



HEALTH  
EDUCATION  
COUNCIL

Health happens together.



# HEC CONNECTS

HEC is a community-based non-profit fueled by support from community members like you.

## Amplifiers

Growing the influence of neighborhood superheroes and amplifying the voices of the people who best know the communities in which they live and work.

ISSUE NO. 4  
FALL 2023

## 2nd Annual Walk for Health

This year's Walk for Health couldn't be stopped by a little rain and cloudy weather. The Robla community and more than 20 community-driven organizations attended to make HEC's event memorable for the youth and families. More than 100 residents participated in the walk, which was designed and approved by our friends from Sierra Race Walkers. Before the walk started, residents were invited to do Zumba, which was very popular amongst the adults.

Youth were cheered on by their families, school staff, and the fire and police departments. They also received a medal and refreshments upon finishing the walk. The adults completed a longer route while the youth participated in activities and met with community organizations to collect stamps to be entered in a raffle.



To give back to the surrounding community, HEC donated \$1,000 to two nearby schools, Glenwood and Taylor Street Elementary, as well as \$500 to the Robla Park Neighborhood Association. Before the event wrapped up, families enjoyed a ballet folklorico performance, won prizes through the raffle, and were able to pick up free fresh produce. Many of the walkers were participants in our weekly Robla Park Walk with Friends group that meets every Thursday at 8am.

Deputy Director Martin Ross commented, "By bringing Walk for Health to Robla, HEC puts its "walk with its talk". Neighborhoods like this often get overlooked, so it is crucial that we bring equity and access to improve the overall outcomes to residents. We are doing our part collectively with key partners to show that "Health Happens Together".

## OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## MISSION STATEMENT

As a community non-profit, HEC leverages the power of collaboration to improve health outcomes in under-served communities.

For more than 30 years, HEC has made addressing the social drivers of health in under-served communities the foundation of our work.

We support this foundation by tapping into the power of collaboration. By partnering and connecting with residents, businesses, organizations, leaders, and influencers already living and working in priority neighborhoods, we have the best chance of improving health outcomes in those neighborhoods.

## ADDRESS

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## Thank You to our Walk for Health Sponsors

**Anthem** 



WELLNESS EDUCATION

## 3rd Annual School Wellness Summit: Harmony & Health

### 2023 School Wellness Summit Speakers



**BESSIE O'CONNOR, RDN**  
Dairy Council of California



**REBEKAH LATRONICA**  
Food Literacy Center



**ABBY ROSE**  
CATCH Global Foundation



**SABRINA WHITE**  
Food Literacy Center

HEC's Schools Team set out with a conference vision to bring together school leaders, families, students, and community-based organizations to collectively examine the wellness barriers that students face.

This year's online summit, "Harmony and Health: Fueling the Future with Wellness" featured sessions on the trends shaping schools, implementing schoolwide physical activity initiatives, and inspiring kids to eat their veggies. The three one-hour long interactive discussions featured the Food Literacy Center, Dairy Council of California, CATCH Global Foundation. To accommodate educators, sessions were held after students were released from school.

Following the summit, participants reported that they will use the sessions to encourage their family and students to eat healthier meals, introduce the recipes in their classrooms, and share resources with others who work with youth.

Past Summits have examined the connections between food and mood, reducing burnout, and inspiring youth to make healthy food choices. "By using feedback from the school community, we identify pressing challenges and develop workshops featuring experts to facilitate dynamic conversations rooted in solutions and collaboration" added Hibatallah Eltahir, MPH HEC Program Administrator.

Individuals interested in the topics covered during summits should consider joining the School Partners committee. For more information about the School Partners Committee contact Hibatallah Eltahir at [heltahir@healthedcouncil.org](mailto:heltahir@healthedcouncil.org).



# MOVE IT UP: Bringing COVID Education to Underserved Communities

Since 2021, HEC has partnered with UC Davis Health's Center for Reducing Health Disparities to administer MOVE IT UP (Mobilizing Organizations Via the Equitable Integration of Testing - Treatment through Unified Partnerships) program. The initiative was designed to increase access to COVID vaccinations, testing, and treatment for historically underserved communities, with a focus on Latinos and Latino farmworkers.



During phase 1 of the program, HEC supported more than 6,000 residents receive a COVID vaccine. In phase 2 our team assisted with more than 6,000 residents receiving a COVID test and treatment sources if needed. For both phases of the program, HEC staff provided outreach, education, and translation services for residents during both phases of the program. Staff also used clinics as an opportunity to provide referral support for other needs such as food security, low-cost medical care, and other health and social support services.

Program Administrator Michaella Crane added, "The Move It Up project not only brought COVID vaccines and testing to communities who were underserved and often lacked transportation to health facilities, but also allowed us to connect these populations with wraparound services. The clinics were opportunities for us to bring culturally relevant health education and connect folks with other services in their area."

## STAFF HIGHLIGHT

**Eleazar Barajas**  
Health Access Team  
Community Health Leader



Eleazar is a Community Health Leader on the Health Access team. His role includes participating in community outreach events, nutrition workshops in the migrant centers and summer youth series, and financial education. He was born in Ciudad Guzman, Mexico and grew up in Concord in the East Bay. In his spare time, he enjoys listening to health and wellness podcasts, playing with his dog, finding new music, and catching sunsets with his wife.



