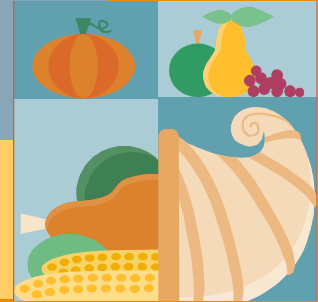


**Healthy Eating**



**Every Day!**



# Community-Based Nutrition Awareness Program Plan

January 2008



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Port Townsend Public Library  
**Healthy Eating Every Day!**  
 Community Nutrition Awareness Program

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The Port Townsend Public Library "Healthy Eating Every Day" program plan was prepared by Carol Cahill, MLS. Development of the plan was supported by a grant from the National Network of Libraries of Medicine/Pacific Northwest Region.

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## Introduction

Many of the leading causes of illness and mortality are related to what we eat. For example, obesity is considered one of the most pressing health concerns in the United States today, and rising obesity rates in this country are primarily caused by our eating habits.[1] Other health problems associated with poor diet include diabetes, heart disease and hypertension. With nearly ubiquitous access to energy dense prepared foods and increasingly sedentary lifestyles, people are consuming more calories than they burn, and their health is at risk as a result. Children are particularly vulnerable, because the effects of overweight can have lasting health consequences. To counter this trend, learning about better choices for healthy eating is a key strategy outlined in *Healthy People 2010*[3].

Over the past five years, there has been a growing awareness of how environmental factors influence the ability to purchase and consume healthy foods. For example fresh fruits and vegetables are considerably more expensive than are foods high in fat and calories. Researchers at the University of Washington note that people living low income neighborhoods are at greater risk of obesity and other health problems associated with a high-calorie, low-nutrition diet.[4, 5] Too frequently it seems that “the poor get diabetes, while the rich get local and organic.”[6] Nonetheless, there are encouraging changes taking place: Northwest food banks are beginning to install cold storage in order to offer fresh produce[7], and legislation supporting increased schoolchildren’s access to locally grown foods has been introduced in the current session.

*"If Americans are to meet the objectives of Healthy People 2010, librarians must be health advocates in their respective communities by partnering with like-minded agencies and organizations. In this way, librarians contribute to the greater good of the nation's health."*[2]

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, one of the leading forces in the fight against the growing prevalence of obesity, has identified four food environments that affect healthy eating, one of which is information environments.[8] In their role as community information spaces, public libraries are a key resource for

improving knowledge of nutrition, food purchasing and preparation, and for raising awareness about political and environmental factors that influence healthy eating choices.

The Port Townsend Public Library “Healthy Eating Every Day!” plan outlines implementation of a library-based nutrition awareness program. The plan describes local needs and assets and identifies strategies for contributing to the health of the community. These strategies draw upon the library’s inherent strengths and call for joining forces with community partners – such alliances are essential if the library is to have a role in reaching public health goals.[9] The plan will continue to evolve over time, as new community needs emerge and new partnership relationships develop. A “Healthy Eating Every Day!” toolkit is appended to the plan; the companion electronic version will be a resource for library staff to use in program planning and implementation.

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## Methods

The “Healthy Eating Every Day!” plan was developed by collecting data from secondary sources, interviewing key informants, surveying the community, and compiling information on innovative approaches to promotion of healthy eating. Data collection activities include the following:

- ♦ Gathering demographic and health status data from the Office of Financial Management, Jefferson County Public Health, the Office of the Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction and Department of Health;
- ♦ Interviews with the Port Townsend Public Library director and library staff;
- ♦ Interviews with potential community partners, including the WIC program, the local Food Stamp office, and the Food Coop;
- ♦ Assessing existing library resources, including collections and online resources;
- ♦ Conducting a community survey – web-based, with paper copies available – to determine information interests and knowledge needs;
- ♦ Determining strategies for program implementation;
- ♦ Recommending methods of evaluating program success.

The library has developed four focus areas for its “Healthy Eating Every Day!” program and four main strategies for implementation:

### Program Goals

**Children & Teens:** Increased knowledge of how to make choices for healthy eating

**Adults:** Increased ability to make healthy eating a daily habit

**Community:** Increased awareness of policies, issues and trends affecting choices for healthy eating and improved recognition of the public library as a key resource for health information

**Library:** Increased capacity to provide services and that support healthy eating choices

## Strategies

**Collections:** Expanded print collection in areas of high consumer interest including easy-to-prepare healthy recipes, fruit and vegetable gardening, cooking that addresses particular health issues (low-fat, low-salt, food allergies), and consumer choices that support environmental health as well as personal health.

**Programs:** Library-based programs for both adults and children with cooking demonstrations as a core component; community programs on issues related to nutrition policy; programs featuring authors of books related to healthy eating, including 2009 Community Read.

**Online resources:** Update of library staff knowledge of health and nutrition reference resources; public workshops on searching high-quality resources such as MedlinePlus; development of Web 2.0 tools, including wikis and social bookmarking.

