

Sparkling a Water Revolution: Healthy Teens on The Move

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A Project by: Public Health Advocates in collaboration with Building Healthy Communities-Boyle Heights



Introduction

Healthy Teens on the Move (HTOM) is a group of dedicated youth leaders at Roosevelt High School (RHS) who collectively want to give their voice to health issues that impact their school and community. Students take part in health projects and advocacy campaigns and use their leadership skills to improve the nutrition and beverage environment at RHS. These teens are a part of the California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities Boyle Heights initiative and advocate to bring an end to childhood obesity and Type II diabetes amongst the Boyle Heights community members. Our teens show amazing dedication and value to the community, to ensure that everyone has the right to healthy and affordable food and a life free of preventable diseases and chronic health problems.

The Problem

Students at RHS have limited access to water on campus and refuse to drink water from the nearby water fountains because they believe it is unsafe to consume due to potential lead contamination. Additionally, the ongoing school renovation project further limits access to water because students must walk long distances to reach their classrooms and have limited opportunities to find water fountains to rehydrate.

Healthy Teens on the Move Work

#Agua4AllStudents Event

On December 3rd, 2018, youth, parents, partners and faculty distributed bottled water to the student body so that students have access and an opportunity to drink water during the day and remain hydrated. Through this process the HTOM youth:

- Advocated and educated students on the importance of drinking water to promote better health outcomes
- Introduced students to healthier alternatives to sugary beverages to promote the greater impact of making healthier beverage choices

Drinking Water pH Testing

RHS youth were active participants in testing the quality of their campus drinking water and it was a highly informative hands-on learning experience. Through this project, the youth:

- Assessed the purity of water fountain drinking water in order to safeguard the health of students on campus
- Advocated for the installation of a water filling station



Results

1. During the #Agua4AllStudents Event, HTOM youth collected over 350 student petition signatures in support for "WE THE STUDENTS deserve access to clean and safe drinking water"
2. HTOM students collaborated with LAUSD Health and Environmental Safety staff to address concerns and potential partnerships
3. The youth presented their advocacy work and efforts to LAUSD to support the Drinking Water Quality Program Resolution
4. Following the completion of the RHS modernization, LAUSD will install a total of 6 water filling stations on campus:
 - 1 water filling station inside the main hall is expected to be installed during the summer of 2019
 - 1 hydration station will be donated to RHS by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
 - 4 water filling stations around the modernized school site



Conclusions

On April 23rd, 2019, history was made as the LAUSD approved \$15 Million for Phase III of the Drinking Water Quality Program Resolution.

The \$15 million Strategic Execution Plan will fund:

1. Sampling all active drinking water fountains at all school sites
2. Upgrading drinking water fountains to bring lead levels to below five parts per billion (ppb)
3. Installing water bottle filling stations at selected school sites

