

The Link Youth Health Service

10 for 10

SHARING STORIES - LOCAL ACTION ON FOOD SECURITY

Determinant of food security:
Food supply and access

Sub-determinant:
Knowledge and skills

Location & year:
Southern Tasmania, 2013

Story tellers:
David Perez, CEO, The Link Youth Health Service

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Summary/Description

The Link is a service dedicated to providing free health care to young Tasmanians. The service also supports young people by offering free fresh produce to make cheap and nutritious meals.

Initially, many of their clients weren't sure how to use the fresh ingredients to prepare a meal.

Through the 10 for 10 project, staff at the Link have connected with young people through the cooking and sharing of food. The project has helped the Link to build a new kitchen area, with extra fridges, an open eating area and a pizza oven.

Free weekly lunches are prepared for clients, and the staff hold cooking classes in their new kitchen facilities, using fresh seasonal ingredients from Second Bite and Urban Farming Tasmania.

Benefits and achievements

Since the new kitchen space was installed, it has become the heart of The Link – the tables and chairs give the room a 'family living room' feel, and the open benches make young people feel welcome to drop in and make a sandwich or share a meal with the staff.

"It doesn't matter who you are or where you're from, food brings people together."

David Perez, CEO.

The room has also attracted new groups of young people to The Link Youth Health Centre, with students from nearby secondary schools dropping in more often. This is important, because it means more young people in Hobart are aware of The Link, and feel comfortable talking to staff and seeking help when they need it.



Challenges

Initially some of the staff at The Link were apprehensive about the new kitchen space and cooking classes - they expected that maintaining the space might mean extra work. But young people value the new kitchen space and help to keep the room clean, which has meant minimal extra time and effort for staff to look after the area.

The 10 for 10 project started as a cooking program, but it has now become much more – sharing food and cooking together has helped staff at The Link Youth Health Service to connect in new ways with the young people that they support. The program has now been integrated into other activities at The Link.



Promotion

The Link Youth Health Service have promoted their new kitchen space and free cooking classes to their clients through social media, and through posters and fliers.

This was chosen as the most effective method of reaching adolescents and young adults, and staff at The Link have found there has been a good attendance at the cooking classes.



Funding

The Link Youth Health Service 10 for 10 project is an initiative of the Food For All Tasmanians Fund. A number of organisations have worked alongside The Link to support the project, including the Food Bank, Urban Farming Tasmania and Second Bite through their supply of fresh food.

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Information was compiled by **Population Health Services (DHHS)** in partnership with this initiative and the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

