



Sprouting Sandoval is a series of Community Services Division (CSD) initiatives designed to improve health at the individual, family, and community level. *Health Starts with Self* is among its core values while we work to promote locally-sourced, healthy, nutritious foods as an essential factor for a healthy life and healthy community through the (re)investment in our Heritage Farmers. These health education and outreach programs will be done through a multiplicity of mediums: experiential learning activities, art, lecture, food service contracts with local growers, and more. *Sprouting Sandoval* will commence conceptually in the fall of 2017 with the intent to plant seeds towards a health-filled sustainable Sandoval future.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

- **Place Matters:** Proven studies that demonstrate zip code as among the largest determinants of health. We see this in Sandoval as we continue to mega-source “food” (do we even recognize food anymore?!) from elsewhere, eroding our economy of what was once a flagship farming hub.

- **We really are what we eat:** And the devastating impact of heart disease, proven preventable through lifetime lifestyle choices of regular exercise and healthy diets rich in plant-based foods.
- **Public Pennies, Public Health, and the Power of Procurement:** Imagine if all food-purchasing government and quasi-government entities within Sandoval were to pool their collective bargaining power (both hospitals, all schools, the County and relevant municipalities); it would change the name of the game *and put community health first*. Simply put, when you put profit before people, people lose. Period.



Taps natural talent and natural resources in naturally sustainable ways.

Produces the product of produce, a proven disease preventer when primary in diets and is also biodegradable and eco-enhancing.

Follows doctors' age-old orders and protects perhaps our most precious resource: our children. *"The health equity gap can be closed in a generation if children are the focus."* (WHO on social determinants of health)

PROJECT EXAMPLES

1. **Education and Certification:** During the fall of 2017, a cohort of 12 within CSD participated in the NMSU Garden-to-Table program featuring a variety of professional Nutrition and Wellness experts on matters such as food insecurity in New Mexico, Mapping the Meal Gap, farmers market tours, how to conduct healthy food and recipe demonstrations to a diverse audience using principles of Garden-to-Table, heart-healthy meal preparation, best brain foods, the infinite benefits of using locally sourced products, diabetes-specific diets, and more. A condensed version of the series was included in the CSD fall biannual In Service while this "Cornucopia Cohort" then cooked for their colleagues using the applied principles learned in the program. They will subsequently (and selectively) rollout these same applied principles within senior and community centers in partnership with our Ag Agent and Master Gardeners inclusive of Garden-to-Table recipe demonstrations tied to the Food Nutrition Program.

2. **Let's Cook!** Is a multigenerational cooking program offered by *Kids Cook!* that provides families with experiential learning opportunities about the importance of healthy eating habits to include farm-to-table family activities and conclude with a communal meal. We piloted the program in the fall of 2017 in Pena Blanca which will be followed by the Jemez Valley in the spring of 2018. Funding permitting, CSD can offer this program throughout the other regions in the future.
3. **Streamline the Food Nutrition Program and Remove Age Restrictions:** Create a Food Nutrition Services Bureau within CSD unrestricted to age demographic as hunger does not discriminate. Head bureau with a seasoned and experienced Food Services Manager to help professionalize the staff, the service, and more robustly tackle hunger while focusing on locally-sourced healthy foods.
4. **Fresh Possibilities Farm et al:** Help to develop local farms and contract with them to eventually, over time, scale supply to meet the demand needs of our Food Nutrition Program. Fresh Possibilities is an innovative organic farm based in Pena Blanca and is our first partner planting crops exclusively for the CSD Food Nutrition Services program.
5. **Mobile Food Pantry:** Offer Mobile Food Pantry services targeting rural, underserved populations inclusive of locally-sourced, healthy foods. St. Felix was awarded this competitive contract and in partnership with CSD this service will commence in January of 2018 using the Pena Blanca, Village of Cuba, and Jemez Valley County Centers as distribution sites.
6. **From the Soils of Sandoval** is a partnership between CSD and professional artists Geraldine Brussel and BethAnne Bethel, both of whom are Sandoval residents and actively engaged with our Senior Centers. Together they will conduct a series of professional art workshops at select Senior and Community Centers with canvas art featuring locally-sourced healthy native foods (apples, squash, watermelon...). These professionally-facilitated art pieces created by local residents will then adorn the walls of dining areas among the Centers as part of community health outreach and education. Several of the workshops will include presentations by local organic farmers and new vendor Growers for our meal programs.
7. **Comedicina de Medicina** (Food is Medicine) is part of a greater initiative by local artist Jade Leyva that exhibited throughout North America including at the National Hispanic Cultural Center. *SEEDS: A Collective Voice* aims to educate communities about the health impact of locally sourced plants and the importance of supporting locally-sourced growers through the collective creation of community mosaic murals made from local seeds. During visits to classrooms and community centers residents participate in the

murals while subject experts lead discussions to raise awareness on related topics such as community health and nutrition, organics, plant-based foods, the importance of seed and bee preservation and their connection to a healthy environment, among others. The *Comedicina de Medicina* mural was titled in representation of CSD's mission and is a perfect symbol of the intent behind *Sprouting Sandoval*. The mural will be publicly installed on the second floor of the County Administration Building in the spring of 2018.

8. **Preserving Traditions: Heritage Farmers of Sandoval County** is an Oral History Project with Sound Seed Productions that will culminate with ten Heritage Farmers and their families plus a (voluntary) composition for use as outreach and education about the interdependence of community health and economic development, the positive health impact of sourcing from local growers, and honoring our elder Heritage Farmers in hopes of planting seeds that inspire younger generations.
9. **Request funds to update the Health Commons' kitchen and return to original intent:** The kitchen at the Health Commons is intended to teach families how to prepare healthy meals. Over time it unfortunately turned into a breakroom and storage area. With the help of DOH, this has since changed but renovations are needed in order to return it operationally to its original intent. A \$17k estimate has been secured and will be requested in the new budget cycle.
10. **Invite Ag Agent and Master Gardeners to move into The Health Commons** inclusive of irrigated adjacent plot for partnered Seed-to-Need (or similar) model. This redefines the Health Commons in progressive ways and underscores the *Food is Medicine* fact, while also serving as a symbol of Sandoval values as we work to ensure equity of access and affordability of locally sourced foods for all County residents.
11. **Expansion of canning center opportunities** for the community, up to and including having select CSD staff facilitate canning workshops among certain community and senior centers. CSD largely funds the Canning Center operated by NMSU in conjunction with Jemez Valley Schools and this is a lifeline for many in that region, esp when preparing for the cold winter months.

