

HOPE VI Community & Supportive Services Best Practices – Health/Wellness/Nutrition Phoenix Housing Authority

Gardening Promotes Good Nutrition and Exercise Among Seniors

Because of a lack of grocery stores in the Central City South Community of Phoenix, many seniors were unable to purchase fresh vegetables, and had to rely on canned vegetables which are less nutritious and of a limited variety that does not allow seniors to cook traditional ethnic dishes.

HOPE VI CSS partnered with the Phoenix Revitalization Corporation, which employs a master gardener and provides technical assistance, gardening tools, plants and seeds to the community.

To help combat this problem, CSS implemented a garden club at the Senior Living Building of the Matthew Henson HOPE VI community to recruit residents interested in gardening. Participants meet monthly and are able to grow vegetables to make traditional ethnic foods, learn about other cultures and interact with one another. Residents who are part of the garden club have a sense of pride and accomplishment in their produce and ability to give back to the community. When vegetables are harvested, they are made available to the seniors at no charge.

Many senior residents were unable to perform the labor to get the garden ready for planting (tilling, weeding) and have limited transportation to buy fertilizer, mulch, plants and/or seeds to start the garden. With the support of the property management company, the groundskeepers assist in the weeding and tilling of the garden to prepare it for planting. Intern staff and volunteers have also been hired to assist with these tasks. Additionally, CSS is often contacted by residents who consider the garden as a suggestion to meet monthly community service requirements for public housing residents.

The City of Phoenix received an FY 2001 \$35,000,000 HOPE VI Revitalization grant for Matthew Henson Homes.

For more information on this Best Practice contact:

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