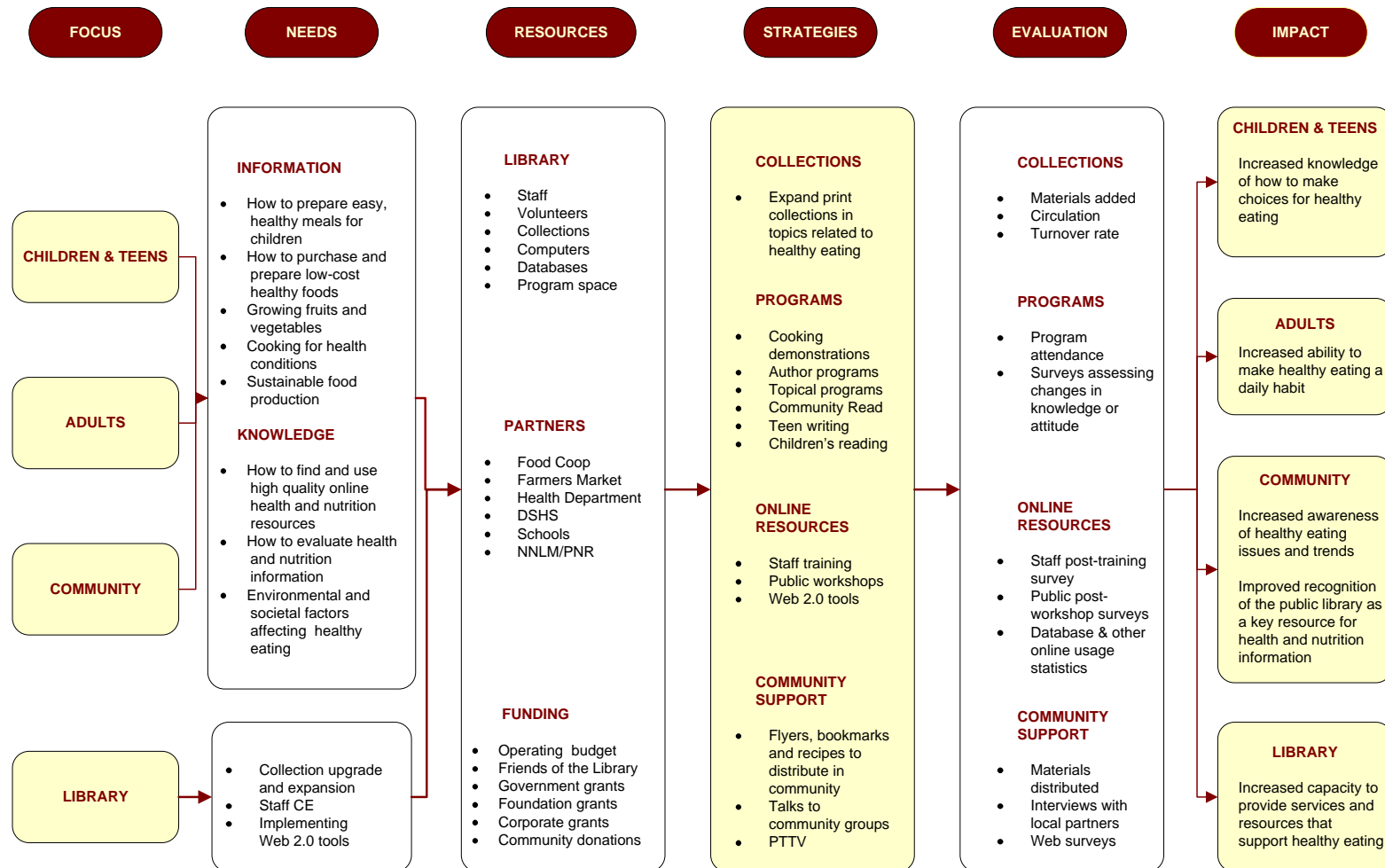
**Community support:** Distribution of materials that promote library resources related to local health and nutrition services; presentations to community groups; programs on local cable-access TV.

A conceptual map – or logic model – of the “Healthy Eating Every Day!” program is on the following page.

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**Logic Model: HEALTHY EATING EVERY DAY! – Port Townsend Public Library**


