



# WHAT'S HAPPENING



Healthy Kids Las Cruces Monthly Newsletter

September 2015

## Food System Setting

Lead: Aaron Sharratt [aaron@lasemillafoodcenter.org](mailto:aaron@lasemillafoodcenter.org)  
Director of Development & Administration

### Increasing Healthy Food Access in the Mesquite Neighborhood

In the heart of Las Cruces lies a food desert. The historic Mesquite neighborhood has low access to food, particularly healthy food - residents who lack transportation must walk over half a mile to the nearest grocery store from some areas. But in this desert, something good is sprouting. La Semilla facilitated community meetings focused on food access and heard from community residents about the difficulties faced and the hardships of some to get adequate healthy food. From those meetings, ideas and solutions were discussed with great excitement, with ideas about revamping old neighborhood corner stores and stories of the man with the horse-drawn wagon that used to go around the neighborhood selling fruits, vegetables, and sugar cane. The folks at El Calvario Methodist Church were ready and willing. Beginning in October, the church will hold a monthly free produce market, the Agape Free Market, a place to build community, fellowship, and health. This is just the beginning cultivating health and food traditions in the Mesquite neighborhood - stay tuned for more to come!



#### What is a food desert?

A food desert is a geographic area where affordable and nutritious food is difficult to obtain, particularly for those without access to an automobile. Research links them to diet-related health problems in affected populations.

## School Garden Work Days

La Semilla's Edible Education program is seeking volunteers to assist with school garden work days on September 12th from 8-11am at Conlee Elementary School and September 19th at Lynne Middle School. We will be putting in permanent garden beds for students to use for many years to come! If you are interested or would like to learn about other volunteer opportunities please contact Liz at [liz@lasemillafoodcenter.org](mailto:liz@lasemillafoodcenter.org).



## Upcoming Events

**CANCELLATION** for  
September 12-Fall Youth  
Basketball League  
Registration for more  
information call  
575-541-2563

September 12-  
NMSU Aggie Football  
Stuff the Stadium  
6:00 pm NMSU ticket office  
575-646-1420

September 15-  
Safe Routes to School Meet-  
ing 9:00 am at the City of Las  
Cruces City Hall Conf. Room  
2007A

September 29-  
High School Completion  
Convening 4:30-8:30 pm  
Location TBA  
RSVP to  
[david@ngagenm.org](mailto:david@ngagenm.org)

September 30-October 4  
Southern New Mexico State  
Fair @ the fair grounds  
[snmstatefairgrounds.net](http://snmstatefairgrounds.net)

Go to <https://www.facebook.com/HKLasCruces>



# Community & Regional Planning Setting

Lead: Andy Hume [ahume@las-cruces.org](mailto:ahume@las-cruces.org)  
Senior Planner-City of Las Cruces Community Development

## Gearing up for International Walk to School



As of today, 15 schools in Las Cruces have signed up to participate in International Walk to School Day. What is International Walk to School Day? International Walk to School Day is a global event that involves communities from more than 40 countries walking and biking to school on the same day. It began in 1997 as a one-day event. Over time, this event has become part of a movement for year-round safe routes to school and a celebration – with record breaking participation – each October.

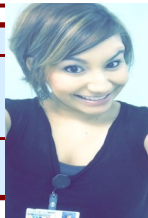
Today, thousands of schools across America – from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico – participate every October. Las Cruces Public School have participated since 2007. This graph shows the increasing participation year after year. Last year in 2014, 22 schools participated. International Walk to School Day

takes many volunteers and hands to pull of safely. If your interested in volunteering send Ashley Curry a e-mail at

Ashley Curry a e-mail at [acurry@lcps.k12.nm.us](mailto:acurry@lcps.k12.nm.us)

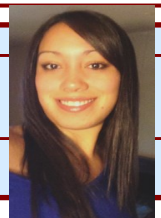


Marissa Marrujo



Marissa is a student in the Bachelor of Public Health program expecting to graduate in May of 2016. Marissa then plans to move to Dallas, Texas where she intends on continuing her education by becoming a nurse. She spends her free time volunteering for "Project Hope" & the American Cancer Society when she isn't working as a server at Nopalitos. Marissa will be working with the health promotion team to do BMI surveillance, WIC Farmers Market Tastings, & rating many local parks based on criteria such as safety, utilization, amenities, proximity to walking trails, and/or other health-related attractions.

