



# Healthy U Case Study

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## **Junior League of Kansas City, Missouri**

### **2015 Healthy U Case Study**

In July, 2014, as the Junior League of Kansas City, Missouri (JLKCMO or the League) was entering the final year of its Impact Area, Chanelle Zak, an undergraduate student from Rockhurst University pursuing a major in Nonprofit Leadership, was engaged by the JLKCMO to conduct a Case Study. This Case Study was to cover the entirety of Healthy U, the Signature Project in effect at that time, to serve as a resource to their members, community, and other Junior League chapters to show what the Junior League of Kansas City had accomplished over the five-year span.

### **Goals of this report**

- To detail the process of inception, enactment, and outcomes of Healthy U, the JLKCMO's Signature Project, beginning in 2010 and ending in 2015.
- Give outside audiences an opportunity to see the inner workings and decision-making processes that helped galvanize these programs.

### **Methodology for this Case Study**

- Compilation of information gathered during the research and decision-making processes from the JLKCMO
- Information gathered from membership surveys throughout the five years
- Information gathered from internal interviews with individuals from Harvesters, University Academy, and Junior League
- Site visits to BackSnacks stuffing sessions, Nutrition Club, and Family Dinners to get an up close look and hear from volunteers and program participants.
- Conduction of online surveys to gather feedback from University Academy teachers and from a sampling of parents of children participating in Healthy U programming
- Information gathered about children involved in Healthy U for three and five years, respectively

## Impact Area

The Impact Development Committee gathered data over the course of a year in order to propose potential impact areas to the general membership. The committee looked into local needs, national trends, opinions of our membership, as well as impact areas and program structures of other Junior Leagues around the country. The committee investigated several potential impact areas, including Child and Maternal Health, PreK-12 Education, and Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity. This cause was eventually selected as the Impact Area by vote during a general membership meeting.

The research gathered that showed support of the selected impact area of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity is as follows.

### Obesity

- The Centers for Disease Control and prevention estimate that about 16% of all teens and children in the US are overweight (measured by Body Mass Index)
- According to the American Heart Association, the rate of childhood obesity has doubled and the rate of teen obesity has tripled compared to the same figures in the 1980's.
- Missouri is ranked in the "Top Twenty" worst states for adult obesity, teen obesity, and childhood obesity.
- In Missouri, 18.6% of grades 6-12 were overweight in 1999 while the national average was 14%
- In the 1999-2000 school year, 36.6% of Missouri students were either at risk of being overweight or were classified as overweight. In the 2000-2001 school year, that figure had risen to 39.4%.
- In Kansas in 2002-2003, 11% of grades 6-12 were overweight while 13.6% of adolescents are at risk of being overweight.
- Overweight adolescents have a 70% chance of becoming overweight or obese adults
- Obese children have shown:
  - Alarming increase in the incidence of type 2 diabetes, usually considered adult-onset diabetes
  - High cholesterol and blood pressure levels, which are high risk factors for heart disease
  - High incidence of orthopedic problems, liver disease, and asthma
- Trust for America's Health, the public health advocacy group said research suggests that the nation would save \$5.6 billion a year in costs associated with treating heart disease if just one-tenth of Americans began walking regularly.
- Nationally, 31% of children 6-19 years old are overweight or obese- that is over 9 million children- a number that has tripled since 1980.
- We spend \$150 billion every year to treat obesity-related conditions, and that number is growing.
- For the first time in American history, our children's life expectancy may be shorter than their parents'. Obesity threatens the healthy future of one-third of all American children

- Local obesity rates for Johnson County are 12.6% and are 14% for Johnson County.
- Children’s Mercy and the University of Kansas have both recently started special divisions and clinics for obesity.

### Nutrition and Food Insecurity

- In 1999-2000, the number one most consumed food item by children was carbonated beverages like soda.
- The average child sees 40,000 commercials a year and more than half of the ads are for unhealthy foods like candy, soda, and fast food.
- Poor nutrition, even in non-overweight children can affect brain development and performance in schools. Children without proper nutrition may have shorter attention spans, more irritability, and more suspensions.
- Food insecurity is the condition of not having regular access to enough nutrition’s food for a healthy life. Almost 2/3 of teachers believe most or all of their students rely on school meals as their primary source of nutrition
- Nearly 1/3 of U.S. Children aged 4-19 years old eat fast food every day, which results in 6 extra pounds per year per child.
- ½ million people in Chicago do not have access to a grocery store in their neighborhood and this “food dessert” issue exists in Kansas City.

### Physical Activity

- According to a national study, 92% of elementary schools do not provide daily physical education classes to all students throughout the entire school year.
- Less than 25% of children get less than 30 minutes of physical activity per day.
- Children spend more time sitting in front of electronic screens than any other activity besides sleeping.
- The average time spent with various media (televisions, computers, and video games) is over 4 ½ hours per day among children 2 to 17 years old.
- Children need 60 minutes of physical activity every day to maintain a healthy weight.

## Signature Project: Healthy U



After the selection of the impact area of Children’s Nutrition & Fitness, the Junior League worked to establish the Signature Project that was to take place. The established mission of this Signature Project is

**To work with several community groups to provide healthy snacks, education on nutrition and fitness to students and their families at University Academy.**

### Collaboration

For the selected impact area, the JLKCMO chose to collaborate with Harvesters and University Academy. Both entities are described below.

#### Harvesters

Harvesters is a regional food bank that serves 26 counties in northwestern Missouri and northeastern Kansas. A certified member of Feeding America and a registered 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization, they provide food and related household products to more than 620 nonprofit agencies in the area as well as providing educational programs in the community. Harvesters’ mission is to feed hungry people today and work to end hunger tomorrow.

Harvesters’ BackSnack program provides a weekly backpack filled with nutritious, child-friendly food for schoolchildren who are food insecure to take home over the weekend. The BackSnack program is established as a partnership between Harvesters, a participating school, and a community partner. Each entity’s involvement is usually as follows: Harvesters provides the food and the backpacks, the community partner helps facilitate the delivery of food kits and distribution of BackSnacks, and the school determines which children are to receive a BackSnack. As of April 2015, the Backsnack program exists in 431 schools within their service area.