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## Port Townsend community

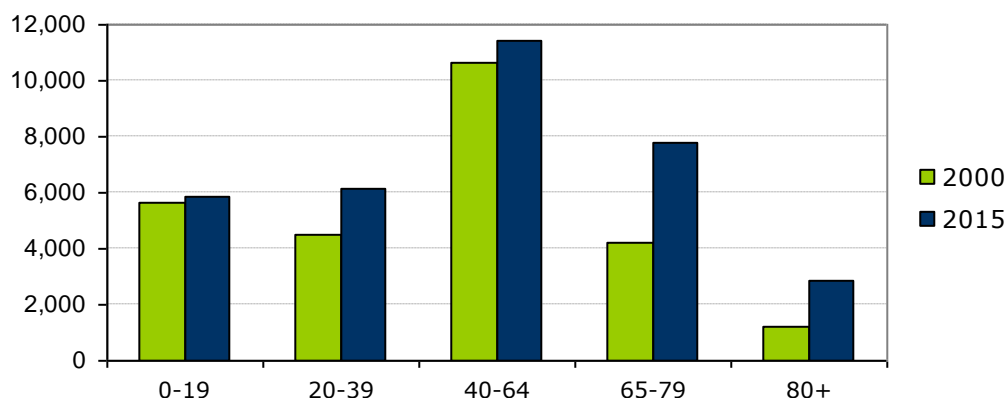
Port Townsend is located at the entrance to Puget Sound, on Washington state's Olympic Peninsula. With a long maritime heritage, the town has more recently become a noted center for the arts. Its Victorian architecture, many festivals and natural beauty attract tourists and those wishing to resettle in a rural area with many amenities, including a well-regarded public library.



Port Townsend is the seat of Jefferson County and its only incorporated place. Current population is estimated at 8,865. The city is growing at a somewhat slower rate than the remainder of the county – 6.4% from 2000 to 2007, compared with 9.9% for the unincorporated areas. Most of the county's population growth in the future is projected to result from net migration, particularly as more people retire to the area. While the greatest percentage growth will occur among those of retirement age, the largest segment of the county population will continue to be middle-aged adults, as shown in Chart 1.



**Chart 1**  
**Population by Age,**  
**2000 Census & 2015 Projection**  
**Jefferson County, Washington**



Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management, 2007

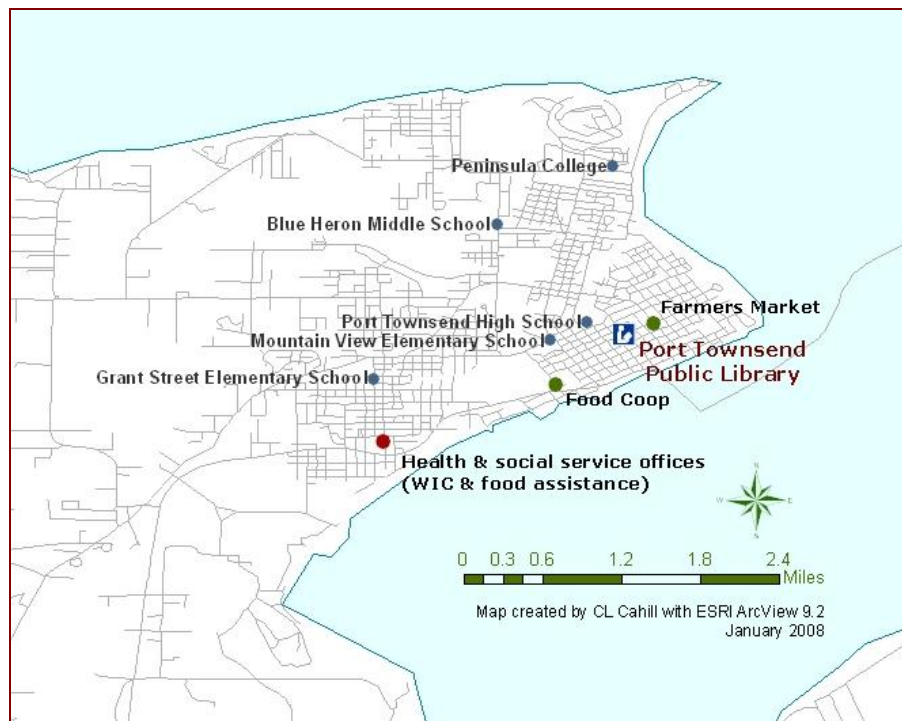
Port Townsend median income is somewhat higher than in adjacent rural areas, but much lower than in the relatively wealthy community of Port Ludlow, 20 miles south. In 2000, an estimated 31% of city residents had income below 200% of poverty, which is the threshold of eligibility for many public health and food assistance programs. Cost of housing in the area has been growing at a much higher rate than wages, and the housing “affordability gap” gets wider every year.[10]

The Port Townsend community has long been resistant to the establishment of chain-store retail outlets, including fast food franchises, of which there only a handful. The city has two supermarkets, both of which are making an effort to feature organic goods, and a thriving Food Coop. Established in the early 1970s as an outgrowth of “food conspiracy” bulk food purchasing groups, the Food Coop has continued to grow, and features organic fruits, vegetables, grains and dairy products – including locally grown and produced foods. The Coop’s member outreach coordinator is working with teachers and students at both Grant Street Elementary School (which has a student vegetable garden) and Port Townsend High School, and she will be a key resource for implantation of “Healthy Eating Every Day.”

In fact, “buy local” is something of a mantra in Port Townsend – residents are frequently exhorted to patronize locally owned businesses. The popular Farmers Market, which takes place on Saturdays in the same neighborhood as the library, offers a diverse selection of nutritious foods from a number of local farms, bakeries and a creamery.

