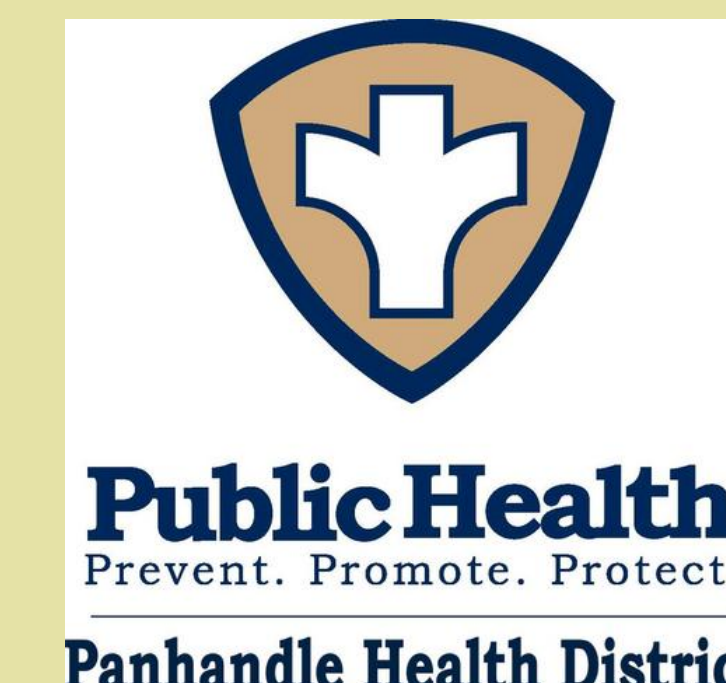


# Fresh and Healthy Foods Encouraged by the Medical Community are now Affordable in Bonner County, Idaho!



Bonner County Coalition for Health | Panhandle Health District 1 | Sandpoint, ID | Presented By: Nanci Jenkins, MS, RDN, LD, Grant Manager, WIC Dietitian

## Introduction

- The Bonner County population is dispersed in nine separate cities and eleven separate unincorporated communities. Although all of these areas have unique needs, a general theme connects them. For the most part, the residents are low-income and suffer from a high rate of obesity/overweight. There are only 28 Primary Care Physicians serving a population of over 40,000 persons. The U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2010-2014 reports that in Bonner County, 19.43% of children aged 0-17 are living in households with an income below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). It is not surprising that the barriers to access health services and healthy foods and beverages are tremendous.
- The Idaho Department of Health data reports an increased prevalence of nutrition risks for clients serviced by the Sandpoint WIC clinic in 2015. Greater than 35% of Sandpoint WIC participants report consuming diets low in calories and/or essential nutrients. Another interesting yet concerning statistic is that 28.5% of Sandpoint WIC participants have a history of fetal or neonatal loss, an event that is likely influenced by inadequate early access to medical care.
- This project sought to address the high rates of obesity and inadequate nutrient intake by Bonner County residents with a focus on WIC participants by improving access to healthy foods and encouraging their consumption.

## Project Overview

A group of nearly 100 local citizens came together in 2016 to work on improving the health of Bonner County residents. They formed the Bonner County Coalition for Health (BCCH) and created 4 distinct projects. Two of those projects are show cased here.

1- Change for Change: a creative new project offered in collaboration with the local Super One Foods grocery store. Every 2 weeks, a healthy recipe is offered and 4 items from the recipe are placed on sale. These items are primarily WIC approved so that any resident can purchase them. A coupon is provided at checkout worth \$1.00 off a future healthy food purchase for each item bought. If all 4 items are purchased then the consumer will get a \$5.00 coupon at checkout.

2- Healthy Lifestyle Rx : tear off prescription pads similar to the ones physicians use for pharmaceutical prescriptions are being used by local health care providers to encourage patients to make healthy food choices, increase their physical activity, enroll in the WIC program or monitor personal health parameters like weight or blood pressure.

## Activities

“Change for Change”

- Identify a store willing to participate
- Create recipes keeping in mind seasonal requirements and WIC allowed ingredients
- Make clear reusable signs identifying the items on sale each week
- Educate the public on the project and its intent

“Healthy Lifestyle Rx”

- Identify physicians willing to participate and gather their input on the design
- Collect logos from each physician’s office
- Find a resource willing to house the information regarding the specific referrals
- Create the pads and ensure re-orders can be filled quickly

