

# A Campus Health Fair

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## Background

Last year Central Carolina worked in a consortium of five North Carolina community college ESL programs to complete health literacy lessons in a project called **Survivor North Carolina**.<sup>1</sup> Two striking facts stand out from that experience:

- 1) The five leading causes of death in North Carolina—heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic lung disease, and diabetes—are *all* associated with tobacco use, physical inactivity, and poor nutrition habits.
- 2) Over half the deaths in North Carolina each year are *preventable*.

Thus, it seems worthwhile to engage our current ESL students in a community project to target students, staff, faculty and the general public with information about healthy lifestyle decisions.

## Objectives

Students will

- explore some connections between lifestyle choices and good health/longer life
- engage in a campus community service activity to share information about healthy lifestyle decisions

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<sup>1</sup>Survivor North Carolina can be found online at <http://nc-net.info/>. Put your cursor on *Teacher Resources* in the menu on the left side of your screen; then move over and down to click on *ESL*. Finally, click on *Survivor North Carolina* in the list of materials included in the library.

## **Overview**

Only one person in my class during **Survivor North Carolina** is currently in my class, so I choose to teach selected information from **Survivor** to prepare my current students. I added a class internet search about the advantages of drinking water. By the time I announced that we would host a health fair, the class was ready to participate. Some time in small-group discussions permitted my students to supply ideas of their own for the fair.

Carol O'Brien and Mitch Million each prepared their classes through health-related study and activities covering topics such as the food pyramid and healthy eating, body parts, various ailments and injuries, and remedies and treatments.

Students from all three of our ESL classes readily helped to set up and staff the tables for the health fair itself.

## **Physical Preparations**

The choice to do a campus project in its entirety--as opposed to becoming involved in an existing community service activity--engendered a significant extra investment of teacher time for administrative arrangements. We met to determine:

- ✓ **a date and time for the health fair**

To facilitate a continuous flow of students through the health fair and get better participation and traffic flow, we allocated specific times for different classes in the school to attend. Our sessions were as follows:

Thursday, October 23, 2008

1<sup>st</sup> session 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

(open to the general public and to campus students)

2<sup>nd</sup> session 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

(open to campus students only)

- ✓ **administrative support**

It was not difficult to gain school administrative support for this activity

✓ **food**

We decided on healthy snacks of raisins, fruit cocktail, peanuts, pretzels, Chex Mix, fresh vegetables, 8-ounce bottles of water



Fruit: fresh, canned, frozen.

✓ **services and business to invite**

I invited local agencies and businesses to participate. Some examples include the Health Department, Curves, Chatham Market Place (a health food store), and The Hispanic Health Institute. Some did come, but others were unable to attend due to a business expo in Pittsboro on that same day. Unfortunately, we did not know that the business expo would be on our chosen day.

✓ **publicity**

I posted flyers at different locations (grocery stores, the library, the water department, and restaurants). I also took a flyer to our local radio station, WNCA.



✓ **information tables**

Tables were already in our break room area. We just rearranged them and set up two “welcome” tables at each end of the hall.

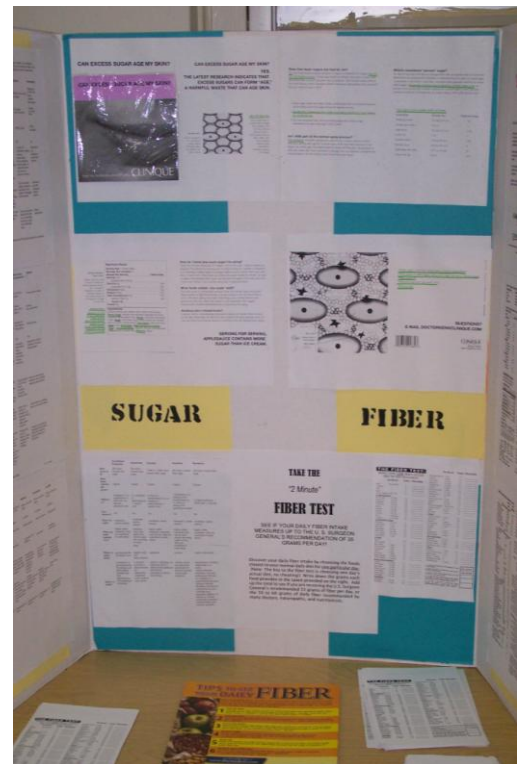


*Get your blood pressure and weight checked in Room 2.*

We also assigned display tables for information about diabetes, sugar, fiber, water, general nutrition, and for our various invited participants.



Water is the most important liquid that you should drink every day.





## Health Fair Partners

*Central Carolina  
Community College  
nursing students checked  
weight and blood pressure.*



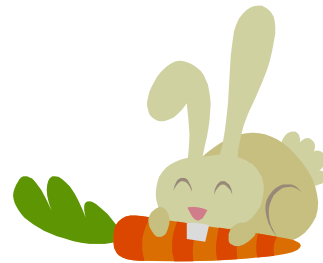
*Curves distributed  
information about their  
exercise program for  
women members only.*



*The Chatham Social Health  
Council provided brochures  
and information about  
Sexually Transmitted  
Diseases and HIV/AIDS  
Prevention Education*



*The Central Carolina Community College Sustainable Agriculture Department provided fresh vegetables.*



*The Health Department supplied brochures about fitness and healthy nutrition*



**And They Came . . .**





**Attendance and Participation at the Health Fair was rewarding.**



### **Reflection**

Planning the health fair was a lot of work, but I enjoyed doing it. We received positive feedback from students, instructors, and people from the community. I was disappointed that the Health Department wasn't able to come and check people for diabetes.

Looking back, I wish I had asked the students to do written evaluations of their experiences and learning after the Health Fair.