

Abstract

As the obesity rates among children have increased examining the causes of this rise is imperative. One of the many reasons for the increase is the amount of meals eaten away from the home and even though young men of color may be less likely to be overweight or obese, chronic diseases associated with poor diets such as diabetes, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia still adversely affect them. Studies show that there is a connection between unhealthy eating and the development of the aforementioned chronic diseases. Therefore, the purpose of this Capstone Project, *WooFood Cooks*, is to bring high school-aged men of color into the kitchen, expose them to micronutrient rich foods, and teach them to cook healthy meals so that they can take these skills home to their families and employ these into adulthood. By having multiple opportunities to learn about, prepare, cook, and eat meals with fruits, vegetables, and lean meats, this program will hopefully have a long-term positive impact on the health of these young men. After the completion of the classes the young men enjoyed the time in the kitchen and learned new cooking skills that they could implement in their homes. However, this project demonstrated that there is more work to be done in the community with bringing families together into teaching kitchens to help them see a new way of cooking traditional meals. It will also impart the necessary knowledge to parents desiring to best serve the health outcomes and behaviors of their children.

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