

Healthy Eating and Active Living - Mapping Attributes Using Participatory Photographic Surveys: Building Leadership Capacity in the Latino Population

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INTRODUCTION

Linn County is one of the least healthy counties in Oregon, and ranks low in health outcomes (24th of 33 counties) and health factors (23rd of 33 counties).¹ With 36.1% of its population overweight and a 30% obesity rate, Linn County weighs in heavier than Oregon averages – only 50% of residents meet daily physical activity recommendations.² These Statistics reveal the need for a comprehensive plan to address obesity-promoting conditions in Linn County.

Latinos are disproportionately impacted by obesity and related diseases: The burdens of these diseases are compounded by the socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental factors common in Latino communities. In Oregon, Latinos are five times more likely to die prematurely than Caucasians, non-Hispanic Oregonians.³ In Linn County, 83% of Latinos have incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level, compared to 12% in the general population.⁴ For low-income Linn County Latinos, financial constraints and neighborhood conditions increase food insecurity and limit access to healthy foods and safe places to exercise.^{5,6}

Latinos constitute approximately 11.7% of Albany's population – this number is expected to grow an additional 184% by 2025.⁴ Healthy Eating, Active Living - Mapping Attributes using Participatory Photographic Surveys (HEAL MAPPS) was used to engage Albany's Latino community to explore the environmental conditions that support or hinder healthful eating and physical activity behaviors among youth and families.

HEAL MAPPS is a community-based participatory research tool developed by OSU obesity prevention researchers. Latinos were mobilized to assess Albany's HEAL-related issues, prioritize concerns, and further develop advocacy skills and action groups. This project engaged emerging Latino leaders and residents with the wider community and increased capacity for improving the local HEAL environment and health inequities that exist in Albany.

The specific aims of research: (a) provide culturally and linguistically appropriate leadership training (b) increase leadership skills and confidence in civic engagement (c) increase participants' civic engagement, (i.e. Make policy and program recommendations; develop a policy action plan; and disseminate project findings to the community and local policy makers.)

STUDY DESIGN

Step 1: Create outreach plan

Network analysis and power mapping to identify key institutions and organization, individuals who support the health of Latino families.

Step 2: Stakeholders are trained in HEAL MAPPS

Familias Activas leadership group photograph and map their direct experience with the community food and physical activity environments.



Step 3: Focus group

MAPPers decide which photographs best represent important aspects of the community food and physical activity environment.

Step 4: Community Conversation

Community residents and stakeholders gather to look at photographs and share their stories of what makes it easy or difficult to eat healthy and be physically active most every day in the community.

Step 5: Developing Strategies

Familias Activas leadership group receives a summary of results and works to develop an action plan.

Study participants completed a survey at the beginning of the Familias Activas Capacity Building Leadership project and will complete a post survey at the end of project period. Self-report survey includes demographic information, acculturation level, community connectedness, self efficacy, and resource knowledge. HEAL MAPPS was one of the leadership training activities of the project.

