

**PROGRAM TITLE:** Horticultural Therapeutic Community Center (HTCC)  
**PROVIDER:** West Fresno Family Resource Center

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

The HTCC-Growing Hope Community Garden is aimed at addressing Mental Health concerns among unserved/underserved populations in Fresno County. The Community Garden is a culturally competent site that not only helps in the reduction of isolation, anxiety and depression. It also fosters intercultural as well as intergenerational social bonding. This site has been instrumental in the alleviation of sedentary life-styles for those who participate in its garden activities, thus reducing stress levels in the process. It also serves as a source of nutrition for those who do not have the resources available to make healthy purchases. The Growing Hope Community Garden is a traditionally culturally- relevant and welcoming platform for community gathering where participants can garden and reap the rewards of their harvest; a place to share and discuss issues relevant to the community, where peer support and Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) activities may be provided for the mental and physical well-being of the community.

**AGES SERVED:**

Children

Adult

TAY

Older Adult

**DATES OF OPERATION:** January 2014- Present

**DATES OF DATA REPORTING PERIOD:** June 2015 - July2016

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Erected 6X6 “ sign displaying name of Garden Site along with hours of operation as well as contact and safety information.

Construction of overhead shelter projected to start before end of winter 2016.

Secured and prepared land; Planted crops; harvested crops;

Added six fruit trees along the perimeter of garden that consisted of (Lemon, Apricot, Peach )trees

Increased community connectedness;

Improved family functioning.

Displayed Mental Health related materials, hours of operations, contact information and emergency directions.

Families planted and harvested crops to included, tomatoes, collard and mustard greens, peppers, bell peppers, corn, squash, egg-plant sweet potatoes, water melons, and flowers.

During this reporting period staff maintained the Healthy Lifestyle Club. Garden members meet each week to discuss, mental health education, community resources and garden education. Our staff recognizes that educational presentations increase community connectedness and improve health outcomes.

Garden members reported a strong reliance on the vegetables that our community garden yields as a way to provide nutritious snacks for their families. While the program goal is to decrease the stigma associated with mental health, we also understand that there are other residual benefits derived from gardening, such as the dissipation of food insecurities and the provision of a safe, tranquil environment that is conducive to mental relaxation.

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Increased resources for ant stigma and MH information; maximum community participation, including consumers, community leaders, MH providers, etc. Reduced stigma; increased MH education in community;

Reduced stress and anxiety of participants;

Participating families feel increased social support and reduced isolation.

Demographic information;

Garden members reported unemployment, lack of food and safe places for youth to play as causes of high levels of stress.

With this dilemma in mind our Director Yolanda Randles elected to implement the Sweet Potato Project, which is a program designed to give disenfranchised youth the opportunity to reap the benefits of horticultural therapy along with their parents.

Garden members report an increase in social support and a reduction in isolation. Members participate in monthly food give away, referrals to Cal Fresh (food stamp) and job readiness to assist families with stress and isolation.

Targeted area included Southwest Fresno. To date there are 23 families participating in West Fresno Family Resource Center's Horticultural Therapeutic Community Center Garden. This equates to approximately 100 + individuals that reap the benefits of our site,

15 African American (71%)

6 Hispanic (29%)

2 males (0.09) and 19 females (90%). Marital status = 4 married participants (19%) Single = 11 participants (52%) Divorced = 2 (0.09%) Widowed = 4 (19%)

PEI programs targeted at underserved/un-served cultural communities;

From these numbers the vast majority of the participants are female and our number also reflect that close to half of our participants are single or are from single parent households. Although, we could not accurately determine median household income it would appear that the majority of our stressors are derived from, single parent households and are economically based.

During this reporting period information regarding Mental Health was provided at the Healthy Lifestyle Club weekly meetings. Topics included, nutrition education, physical fitness, stress management, depression, understanding isolation, health education i.e. Diabetes Care, Breast Cancer, Asthma, High Blood Pressure, Urinary Tract Infection, Menopause and Middle Age Crisis, Heart Health, Cultural Awareness, Elder Abuse and Osteoporosis.

