

Cultivating Wellness in Montclair



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 City of Hope Healthy Living Conference, June 2024



SUMMARY

The main healthy living grant strategy utilized for this project is: programming that addresses risk factors for chronic disease (e.g., gardening workshops, nutrition education, wellness, etc.). We would like to cultivate wellness in Montclair by assisting the efforts of Healthy Montclair's *promotoras* and expanding the Montclair Community Garden as a resource for increasing access to organic fruits and vegetables and improving physical activity through gardening activities.

The *promotoras* are a group of bilingual Latina women who network with local resources to promote healthy eating and physically active lifestyles. The Montclair Community Garden addresses food insecurity by providing the community a space to grow their own nutritious food. By engaging community members in gardening activities, the *promotoras* will help promote the Garden as an optimal environment for individuals to grow their own crops and to engage in physical activity.

FUN FACTS

- 24 Cultivating Wellness classes were held from January to end of May 2024.
- Activities, such as cooking demos and basics of gardening demos, took place at 4 different locations in Montclair, Ca.
- Attendance per class ranged from 4 to 11 persons, with an average of 8 per class.
- Individuals of all age groups participated in one or more Cultivating Wellness activities.
- 39% of respondents with chronic diseases including: high blood pressure (4), diabetes (4), and cancer (1)
- 3 *promotoras* dedicated over 100 hours to planning and presenting Cultivating Wellness activities.
- The Cultivating Wellness program helped bring back our *promotoras* after a four year hiatus due to COVID-19.

WHAT DID WE DO

- Launched a **new** program called "Cultivating Wellness" facilitated by 3 *promotoras* and Health Education Specialist Leticia Gavilanes.
- *Promotoras* educated the community on the benefits of gardening, including reducing the risk of chronic diseases, by increasing physical activity and sharing ideas on how to consume more fruits and vegetables.
- Topics and hands-on activities for this program included:
 - Basics of Gardening Series: planting seeds, preparing soil, planting and transplanting
 - Cooking Demos: garden salads, pastas, bread loafs, and no salt seasoning
 - Activities: sugar scrubs, essential oil sprays, and soap making
- All topics focused on the multiuse of plants grown in the garden
- *Promotoras* helped increase awareness in the community of the Montclair Community Garden as a local resource to improve living a healthy lifestyle.



Prior to participating in a Cultivating Wellness workshop...



33% use gardening as part of their daily activity



48% consume fruits and vegetables grown in their garden



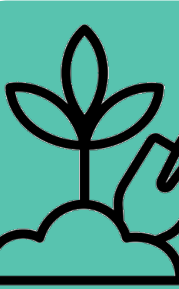
72% did not know Montclair has its own community garden



35% consume more fruits and vegetables because of gardening



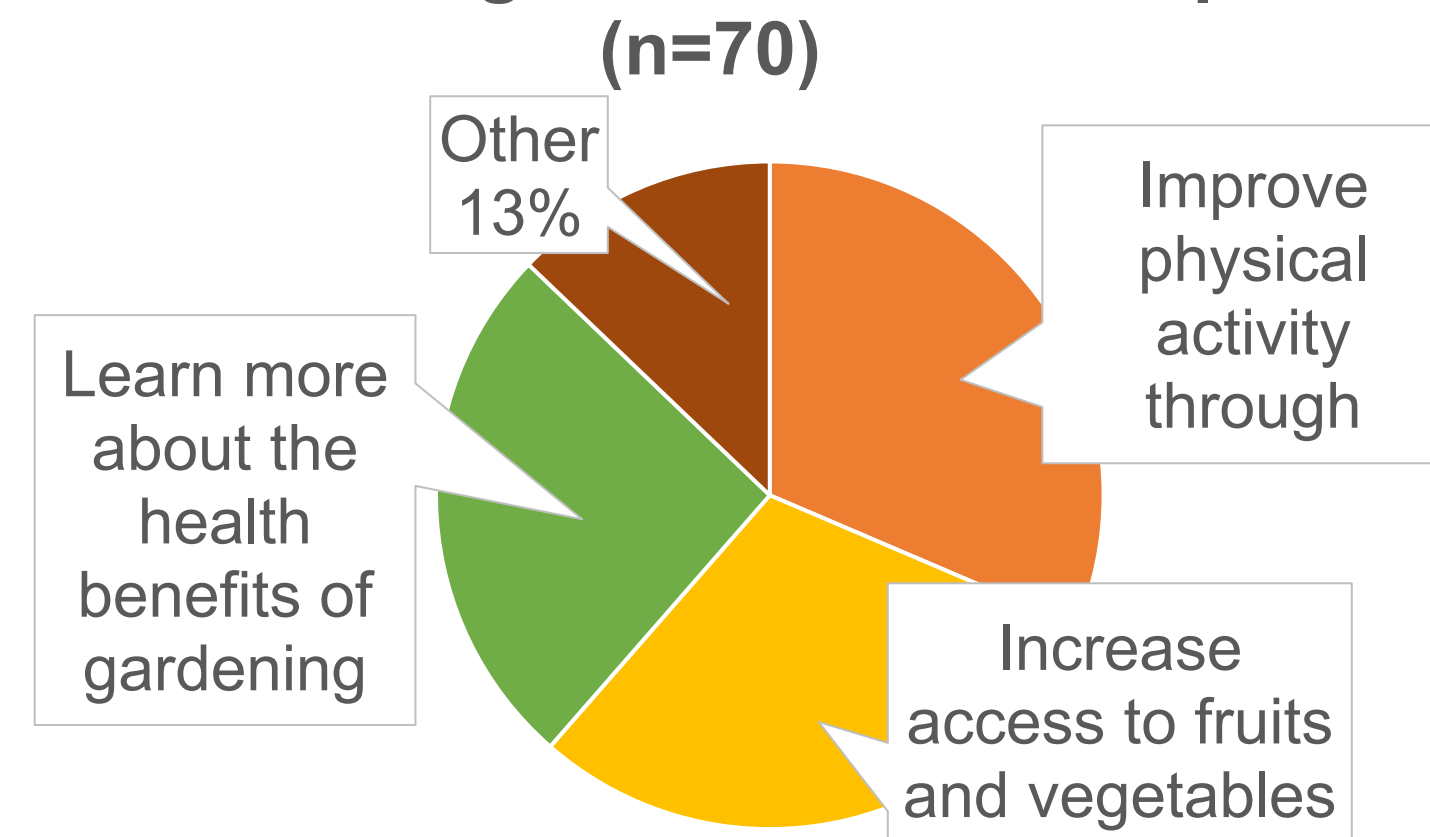
57% share their fruit and vegetables with their friends and family



