



HEALTH
EDUCATION
COUNCIL

Health happens together.



HEC CONNECTS

Empowering People, Improving Health

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WELLNESS EDUCATION

Planting Roots in Sacramento

The Afghan Moms' Group was established in 2020 to help the influx of Afghan families arriving in Sacramento. HEC's staff created a safe space for mothers who had students attending schools in Twin Rivers Unified School District and the San Juan Unified School District. Initially, the groups were designed to help the mothers with basic needs such as reading, writing, and speaking Farsi and English and making healthy food choices. Typically, the groups welcome 20-40 attendees, but have hosted more than 100 moms for special occasions.



Eventually, the weekly meet ups in North Highlands and Carmichael were used to facilitate cooking lessons for healthy, low-cost meals for their families. The curriculum was designed by Leah's Pantry Food Smarts and segued into other discussions about health and wellness. The participants continue to be eager to attend the sessions and are engaged in all the activities, asking questions, and seeking resources, which were provided through flyers, booklets, and websites. Program Coordinator Shiva said, "The sessions would be tough in Farsi, but we would also make sure to give instructions in English, so they could begin to learn it." As more mothers started to attend, additional meet ups were scheduled and childcare was provided, which allowed them to focus entirely on that week's lesson and socialize with the friends they had made in the group.

**Read the full story by
scanning the QR code**



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MISSION STATEMENT

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.

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FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DEBRA OTO-KENT SPEAKS AT NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION'S CONVENING ON YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH



Debra Oto-Kent, MPH was invited by Governor Gavin Newsom's Office and the State of California's Office of Health Equity to speak at the National Governors Association convening on youth mental health. Hosted by New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy and Colorado Governor Jared Polis in January, Ms. Oto-Kent's panel focused on strategies for educating youth about the mental health spectrum, stigma and empowering youth to seek support. Ms. Oto-Kent was joined on the panel by leaders from Frameworks Institute, FloraMind, California Children's Trust, and Child Mind Institute. "We focus on a host of program areas, so I was honored to speak alongside leaders who specialize on youth mental health," commented Oto-Kent.

Focusing on how mental health intersect with other social determinants of health, Ms. Oto-Kent emphasized the importance of considering integrated, comprehensive solutions with community input and community driven solutions. Using HEC's Peers Helping Peers initiative, as an example, she stressed the need for services to be culturally tailored and offered at the neighborhood/micro level. "Culturally competent services are provided in various languages and formats and engage trusted community leaders", said Oto-Kent adding, "many of the populations we serve rely on the recommendations of community leaders, so their buy-in is crucial."

Following the panel, other participants reinforced the need to address mental health in the context of the social determinants of health. Ms. Oto-Kent shared that it was refreshing to hear that HEC has implemented and been part of many of the strategies being considered that impact to mental health diagnosis, stigma reduction, treatment and community support mechanisms. In summation, Oto-Kent said "HEC is positioned to integrate mental health as a key component of total health and to have a deep impact as educators, direct service providers, and advocates for more inclusive of mental health solutions."



ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

Free One on One Financial Coaching



In partnership with Kaiser Permanente and Change Machine, during the fall of 2022, HEC launched individualized financial coaching for low-income families. HEC coaches provide free one on one coaching and workshops on topics such as budgeting, credit, reducing debt, savings, banking, and developing action steps to meet financial goals.

Coaching sessions are available in-person and virtually in Spanish, English, and Farsi.

"We started providing coaching sessions in the fall of 2022 and are pleased to help community members take steps towards improving their financial wellness," said Program Director, Patricia Parra. Building sustainable economic foundations for individuals, families, and organizations is a key component of the social determinants of health model in which HEC's work is rooted.



Community members can schedule a coaching session by scanning the QR code from a smart phone.



WELLNESS EDUCATION

Building Community in Roseville

HEC, First United Methodist Church, and a host of Roseville faith and community based organizations are celebrating one year of supporting families with monthly community gatherings. Community members of all backgrounds are invited for activities, relaxation, and a fresh produce distribution. The events include community partners who provide direct services such as tax assistance, wellness preparation and preventative health screenings. Placer County and City of Roseville staff have also attended to help families learn about programs such as CalFresh and engage with residents about their needs. Nearly 300 people have received a free COVID-19 or flu vaccinations.