During this reporting period garden members increased knowledge and access to care during Healthy Lifestyle Club meetings.

In addition to Mental Health and Health Education, the Healthy Lifestyle Club also offered monthly celebrations, i.e. birthday or holiday. Garden members participated by providing food or entertainment.

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	<p>Guest speakers were also invited to provide information on social service programs. For example, Fresno State Department of Nursing conducted health education and referrals to a medical provider.</p>
<p>Reduced stigma; increased MH education in community;</p>	<p>The HTCC continues to serve as a catalyst to bring people from all walks of life together for a common cause, a healthy community.</p>
<p>Increased knowledge and access to care.</p>	<p>As a result of garden members participating in Job Readiness, Nutrition Education, Physical Fitness, monthly food give away and activities for youth. During this reporting period no referrals were made to higher levels of services.</p>
<p>Increased culturally appropriate social supports, resources and rehab services;</p>	<p>Garden members are regularly invited to our facility for meals and are encouraged to exchange cultural dishes, as well as cultural entertainment. Guest speakers are also invited to provide information on social service programs. For example, Fresno State Department of Nursing conducted health education and referrals to a medical providers.</p>
<p>Increased awareness of types of stigmatization and tolerance of others; Improved well-being and hopefulness among community members.</p>	<p>The HTCC strives to serve as a bridge between those individuals that need services and the resources at their disposal. We continually search for new ways to facilitate consumer as well as citizen participation in organizational as well as community</p>

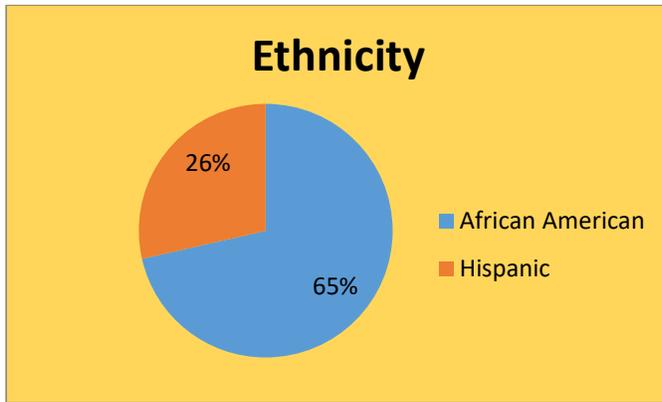
programs such as the Horticultural Therapeutic Community Center Garden.

Reduced need for higher level of services.

We realize that nurturing relationships is an ongoing challenge and to be completely culturally competent is an impossible task. Yet our staff understand that it is imperative that we remain culturally aware and sensitive to the needs of others at all times if we are to accomplish our goal of creating an egalitarian environment where individuals from all backgrounds feel comfortable and welcomed.

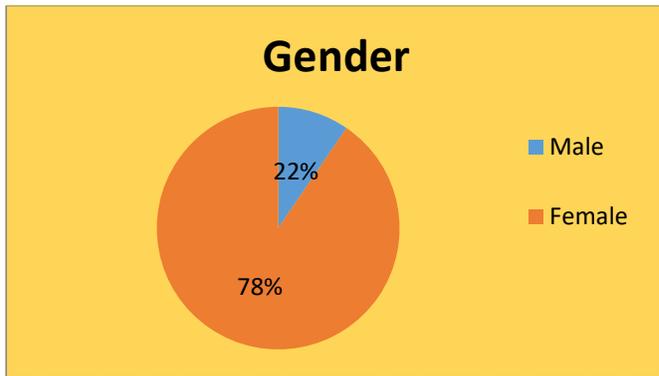
**DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION(S):**