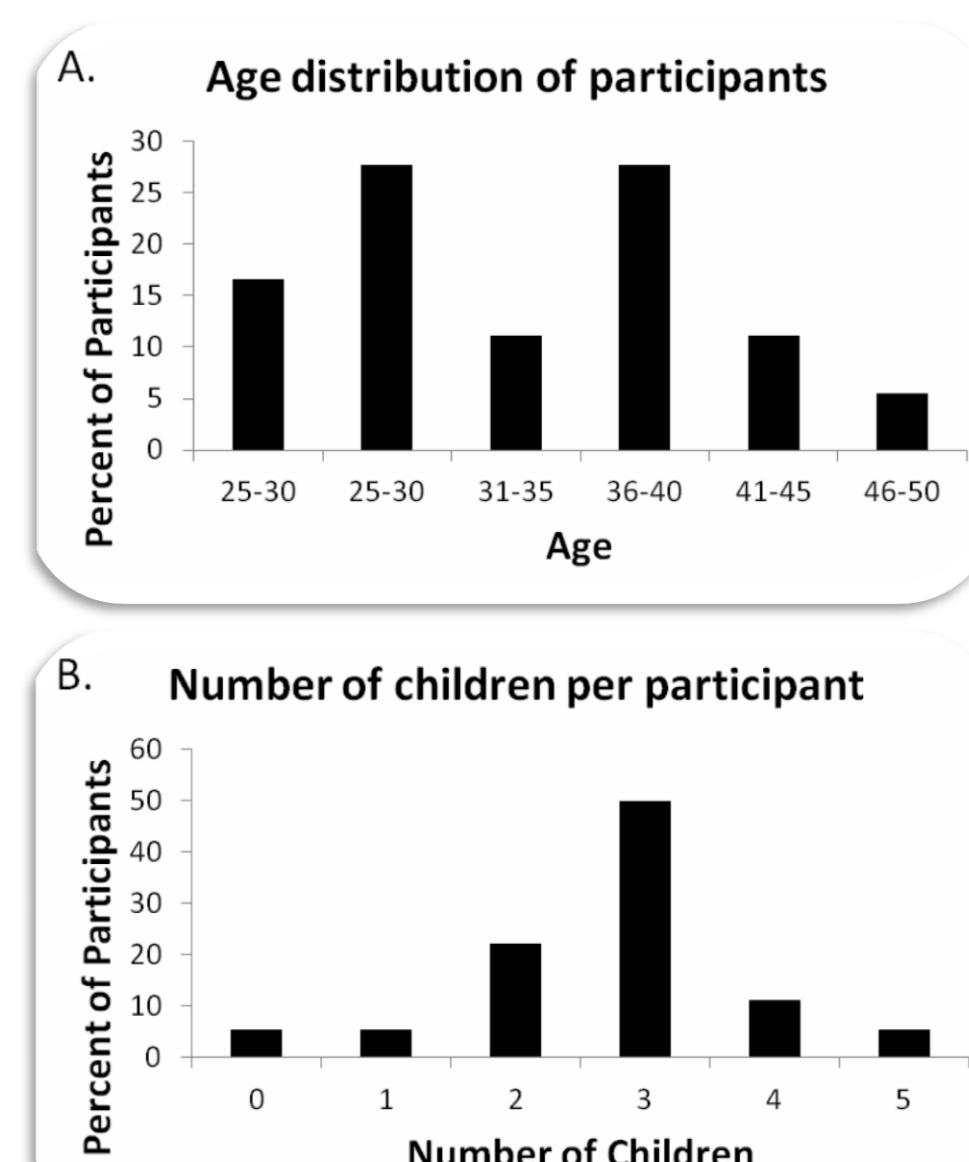


Figure 1. Participant demographics. The ages (A) and number of children (B) of 18 married, Spanish speaking women (17 Latina and one Caucasian) who took part in the study.