When the JLKCMO was seeking a community partner to provide these services, Harvesters stood out due to the Junior League’s interest in including BackSnacks as a part of the Signature Project. Further, the Junior League had a pre-existing relationship with Harvesters from previous day projects that the Junior League had performed, providing a good sense of rapport already built amongst League members and Harvesters. The ability

to provide both funding as well as volunteer time was attractive to Harvesters. At the inception of Healthy U, Harvesters expressed the desire to begin a school pantry (an uncommon practice in this area) as well as a new program involving experiential learning to educate families on nutrition and healthy lifestyles. They were willing to collaborate with the Junior League to initiate new programming and had hopes of using Healthy U as an opportunity to initiate pilot programs.

### **University Academy**

University Academy (UA) is a charter school located at 68<sup>th</sup> and Holmes, serving students from Kansas City, Missouri. Their student body demographics include:

- 98% African American enrollment rate
- 85% of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch

In regards to achievement and commitment of students:

- Students travel from all areas of Kansas City, with bus rides as long as 1 ½ hours
- All but four graduates from University Academy have pursued post-secondary education, with one of those four students entering the military.

This school utilizes a lottery system to select students to attend their school. At the time of data gathering for the implementation of Healthy U, there were over 1,000 children on the school wait list.

As for the current state of resources for health and wellness:

- Children's Mercy Health Clinic and a full time nurse are on site
- Recess is ½ hour per day for grades k-5.

Members of the Junior League did extensive research on potential community partners throughout the city. University Academy proved to be an especially attractive option due to its strong governance, high parental involvement, community support, and a wide array of opportunities for volunteers to get involved. Further, due to its status as a charter school, it was thought to have a strong community investment. When looking ahead, this suggested a greater likelihood of continuation of funding and sustenance of programs at the end of Healthy U. Further, the JLKCMO aimed to choose a school that demonstrated a need. Given the high percentage of children who qualified for free and reduced lunches, as well as the number of students who were homeless, University Academy fit these criteria. Lastly, the location would provide a sense of safety while being geographically feasible for the vast majority of the Junior League's membership.

According to research gathered, when children eat healthy food, schools have seen 68% improvement in grades and behavior, 84% improvement in attendance, 71% improvement in social skills, 83% improvement in self esteem, and 77% improvement in children's responsibility. Further, education in local communities is the first step in raising awareness for childhood obesity prevention and promoting healthy lifestyles. This information provided direction for the selected programming for Healthy U.

While the JLKCMO and Harvesters had an already-established relationship prior to the inception of the Signature Project, the relationships between the Junior League and University Academy as well as University Academy and Harvesters were completely new. From the beginning, this collaboration was described as an “Easy partnership,” with all parties meeting in the beginning to negotiate and lay the plans for the Signature Project.

After establishing the focus of the Impact Area as well as the community collaboration partners for Healthy U, the JLKCMO established the programming that would constitute Healthy U. During the planning process, the Junior League aimed for their programming to lead to measurable outcomes, which was also more likely to be possible due to the capabilities and capacities for measurement present in their selected community partners. The manner in which University Academy kept data on their students and the level at which Harvesters kept data on their supplies and program outcomes enhanced the likelihood of accurately measuring impact. Measurability was important to the Junior League in efforts to be able to show members and funders the community impact resulting from this Signature Project, which would also lead to many beneficial public relations opportunities. Lastly, the JLKCMO strove to provide a variety of engaging volunteer opportunities, with opportunities present in the daytime as well as evening, in order to make these projects attainable for the 85% of members who are employed.

At the onset of Healthy U in 2010, there were 7 proposed Signature Project Components. The originally laid out goals and plans for each program are as follows:

### **1. BackSnack program – Elementary School**

- a. Begin in Fall 2010-Spring 2011
- b. Program will provide approximately 230 backpacks to UA each semester.
- c. Program duration: September to the end of May each year
- d. Volunteer opportunities for the committees and volunteers will include:
  - i. Headquarters backpack cleaning (Tuesday morning)
  - ii. Headquarters backpack stuffing (Tuesday evening)
  - iii. Headquarters: Supplemental material to put in backpacks (daytime and evening opportunities)
  - iv. Delivering the backpacks to UA from HQ (Thursday evening)
  - v. During the 8 week Adult Project Strength, we will have TR evening distributions of the backpacks to the lockers and the others weeks we will have Friday afternoon opportunities to deliver backpacks to the lockers.

In preparation for the Fall 2010 start date for the BackSnack program, the JLKCMO conducted a six-week trial, providing BackSnacks for children during summer school. This gave them the opportunity to put systems in place for packing the backpacks, delivery, and ensuring that the committee members that this endeavor could fit in with their work schedule.

### **2. Healthy U Teens – Middle School**

- a. Program will include six week Harvesters cooking and nutrition course for middle school students.

- b. All meals are prepared for under \$1 per meal.
  - c. 200 students will go through the 6 week course.
  - d. This will be open to all Middle School students during their science class throughout the year.
  - e. Lessons will be led by a Health class teacher.
  - f. Program goal: to foster knowledge of nutrition and independence in teens
  - g. The League is providing funding for teacher's training.
- 3. Healthy U Families Programming with Harvesters/ Side by Side – Adult Education Classes**
- a. Goal: provide education on how to create healthy and appetizing meals on a tight budget
  - b. This program empowers participants with the knowledge and skills they need to strengthen their food resources and provide healthier meals.
  - c. This program teaches people on low and fixed incomes the important nutrition basics, food safety, and hands-on cooking.
  - d. Participants also receive a 20-pound bag of groceries at the end of each class.
  - e. This will be a six-week course each semester.
  - f. Volunteer opportunities include:
    - i. Committee members will be required to take one training course.
    - ii. Committee members will work with Harvesters to teach the courses and assist participants who are cooking.
    - iii. 8-week parent education course on Thursday nights at UA.
    - iv. Family dinner nights will be limited to 25-50 people per semester.
    - v. Harvesters provides supplies and 20 pound food bag for each participant to take home.
    - vi. Activities with school-age children will take place during classes depending on the ages of the kids.
- 4. Family Dinners- Will work with Healthy U Families**
- a. The League will work with community sponsors to feed families at UA throughout the school year.
  - b. Provide education on nutrition and fitness to parents and children.
  - c. Give families the opportunity to spend quality time together.
  - d. Dates and times are TBA. Meetings will occur once a week for six weeks per semester
  - e. This program will be a collaborative effort with classes led by Harvesters staff and League members.
  - f. Harvesters provides class supplies, nutritional information, and handouts.
  - g. Family Dinners will take place at University Academy
- 5. Fitness Component**
- a. The fitness component is to ensure that students at UA understand the important balance between exercise and nutrition.
  - b. League hopes to give them ideas on how to stay fit and still have fun.