**See page 2 for tables**

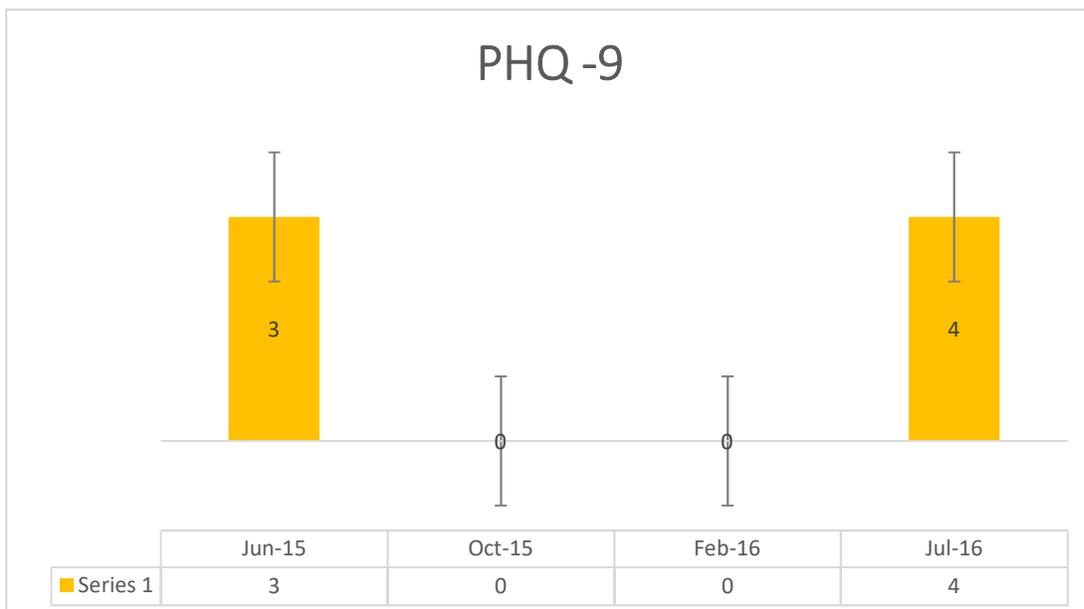
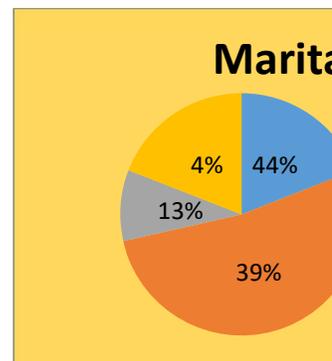


Our target area encompasses Southwest Fresno’s District 3. The demographic breakdown of the 23 garden participants are as follows, 15 African-Americans (65%), 8 Hispanic (35%).

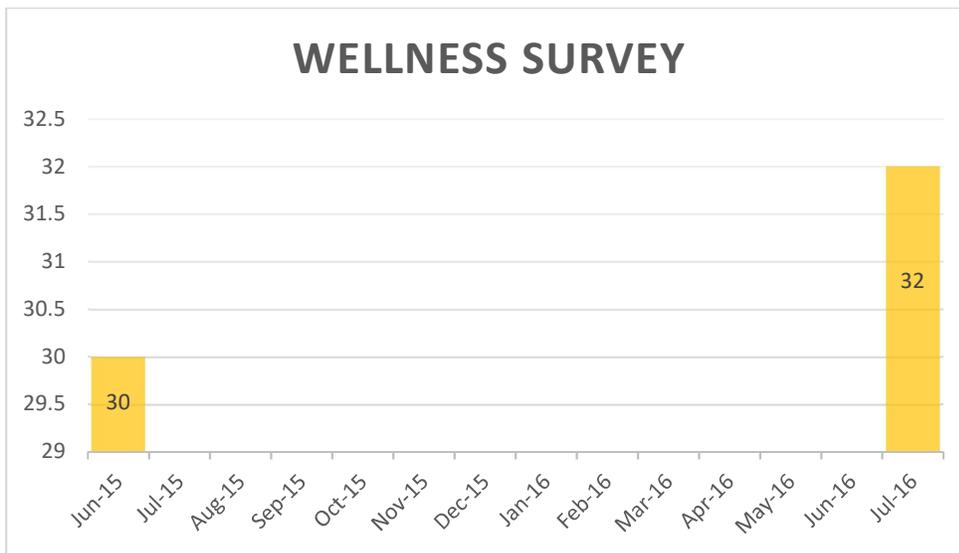
Five male participants (22%) and 18 female participants (78%).