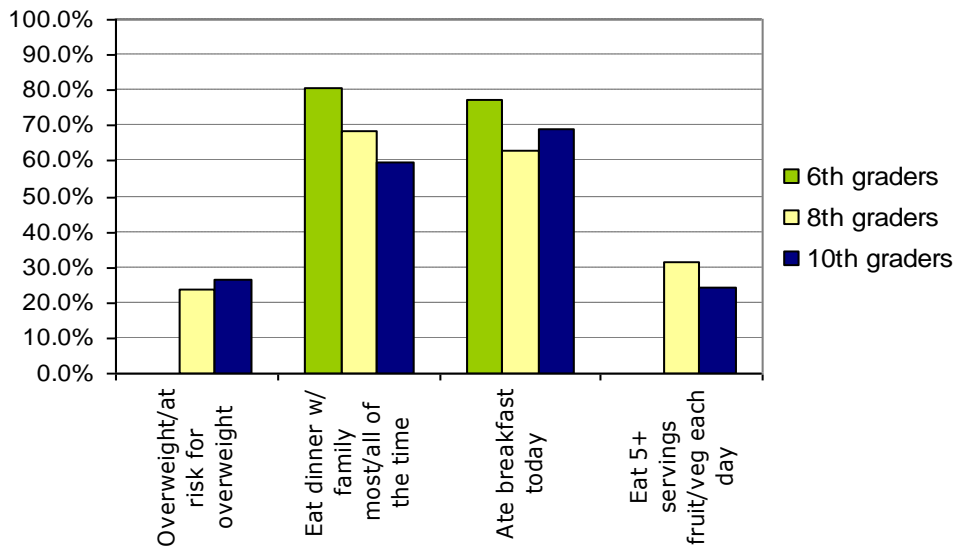
### Health & nutrition indicators

In 2006, around 20% of Jefferson County residents received economic assistance from the state Department of Social and Health Services.[11] That year, 45% of women giving birth were overweight or obese, and 56% of the babies born in the county were served by the federal Women, Infants & Children (WIC) nutrition assistance program.[12, 13] Both the local WIC and food assistance programs provide information on healthy eating habits: food assistance recipients get a 20-page booklet with tips on stretching food dollars, and WIC mothers receive one-on-one nutrition counseling and a monthly newsletter. Electronic “food stamp” cards can be used at both the Food Coop and the Port Townsend Farmers Market and the WIC program provides special farmers market vouchers.



Around 43% of children enrolled in the Port Townsend public schools are eligible for the free and reduced-price lunch program.[14] According to the Healthy Youth Survey, in 2006, one-quarter of Jefferson County 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders were overweight or at risk for overweight. Two-thirds reported eating breakfast the day of the survey, but only 28% said they eat the recommended five or more servings of fruit and vegetables each day. The proportion of schoolchildren that ate dinner with their families most or all of the time was 80% among 6<sup>th</sup> graders compared to 60% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders.[15]

**Chart 2**  
**Healthy Youth Survey Jefferson County, 2006**



Source: Washington State Dept. of Health  
6th grade: not all Q's asked; 12th grade response too low to report

### Port Townsend Public Library

The library is a 1913 Carnegie building that was remodeled and expanded in 1990. With collection enhancements, service expansions, and increased use, space is again an issue, and the library is developing plans for a capital campaign for another expansion. Currently the library has 9.4 FTE staff and a corps of 100 volunteers. Since 1994, the library has had a shared catalog and patron file with Jefferson County Library, which serves the unincorporated areas.



Port Townsend Public Library is among the most heavily used libraries in Washington. The number of registered borrowers per capita is one of the highest in the state, and the library is well above average in collections, electronic resources, and usage compared to the state and other libraries in its size cohort.

**Table 1****WASHINGTON STATE PUBLIC LIBRARY ANNUAL SERVICE MEASURES 2006**

Port Townsend Public Library, Libraries Serving 5,000-25,000 Population &amp; State

	PTPL	PL's serving 5K-25K	State
Print materials per capita	6.4	4.6	3.4
Circulation per capita	25.6	10.9	11.3
Turnover rate (circulation/holdings)	4.0	2.4	3.4
Reference transactions per capita	1.3	0.4	1.0
Public computers: % of time in use	97%	81%	77%

Source: Washington State Library


Over the years, the library has offered many innovative programs and services, including development of special collections in health and parenting, establishment of a Maritime Resource Center, and digitization of historic issues of the Port Townsend Leader. It was one of the first small libraries in the state to offer wireless Internet connectivity to users. The library has a history of promoting access to quality health information, and was the first public library in the U.S. to join the National Networks of Libraries of Medicine.

Children's programs are particularly popular, and there are two "book baby lapsit" story times each week, as well as special story hours for "wobblers" (age 1-2) and another for older toddlers. In addition, there is a weekly teen writers group.

