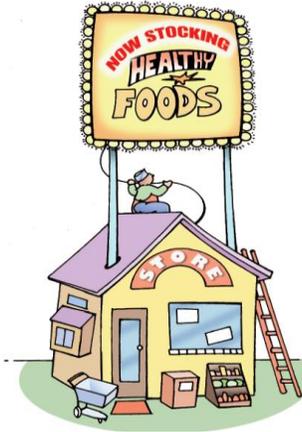


# Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy

## Community Support & Demand Building Activities



**Stock Healthy Shop Healthy**



Increasing the quantity and quality of healthy foods available at small food retailers, while building demand for such foods in the community, is a promising strategy for improving access in both urban and rural communities. In 2014, University of Missouri Extension, in partnership with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, launched *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy*, a comprehensive, community-driven initiative that allows communities to improve access to healthy, affordable foods by working with small food retailers. *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy* will guide any community through a unique approach to increasing access to healthful foods that involves engaging small food retailers and community members to address supply and demand at the same time.

Continue reading to learn how rural counties and urban neighborhoods across Missouri are working with retailers, building strong organizational partners, engaging customers, and providing nutrition education both in the store and in the community.

### KICK-OFF EVENT

Once your community launches *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy*, it's important to spread the word that a nearby store is participating. A kick-off event announces that your community's store is now selling healthier food options and is a great way to show the community that their input and participation is important to the success of the project.

With support from local public health departments and MU Extension, stores in McDonald County and Clay County held community-wide kick-off events. In McDonald County, MU Extension and the County Health Department held a community wellness fair at a nearby church; meanwhile, taste-tests took place at Supermercado, the participating store in Noel. Two Hy-Vee Convenience Stores in Clay County (Kansas City and Gladstone) held kick-off events for community members and customers. Both events included taste-tests, store promotions, store tours and nutrition education. These events provide interaction with large numbers of the community. Nearly 80 people attended the wellness fair in McDonald County and close to 50 people attended both of the kickoff events in Clay County.



## **ADULT & YOUTH NUTRITION CLASSES**

Nutrition education provides community members and customers the opportunity to learn about meal planning, shopping on a budget, and preparing healthy meals. University of Missouri Extension partners with local public health agencies to provide interactive nutrition classes for youth and adults.

The Jackson County Health Department and MU Extension worked together to offer a nutrition education class to community members that focused on how to read nutrition labels and how to find the healthier options within a store. The Greene County Health Department partnered with the Housing Authority of the City of Springfield, located near the participating store in Springfield, to provide nutrition education classes for residents. Following the classes, taste tests were offered in the store showcasing *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy* recipes.



## **YOUTH HEALTHY RECIPE COMPETITION**

Youth are one of the biggest consumer groups at small food retailers, often times purchasing high-calorie snacks and juices. Therefore, involving students and youth groups in the education and promotion of healthy food choices at the store is a vital program component.



The Bollinger County Health Center partnered with the local University of Missouri Extension 4-H youth group to host a healthy smoothie recipe competition. Ten youth participated by each creating their own smoothie recipe using healthy ingredients found at The Butcher Block (located in Patton) and Grassy General Store (in Grassy). The health department developed an application for those interested in participating, and ordered *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy* aprons for each youth. The 4-H youth presented their personalized smoothie recipes to

a panel of judges made up of key county stakeholders. The winning recipe was displayed at the two participating stores.

## **STOCK HEALTHY, SHOP HEALTHY SIGNS AND POSTERS**

Posters and signs can help draw attention to new, healthier items carried in the store. Encouraging the store owner to incorporate *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy* signs, posters, and shelf talkers throughout the store will help customers identify the more healthful options and encourage them to make the healthier choice.

Gringo Loco, in Kansas City, Missouri, utilizes both Spanish and English *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy* materials throughout the store to reach their bilingual customers.



## **COLLECTING CUSTOMER FEEDBACK**



A simple way to build consumer demand for healthy foods is to ask customers what they would like to see carried in the store. One effective way to do this is to place a poster board in a busy location in the store where customers are able to give their input and suggest items for the store to carry.

In Boone County, the store owner placed a poster board survey on display at the front of the store near the cash register so that it could be easily seen by customers. After seeing some of the suggestions made by customers, the owner decided to start carrying a few of the suggested items in the store such as yogurt and brown rice.

## **BUILD YOUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE STORE OWNER**

Regular contact with your partner store owner is important to the success of your project. You are building a relationship, showing the store owner that you are interested and care about the outcome of the project, and truly want the store to be profitable while offering healthy foods. The store owner needs support to make and maintain changes that could affect his/her livelihood.

Show your support to your partner store owner by:

- Visiting the store regularly.
- Sharing examples of what other Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy stores have done across Missouri.
- Asking the store owner what their vision for the project is. Ask what they hope to get out of the program and work hard to make that happen.
- Working with the owner to develop an incremental plan for making changes in healthy food offerings and any other store changes to make shopping for healthy foods easier for customers. Emphasize small steps and slow, steady progress. For example, try adding granola bars or animal crackers to the snack foods section of the store. If those sell well, maybe the next addition could be selling 100% juice. Use the suggestions on pages 7-8 in the Retailer Toolkit for ideas of healthy foods to try.
- Each time you visit the store, check on the placement and condition of shelf talkers, signs and other posters you have used. Replace if needed.
- Celebrating the changes, no matter how small, the store owner makes as part of *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy*. We couldn't do this program without them!

*Stock Healthy Tip:* Retailers need to be encouraged to improve the quality and type of healthy, affordable foods they stock, and supported in their efforts to do so.

## **OTHER COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

- Use *Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy* tools to survey customers and community members to find out what healthy items they would like to buy at the store then share the list with the store owner.
- Partner with local schools and work with students to help promote the store. Students can help distribute flyers or door hangers, design reusable grocery bags or hold taste-tests in the store. Another great way to reach youth is by teaming up with local church youth groups, the local 4-H group, and local Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops.
- Work with neighborhood associations, food pantries, after school programs and other community organizations to create healthy eating and active living posters to display in the participating store.

*Shop Healthy Tip:* Community members need to be informed that healthy, affordable foods are now available at the participating store and educated on how to properly prepare healthy foods and incorporate healthy eating and physical activity into their lifestyle.