



# **WSU Yakima County Extension** **SNAP-Ed Program Overview**

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—Education Component **2021**

## **“Making Healthy Food Accessible”**



### **What is the WSU Yakima SNAP-Ed program?**

The WSU Yakima SNAP-Ed program is a nutrition education program whose primary objectives are to make healthy food accessible for the food insecure population of Yakima County, to increase participation in physical activity, and to “plant the seed” of gardening in the hearts of our participants. We focus on behavior change and Policy, Systems, and Environment (PSE) work that enables our participants to lead full, healthy, and productive lives.

WSU Yakima SNAP-Ed consists of a small-but-mighty team of four (mostly part-time) employees who work together to build and maintain community connections and relationships, educate and foster behavior change in our participants, and strive for sustainability within all of our programming.

Through funding cycles, budget cuts, and changing priorities, the WSU Yakima SNAP-Ed program has remained flexible and creative, always putting our partners and participants first by ensuring that they receive the absolute best programming we are capable of administering.

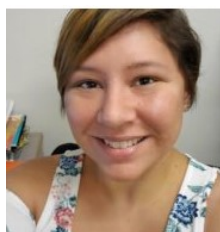
We hope that this quick overview gives you some idea of what our local SNAP-Ed program is currently doing, as well as what we plan to focus on in the future.

### **WSU Yakima SNAP-Ed’s 2021 Programing includes:**

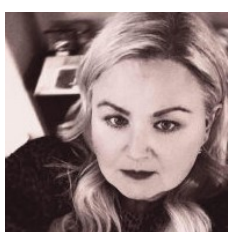
- **The Yakima Union Gospel Mission (YUGM)**
- **Triumph Treatment Center’s Women’s Campus (Rehab Facility)**
- **Downtown Yakima Farmer’s Market**
- **Nob Hill Elementary School**
- **Community Coalition Building, Networking, GIS project**

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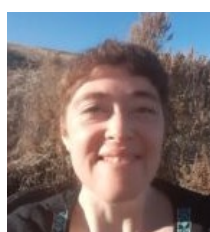
## **Our WSU Yakima SNAP-Ed Team**



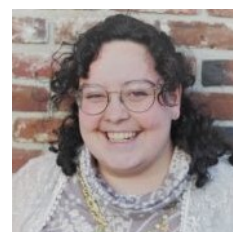
**Holly Lacell**  
**Program Coordinator**



**Chery Reese**  
**Program Assistant**



**Lea Draven**  
**Program Assistant**



**Mary Pearl Ivy**  
**Program Assistant**



## WSU Yakima SNAP-Ed During Covid-19

As a program that is rooted in community outreach and involvement, COVID-19 brought new challenges to the WSU Yakima SNAP-Ed program. By pivoting towards Policy, Systems, and Environment (PSE) changes at our sites, we were able to keep participants engaged in behavior change.

Examples of nutrition and wellness outreach we engaged in during COVID-19 include: a minimal-contact community garden & Veggie Prescription Program; a mini food pantry project to be installed in the YUGM's free clinic; a tomato plant distribution project in conjunction with WSU Master Gardeners; and the piloting of virtual nutrition education classes.

## What does SNAP-Ed provide for the Community?

- Basic research-based nutrition education
- The skills to spend SNAP dollars wisely
- A decrease in unhealthy behaviors, which can lead to a decrease in medical expenses
- Life skills that aid in food security, better nutrition, increased physical activity, and better mental health
- A focus on putting the community first—SNAP-Ed engages in evaluation with the community to ensure our programming is what the community wants and needs, not what we assume is needed.

## Latest Statewide SNAPshot

### FFY 2020 SNAPshot:



**10,699** Youth and **715** Adults participated in **520** Direct Education Programs; **337** PSE activities reached over **700,000** individuals, **95** of which were launched in the past year.



**70%** of K-2nd graders knew their **fruit**.



**40%** of adults did more **physical activity**.



**SNAP-Ed met new needs during the COVID-19 pandemic by:**

- promoting **food access** resources to clients
- increasing **social media** use to reach clients
- offering **virtual education** options
- creating systems to donate **produce**
- supporting creation of new **mobile vending** sites





## **SNAP-Ed & The Yakima Union Gospel Mission (YUGM)**

### **The Mission's Medical Clinic: Community Garden**

The WSU Yakima SNAP-Ed program has been working with the YUGM's onsite medical clinic for approximately four years. Our primary avenue of outreach has been the raised-bed garden that we helped the clinic establish.

This garden started with 6 donated apple bins and by the next year had expanded to 12 apple bins. Each year, all produce from the garden was distributed to the clinic patients via a "veggie prescription" program.

Pre-COVID-19, WSU Yakima SNAP-Ed also conducted recipe demonstrations in the clinic waiting room using the fresh produce from the garden. Over the years, this garden has produced hundreds of pounds of fresh vegetables that have benefited those in need of better health.

The garden program carried on (slightly modified) through the height of COVID-19. For the 2021 gardening season, the garden is being moved and expanded to encompass more of the YUGM's community (pg. 4).

### **The Mission's Medical Clinic: Mini Food Pantry**

In addition to the gardening program, WSU Yakima SNAP-Ed is working with the clinic to install a mini food pantry within the clinic itself. This mini food pantry would include basic staple foods with an emphasis on fruits and vegetables harvested from the garden.

Many of the clinic's patients are food insecure as well as having chronic illnesses such as diabetes. With the on-site mini food pantry, doctors and nurses can talk to patients about healthy food choices and then "prescribe" them a trip to the mini pantry for some healthy food options.

