

Rise Conversation 2.1.22

Leslie Koppel , Chris Cere (development), Monica Tarantino (program director), Conrad Person, Susan Hoskins

Problem: Poor nutrition among aging adults. Program: AFUN education, recipes and fresh produce.

Rise was founded 55 years ago as a Community Action Center, so has had DEI baked in from the beginning, including community voices in programming and board representation, not to mention serving a diverse population (75% Hispanic). A CSBG block grant has for many years. They are a beacon of trust and communication in the community.

AFUN currently serves 40-43 people per month. People are called with reminders of an upcoming distribution and if they don't show up. Pick up can be morning or evening (a few delivered due to Covid). About 50% have sent in photos regularly, there will be a prize at the end for those who do every month. They get lots of feedback, from "loved it" to "I don't like..."

Unplanned benefits include the volunteers feeling purposeful, relationships forming between recipients and volunteers, and gaining a foothold in a senior housing building. It was helpful to find that Capital Food Bank already had recipes in Spanish. They also connected with the local mosque, which is delivering food, and have strong relationships with local farmers. They were excited that they got funding to replicate this program for families.

It has been hard to reach some people, and to meet all dietary restrictions, as well as to serve Chinese residents. Many participants were not prepared to do some envisioned elements such as making videos. There was discussion of need and capacity to grow—broader or deeper. With some additional volunteers, enough could be repeated to serve a new group of clients.

They seek new items to add to the boxes/bags such as aprons and bilingual volunteers. This program is the best way that Rise can serve aging adults in their community, grounded in their mission and history.

Several stories were shared, including how meaningful it has been to the volunteer who calls participants, connections made between participants, and one who has given feedback and a photo every month of the program.

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