

Fresh Friday at Calaveras High School

SUMMARY

Since 2017, the UCCE CalFresh Healthy Living program has worked with Calaveras High School and a Food Corp service member to teach nutrition education and help students learn how to grow and cook food from the school's farm. Led by high school volunteers, once a month students prepare a meal made from farm produce and offer a tasting to the entire school community. The *Fresh Friday* program continues to be sustainable into the 2019-2020 school year, and student volunteers are still passionate about serving their peers while gaining valuable professional and culinary skills.

BACKGROUND

Over many years of collaboration, schools and organizations in Calaveras County have partnered to promote healthy eating, buying locally and teaching food literacy to local students. One program that began from this work is *Fresh Friday* at Calaveras High School. *Fresh Friday* is a student-led group that once a month prepares food from the school's working farm to share with the whole student body. Originally launched in 2017 with the help of a Food Corps service member, the past two years the program has evolved and is thriving with the students' enthusiasm to continue the meals, assisted by staff from the high school and the UCCE CalFresh Healthy Living program.

SOLUTION

For the 2019 school year, *Fresh Friday* has become a part of the "Farm to Fork" crop production elective class, integrating the program into the class curriculum. The approximately 10 students who regularly harvest and prepare food for their peers have more resources and help available to them through this new elective. With guidance and nutrition education from a UCCE educator, the students now prepare a healthy recipe tasting from the farm each week, and continue to share food with the whole school once a month as *Fresh Friday* continues. The partnership between Calaveras High School and UCCE has helped to strengthen the learning objectives of the crop production class by highlighting the health and nutritional benefits of crops that are produced, and by teaching cooking and food safety skills.

For more information or to get involved, contact Katie Johnson, Nutrition Family and Consumer Sciences Advisor for the University of California Cooperative Extension in the Central Sierra at ckrjohnson@ucanr.edu.

"I want to own a Farm to Fork restaurant someday. I love being able to do this!"

-Taylor, Calaveras High School student



Calaveras High School students preparing a meal in the new kitchen and packing house at the farm.

OUTCOME

This project teaches students skills to thrive in a work environment, such as leadership, work ethic, communication and delegation. The students have also become ServSafe certified, and are learning technical skills that could help them enter culinary professions. The program has also extended the food grown on the farm to the wider school community, including the many students who aren't directly enrolled in agriculture classes. Out of the approximately 884 current Calaveras High School students, around 1 in 4 usually participate in the *Fresh Friday* tasting once a month. Over time, this program will continue to contribute to a healthy school community.