- c. Children who are physically fit on average are more focused and are more alert during class.
    - i. A walk around the building before a test can drastically improve a child's performance.
  - d. The Signature Project will work with the Leadership Institute on a project.
  - e. The League will assist with a walking club.
  - f. Provide pedometers, water bottles for the classroom, a tracking system, and a 5K walk.
  - g. The committee will work on activities for students to do over the weekend and possibly get items to include in the BackSnacks like jump rope, hacky sack, etc.
  - h. A wish list of items requested by the PE teacher will be reviewed to see where the League can assist.
    - i. Walking trail painted on the playground, horizontal climbing wall, etc.
- 6. Community Garden with Kansas City Community Gardens (Spring 2011)**
- a. A plot has been picked to grow a vegetable garden at UA and Headquarters with the assistance of Kansas City Community Gardens.
  - b. The students will work with the garden at UA and learn about how to grow fruits and vegetables.
  - c. The garden at Headquarters will be run by JL members, Sustainer's Garden Club, and the Kansas City Community Garden, as well as other groups TBD.
    - i. The items grown will either be added to the BackSnacks or given to the students at UA to take home.
- 7. New Member Classroom Project – Grades 1,2,3**
- a. New Member groups will adopt a classroom in grades 1,2, and 3 in which they will be able to work with the teacher to facilitate a project in the classroom aimed at nutrition and/or fitness.
  - b. The small group leader will meet with the classroom teacher to talk about the needs of the class and any restrictions. The Project will need to focus on our Impact Area of Childhood Nutrition and Fitness.
  - c. Prior to moving forward with any project, the group will need to submit a project plan to the Impact Area Council with the top project selected to be presented to the membership.
    - i. These projects should include pictures, story boards, and/or a Powerpoint presentation
  - d. The groups can do the project in one day or over the course of several visits.
  - e. Each group will be given \$100 to spend on their project.
  - f. All projects must be completed by April 1<sup>st</sup> and participate in 2 of the 3 steps below in order to get credit.
    - i. Present the plan to the Impact Council
    - ii. Implement the project in the class
    - iii. Follow up report and story board to present to the Impact Council for review

## How University Academy students became involved in programming:

For Family Dinners, BackSnacks, and Nutrition Club, children and families were selected for participation based their need for the assistance. The effort to assess and meet the need was distributed amongst University Academy's Social Worker and teachers. Each individual was aware of the signs of food insecurity: children asking for extra snacks, requesting more food at lunch, and stashing away food whenever it was available. Further, UA has a list of students who are homeless and would therefore be likely to be interested in these programs. After identifying a family or student who might be interested in participating, they were invited to be part of the program.

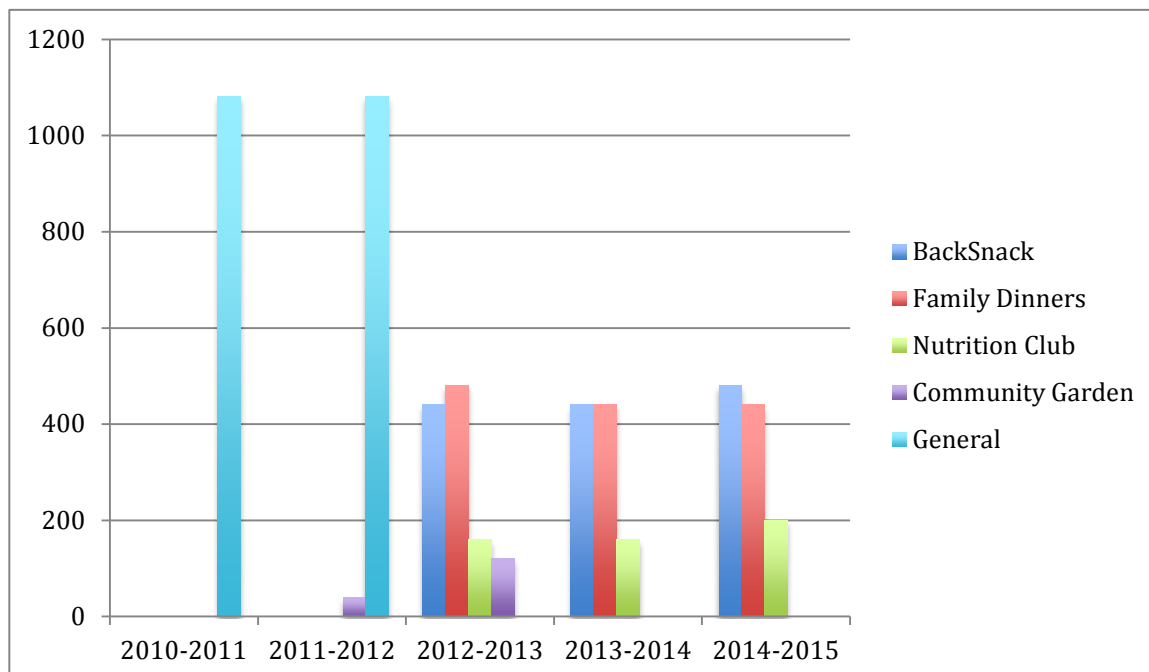
## Financial and Human Investment

While the Junior League provided significant financial support for Healthy U, League members gave a significant amount of volunteer hours. From the start of this Signature project, committees were in existence to support each program. However, as the programs grew and Healthy U matured, committee members were involved in BackSnacks, Nutrition Club, or Family Dinners.

## Committee Member Involvement

Committee Chairs and Committee members of Family Dinners, BackSnacks, and Nutrition Club donated a significant amount of volunteer hours in order to direct and support these programs. The table below outlines each committee's involvement. In addition to stated hours below, Chairs, Co-Chairs, and Step-Up Chairs of each committee went above and beyond the call of duty to serve their program and committee members.