## Unlocking Financial Wellness for Spanish-Speaking Communities

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING



In partnership with the Mexican Consulate of Sacramento, HEC staff are helping Mexican co-nationals get access to the Financiera para el Bienestar (FINABIEN) cards through the HEC-administered Ventanilla de Asesoría Financiera (VAF). FINABIEN consists of two cards, a U.S. card that functions as a debit card and makes the transferring of funds to Mexico simpler through a mobile and web-based application. The second card is for the activation of a virtual bank account in Mexico that receives the transferred funds from the U.S. card. According to Economic Well-Being Program Assistant, Randy Davila, the cards are intended to help Mexican co-nationals create a savings account in Mexico. Access to banking in Mexico directly from the U.S. is a big need in the community.

According to Davila, HEC has helped more than 600 residents receive the FINABIEN cards. In addition to facilitating applications, HEC staff have also shown residents how to download and set up their mobile apps, so they're

able to maximize the benefits of the card. "When we are showing community members how to set up their cards, we're also able to promote our financial education resources and coaching, as well as the mental health services offered through the Ventanilla de Salud (VDS), which is also supported by HEC staff" added Davila.

In closing Davila commented, "The work at VAF is more than simply providing the cards and showing community members how to use them, we're building trust with them and showing them that there are people looking out for them."



## Youth Explore Sac: Summer of Exposure

COMMUNITY SAFETY



When you were in high school, do you remember going indoor skydiving? This summer 15 youth ages 14-18 participated in a Summer of Exposure, which included indoor skydiving, an Escape Room, a tour of State Capitol, and a boat cruise around Old Sacramento. The program culminated in a BBQ for youth and their families.

“Having worked with many of the youth through SHOP, we know their academic and extracurricular

interests, so we planned outings that would be rewarding experiences for them” commented Community Health Leader Taejon King. The staff even found a way to sneak in a STEM lesson during the indoor skydiving by working with the students to calculate their velocity and a civics lesson during the capital tour, teaching students how bills are passed in the state legislature. Also part of the program were Ladies First sessions, where female participants focused on special topics like menstrual equity and advocacy. Following the discussions, the young women assembled period packing kits that were distributed to community members.

“The students hear a lot about what they can become, so we decided to bring them into new spaces that can make careers in STEM, government, and other fields that seem attainable” added Community Health Leader Edgar Yanez. Both King and Yanez agreed that they ultimately want the youth to be comfortable broadening their horizons and navigating in new settings with confidence.

Program Director Ramsey S. King added, “In communities where violence is prevalent, and the weight of life's challenges can seem unrelenting, initiatives like the power of exposure activities that the HEC staff facilitated throughout the summer, can serve as beacons of hope, healing, and positive alternatives to violence for youth. They create opportunities for individuals to envision lives outside of trauma, forging connections between youth and their community, while nurturing healthy peer engagement.”



## Comprehensive Wellness Support for Mexican Co-Nationals

SOCIAL CONNECTION



The Bi-National Week of Health is annual week of activities and events to promote wellness to Mexican and American co-nationals residing in Northern California. The events were administered from the Mexican Consulate with a number of events being led and supported by members of the HEC team. For example, visitors to the Consulate were invited to Walk with Friends, which promotes physical activity and social connection. HEC also led workshopson mental wellness, financial

education, and nutrition. The week concluded with Celebrando Nuestra Salud (Celebrating Our Health) where our staff provided resources on healthy eating, physical activity, and more.

Program Coordinator Nora Rodriguez said, “The highlights of the Binational week of health were the COVID vaccines, osteoporosis exams, and eye exams, where they received their free glasses. Most of the participants do not have health insurance and are low-income, so these events are a great way to ensure they receive the tools needed to live a healthier life.”

## HEC in the Community



Program Director Patricia and Communications Coordinator Ruben presenting at the Metro EDGE’s EMERGE Summit about authentic community engagement. 3fold Communications and SociosPR were also on the panel.



Program Coordinators Sal and Shiva hosting activities at the Clean Air Festival in Roseville.



Program Assistant Yanira facilitating a disaster relief training during the Mobile Mexican Consulate stop in Ceres.

**Keep up with HEC on social media!**

**@healthedcouncil**



# Save the Date

## 2nd Annual HEC Open House

Join us at our South Sacramento office for a celebration of 2023 and look forward to 2024!

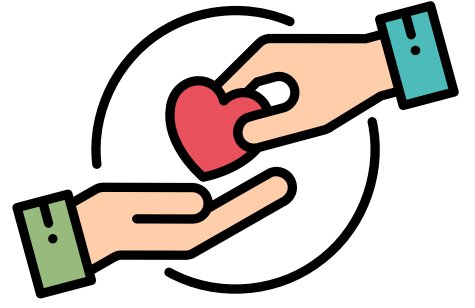


**Thursday, December 7th**

7617 Alma Vista Way  
Sacramento, CA 95831

# Support HEC's Work Today!

HEC is a community-based non-profit fueled by donations from community members like you.



Your donation will directly serve community members with important health-supporting activities. For example:

- \$25 makes vision, diabetes, and blood pressure screenings possible
- \$50 provides fresh produce & supplies for healthy cooking classes for Afghan women
- \$75 covers the costs of financial coaching for low-income families
- \$100 funds mentoring for young women
- \$200 supports mental health navigator training for community residents

Scan to visit HEC's secure online donation page



The Health Education Council is a 501(c)3 nonprofit.  
Tax ID # 680249296

## HEC'S IMPACT IN 2023



**Distributed 236,348 pounds of produce distributed to residents in low income communities.**



**4,300 residents received preventative health services through our partnerships with the Mexican Consulate.**



**More than 13,000 residents received financial and work readiness education and support.**



**Over 1,000 community members received lay mental health support.**



**At-risk youth received 2,280 hours of mentoring services.**