The library is often featured in special articles in the local weekly, the Port Townsend-Jefferson County Leader. Other venues for library news and features are a monthly newsletter included with city utility bills, the Friends of the Library newsletter, and a regular slot on the local cable television station, PTTV. In 2007, the library received a marketing grant from the Washington State Library and developed a new logo and brochure; recently a second rack card with information on online databases was produced. The library's web site is under the banner of the City of Port Townsend web site, [www.cityofpt.us/library](http://www.cityofpt.us/library).

Outreach activities include "Books for Babies" – packets distributed to parents of newborns with books, music CDs and information about library services for young families, monthly delivery of materials to day care

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centers, and “Books on Wheels,” a delivery service for shut-ins. One of the most popular programs the library has ever offered is an annual “Community Read,” which includes author appearances, special events, and book discussions in a variety of community venues.

Port Townsend Public Library is an independent municipal library, and depends on the city’s general fund for its annual budget. In May of 2007 the library was forced to cut hours, due to failure of a utility tax ballot measure. Beginning in January 2008, the library is charging \$3.00 for interlibrary loans to cover shipping costs. Approximately 80% of library program funding comes from the Friends of the Library, with 10% of from grants and another 10% from local funding or in-kind contributions. Special appeals, such as a bake sale in conjunction with a cookbook author program, supplement the regular materials budget.

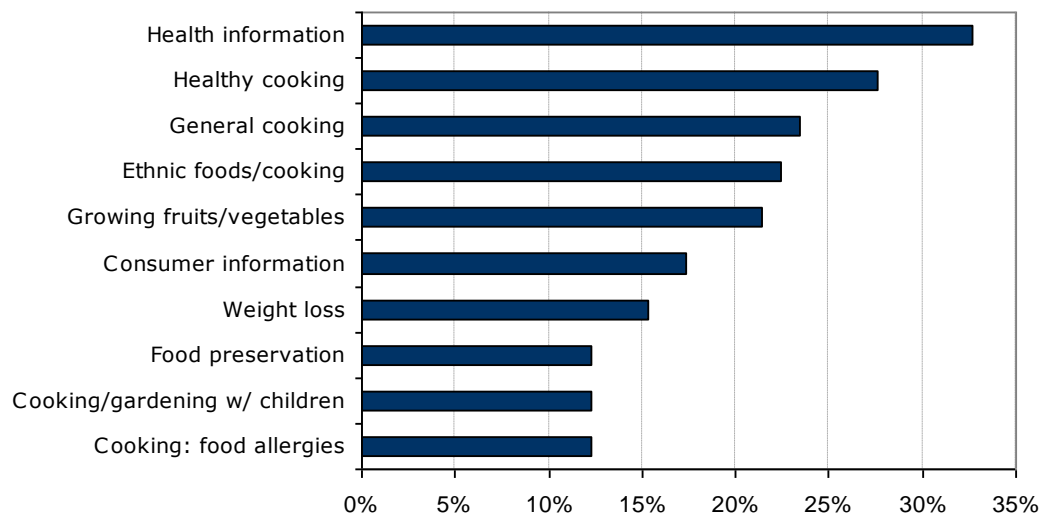
### **Library user “Healthy Eating” survey**

In December 2007, the library conducted a web-based survey to determine user interests for the “Healthy Eating Every Day!” initiative. Paper copies of the survey were also available. In all, 98 people completed surveys, 67 of them online.

All of the respondents have a local Cooperative Libraries Automated Network (CLAN). Most – 64% - are age 41-64, with 22% under 40 and 14% age 65 or older. In a typical week, survey respondents buy groceries at a number of mainly local stores, with the Food Coop being the most popular place to shop (84%) followed by local supermarkets (73%); around 18% leave the county to shop at discount stores such as Costco or WalMart.

With respect to materials recently checked out of the library, the most frequently selected topic was health information, followed by various cooking techniques (the category “ethnic cooking techniques” was inadvertently excluded during the first two weeks of the online survey).

