Welcome to the first issue of the Healthy Lives, Healthy Communities Newsletter! As many of you know, we have been working in the Yakima Valley for the past twenty years on a number of projects designed to improve health and well-being in the Valley.

Many of you have wondered how the projects are progressing, so we decided to produce an occasional newsletter for your information. In this first issue, we talk about Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center (Fred Hutch) and our presence in the Valley.

Looking back over twenty years, I am just amazed at how many projects you and we have initiated and completed. None of this could have been done without you! Whether you are a CAB member, a member of one of the organizations we work with, or a community member, you have all contributed to the work. We feel grateful to have been so well-received in the Valley and honored to be working with all of you. When we first began in Sunnyside in 1995, we had no idea that our partnership would develop and mature as it has. Today we have our own office in Sunnyside with staff hired from the Valley to do health education and health promotion. Our name, the Center for Community Health Promotion, bears witness to our overall goal: We want the Valley to be a healthy place for all.

We hope this newsletter is of interest to you and that it helps keep you informed of all the activities our partnership does. Feel free to contact me or any of the staff if you have questions or comments about this newsletter.

Thank you for all you do!

Sincerely,
Beti Thompson, PhD

OUTREACH & EDUCATION PROJECT UPDATES

Through our Education & Outreach projects, we strive to strengthen existing partnerships with communities, providers and systems of care to conduct health promotion and education activities to increase awareness and knowledge to reduce the burden of cancer and other diseases.

C.A.S.P.E.R. the Inflatable Colon:

Regular screening for colorectal cancer (CRC) reduces morbidity and mortality from this disease. A number of factors play a role in the underutilization of CRC screening; populations with the lowest CRC screening rates are least likely to be aware of the need for screening or have knowledge about screening options. We recently conducted a project to test the best method for increasing knowledge about CRC in a health fair context by using a health educator to provide CRC information at a table, or provide a tour through a giant inflatable, walk-through colon model with physical depictions of healthy tissue, polyps, and CRC.

We participated in six community health fair events, three were randomized to incorporate the use of the inflatable colon, and three used a standard display table method. We used a pre/post-test to look for changes in knowledge about CRC before and after participating in a health fair. A total of 273 participants were recruited.

Participants in health fairs with the inflatable
colon had higher knowledge at post-test than participants in health fairs with tabling activities, that is, without the inflatable colon. Unfortunately, one month follow-up after each event showed virtually no recollection of information learned at the health fairs.

This study helped us confirm that the use of an inflatable colon is not only an innovative way to help people learn about CRC and CRC screening, it is more effective than conventional table display methods. Further research is needed to associate intention to obtain screening after touring the inflatable colon with actual screening. Future research could explore ways to better retain knowledge at long-term follow-up.

**Digital Storytelling Project:**

In 2013, Fred Hutch’s Center for Community Health Promotion implemented a digital storytelling project. Using a national training organization, Creative Narrations, for creating digital stories, we provided a train-the-trainer workshop for local community health educators (promotores) in the Yakima Valley of Washington State. These promotores then conducted subsequent community workshops to create digital stories with members of the community. We interviewed participants to learn about the impact of creating the resultant digital stories. We also conducted focus groups with community members to learn about the effectiveness of digital stories on people who viewed them.

Overall, participants found the digital story experience to be positive and beneficial for engaging others within their community. The common themes in the data demonstrate that storytelling is a uniquely valuable tool for benefits inherent in sharing personal stories of overcoming or managing health issues. As a community engagement tool, digital stories also provide a structure for disseminating health education and fostering relationships for further advocacy and health promotion programming.

The findings of our work support other literature that shows the many benefits of digital stories in health promotion. For storytellers, it provides a healing outlet to critically reflect on a difficult experience and find support and connection within one’s own community.

For story viewers, digital stories are impactful and thought to be more effective than other forms of health education materials that may not be culturally appropriate or accessible to the members of this population.

You can view the digital stories on the Fred Hutch YouTube Channel, or request a DVD copy by emailing EndDisparities@fredhutch.org.

**RESEARCH PROJECT UPDATES**

**Health Fair Pilot Project:**

We are currently finishing up a project that is testing the effectiveness of community health fairs on knowledge of cancer and the screening behaviors of 500 women in Benton and Franklin counties. We implemented a series of five community health fairs per year for three years (n=15). Topics changed each year: Year 1 (2013) focused on breast health, Year 2 (2014) focused on diet, nutrition and colon cancer and Year 3 (2015) focused on cervical cancer. A total of 10 health fairs were completed in Years 1 and 2 in Franklin County. We just completed the last health fair for Year 3. The control county [Benton County] did not have any community health fairs.