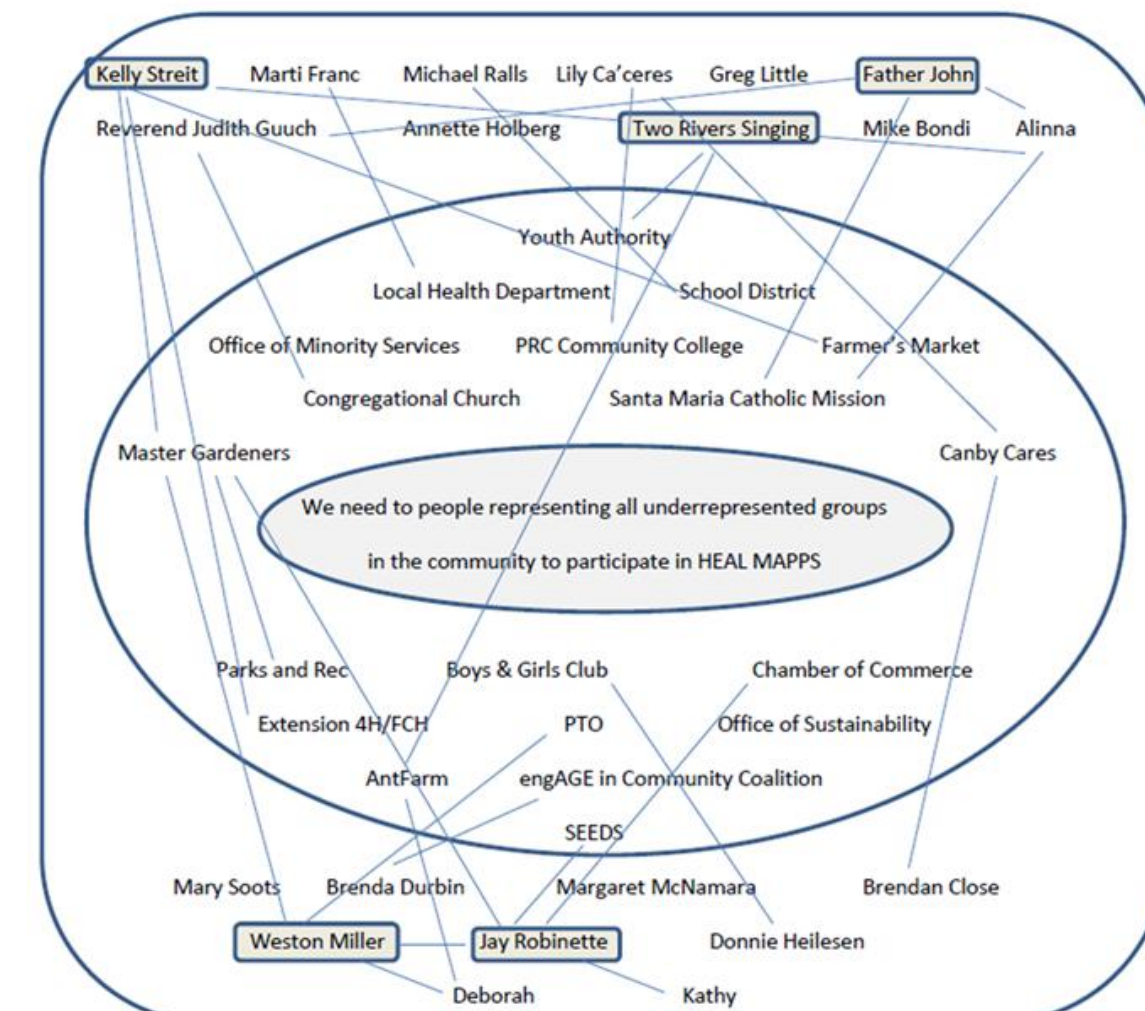


Figure 2. Power mapping and analysis. Individuals with power and influence in the community are identified by mapping participants' social networks. Highly connected individuals are invited to join the discussion addressing needs identified by participants in the study.

RESULTS



Figure 3. Photographic survey data. Widely available fast food options and pollution in public parks negatively influence those in pursuit of healthy lifestyles, but increasing awareness and availability of fresh foods helps individuals who actively seek out alternatives.

- **18 Participants generated maps** representing routes traveled on foot or by motor vehicle as they interacted with Albany, Oregon food and physical activity environments.
- **Participants photographed over 222 features** of the community related to healthy eating and physical activity for children, youth, and adults in Albany, Oregon.
- Preliminary analysis of the acculturation survey revealed most participants are not acculturated to the prevailing culture.

Table 1. Factors that help and hinder access to healthy foods and physical activities in Albany, Oregon.

Factors were identified in a discussion centered on photographic surveys and GPS maps created by participants in their mapping routes on foot and by car.

	Healthy Eating	Physical Activity
Helps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to affordable fresh foods • Food assistance programs such as Women Infants and Children (WIC) • Access to traditional foods and markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playgrounds with equipment for varying ages • Playgrounds with walking paths around them • Affordable options (Zumba \$3/class)
Hinders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many unhealthy food options • Lack of information in Spanish • Lack of affordable fresh high quality foods • Lack of confidence in school food • Lack of public transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor infrastructure for navigating environment: lack of walking paths, broken and missing sidewalks, poor lighting, and secondary smoke • Rainy and dark winters • Unsafe and unhealthy living environments • Lack of public restrooms in parks

SUMMARY

Steps 1, 2, 3 (completed)

- A focus on relationship building leads to the accomplishment of program goals.
- Cultural understanding and approachability and/or bilingual language skills are a must.
- Leadership development is a long process. For long-term participant support, program needs to develop sustainable infrastructure.
- Leadership training should be centered in a popular education methodology. Allow participants to come to their own realizations and conclusions.
- Community and state events can be used as a civic engagement activities.

Steps 4 and 5 (in progress)

- Community report will be completed and available in Spanish and English.
- Familias Activas leadership group will develop advocacy campaign around one identified priority.

REFERENCES

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