Marital status = 10 married participants (44%), 9 single participants (39%), 3 divorced participants (13%), and 1 widowed participant (4%).

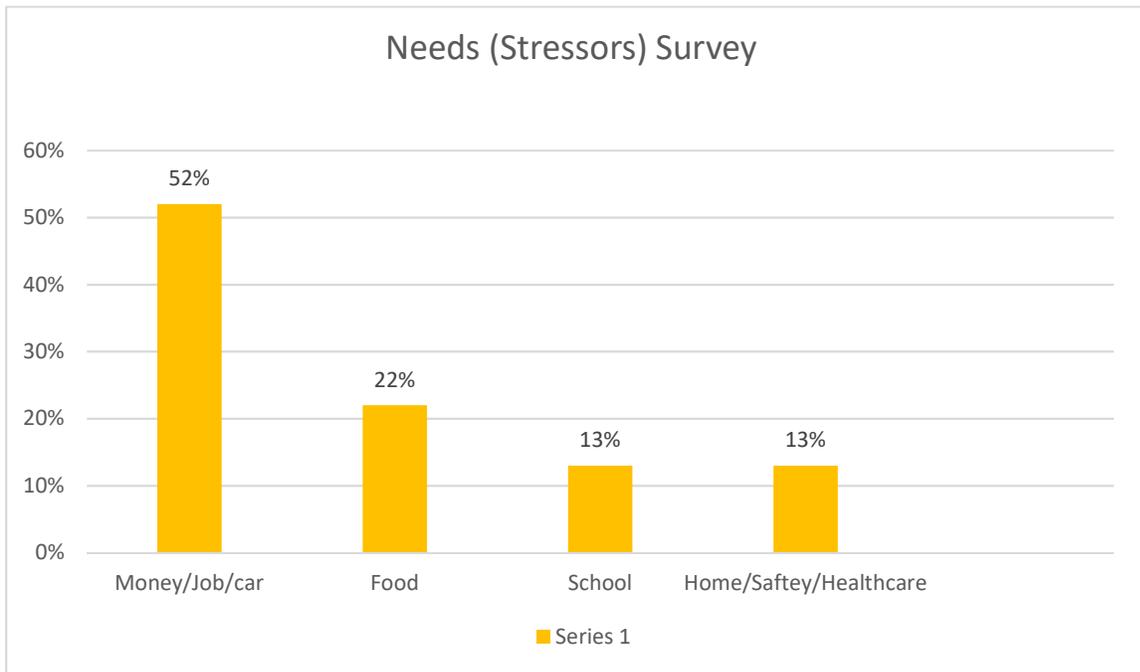


The Phq-9 scores above reflects an average score of 4 from data gathered as a result of follow-up assessments beginning (June 2015) and ending (July 2016). During this time our participation level was 23 participants with an average stress level per participant measuring at a very minimal levels. What also has to be noted is that many of our healthy lifestyle club members (garden participants) are heads of house-holds and as such are representative of a much larger sub - population that also reap the benefits of the garden.



Jun of 2015 reflects the average score from Intake 2 Wellness Survey reaching 21 participants. This report is only on those individuals who completed the second intake during this period.

July 2016 is the average score from Intake II Wellness Survey reaching 23 participants. This reflects a slightly reduced stress level amongst participants.



During this reporting period June 2015 – July 2016, out of 23 consumers 12 (52%) reported having needs and or stressors that were financially related. 5 (22%) reported food insecurities as a source of stress, 3 (13%) stated that problems enrolling in school was a source of stress. 3 (13%) of the remaining consumers reported safety or issues related to well-being as their primary source of concern.

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