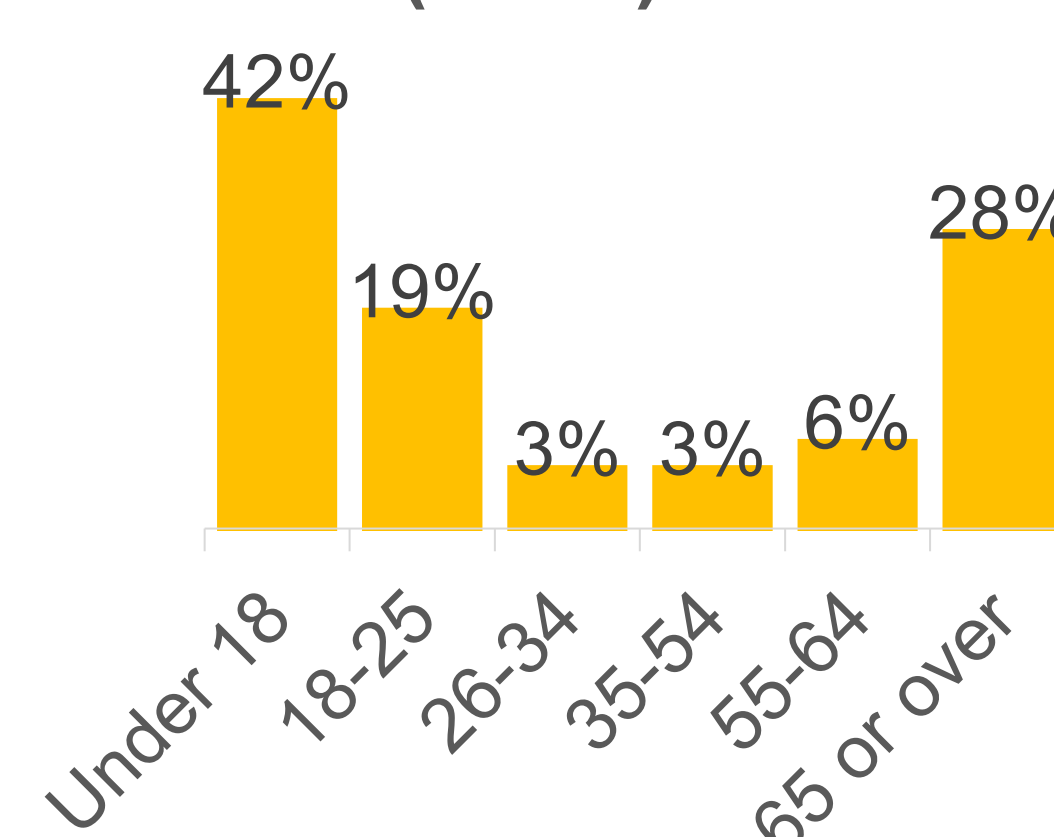
73% say cultivating and harvesting is rewarding for them

- Expanded the Montclair Community Garden with 5 new large plots, exceeding our goal of building 2 new plots.
- Community members joined the *promotoras* at the Community Garden during an Earth Day Celebration in setting up an Italian Garden (consisting of purple bell peppers, tomatoes, basil, onions, and romaine lettuce) and a flower patch.
- One of our challenges was not having a Master's level student intern to help prepare education material, however, Health Education Specialist Leticia Gavilanes took lead in researching and creating lesson plans as well as distributing and collecting surveys.

Why are you interested in this Cultivating Wellness workshop? (n=70)



Participant Age (n=36)



What does gardening mean to you? (n=35)

- Gardening means life and how it always takes time to change and grow
 - It means providing people with food
 - It means life and being able to provide for the community
 - It means hope for the future
 - Feeding our family
 - Therapeutic
- "stress reliever" "distraction" "fulfillness"**

FINAL THOUGHTS

- Although we were not able to collect post-surveys, participants of the Cultivating Wellness workshops showed enthusiasm for all presentation topics and shared positive comments with the facilitators.
- We surpassed our expectations of the Cultivating Wellness program by expanding it to multiple locations in the community.
- MCF and the City will continue to support the efforts of the *promotoras* after the grant period. The Montclair Community Garden will continue to be a resource for the community to grow their own nutritious food.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Montclair Community Foundation would like to acknowledge the City of Hope for the generous funding and each of the three *promotoras* who worked tirelessly to cultivate wellness in our community.