The chart below shows the hourly involvement of committee members, broken down by year and distribution of hours amongst established committees that year.



	BackSnacks	Family Dinners	Nutrition Club	Community Garden	General	Total hours	Committee Members
2010-2011					1,080	1,080	28
2011-2012				40	1,080	1,120	28
2012-2013	440	480	160	120		1,200	31
2013-2014	440	440	160			1,040	27
2014-2015	480	440	200			1,120	29

These values are calculated by attributing 40 hours of work, or the minimum amount of hours that each member is required to complete, to each committee member listed on the committee roster that year. Therefore, the numbers listed are the least amount of hours possible.

### **Business Managers:**

Outside of committee placements, in both 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, one woman served as the Healthy U Signature Project Impact Program Business Manager. Each year, the woman in this position contributed at least 40 hours of volunteer service to Healthy U.

### **Sustainer Involvement**

On top of this, Sustainers contributed to these programs as well, with two women serving on the Sustainer Advisory Committee for Healthy U in both 2010-2011 and 2011-2012.

### **Total Contribution**

Combined, the women serving as committee members alone gave **5,640** hours to Healthy U over the five-year time span. On top of this are the numerous hours given by sustainers, Co-Chairs, Step-Up Chairs, and Chairs of the committees.

## Financial Investment from the Junior League of Kansas City

Below is the Healthy U Budget, divided by program and year

Program	Description	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
<b>BackSnacks</b>	230 / week to elementary students (NOTE: decreased to 150 for 13-14 League year)	\$51,000	\$53,500 \$47,000 – Harvesters \$6,500 – supplies and supplemental	\$53,500 \$47,380 – Harvesters \$6,120 – supplies and supplemental	\$63,500 \$57,500 – Harvesters <i>(cost increased to \$250/child)</i> \$6,000 – supplies and supplemental	\$32,900 \$30,900 – Harvesters \$1,000 Supplies \$1,000 Salary for Delivery
<b>Family Dinners</b>	20 families each in fall and spring; 6 week curriculum, dinner each night and take home bag of groceries	\$31,400	\$10,000 \$8,000 – Harvesters \$2,000 – supplies and supplemental	\$16,000 \$8,000 – Harvesters \$4,000 – supplies and supplemental \$4,000 catering for 12 meals	\$14,000 \$8,000 – Harvesters \$2,000 – supplies and supplemental \$4,000 catering for 12 meals	\$14,000 \$8,000 – Harvesters \$4,000 Catering \$2,000 Supplies
<b>Community Gardens</b>	On-site garden for classroom use	\$7,500	\$200	\$500  (increased funding to add 4 more beds)	\$500	\$250
<b>New Member Classroom Projects</b>	One-day, in-classroom programming for elementary students	\$1,500	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$900
<b>Healthy Teens</b>	Harvesters Teen Eats Curriculum for 75 students within science curriculum at UA. Cost includes food for program.	N/A	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$2,812.50	\$3,000
<b>Fitness</b>	Varies year to year on a hands-on implementation of a fitness component	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$4,000	\$5,000

<b>Summer School BackSnack</b>	4 weeks of BackSnacks for 100 students	N/A	\$3,000 \$2,500 – Harvesters  \$500 – supplies and supplemental	\$3,000 \$2,500 – Harvesters  \$500 – supplies and supplemental	\$3,000 \$2,500 – Harvesters  \$500 – supplies and supplemental	\$2,500
<b>Nutrition Club/Pantry</b>	Access for 50 middle school students. 34-week program; includes 2 yearly field trips	N/A	-----	\$19,000	\$8,000  \$6,000 – Harvesters  \$2,000 – supplies and supplemental	\$3,000 + \$8,000 gift from FUA
<b>Total Budget:</b>		\$96,400.00	\$76,700.00	\$102,000.00	\$96,812.50	\$69,550.00

The following chart demonstrates the allocated budget for the Healthy U program during each year of its existence, alongside with the actual amount spent. Each year, Healthy U was able to provide for each program and reach its desired goals while remaining well under budget.

Year	Allocated	Spent
2010-2011	\$96,400.00	\$71,889.94
2011-2012	\$76,700.00	\$52,670.95
2012-2013	\$102,000.00	\$66,407.01
2013-2014	\$96,812.50	\$69,846.30
2014-2015	\$69,550.00	Forthcoming

With this money, the Junior League was able to supply a great amount of food for the students of University Academy.

Pounds of Food supplied for **BackSnack** and number of bags distributed:

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2	2012-20	2013-2014	2014-2015	TOTAL
Bags	1,350	7,360	8,225	8,425	5,350	4,050	34,760

Pounds	934	27,715	27,653	34,453	20,065	15,716	126,536
Produce Pounds		-----	308	1,566	629	331	2,834
<b>Total Pounds</b>	<b>934</b>	<b>27,715</b>	<b>27,961</b>	<b>36,020</b>	<b>20,694</b>	<b>16,047</b>	<b>129,370</b>

### **Nutrition Club**

Over a course of 34 weeks each year, the following amounts of pounds of food were supplied for Nutrition Club each year along with how many kids were served.

Year	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	Total
<b>Pounds</b>	12,557	6,229	4,332	3,155	26,273
<b>No. Students</b>	160	160	80	80	480

### **Lessons Learned, Successes, and Outcomes**

#### **BackSnacks:**

##### Level of Need

At the beginning of this program, the League’s intention was to feed all individuals who qualified for the program based on need. One of the original goals was to provide 230 BackSnacks each week to students. However, as the League soon learned and UA pointed out, while a high percentage of children were eligible for free and reduced lunches, not all need food on the weekends. This was evidenced by the fact that, during the time that 230 BackSnacks were being handed out, there was a high rate of BackSnacks being left behind by children. In the opinion of employees of UA, this showed a lack of need on the part of the child. In other words, if the child is that hungry, they will make sure to get the food home. As a result, the League worked with UA to identify a more appropriate number to distribute. This collaboration resulted in the number of BackSnacks being decreased for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 years to 150 per week. Looking back, staff from UA recommended that, if they were do to it again, the BackSnack program should start with a smaller number of BackSnacks and add 30 at a time if the need were present.

