh produce
 - a. Progress Made: **Achieved**. Azle Farmer's Market tracked gross sales for last year. The total amount was \$4,656 for 2015.
 - b. Impact on Community. This amount might seem small, but for the small town of Azle, it represents a big success.
- iv. Track the number of consumers who come to the Farmer's Market to establish a baseline.
 - a. Progress Made: **Achieved**. The total number of consumers who purchased produce was 513 for season one.
 - b. Impact on Community. Again, this might seem small, but for Azle, it is not.

For the Farmers Market Promotion Program grant, the following are the intermediate goals:

- v. To increase awareness and attendance to the local Farmer's Markets through a variety of marketing approaches and to educate communities about the value of supporting local grown and produced foods by September 2016.
 - a. Increase the number of vendors from six to ten by spring 2016.
 1. Progress Made: Partially Complete. For the 2016 Season, we had 9 vendors. We have started new gardens to support the Farmer's Market.
 2. Impact on Community: More vendors means more variety, which will bring in more customers.
 - b. Increase gross sales by 20% over baseline established in the first year by fall of 2016.

1. Progress Made: **Achieved**. The Market opened in June 2016. In the first season there was \$4,656 in sales. The second season saw a sharp increase in sales to \$7,200, which is approximately 55% increase.
- c. Increase the number of consumers who come to the Farmer's Market by 10% over the baseline established in year one by fall of 2016.
 1. Progress Made: **Achieved**. In the first season, there were a total of 513 participants, for an average of 27 customers per day. During the second season, this number jumped to 960, or an average of 60 customers per day.

These goals were accomplished through several activities, such as establishing the market, advertising and establishing the electronic debit transaction. The major goal of this grant was to establish a Farmer's Market. Texas Health Azle looked for an ideal location and found one with a current partner. When the idea for a farmer's market began, Texas Health Azle looked to the Arts Association to partner again. Many would ask, "Why would a community theater be a good location for a farmer's market?" The answer is easy. This particular community theatre has all of the ingredients necessary to start a successful community market: 1) The Theater is located directly off the major highway. 2) It is also located in a federally designated low income, low access area. 3) All of the theater activities occur during the evening, opposite of the Farmer's Market.

Through the grant funds, Texas Health Azle had an electronic message board installed to advertise the market. For the first year, this is all of the advertising we needed. During the second year, the access road developed a very large sink hole just down from the Farmers Market. This severely limited the traffic on the road. To compensate for the temporary decrease in traffic, the Azle Farmer's Market rented a large inflatable hot air balloon to make sure the general public knew we were still open. This helped since our numbers for the second year almost doubled.

In 2015, the Azle Farmer's Market was cash only. We discovered this created an unintended health disparity for the low income population. To correct this problem, Azle Farmer's Market applied to the USDA to be able to accept SNAP benefits. In addition, the market purchased the necessary equipment to accept electronic payments as well. With these two upgrades, we do anticipate increasing the participation beyond the 10%. At the end of the second year, we increased participation by over 87% and increased sales by 55%. According to more than 130 studies completed, the answer is yes. According to Policy Link, over the past 20 years, most researchers have found that people who live in neighborhoods with better access to healthy foods also have better nutrition and better health. According to the CDC, in 2011, 38 percent of adults said they ate fruit less than once a day, and 23 percent said they ate vegetables less than once a day (CDC State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, 2013).

In 2012, Texas Health Azle conducted a community-wide baseline survey to determine the fruit and vegetable consumption of the residents of Parker County. This survey includes not only the number of servings, but also the type of fruit and/or vegetable, including fruit juices and white potatoes. The results showed an average of 18.36 servings of fruits and vegetables consumed per week. In 2015, Texas Health Azle surveyed 208 healthy eating participants again and continued to see an increase in the servings of produce. In the 2012 baseline survey, the number of servings of fruit was reported as just under 4 servings per week. In 2015, this number doubled to 8 servings per week. The average number

of servings of all fruit and vegetables increased to 23, which is a 27% improvement over the baseline survey.

If I could do it all over again, I would purchase a slightly larger sign. The current sign can be seen from the state highway, which was our goal. However, if it was the next size larger, the sign could be read from several other roads which either cross or connect to the highway. Our intended goal was met, however, for a relatively small amount more, our actual reach could have been more. This has been especially evident this year. A very large sink hole developed on the access road just down from the Farmer's Market, which naturally closed down the road for months with more to come. This pushed all of the traffic to the side streets. With a larger sign, the message could be read from most of those side streets. The good news is even with the limited access, the Farmer's Market grew in all aspects over the baseline year. Due to the funding provided under FMPP:

- Sales increased 55% and the market saw an increase of 87% in customer visits from June 2016 to September 2016 over the baseline year of June 2015 to October 2015.
- Vendors increased from 6 in 2015 to 9 in 2016.