Chart 2

**Topics of Materials Recently Checked Out**

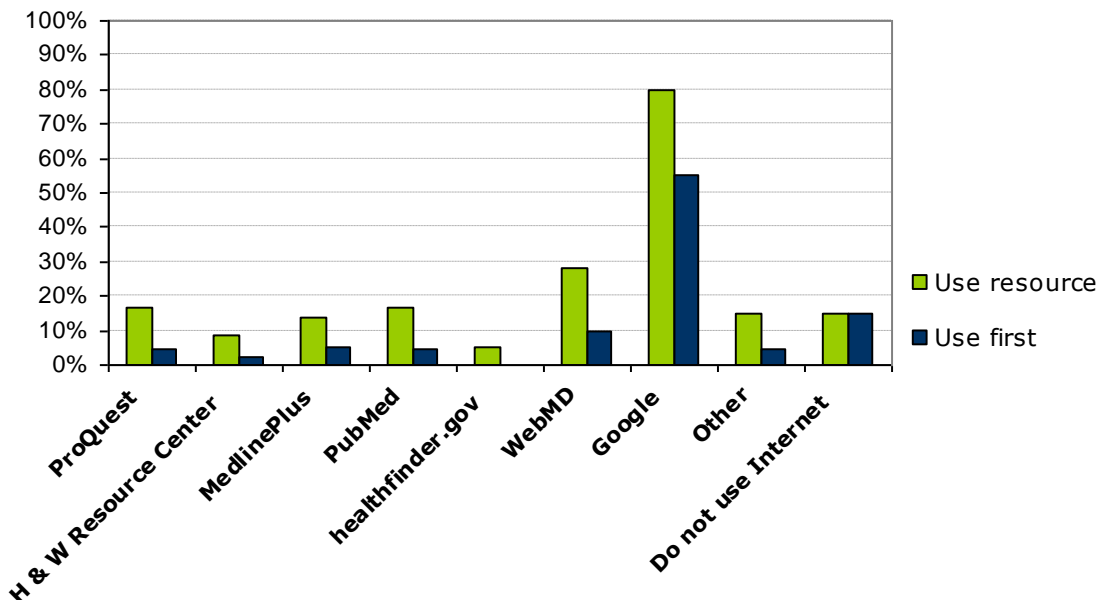
Source: Survey of Port Townsend Public Library Users, Dec 2007

N=98

In terms of online resources for health information, Google is by far the most popular, both for finding information and as the place to go to begin a search. Library subscription databases and National Library of Medicine and other government resources were cited much less frequently, especially as a first source. The most common "other" response was the Mayo Clinic web site. In addition, 15% of respondents do not use the Internet at all for finding health information.

Chart 3

### Internet Resources Used to Find Health Information

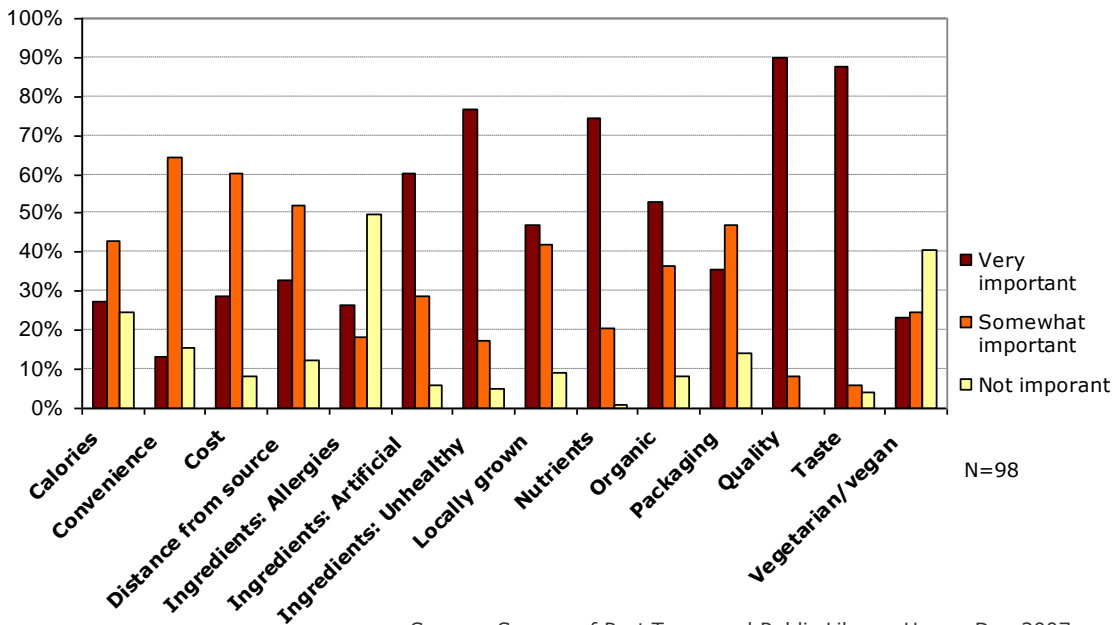


Source: Survey of Port Townsend Public Library Users, Dec 2007

In order to gauge interest in potential program topics, the survey asked how important various considerations are in choosing food to eat at home, and what topics patrons are interested in learning more about. It is apparent that health considerations are very important, and that there is high interest in learning more about eating locally grown food, fruit and vegetable gardening, and cooking for health. Both library staff and social service agency staff confirmed the interest in learning more about time-saving, economical, and healthy meals and snacks, particularly among parents of young children. In particular, people are interested in recipes: "Young parents are always tired – they need information that is easy, available and can be read quickly."

