



Lemon Grove Restaurant Strategy Evaluation and Quality Assurance Report, July 2015

Background

The Lemon Grove HEAL Zone Steering Committee agreed that working with local restaurants to incorporate healthy menu items for adults and children (CAP 3.0 business sector) was a needed environmental change in the local business sector. This change was needed to improve consumption of healthy foods and beverages for children and families in Lemon Grove.

On behalf of the Lemon Grove HEAL Zone, Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP) subcontracted with Healthy Kids Choice, Inc. (HKC) in November 2013 to work with local restaurants to create a healthy kids and family meal menu options. In January 2014, a Healthy Restaurant Action Team comprised of Lemon Grove residents was created to inform and engage with the subcontractor to make community-informed suggestions for menu changes. A dietician with experience working with restaurant owners and menus reviewed and approved all menu changes. Healthy options incorporated the foods each restaurant already used to ensure feasible changes. Community input, advocacy, and promotion would ensure the menu options were sustainable. Without strong community engagement, this strategy will likely fail.

After a first round of restaurants were contacted, the City of Lemon Grove mailed all restaurants with active business licenses a letter encouraging them to take advantage of the free business modifications and promotion. This resulted in ten restaurants participating and working with HKC and Lemon Grove residents to develop healthy menu options.

10 Lemon Grove participating restaurants:

FIRST CHINESE EXPRESS	COOP'S WEST TEXAS BBQ
KING BURRITO	ROSARITO'S MEXICAN FOOD #7
HERRERA'S MEXICAN & SEAFOOD	NANDO'S TACO SHOP
LIDO'S ITALIAN FOODS	CHARLEY'S FAMOUS HAMBURGERS
GROVE GRINDER	LOS RIOS MEXICAN & SEAFOOD

Work with these ten restaurants spanned the 2014 calendar year culminating in a promotional event for restaurants at the Lemon Grove Community Bonfire in December. Healthy Lemon Grove business postcards were created in August 2014 and provided to Lemon Grove Family Health Center patients participating in a diabetes prevention course.



a project facilitated by:
COMMUNITY HEALTH
IMPROVEMENT PARTNERS
making a difference together

Method

HEAL Zone staff conducted quality assurance site visits to the 10 Lemon Grove restaurants that adopted healthy menus. Staff visited each restaurant and recorded signs of compliance the restaurants agreed to after implementation. These signs included the HEAL Zone window decal displayed on the business exterior, a HEAL Zone menu posted near point of purchase, and having the cashier ask if we were interested in ordering from and/or answer questions about the healthy menu items displayed.

Results

Healthy restaurant	Menu displayed at point of purchase/order	Window decal	Notes
First Chinese Express	Yes	Yes	
King Burrito	No	No	NEW OWNER » Burros + Fries
Herrera's	Yes	Yes	
Lido's Italian Foods	No	No	Family meal available upon request
Grove Grinder	No	No	menu online has no mention of HEAL Zone
Coop's West Texas BBQ	Yes, Kid's Meal	Yes	Family Meal no longer available. Kid's meal not popular because parents usually let children share their food.
Rosarito's Mexican Food #7	No	Yes	Wheat tortillas are available
Nando's Taco Shop	No	No	
Los Rios Mexican & Seafood	No	Yes	
Charley's Hamburgers	No	Yes [2]	Offers two salads and veggie pita

One of the participating businesses closed and changed owners (see King Burrito). Half of original 10 restaurants display the HEAL Zone Healthy Restaurant decal outside their business. However, only 3 of the 10 restaurants display the healthy menu at the point of purchase or order.

Conclusion and next steps

While recruiting and adding healthy kids and family menus to 10 Lemon Grove restaurants was successful, the compliance and sustainability has not been as successful. HEAL Zone recommends reassessing the strength of this strategy with Steering Committee and RLA graduates to develop next steps to make the strategy more sustainable to meet the community health goals of increasing consumption of healthy foods and beverages where Lemon Grove residents purchase.