### **The Mission's Medical Clinic: Project Tomato Plant**

In collaboration with the WSU Master Gardener's program, WSU Yakima SNAP-Ed has distributed over 200 tomato plants to the patients at the YUGM's clinic, along with information in English and Spanish on how to care for their new plants. If each plant produces approximately 10lbs of tomatoes, that could mean 2,000lbs of tomatoes in the hands of the community.

### **The Mission's Bridge Program**

The YUGM's Bridge Program is a clean and sober transitional program that helps clients set goals and connect to resources as they move forward to what comes next.

WSU Yakima SNAP-Ed partnered with the Bridge program to offer the research-based curriculum Around the Table to Bridge's participants.

This was also one of the first instances of a SNAP-Ed program in Washington State conducting virtual nutrition lessons with adult participants.

While the virtual format (through Zoom) created some difficulties, the classes were a success. Participants reported learning new skills and recipes that they intend to use in the kitchen from now on.

#### **Participants in our classes:**

- Learned kitchen skills and new recipes
- Were exposed to ingredients and techniques they had never experienced
- Practiced mindfulness and interpersonal communication
- Gained a new perspective on food and health



## Future Plans for the YUGM Community Garden



The YUGM Clinic's garden has been in production for 4+ seasons and has consisted of 12 donated apple bins full of produce. The program has been a huge success, however the placement of the garden has created several problems.

The garden has been located in the Family Shelter's outdoor space. This space is secluded and exclusive, to protect the women and children who use it. This has limited the number of people who could participate in the care of the garden over the years.

This year, in conjunction with multiple programs at the YUGM, we are moving the garden to a new location!

This move will be very impactful for the garden program. While much of the produce will still go to the YUGM clinic, the new location will open up new opportunities for all members of the YUGM to participate in the cultivation of the fruits and vegetables. The Bridge program is already planning to help build the raised beds for the garden and help to care for the garden.

Another new program to the garden will be the kitchens at the YUGM. They have asked to have their own herb and tomato garden exclusively for the kitchen's use. This will provide a huge boost in flavor for the food produced in the kitchens and the possibility for including more fresh produce in the future.

### **Triumph Treatment Women's Campus**

WSU Yakima SNAP-Ed has had a long collaboration with the Triumph Treatment Services Women's Campus, which is a long-term drug and alcohol treatment campus.

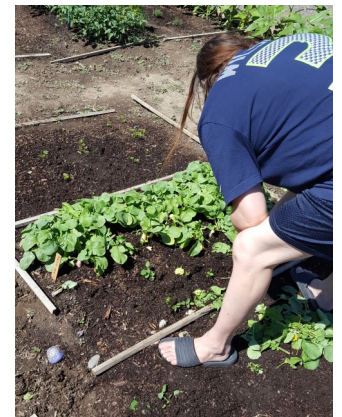
Pre COVID-19, many nutrition education classes were taught and a yearly vegetable garden was planted.

COVID disrupted FY20's classes, and a newly built building took over the garden space, however we are still working to offer virtual classes and innovative gardening opportunities, such as vertical gardens and container gardening.

We are also planning to work with Triumph to update their food and nutrition policies to include more fresh produce and the ability to practice more food preparation.

### **The Benefits of Community Gardens**

- Improved food security
- Important life skills
- Increased physical activity
- Mental health benefits
- Increased consumption of fruits and vegetables
- Promotes social health and community cohesion through the shared community space



## Nob Hill Elementary School

COVID-19 drastically impacted WSU Yakima SNAP-Ed's involvement with schools.

For many years, SNAP-Ed has offered nutrition education to K-5th graders in Yakima County—thousands of students have benefited from increased nutrition knowledge and physical activity in the classroom.

Although COVID put a stop to nutrition lessons in FY21, we are hoping to start nutrition lessons with the students in the next school year, as well as working with schools to change policies, systems, and the physical environment to promote healthy behaviors, which in turn promote better attendance and test scores for students.



## Downtown Yakima Farmer's Market

FY21 will be the first year that WSU Yakima SNAP-Ed has worked with the Downtown Yakima Farmer's Market.

In collaboration with the market, WSU Yakima SNAP-Ed plans to engage in multiple avenues of evaluation of the market to see what can be done to benefit the SNAP eligible population and increase the use of EBT at the market.

We will talk with local farmers and market shoppers to see what barriers keep people from shopping local. Our focus is on finding out what our partners and participants actually want and need, not what we assume is needed.

We will also have a monthly booth at the market where we can interact with the public and get in-person survey responses and distribute information on using EBT at the market to shop for the freshest and most delicious produce around.



## Community Connections

One of WSU Yakima SNAP-Ed's goals both pre and post COVID-19 has been to create and maintain connections throughout the community.

We are part of a small coalition with bi-weekly calls that was created to address the inequitable food access that is present in Yakima, as well as to create connections between organizations to better utilize funding and resources.

As things open up, we are planning to create a space for local agencies and programs to come together in person and discuss food access topics, with plenty of time for networking. We are hoping to create a yearly community collaboration forum, in conjunction with the food access calls, with an emphasis on working together to better utilize our resources to help our community access local produce, supporting local businesses and benefiting the health of those most in need.





## Final Thoughts

Our WSU Yakima SNAP-Ed program is proud to have served Yakima County for many years. We strive to put the community first, helping them work towards a healthier lifestyle through better nutrition and increased physical activity.

With a new focus on changing the policies, systems, and environment (PSE) of our partners, we hope to create lasting change and enable our participants to make the healthy choices we encourage.

We hope to be working with our community for years to come, and we thank you for supporting our program!



**Thank you for supporting SNAP-Ed!**



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# SNAP-Ed 2021