## Outcomes

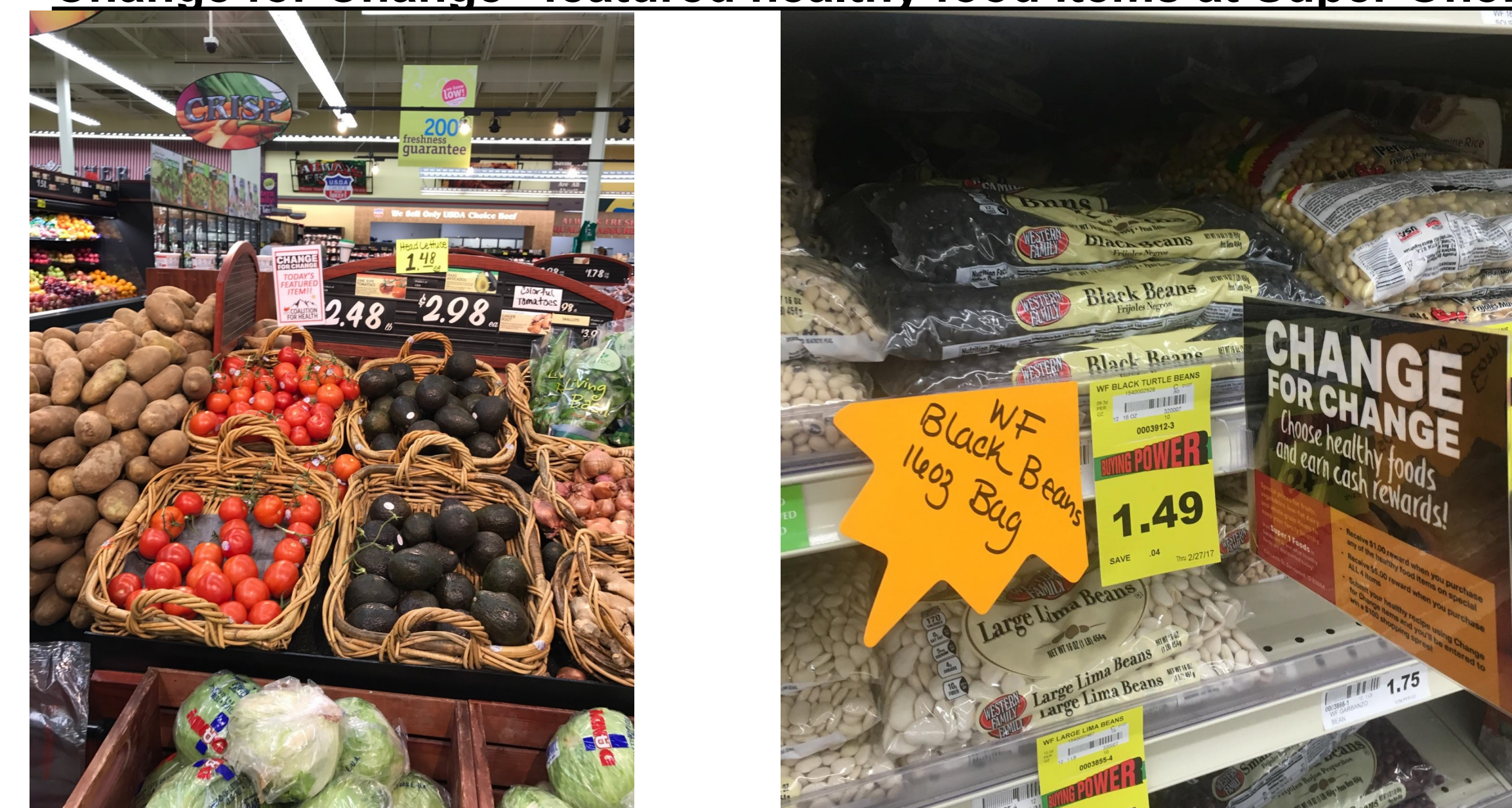
“Change for Change” is a success and is expected to continue long after the project end date. The launch date was 10-12-16 and to date >3,000 coupons have been redeemed at the store. An unexpected bonus has been the fact that many coalition members now have a greater understanding of the barriers to healthy food consumption experienced by the low income population. A recent WIC client survey indicates that without these discounts they would not be able to purchase the ingredients needed to try the healthy recipes offered.

“Healthy Lifestyle Rx” pads are now being used by 3 different health care provider groups. Each has created their own recommendations and all now have a link to The Sandpoint Community Resource Center where patients can find detailed information about the healthy recommendations prescribed. There has been a 2% increase in WIC clients served since the initiation of this project.



BCCH Coalition Meeting

“Change for Change” featured healthy food items at Super One!



## Next Steps

We were fortunate to have The Blue Cross Foundation offer a grant opportunity that the City of Sandpoint applied for and was awarded. Since the task of that grant is to improve the health of our local residents we have arranged to have the BCCH become the Health Advisory Board for this new grant’s efforts. Therefore the projects we have begun will continue and the coalition we have formed will be allowed to grow and expand to meet the health needs of our county beyond this funding cycle.



## Lessons Learned

The first major challenge was finding a grocer willing to participate in the program. We overcame this challenge by identifying what was needed to make the program a win for the grocery store as well as the low income patrons. We recognized that if we could increase the foot traffic to the store, then the project would pay for itself with the increased purchases made by the additional customers. We created high quality marketing brochures and posters to be used strategically throughout the county.

The second obstacle was finding recipes with WIC approved ingredients. We solved this challenge by using the strengths of our coalition members to create our own recipes and by creating a recipe contest and asking the public to submit their own healthy recipes.

A barrier to the use of prescription pads was that the physicians have such limited time. We overcame this challenge by having the OB/GYN Team Leader hold small group meetings outside of the coalition meeting time to refine the project to meet physician need. In addition, we linked this tool with an online website so that patients can follow up on their own time to learn more about how to implement the prescription they received from their doctor.

[www.sandpointcommunityresource.com](http://www.sandpointcommunityresource.com)

### Healthy Lifestyle Prescription

**Healthy Lifestyle Rx**

Patient's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:**

**Activity/Exercise**

- 30 min. cardio 5x/week
- Park Rx program
- Gym/classes/training 3x/week

**Nutrition**

- “Change for Change”
- WIC program
- Nutritionist or Dietitian or support groups

Healthy Weight Goal \_\_\_\_\_ lbs.

**Wellness**

- Counselors & support groups
- Parenting support, CBE

**COALITION FOR HEALTH**

[www.sandpointcommunityresource.com](http://www.sandpointcommunityresource.com)

Prescriber: \_\_\_\_\_  
423 N. 3rd Ave, #210, Sandpoint Idaho 83864

“Change for Change” Recipe Winner!



## Best Practices

- Grow the coalition slowly. Initially invite members that represent unique populations in the county and seek out those who might be able to influence the goals you desire.
- Pay attention to how the coalition members are responding to the process. Acknowledge and strengthen what is going well. Assist and take corrective action quickly when progress slows.
- Allow coalition members to move between the various groups to keep them engaged and contributing.