2021 Impact

Educators Siew Guan Lee and Andy West received a community transformation grant for $43,999 from the City of Twin Falls through the Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation for Health, and $4,300 from SNAP-Ed to provide gardens, gardening and nutrition education, and access to fresh produce for low-income families in Twin Falls County. The goal is to create systemic and environmental change in the community to improve children’s health. They established 14 garden sites, in partnership with many community entities. Over 65 gardening and nutrition education classes were held, reaching 776 low-income youth and adults. Lee secured an additional $11,817 of in-kind and industry donations for materials and supplies.

The Twin Falls County Pollinator Demonstration Garden project came together with donations from local partners, grants from the Idaho Native Plant Society and Idaho Botanical gardens and support from the Magic Valley Master Gardener Association. Round one was completed in fall 2021 with the planting of 150 native pollinator plants. The garden will be complete this spring with remaining areas planted and signs installed.

4-H in Twin Falls County

Lee collaborated with three educators from University of Georgia Extension to offer a Kids in the Kitchen Virtual Cooking Club to address the increased need for healthy cooking education due to COVID-19. The program builds confidence and increases self-efficacy in the kitchen. The team offered 31 sessions throughout Idaho and Georgia, reaching over 1,200 youth and adults from 30 counties across six states. Average attendance was 40 per class, almost tripling regular in-person classes, with more than half attending two or more sessions. Survey results showed 92% gained food safety and nutrition knowledge; 93% increased self-efficacy for cooking; 93% gained cooking skills; and 100% of recipes had been made again.

4-H program assistants provided 52 hours of educational programming to Hansen Elementary School youth. They also worked with the Boys and Girls Club 21st Century Community Learning Center to provide out-of-school programs to 50 K-2 youth at Lincoln, Bickel and Oregon Trail Elementary Schools.

$30,000 in ARPA funding was secured to provide supplies for 640 seventh graders at Twin Falls School District Middle Schools to dissect a variety of animals utilizing the Dabble in Dissection curriculum pilot. This program provided the opportunity for students to focus on the digestive systems in each of eight animal species and identify similarities and differences across the animal kingdom.

On the Horizon

The community garden project has been expanded into local elementary school classroom gardens, making the gardens more accessible during the school year. Over 60 gardens were placed in January 2022 and three more schools will start this fall. The team has also received in-kind support from local greenhouses and Chobani and will create a protocol in 2022 for Eat Smart Idaho team members to replicate in their district for a statewide impact.