##### Supplies

As is usual with the BackSnack Program, Harvesters provided the food as well as the backpacks that would be used to carry the food. However, the League soon found out that the children either did not return the backpacks or a great number of the backpacks were coming back dirty or stained by the food. As a result, the Junior League decided to invest in plastic disposable bags that had the Junior League logo on the side, therefore increasing the presence of their brand as well as remedying the issue of unreturned or dirty backpacks.

In the beginning, BackSnacks were shown to be too big for the Kindergarteners to carry, but this was soon remedied and accommodations were made for our smallest recipients of the BackSnacks.

### Understanding the Student Perspective

As previously referenced, many students were leaving BackSnacks behind. Some of this was due to lack of need, while, in other instances, this was due to a stigma forming around taking a BackSnack home. UA staff shared that some children did not want their friends to know about their family's need for food. An aspect of this to consider is that Harvesters originally designed this program with actual backpacks serving as the manner to transport the food in order to lower the stigma and make discrete the process of bringing food home. Therefore, the stigma issue in this program may have been exacerbated due to the use of the League bags instead of the backpacks.

### Delivery

There was much discussion in the internal interviews conducted about the process of delivering the BackSnacks, both to UA as well as to the students. First, in the delivery of BackSnacks to UA, League members were generally only free to do so in the evenings, when UA was not open. When this plan was in effect, UA staff ended up having to stay late to be there for delivery and did not receive additional compensation for working past their shift. Later on in the program's existence, a paid staff member of the Junior League took on the responsibility to deliver the BackSnacks to UA. Next, in the distribution of BackSnacks to the children, it would have been ideal for League members to be able to help with this task as this would give them more interaction with students at the school and involve League members in every part of the BackSnack process. However, since many of them are employed, this was not a feasible option. As a result, this responsibility fell on one employee at UA. In its ideal form, the BackSnacks program involves placing the BackSnacks in each recipient's locker for them to find after school before they go home. However, given the size of this operation and lack of staff to deliver the BackSnacks, the staff at UA ended up taking the BackSnacks to each classroom to save time, which also took away from the sense of discretion that was present in the originally laid out program. In the opinion of the UA staff, it would have been ideal to have League volunteers help with the distribution of BackSnacks in order to maintain the integrity of the program and help kids feel comfortable receiving the BackSnacks.

### Volunteer Hours and Opportunities

During the BackSnack stuffing sessions done by League volunteers, these women proved to be very efficient in packing the food into the carriers. As a result, these committee members found themselves needing to complete more volunteer hours. In order to remedy this, League members began adding supplemental items to add to the BackSnacks as well as writing letters to the kids to include in the backpacks as well. League members capitalized on the opportunity to give more to this program when they found they had extra time to fill. However, in survey feedback, BackSnack committee members shared that they felt that

their talents could be better used than by stuffing BackSnacks and that they did not have any contact with the children. However, as reported by other members, they did realize that they were making a huge impact by being able to help provide these children with food for the weekend.

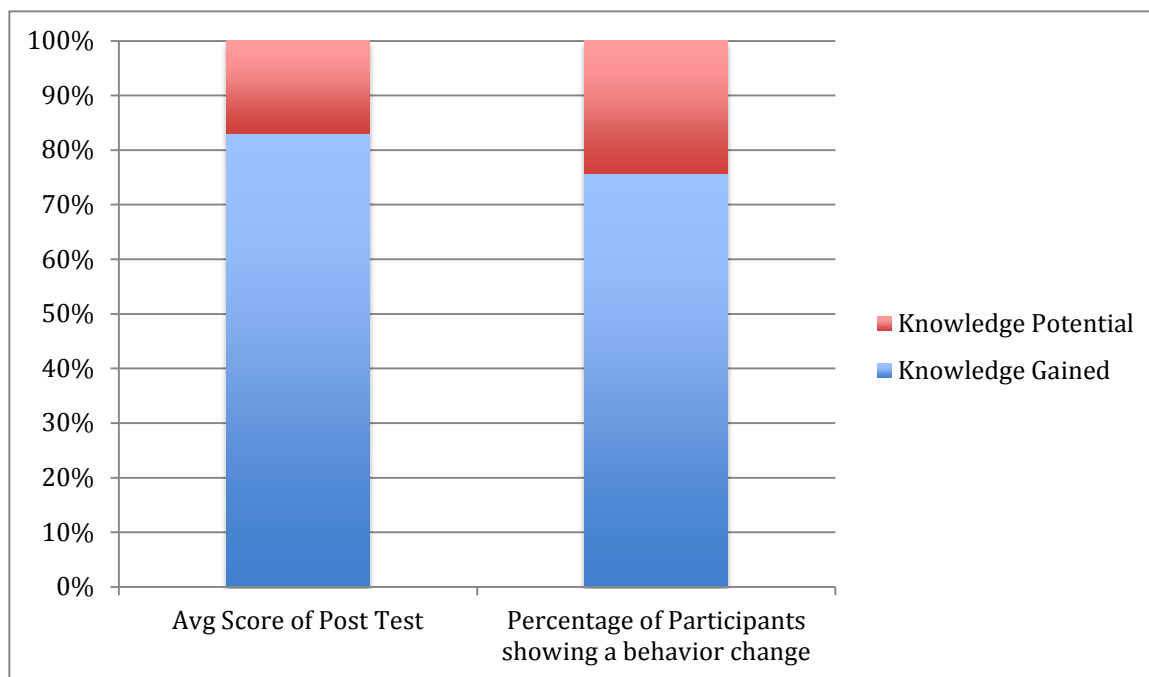
### Healthy Teens

Evolution of the Program:

The plans originally laid out for the Healthy Teens program later became known as Teen Eats. This program has provided all middle school students who take this class each year with knowledge on cooking and nutrition. All League members and UA staff that were consulted talked of this program positively. It also was spoken of as a relatively easy program to initiate and support over the course of Healthy U, as the teacher that was charged with incorporating this in their class took on the full responsibility of teaching the material and disseminating this information to their students.

Throughout the life of this program, **290** teens participated in Teen Eats. The total number of exposures that were provided to these 290 students amount to **1,661** exposures to knowledge about cooking and nutrition.

A post test was also given to participants of Teen Eats. The teens, on average, earned 83% on information taught within their class. True/False statements were posed on the post tests including, "I have a behavior change goal in the last six weeks that has lead to a healthier lifestyle." If true and the student was able to list their goals, their answer represented a behavior change. 75.7% of students demonstrated a behavior change.