Chart 4

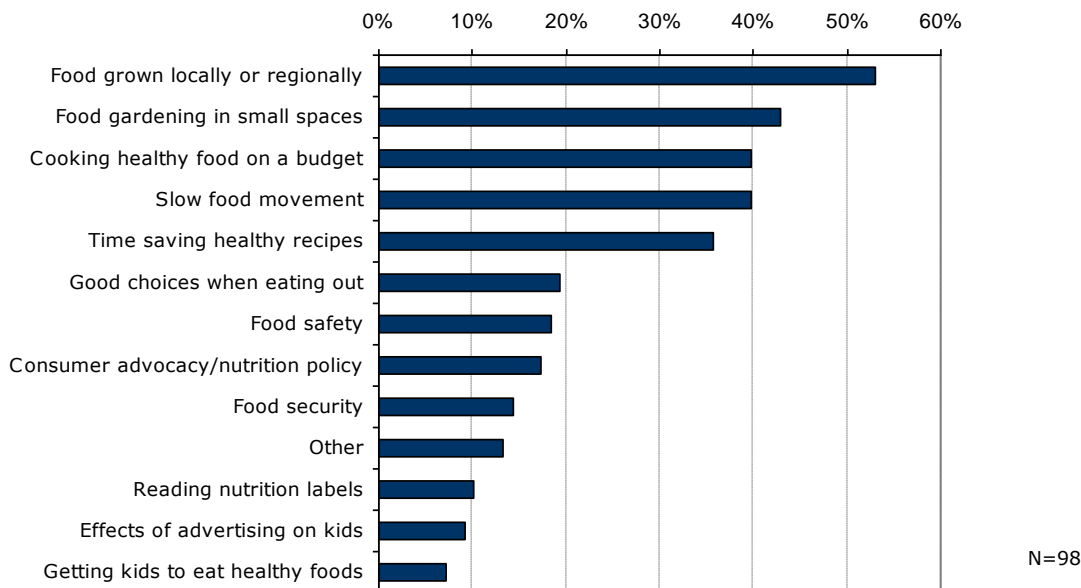
**Importance of Considerations for Choosing Food to Eat at Home**



Source: Survey of Port Townsend Public Library Users, Dec 2007

Chart 5

**Topics Interested in Learning More About**



Source: Survey of Port Townsend Public Library Users, Dec 2007



## Strategies

“Healthy Eating Every Day!” strategies are intended to benefit children and teens, adults, the community at large, and the library itself. Lifelong eating habits begin in childhood, and parents help shape healthy eating choices. For this reason, initially the library plans to reach children and teens primarily through their parents.

Adults can certainly benefit from support in making healthy eating a daily habit, through information in books and periodicals, programs, and guidance in finding and evaluating online information. The first round of programs and services will be targeted mainly at middle-aged adults, both because they are the largest segment of the population and, based on web survey responses, the most likely to be engaged in nutrition awareness.

Healthy eating is about more than individuals changing their behavior. Opportunities for making healthy eating choices are influenced by many environmental and political factors and the implementation of local, state and federal health policy depends in part on raising community awareness. Port Townsend residents are well educated and politically aware, and the library is frequently a venue for programs about contemporary social issues such as food politics.

As a result of implementing the various strategies outlined below, the library intends improve its role as a trusted resource for health information and to increase its capacity to support healthy eating, every day in Port Townsend. Each strategy is accompanied by one or more “tools,” located in a planning and evaluation toolkit appended to the plan.

## Collections

The library currently has owns over 13,000 adult nonfiction titles, of which nearly 300 are cookbooks; 54 of those are in the “cooking for health” classification. Around adult 1,200 titles are on health topics, including 70 focused mainly on nutrition and diet issues. Recently the youth services department undertook a major upgrade of its parenting resource center, including several books on healthy snacks and cooking with children.

In some cases, library materials are considerably out of date. For example, in the area of gluten-free cooking, most of the recently published cookbooks, while available to Port Townsend library patrons via the CLAN shared catalog, are owned by Jefferson County Library. One of the books currently in the Port Townsend collection was published in 1982!

→**Strategy:** Identify healthy eating topics and compile collection profile; research and identify titles to purchase; discard outdated materials

→**Toolkit:** Collection Evaluation Template, Planning & Evaluation Template

## Programs

A key resource for implementing “Healthy Eating Every Day!” will be the member outreach coordinator at the Food Coop. She is very interested in working with the library in co-sponsoring programs, and sees the library as “an intimate, story-telling space.” The outreach coordinator is very involved with local schools, taking advantage of opportunities to reach families that may not be Coop members.

With the high level of overlap between library users and Food Coop members, working together will offer all sorts of possibilities for programs with a healthy eating theme. Whenever the Coop sponsors an event, there is an element of education, making it a perfect partner for developing library programs.

Studies have shown that learning to cook is a very effective way of building healthy eating habits [16-20]. Currently the Food Coop is offering a series of cooking demonstrations in its own facility, and it may be possible to duplicate some of those demonstrations at the library. Considering the level of patron interest in ethnic cooking, the library could offer a series of programs around the theme of “Eat Around the World 98368,” featuring healthy recipes from various cultures.

Author programs are central to the library’s mission of encouraging reading and supporting the quest for knowledge. One of the key strategies will be programs featuring authors of cookbooks and other healthy eating topics. In addition library plans to feature a book about some aspect of healthy eating for its 2009 Community Read.

