Building an Appetite for Health…
An Academic Medical Center’s Campus Farmers’ Market and Outreach Initiatives
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Background
Over the past five years, the Farmers’ Market in Hershey has expanded to provide healthy food choices and education to not only our campus but also to our underserved local community. This initiative supports the goal of Healthy People 2020 to “promote health and reduce chronic disease risk through the consumption of healthful diets and achievement and maintenance of healthy body weights.” Academic farmers’ markets need to distinguish themselves by providing innovative programs to all age groups and expanding through community partnerships, student projects and grant funding to reach high risk individuals. Best practices and unique strategies are identified that could be easily replicated by other health-promoting hospitals.

Objectives
1. Provide education with a focus on kids.
2. Increase access to fruits and vegetables to underserved and high risk populations.
3. Establish effective partnerships.

Health Detective Program
The Health Detective program and activity booklet designed for children was developed from the input of eight clinical departments and was created by a MPH student. The program offered eight interactive sessions at the summer Farmers’ Market in Hershey, the YMCA, and the County Library System. It was also available on the Department of Health and PRO Wellness Center websites. Topics included:
- Swim Safety
- Color and Crunch (vegetables)
- Get Out and Explore
- Heart Healthy & Brain Smart
- Energy Balance
- Creepy Crawlers
- Sun Safety
- Diabetes

Results - 2014 Market Season
- 685 people participated in the market Health Detective booth.
- 1,500 Health Detective booklets distributed to the community.
- 5,361 booklet downloads made.
- 500+ underserved or high risk individuals received 2,400+ pounds of fruits & vegetables.

Increasing Access
- Wellness on Wheels partnered with a local school’s Books on Board bus to deliver produce and educational messages weekly.
- A Therapy Services staff member delivered produce and education to an underserved site through the Patient Driving program.
- Prescription as Produce was designed for medical students to serve as Nutrition Navigators for the Pediatric Weight Loss Clinic and in an underserved medical clinic.
- The Online Farmers’ Market was developed to help people with a busy schedule have access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Lessons Learned
- Collaboration with many campus departments, students and community partners is a must.
- Delivery coordination is key and weather must be considered.
- Cooking demonstrations and food tastings of unfamiliar items should be provided.
- Educational messages must be age and culturally appropriate.
- A parent message should be included with all kids’ activities.
- Determine measures for impact; for example, did increasing access to fruits and vegetables increase consumption of them and improve health?

Reference