

## COMMUNITY NUTRITION EDUCATION SERVICES, INC.

“PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN URBAN LOS ANGELES # 4

The basic themes during the time period of April 2010 through November 2010 focused on consumer gardening activities; water related issues in the Los Angeles Basin and large scale activities held in Los Angeles that focused on the environment. Community Nutrition Education Services, Inc. (CNESINC) was involved in the following activities.

### **Gardening** April- July 2010

A backyard gardener and her family living in the city of Los Angeles chronicled their spring/summer gardening activities for a series on the CNESINC.org website. The series, covering the April through July time frame, addressed issues that included water usage, insect infestation, and replanting vegetables that did not survive the initial planting cycle. Reviewers of the series noted that this was useful information for the urban resident who may need some encouragement to start backyard gardening activities. An outgrowth of the series was the development of educational material encouraging all clients and community groups involved in our nutrition education classes to begin planting vegetables grown in flower pots or in their own backyards. The in-class questionnaire entitled, “What do you know about food sustainability?” seeks to encourage consumers to thinking about exploring gardening as a source of vegetables for family meals. The second brochure entitled “Eat more vegetables in your meal” (English and Spanish versions) is available at the “Of Consumer Interest” section of the cnesinc.org website.

Over an 8 week time period between April 30 and June 30, 2010, volunteer efforts were performed in a community garden in the Los Angeles area. This time of year was the initial stages of the planting season so the work involved primarily the planting and general maintenance of the garden area. The community garden setting was very interesting especially the politics of which specific community residents actually participated in the gardening efforts. This experience was an insight into community

gardens that are described as public spaces often found in urban areas used by a group of people to grow flowers, fruits, and vegetables. Individuals or groups usually pay a small fee for the use of a plot of land year by the year. Community gardens give people the opportunity to grow the foods they love most-sometimes they grow foods from their own cultures that aren't as easy to get in the USA. Community Gardens create space for people to grow their own food, and gardening is good exercise.

May 2010- Attended the inaugural meeting of the Bell Shelters Garden Project (Bell, CA). This residential shelter program offers transitional care for up to 350 homeless men and women. The goal of the Shelters program is to provide a one-stop solution to the homeless condition by addressing the problems and barriers that keep homeless men and women from achieving self-sufficiency. The Garden Project meeting was planned in order to begin to explore efforts to provide additional produce for the meals provided at the shelter. Several voluntary and governmental agencies were in attendance at this meeting. There was a follow-up meeting in September 2010. At the request of the Garden Projects coordinators, CNESINC produced a nutrition education brochure entitled, “Nutrition Facts-Fruits and Vegetables Commonly Harvested in Southern California”. This reference guide provides nutrition facts on the fiber and vitamin content of 50 different produce items commonly harvested in Southern California. It is available on the [cnesinc.org](http://cnesinc.org) web site.

June 2010 The California Higher Education Sustainability Conference included a tour of community gardens located in Los Angeles. These Community Gardens play an integral role in making city living enjoyable and sustainable for people in various geographical areas around Los Angeles. There are more than 70 community gardens in Los Angeles, the tour covered 7 of those located in diverse cultural group throughout the city.

July 2010-Poster presentation at 2010 American Horticultural Society National Children and Youth garden Symposium held July 22-24, 2010 in Pasadena California. The event allowed for CNESINC to showcase the Food Web Mobile and Activity Guide Tool Kit. This product provides the basics for introducing the concept of the Food Web to 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students. The presentation included lesson plans, art work, and vocabulary terms.

## Water

August November 2010

Attend public meeting of Board of Water and Power Commissioners for the Department of Water and Power of The City of Los Angeles. Topic discussed included water supply assessment (included discussion of a community garden); sustainability program related to recycling, reclaiming and conservation of water supply by ratepayers. This was a very interesting perspective from the bureaucracy side of the water issues relevant to the impact of water ordinances on the ratepayers.

Tour of West Basin Water Efficient Demonstration Garden in El Segundo (Los Angeles County) that has a long recycling history and reputation as a world-class leader in water reuse. Since 1992, Edward C Little Water Recycling Facility has reclaimed 30 million gallons of water daily at the state-of-the-art recycling facility.

Attended 3 workshops in a series that focused on Ocean Friendly Gardening including basic gardening and landscaping classes and hands-on workshop. The challenges: 1) California's water reserves are at historic lows and are predicted to keep dropping, 2) up to 70% of our water is used for outdoor landscaping, 3) in Los Angeles county alone 300 million gallons of polluted urban runoff end up in our oceans EVERYDAY, and 4) twenty percent of California's electricity is used to move and clean drinking water

Their Solution: Planting an Ocean Friendly Garden; Reduce outdoor water use by 60%; Conserve resources and prevent runoff. Enjoy a beautiful native and edible garden habitat.

## Environmental Focus

June-August, 2010

In June 2010, at the beautiful Central Library in downtown Los Angeles, a panel presentation entitled, "Advancing Urban Agriculture in Los Angeles. Back to Basics" was conducted. The panel of experts including academicians, urban planners, community leaders, etc. discussed the emergence of urban agriculture in Los Angeles, with a focus on such key topics as policies, challenges, trends and current programs.

On August 13, 2010, set among the high rises of down town Los Angeles, the 1st Annual Jules Vern Nature Day was convened. This event focused on sustainability and the environment. There were events targeting kids including those in attendance from the John Muir Elementary School as well as informative displays focused on solar energy and sustainable seafood. Numerous environmental friendly organizations were present that focused on inspiring, engaging and supporting people to take personal responsibility for the urban environment, making it safe, healthy, fun and sustainable and to share the process as a model for the world.

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