Monthly themes have included Día del Niño (April), Summer Cool Down (July), Día de Muertos (October), and Los Posadas (December). The next gathering is scheduled for March 23rd at from 4pm-7pm at First United Methodist Church in Roseville located at 109 Washington Boulevard.

To learn more about the monthly gatherings, please contact Michaela Crane at mcrane@healthedcouncil.org.

STAFF HIGHLIGHT

NADIA ESPINO
COMMUNITY SAFETY TEAM
PROGRAM COORDINATOR



Nadia is a Program Coordinator on the Community Safety team where she facilitates SHOP cohorts and mentors young women to set meaningful goals. She's from Roseville and enjoys hiking and spending time with family when she's not working. A little-known fact about Nadia is that she is an identical twin.





COMMUNITY SAFETY

Youth Outreach & Mentoring



Safety, Health, Opportunity, and Practice (SHOP) is a six week program that teaches youth about effective communication skills, health and nutrition, anger management, and more. To date, more than 150 students have completed the program throughout Sacramento.

The cohorts have traditionally been co-ed, but Program Coordinator, Nadia Espino, noticed that sessions at the Swanston Community Center were mostly boys and suspected girls might be uncomfortable to attend so she created an all girl's SHOP cohort. The topics discussed were similar to the traditional SHOP sessions, however additional time is spent exploring relationship wellness, positive self-image, and whole-body wellness.

"The discussions we had were more in depth and relevant to how girls feel during this pivotal moment in life where they are growing into young women and are figuring out what they want to do in life whether that is transitioning to high school, college, or work," said Espino, who also serves as the lead facilitator.

SHOP is currently expanding to serve youth in Yolo and Placer Counties.

Peers Helping Peers Set to Expand to Oakmont High School



SOCIAL CONNECTION

With funding from Proposition 63, Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), HEC developed Peers Helping Peers (PHP), a community driven initiative intended to prepare people to be mental health navigators. Over 100 residents have been trained by PHP with many going on to lead Community Projects for Spanish-speaking and youth residents to improve their mental well-being by learning coping skills, exploring interests and hobbies and building connections with new people.

With new funding from the city of Roseville, HEC will bring PHP training to the health academy at Oakmont High School in Roseville. Beginning in March, interested students will go through a 7 week training to learn about mental health stigma and reduction, empowering students to support their peers experiencing challenges.

HEC in the Community



Food Justice Taskforce; including HEC and over a dozen community partners



MLK March: Deputy Director Martin Ross, Congresswomen Doris Matsui, and Program Director Patricia Parra



Program Assistant Yanira Molina sharing wellness resources at the Move It Up COVID testing event



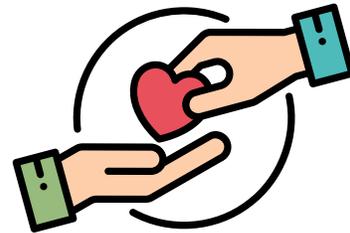
Program Administrator Atoosa Azarang speaking to a Kiwanis chapter about the importance of smoking cessation initiatives

Support HEC's Work Today!

Donations from supporters like you fuel our work.

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. Tax ID # 680249296

HEC'S WORK IN 2022



Over **2,300 students and their families** were provided resources to prepare health snacks and meals on a monthly basis.



Provided **14,000 pounds of fresh produce and food** to people living in food insecure communities.



Over **12,000 Spanish speaking** community members received financial training and consultations.



Over **1,500 Spanish-speaking adults** received preventative health screenings, attended counseling appointments, and joined support groups.



Dedicated more than **1,600 hours** mentoring youth on topics such as effective communication and personal finance.

Save the Date

**The premier Spanish-speaking women's leadership
conference in Northern California**

13TH ANNUAL

MAY 20, 2025

SOMOS 2025

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



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CONSULADO GENERAL EN SACRAMENTO



**Sponsorship packages are available and selling quickly
Contact Lupita Rodriguez at lrodriguez@healthedcouncil.org**