### Nutrition Club

Healthy U Teens, after having established Teen Eats, expanded to include a food pantry for teens to come pick out groceries for their families once a week, filling the same need for middle school students that was being met in the elementary school children through BackSnacks. Teachers or staff recommended these students for the program based on need.

In the 2011-2012 year, middle school students were provided with a kit that was assembled at Harvesters with a food selection from their pantry. However, this was determined to be a cumbersome process and students did not like the food that was provided.

As a result, in 2012-2013, this program shifted to providing a traditional pantry-style program for middle school students.

### Combating the Stigma

Soon, a stigma formed around this program and students became less interested in coming to the pantry each week. As a result, the focus of this program shifted to educating students first and took on a new name: Nutrition Club. In this new format, League members would provide a quick nutrition lesson and a new food to try each week, and then students would be free to walk through the pantry to pick out food for their family.

Further, Nutrition Club began offering field trips once a semester to all students in the program. The novelty of a field trip raised the level of excitement and investment for students placed in the program. Friends of students in the program began asking if they could be in the program because it looked “cool.”

### Empowerment of Students

Along with involving the students in field trips, the Nutrition Club Committee also asked for students’ feedback as to what food they would like to see provided in the pantry. When the students started seeing changes in the food provided because of their suggestions, they felt that they had a part in the program and were given a voice. The Nutrition Club Committee reported that they saw these students grow in responsibility throughout the program, as they then had the ability to help their family in a tangible way. They would often hear comments such as, “I’m going to get these cereal bars this week because my sister likes them.” And “My mom knows how to cook these, so I’ll get more of them this week.” When these students were given options, they were given power, and they took on that power with pride.

### Volunteer Involvement

This volunteer assignment was described as very hard to staff because of the time of day that it took place. Nutrition Club was once a week after school, a time when many League members are not available. Also, volunteers described the programs as overstaffed at times, as the duties for this assignment were not numerous and be done quite quickly. However, when League women were able to commit to this time with the right number volunteers there, they found that they had significant student interaction, got the opportunity to know many of the kids well, and found the experience very rewarding.

### Importance of Combination of Programs

Volunteers also heard the statement, “I’m not gonna get any more food this week. My momma didn’t make anything I brought home.” Statements like these highlighted the importance of Family Dinners as it teaches parents the skills needed to use the groceries brought home and Teen Eats as it empowers teens to be able to make use of these services. Nutrition Club was a powerful program on its own, but as a part of Healthy U, it was an even more effective way to serve the UA community.

## **Healthy U Families: Family Dinners/Adult Education**

### Program Development and Evolution

Healthy U Families, in the League’s original plans, included two separate programs. One was to provide food for families, while the other was to educate parents on nutrition and fitness. However, the League decided to mix these two ideas to form a new program, Family Dinners. This program become very successful and popular throughout its time; it also developed and evolved greatly throughout its five years, as detailed below.

In the 2010-2011 year as well as fall 2011, Family Dinners’ emphasis was on fostering quality family time, providing dinner for families who needed it, and educating parents and children. Families ate a meal together and played board games with League members. After dinner, the group was split into two rooms: children in one and parents in the other. During this time, the Harvesters Nutrition Coordinator taught a nutrition or fitness lesson to parents, and children partook in an activity led by League members in order to learn about nutrition or fitness.

By spring 2012, Harvesters staff adapted their curriculum, Kids in the Kitchen, to be used for this program. This changed the overall structure of the evening, as parents and kids then were able to stay together for the educational piece of the program. Further, instead of Harvesters staff or League members teaching all of the information, this allowed parents to take part in teaching these concepts to their children.

By fall 2012, Harvesters rolled out a curriculum that was written specifically for this partnership with the Junior League. This program still provided family time, dinner, and education as before, but now added a new component of experiential learning for the families and empowerment for parents. For this version of Family Dinners, Harvesters trained twelve Junior League women to serve as leaders each week and oversee the family

dinners. The structure was changed again so that families were getting to prepare a meal together with the help of a League member. While preparing the meal, the family worked together to make the dish and the League member provided feedback and small lessons about kitchen safety or cooking tips. Then, while enjoying their meal, the League member would teach a lesson and then involve the parent to teach their part of the material to their children.

Families involved in this program were hand picked by UA staff for the first 3 years, based on needs, food insecurities, and homelessness. However, as this program became increasingly well known at University Academy, a stigma formed about this program amongst the families. If they were asked to come, the first question they would ask was, “Why have you asked *me* to come?” thinking that they were seen as needy. As a result, University Academy shifted their manner of recruitment for this program. Instead of the program solely being about need, they advertised it as a program for families who want to learn more about healthy living.

### Participants and Exposures

Below are the number of individuals who participated in Family Dinners as well as the cumulative exposures to healthy meals and knowledge about nutrition and fitness that occurred throughout the life of this program.

	Participants	Exposures
Adults	131	558
Children	203	854
<b>Total</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>1,412</b>

### A Successful Volunteer Placement

Overall, Family Dinners received very positive feedback from volunteers. This program was said to provide an opportunity to form personal bonds between League members and UA families. Many League members sited this placement as their favorite during their time in the Junior League.

### Decline in Enrollment

Harvesters staff cited a decline in family enrollment in the last year of this program due to reaching the saturation point in the UA community. It was not that all families who qualified for the program were reached, but all families who were interested in the program and willing to commit to attending six weeks of classes participated in the program.

### Decision Making and Communication

Harvesters staff shared that Family Dinners took place in another school for one semester due to circumstances with UA. This decision was a point of contention, as there was a

breakdown in communication and Harvesters was not consulted by the Junior League and UA during this decision-making process of choosing a new school. This put great hardship on Harvesters when working to plan out the logistics of this program.