Baseline and follow-up surveys were collected each year. If participants dropped out between years, we recruited more individuals. In Year 1, 499 individuals participated, in Year 2 we had 457 participants, and in Year 3 there were a total of 374 participants. In September we will complete the final Year 3 follow-up surveys and begin data analysis. These surveys will highlight changes in
awareness, knowledge and attitudes, as well as changes in behavior, practice and screening rates for participants living in the control county [Benton] and those living in the intervention county [Franklin] with yearly summer health fairs.

**Support Group Pilot Project:**
Do you know a woman who has survived cancer? We are looking for Hispanic/Latina cancer survivors to take part in a support group study. To be eligible, participants must:

- Be Hispanic/Latina and speak Spanish
- Be at least 18 years old
- Live in Franklin, Benton, Walla Walla or Yakima County
- Have been diagnosed with cancer of the breast, cervix, ovary, uterus, or endometrium
- Have completed primary treatment

Participants will receive up to $75 in gift cards. To learn more, or to sign up to participate, please call Genoveva Ibarra at 509-837-5681 or toll-free at 1-866-809-6846.

**TRAINING UPDATES**

**National Cancer Institute Diversity Supplement:**
Adriana Ramos was selected as a summer intern in 2010. As a high school intern Adriana was paired with Fred Hutch community health promoters in the lower Yakima Valley to disseminate health education information and materials on cancer and diabetes prevention and control. Her passion for making a difference in the health of her community was evident from the start. Adriana was always willing to help with any task and eager to learn how community-based research can improve health outcomes.

We later helped Adriana apply for a Diversity Supplement through NCI to work in the Sunnyside office as an Undergraduate Research Assistant for two years. Adriana’s work on this supplement focused on the evaluation of a community health fair intervention. She designed the survey questions, recruited participants, completed informed consents with participants, facilitated educational sessions at the health fairs (in both English and Spanish), interviewed community members, used REDCap and MS ACCESS to enter the 350+ surveys and assisted with the data analysis. Adriana was involved in every step of this research project which resulted in quality data, a research poster and a manuscript which will be submitted in the coming months.

During this time Adriana also completed her Associate in Arts degree at Yakima Valley Community College and began her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology at Western Oregon University. Adriana was accepted to multiple Social Work programs, including the Master of Social Work Program at the University of Washington where she is starting this fall.

**Ilda Islas Summer Internship Program:**

In 2000, Dr. Beti Thompson began a summer internship program for minority high school students living in the lower Yakima Valley. This program was created to provide minority high school students the opportunity to learn about conducting research projects on health disparities that impact communities in the lower Yakima Valley. In addition to working in underserved communities to educate and empower people to make healthy lifestyle choices and get screened for cancer, we at Fred Hutch are committed to encouraging the participation of underrepresented minorities in science by focusing on the recruitment and mentorship of students, fellows and junior investigators from underrepresented groups. Investigators and staff of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds can bring a clearer understanding of the day-to-day barriers faced by underserved and minority groups. Their participation in health care and biomedical research is critical to alleviating community health disparities. It is imperative that we inspire and nurture the next generation of scientists and involve them in life-saving research that will help us all.

Through generous donations from various sources, we were able to continue the internship program...
This time the internship would take the name of a beloved co-worker who is dearly missed, Ms. Ilda Islas. In Spring of 2014, Maria Guadalupe Barrera was selected as the 2014 high school summer intern. Maria worked tirelessly reading, training, shadowing community health promoters, collecting study data and creating a research poster. On August 15, 2014, Maria successfully presented her research poster to a panel of scientists at the Fred Hutch in Seattle. She was the only high school student presenting her work; all other students were undergraduate and graduate level students. Maria beamed with confidence as she presented her poster to the scientific committee. Maria has since started her undergraduate degree at Washington State University.

We have asked Maria and past intern, Adriana Ramos, to evaluate the internship program and tell us how their experiences as interns impacted them. Both agreed that the internship helped them understand health disparities and how underserved populations are impacted by these disparities, they were also thankful for the exposure to research techniques prior to entering university. Both interns rated the interaction with mentors and community health promoters as excellent and believe the poster presentation in Seattle was imperative to the higher level of confidence, pride and growth they experienced.

This past Spring, a total of 21 applications were submitted for the one intern position available for the Summer of 2015. After a series of interviews, Brenda Cueva was selected as the 2015 intern.

Over this past summer, Brenda worked with our health promoters and staff to implement outreach and education activities in the Lower Yakima Valley. Brenda also worked with mentors in Seattle to learn about health disparities, community-based participatory research and many other topics.

If you are interested in financially supporting the Ilda Islas Scholarship Fund to support future interns, please contact Elizabeth Carosso at ecarosso@fredhutch.org.