Marlene Zuniga



Marlene is a student in the Bachelor of Public Health program expecting to graduate in May of 2016. Following graduation Marlene wants to extend her education and become a dental hygienist. Marlene is the proud mother of 18 month old daughter Jaelynn. She will spend her internship time working with the health promotion team to do BMI surveillance, WIC Farmers Market Tastings, & rating many local parks based on criteria such as safety, utilization, amenities, proximity to walking trails, and/or other health-related attractions.

NMSU STUDENT INTERNSHIP

## Healthcare Setting

Lead: Dr. Danielle Nixon

[drnixon@fullbloompediatrics.com](mailto:drnixon@fullbloompediatrics.com)

Pediatrician at Full Bloom Pediatrics



Back to school often means more sniffles and viruses spreading. To combat the spread of illness the best defense is good hand washing technique. Encourage proper hand washing and

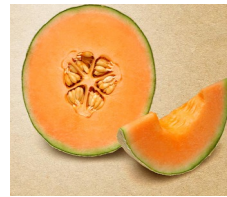
make sure to get your family vaccinated with flu vaccine when it becomes available this fall to stay healthy this winter.

## Education Setting

Lead: Barbara Berger

[bberger@lcps.k12.nm.us](mailto:bberger@lcps.k12.nm.us)

LCPS Health & Nutrition Specialist



**In March Las Cruces Public School introduced salad bars in middle and high schools. This school year will see all schools implementing salad bars.**

**LCPS Elementary schools we will have a melon tasting lesson on September 10.**



## Communities and Families Setting

Lead: Mark Johnston [mjohnston@las-cruces.org](mailto:mjohnston@las-cruces.org)

City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Director

Registration for the second annual Teen Retreat hosted by the City of Las Cruces Parks & Recreation Department and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity continues from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. thru Wednesday, September 2nd at Meerscheidt Recreation Center (MRC), 1600 E Hadley Ave.

The retreat will be at MRC from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Saturday, September 5th. During this time, the center will be closed to the public. The event is for youth 12 - 19, but those 12 – 17 must be registered by a parent or guardian. A free t-shirt will be given to each teen participating in the retreat. Security will be on site during the event.

The goal of the Teen Retreat is raise awareness on issues such as teen pregnancy prevention, bullying, gang violence, healthy life habits, budgeting, leadership skills and insight on how to enter college. The event fosters teamwork, communication, physical fitness, and social networking among teens.

Teens will be allowed to challenge themselves, as well as their peers, through group discussion, by acting out situations involving teen issues, and coming up with the best solutions to solve problems. There will be music, fitness, sports, relays, arts & crafts, games and contests. Several groups, agencies, and community leaders will be on hand to present and perform throughout the event.

## Youth Plus 1 Hiking Program

The City of Las Cruces Parks & Recreation Department will begin a Youth Plus 1 (parent) hiking program! This program is designed to get kids, ages 12 - 15 years, active and involved in the outdoors by offering hikes in length from 3 - 7 miles, round trip. Participants will be required to wear hiking boots, hat and have a backpack with water and lunch. Hikes take place every other Saturday starting in October and continue until just before Christmas. Look forward to hiking Dripping Springs, Filmore Canyon, Soledad Canyon, Branson Canyon and more! This program is free.

Registration will be held starting September 8, at the Frank O'Brien Papen Community Center (304 W. Bell Ave.), and is on-going until filled. Space is limited.

For the young adventurers who decide that they like hiking the great outdoors, we will add a "Youth Adventures Group" in 2016 (parent participation not required). Stepping it up a notch, youth adventures will geocache, learn map skills, participate in night hikes, volunteer for projects in state parks and camp! The Youth Plus 1 program is a pre-requisite to Youth Adventures.

For more information call the Frank O'Brien Papen Community Center at 541-2454.