The library’s youth services staff is deeply committed to supporting families. Healthy snacks are often a part of preschool story times. A recent story hour about pancakes – including samples for the young audience – generated a letter of appreciation to the local newspaper![21]

→**Strategy:**

Plan a series of thematic programs that match patron interests and needs identified by community agencies, including cooking healthy food on a budget, eating locally, and the slow food movement.

Plan a series of author programs, and when possible, offer samples of foods featured in cookbooks.

Select a title and plan events for the Community Read 2009.

Explore ways of incorporating healthy eating themes into existing programs for children, including the summer reading program. The teen writers group could take on researching recipes and producing a cookbook of its own.

→**Toolkit:** Planning & Evaluation Template, Funding Resources Guide, Budget Planning Template

**Online resources**

Currently the library subscribes to 30 online reference databases covering a variety of topics. The library links to these and other core resources on the "Reference Desk" section of its web site. Top-level health links include the InfoTrac "Health and Wellness Resource Center" and the National Library of Medicine (NLM) MedlinePlus and PubMed databases. Considering the public's heavy reliance on Google for finding online health information, promotion of library-sponsored resources is an important strategy.

Consumers are aware of the link between nutrition and health, and increasingly are using the Internet as a source of information – without always knowing how to discern what is reliable and what is questionable.[22] Many of the nutrition web sites that are found via search engines can be aesthetically appealing and easy to navigate, but provide inaccurate information.[23] Studies have shown that young people in particular are impatient online searchers and spend little time evaluating web information, and that Medline Plus can be an effective tool for educating students (and others) about finding health and nutrition information. [24, 25]

Library staff expressed great interest in offering workshops for the public in using its featured online reference resources, including MedlinePlus. A first step is to update staff skills via in-person or online workshops offered through the NLM regional office (<http://nnlm.gov/pnr/training/classes.html>). The library will also need to periodically review and update database and subject links on its web page.

The library staff has recently been exploring implementation of social networking – or Web 2.0 – capabilities. Reference desk staff maintain individual "delicious" (<http://del.icio.us>) Internet favorites files. In November

2007 a University of Washington Information School student presented the various Web 2.0 options to staff, generating a high level of interest and enthusiasm.

→ **Strategy:**

Plan a series of one-hour public workshops for library patrons on how to find and evaluate quality health and nutrition web sites, including effective search techniques. Consider offering a similar one-hour workshop for high school students during health class.

Create a “Delicious Library” social bookmarking web site that is featured on the library home page, with links to best resources bundled in various healthy eating topics.



Develop a “recipe wiki” that both staff and patrons can contribute to. This effort will probably require outside resources for designing the site and occasional consultation with a local dietician for recipe review.

→ **Toolkit:** Planning & Evaluation Template, Funding Resources Guide, Budget Planning Template

**Community support**

Recipes are in high demand – this is confirmed by the library staff, the WIC program coordinator, and the patron survey. The WIC monthly newsletter always includes a recipe, and the WIC coordinator has expressed interest in distributing library information that supports healthy eating for families (for example, a booklist with the new items in the parenting collection). The library staff also viewed printed recipes (and food samples!) as a way to promote the library’s healthy eating resources.

When individuals’ food assistance cards are activated they receive a 20-page booklet with tips on healthy eating and food shopping. The head of the program indicated that the office is already inundated with print material, and that a separate library brochure would get lost in the shuffle. One possibility worth exploring is a bookmark with library information that could be inserted in the food assistance booklet.

Other outlets for community support and promotion of the library’s healthy eating resources include videotaping of programs for broadcast on PTTV, having library information available at the Farmers Market, and speaking engagements at community meetings such as the Chamber of Commerce.

**→Strategy:**

Design and create a series of “recipe bookmarks” that can be handed out at the library and through various community agencies, including the WIC program and the Food Bank.

Videotape author and thematic programs for broadcast on PTTV.

Feature a healthy eating book and recipe in issues of the City newsletter that is mailed to all utility customers.

**→Toolkit:** Planning & Evaluation Template, Funding Resources Guide, Budget Planning Template

**Evaluation & Toolkit**

The Port Townsend Public Library “Healthy Eating Every Day!” initiative is intended to benefit the community in many ways, by implementing various strategies and working with community partners. The program Logic Model on page 4 outlines quantitative and qualitative evaluation measures, including tracking use of collections and other resources, and assessing improvements in knowledge and attitudes. The planning and evaluation toolkit appended to this plan can be used to determine specific short-term objectives and evaluation measures for each strategy.

**Future**

As the library continues to assess community needs and use of its resources, - and continues to develop community relationships – new priorities will be identified and new strategies developed. For example, reaching out to senior citizens will be more important as the population ages, and there is a need for resources in Spanish for a growing Hispanic population. Another potential project is to engage teens in mapping the local food environment. Through its “Healthy Eating Every Day!” initiative, the Port Townsend Public Library will be able to demonstrate how libraries are key resources for community health.

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