

Thursday Leader-News

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Teaching kitchen cooks up \$10,000 gift

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The teaching kitchen at Community Health Development Inc. is a happy kitchen once again thanks to a \$10,000 donation from Security Service Federal Credit Union.

Credit union representatives were at the Aug. 28 CHDI board meeting

to present a \$10,000 check to ensure the program receives funding. It needs to stay in operation.

Aaron Leek, senior vice president of member service operations for SSFCU, said that as a representative for the seventh largest credit union in the United States he is always looking for ways to give back to the communities they serve.

“This program really tugged at our heart-strings,” Leek said. “It is a good cause and it seems to really make a difference. Thank you for inviting us to share in this moment.”

Before the check presentation, everyone in attendance was encouraged to try a healthy smoothie and popcorn snack that is part of the teaching kitchen curriculum.

A family was in attendance to share their story of how the teaching kitchen saved the life of one of the boys in the family. The 15-year-old boy spoke about how the teaching kitchen helped him learn to cook healthy food and take care of his body. He had been struggling with diabetes as a teenager

and was up to 200 pounds when his mother decided to sign them up for the classes.

He said that by using the teaching kitchen he has been able to lose over 30 pounds through a combination of healthy cooking and working out at CHDI's fitness center.

His mother was proud to report that the doctor has

taken her son off insulin and drastically reduced the amount of oral medication he has to take each day.

Rachel Gonzales-Hanson, chief executive officer of CHDI, said that this money is going to not only allow the program to continue but to offer more classes

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CHECK: Teaching kitchen organized to help people make healthier decisions

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and train more instructors.

TEACHING KITCHEN

The goal of the teaching kitchen, according to Carol Garcia, health educator, is to help their patients eat better and to know that it doesn't cost a whole lot to do that. She said the "Happy Kitchen" curriculum offers recipes that can run as low as 5 cents per serving.

The average price per serving of meals in the book is 79 cents.

The CHDI teaching kitchen is not a typical cooking class. Students watch and learn as the trained facilitators demonstrate a specific recipe from their book, "The Happy Kitchen" or "La Cocina Alegre."

At the end of the hour-long class, all students are given a bag full of the ingredients needed to make the meal that was

demonstrated that day.

The students should then make that same meal at home for their families and report back the next week on whether it was successful or not.

The teaching kitchen teaches skills and self-sufficiency in preparing healthy, economical meals that consist of whole grains, fresh produce and ingredients low in saturated fats.

It also aims to create positive changes in shopping, cooking and eating habits and nutrition, which in turn helps reduce diet-related diseases such as diabetes, obesity, heart disease and various cancers.

The program promotes the health and development of young children and places emphasis on local, seasonal and culturally appropriate foods.

For more information, call 830-278-7105 and ask for the health educator.



KIM EAGLE/LEADER-NEWS

Aaron Leek (right) presents a \$10,000 check to CHDI board chair Reyes Lopez (second from right) and teaching kitchen staff that is run by Carol Garcia (fourth from right). Other teaching kitchen staff, volunteers, and SSFCU employees were there for the check presentation.