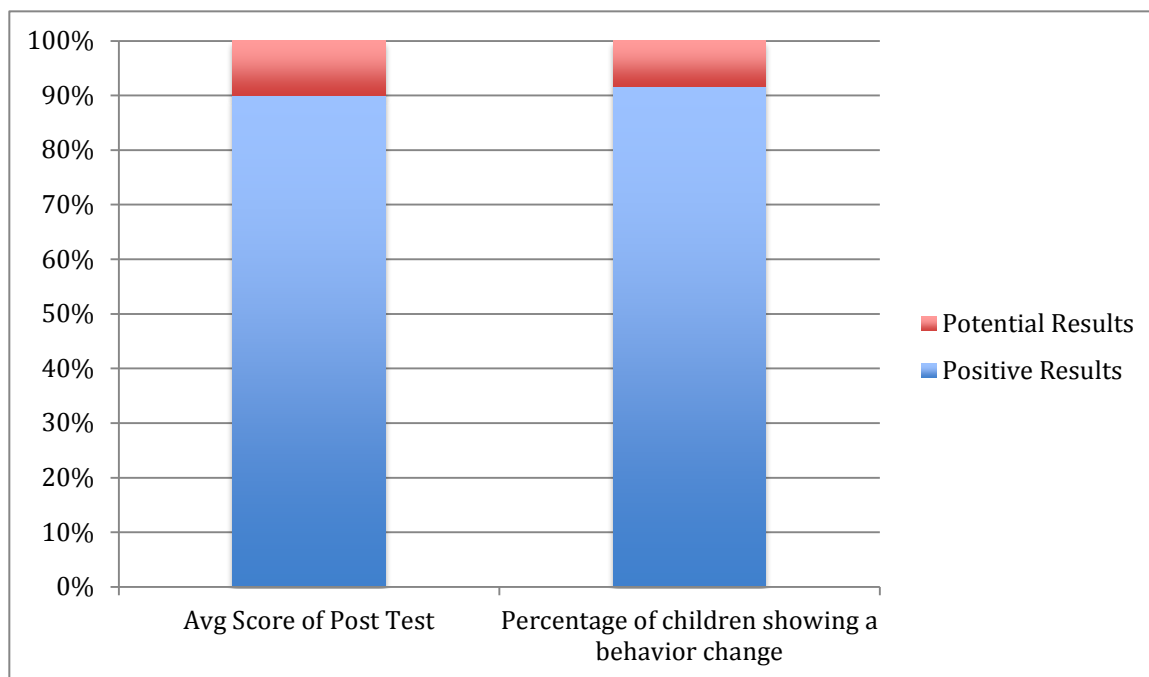
On another point of communication and decision-making, Harvesters requires that participants only take part in Family Dinners for one semester, with no repeat students. However, there were families that took part in the program three times.

### Distribution of Incentives

University Academy staff shared that if they were to change one aspect of family dinners, they would ask that the distribution of incentives to families is not reliant upon families arriving on time. While they understand the desire to reward families for being on time, it was shared that families felt punished for situations that were often out of their control, including buses running late or having to work late that day.

### Impact on Child Participants

At the end of each six-week session of Family Dinners, the children participating took a post test. These tests asked questions to determine the amount of information retained that was taught throughout the semester. The average score earned throughout Family Dinners existence was 90%. Participants were also asked questions such as, “Can you name a new food that you have tried during Healthy U families?” and “Can you name a new fruit or vegetable you have tried?” If they could identify a new food in their answer, it was considered that a behavior change was seen in this child. 98 children or 91.6% of participating children demonstrated a behavior change.



## **Parental Feedback:**

At the end of each six-week session, parents were asked to provide feedback on their experience. Below are quotes from parents that represent a large majority of the feedback that was received.

When asked about what they enjoyed most about the program:

- *"I enjoyed cooking together as a family."*
- *"Quality time as a family."*
- *"The bond with my family and other families."*
- *"Making time for this program because it was important to Donald."*

When asked what they would change about the program, the consensus was clear:

- *"Nothing because the program is so great."*

When asked if they were comfortable with the teaching format:

- *"We were comfortable and we liked being part of the teaching."*
- *"Very comfortable, the teachers were comfortable around us too. The teaching part was easy to digest because we learned by doing."*

When asked about the most valuable information they will take away from this program:

- *"Cooking together not only allows us to spend time together, but also encourages the kids to try new foods."*
- *"Reminded me of the fun of working with kids in the kitchen."*
- *"We're eating healthy."*
- *"I learned healthy cooking is not hard."*

When asked what goals they have accomplished since starting the class:

- *"Eating together more."*
- *"Tried new foods, took long walks as a family."*
- *"Drinking more water, eating more dairy."*
- *"Eating smaller portions, not eating in front of the TV, eating less of the junk kinds of foods."*
- *"Cut out some sugar."*
- *"Exercise."*

When asked what information they found most valuable in the newsletter:

- *"Serving sizes and portions was valuable."*
- *"Don't give up on trying new things."*

- *“That it takes 10 times before you know you like it.”*
- *“Eat the rainbow.”*

### **Fitness**

As a result of consulting the Physical Education Teacher at UA, the Junior League, combined with funding from the Helzberg family, built an indoor walking trail for the UA students to use. This trail serves as a great indoor recess option during bad weather as well as a way for teachers to help students let off steam.

Further, at the end of the 2014-2015 year, a boot camp was hosted for students at UA, with their fitness ability measured before and after the camp. (These are forthcoming).

### **Garden**

Schoolyard gardens were constructed on UA’s property. As this program developed, the program objectives included:

- Develop gardening skills by planting and maintaining food crops in an outdoor garden setting.
- Learn about nutrition and healthy eating habits as they taste and experiment with a variety of vegetables and fruit.
- Increase understanding of plant science and the basic concepts of plant growth through “hands-on” experience.
- Increase environmental awareness by learning how to garden and how people fit into the garden environment.

This program was in collaboration with the Kansas City Community Gardens staff, who helped with site evaluation and selection, soil separation and tilling, development of a planting plan, and advice on what grows in spring, summer, and fall gardens. The Junior League provided the funding for the garden construction, including seeds, plants, fertilizer, insect controls, and tilling of the garden. Further, the Junior League provided tools for all of the participating classrooms.

This program eventually was taken over by one of the science teachers and growing vegetables was made part of UA’s curriculum.

