

ACTIVITY ROOM



OPAL Case Study Vegies, they're GrAte

Northern Areas Council and District Councils
of Mount Remarkable and Peterborough


Goal: Home Meals

Theme: Make it a Fresh Snack

Strategy: Marketing and Awareness

Summary

OPAL developed a campaign with local primary schools and supermarkets in the Mount Remarkable area to address barriers to the consumption of vegetables by children and their families. Over the year additional strategies built on the 'Vegies, they're GrAte' campaign adding in physical activity to extend the impact of the initiative.

 **'If my kids see vegies they will generally complain or refuse to eat them but they are eating these muffins happily and have no idea that any vegies are in them.'**

Parents at Peterborough Primary School fruit and veg month celebration.

Our approach

In February 2013 the OPAL team began the four-week 'Vegies, they're GrAte' campaign focussing each week on a particular vegetable that can be grated into everyday meals. The aim was to capture children's imagination by promoting the focus vegetables as The Fantastic Four: Captain Carrot, Zuper Zucchini, Powerman Pumpkin and Kung-Fu Cucumber. School and council newsletters, local media and shops provided information, recipes and tastings.

OPAL also engaged with the local supermarkets to support the marketing of the focus vegetable, offer sales on that product and provide OPAL-developed recipe cards at point of sale.

A 'Where is Captain Carrot' competition maintained the campaign momentum with children from all three OPAL councils invited to guess where the pictures of Captain Carrot had been taken. This required students to explore up to six local parks, many for the first time, adding in an active play focus. OPAL invited students to create a comic book of the Fantastic Four vegetables and develop a comic story that promotes the benefits of eating vegetables everyday. This comic will be distributed to all OPAL primary school sites and used as a positive resource to encourage increased consumption of vegetables.

Our achievements

This project successfully built a partnership between OPAL and local schools. Prior to the Captain Carrot competition, there were two uninitiated contacts from schools or parent groups. Following the program, there were seven requesting information, workshops, education and support.

Over 50 entries were received for the 'Where is Captain Carrot' competition from across the OPAL region. Children have become familiar and comfortable with the positive messages surrounding the Fabulous Four vegies and show great excitement when Captain Carrot visits their school.

Children's Home Vegie Garden kits including seeds to plant strawberries, snow peas and carrots were awarded as prizes to the three best entries. Follow up phone contact via the school with the award winners indicated that all gardens have been planted, increasing activity in the home environment to produce local food. There were 600 recipe cards distributed to supermarkets and 18% of these were taken by shoppers.

Opal



Resources

The OPAL team prepared materials including newsletter articles, recipe cards, point of sale marketing posters, 'On Special' store board templates, information sheets as well as the competition materials. Captain Carrot is a half metre high soft toy purchased from a retailer. Children created their own versions of the Fabulous Four.

'I can't believe the kids are eating parsnip!'

Parents at Peterborough Primary School fruit and veg month celebration.

About OPAL?

The OPAL (Obesity Prevention and Lifestyle) initiative supports children, families and their communities to eat well and be active. It is South Australia's largest ever investment in obesity prevention. OPAL uses a range of interconnected strategies to build knowledge and skills and change policies and environments in partnerships with others to support healthy behaviour. This case study is one of many linked projects that together are helping children, through their families and communities, to be healthy now and stay healthy for life.

Contact:

OPAL Council Manager
Northern Areas Council
District Council of Mount Remarkable
District Council of Peterborough
Tel: (08) 8662 2018
Website: www.nacouncil.sa.gov.au

Why

The South Australian Fruit and Veg month held in February each year offered an opportunity to address children's low levels of vegetable consumption. School and community awareness raising about quick, easy ways to add vegetables to everyday meals and promotions of vegetables through supermarkets helped overcome barriers related to motivation, forgetfulness, lack of knowledge and convenience.

Who

Primary school children and their families in the Northern Areas, Mount Remarkable and Peterborough region were the focus.

Rationale

SA Health survey results indicate that while many children and adults are meeting the minimum daily fruit intake, very few are meeting their vegetable intake. In 2011 children aged 5-11 were eating only 2.3 serves of vegetables on average compared with the recommended 2-4 serves for children 4 to 7 years and 3-5 serves for children 8 to 11 years. The Go for 2&5 campaign focus on 'the more you eat, the more they'll eat' recognised that parents need to role model eating vegetables to encourage consumption by children¹. The focus on grating vegetables into meals addressed the barrier of child resistance to vegetables as identified in OPAL market research.

¹ SA Health. Go for 2 Fruit and 5 Veg Campaign Information Bulletin September 2011 [on line]. Available at: www.gofor2and5.com.au/Portals/0/PDFs/2and5_SA_CampaignInfoBulletin_Sep2011.pdf. (Accessed 12 August 2013)