### **New Member Project**

New members were divided into small groups of about eight women. Each group had a leader and was assigned to a classroom at UA. This program very closely followed the originally laid plans, as described earlier in this document. The lessons constructed by each group varied greatly to offer each classroom a unique learning opportunity. Some examples of New Member Projects include decorating a water bottle while learning about the importance of hydration, learning Zumba, and practicing Yoga and telling a story through their Yoga poses and movements. After completing the lesson and giving the classroom

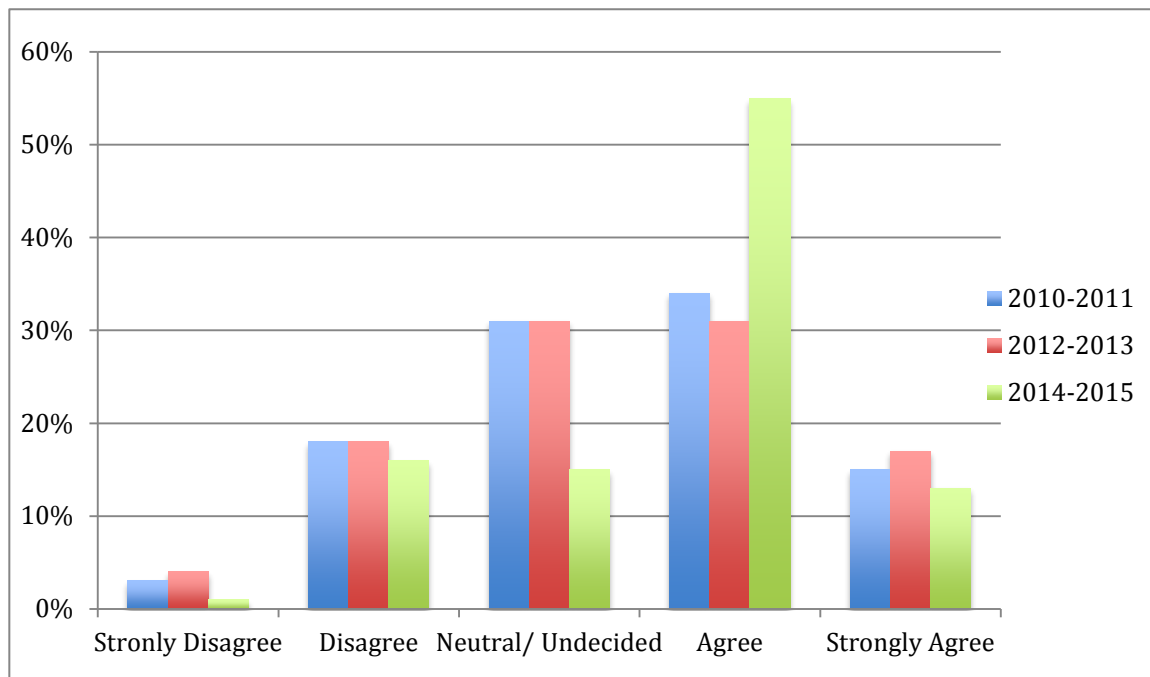
teacher a small break, members donated the extra supplies to the teachers of the classroom so that the teacher could have more resources on hand for future projects with the class.

This program was described as a perfect way to get new members involved in serving the community, bond with their fellow new members, and gain direct-contact opportunities with UA students, which led them to feeling more tied to the Junior League and our Impact Area.

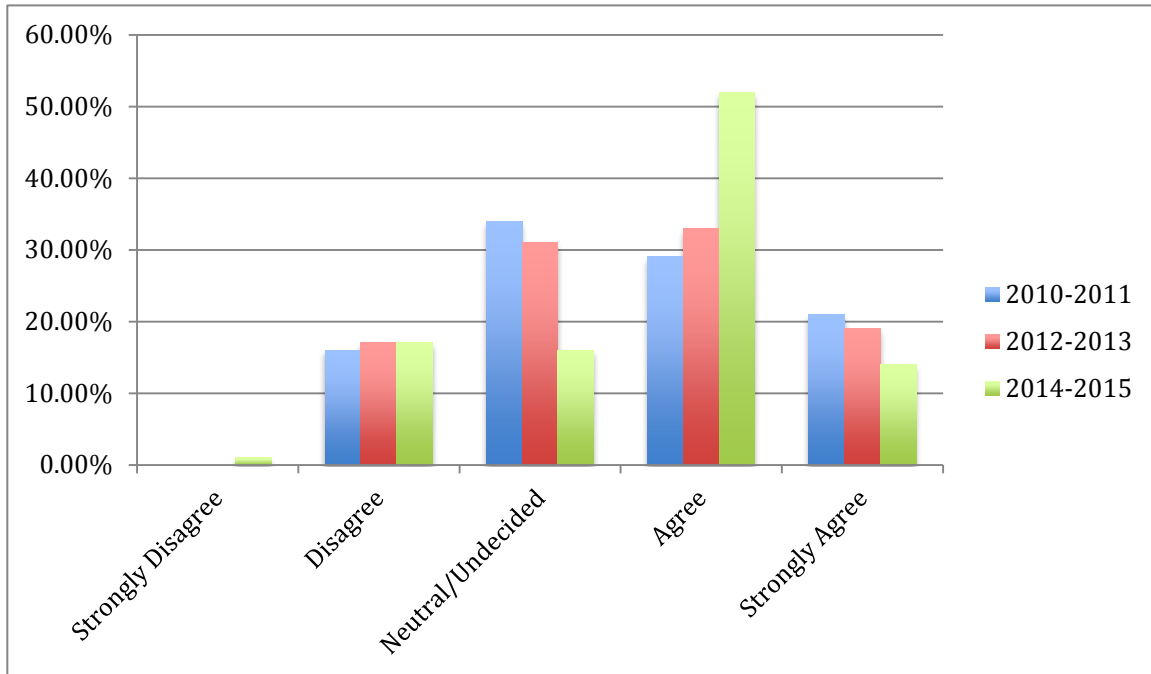
### Membership Knowledge and Engagement

Below are the results of surveys conducted in 2010-2011, 2012-2013, 2014-2015 or years 1,3, and 5 of Healthy U. In the survey conducted in September 2010, 62 responses were gathered. In September 2012, 113 responses were gathered. In 2015, 159 responses were gathered. Each question posed with the answers in the form of a Likert scale is shown in a bar graph, while the questions with right or wrong answers are shown in a table below with the number showing what percentage of responses were correct.

#### “I can identify the community partners that JLKCMO works with every year.”

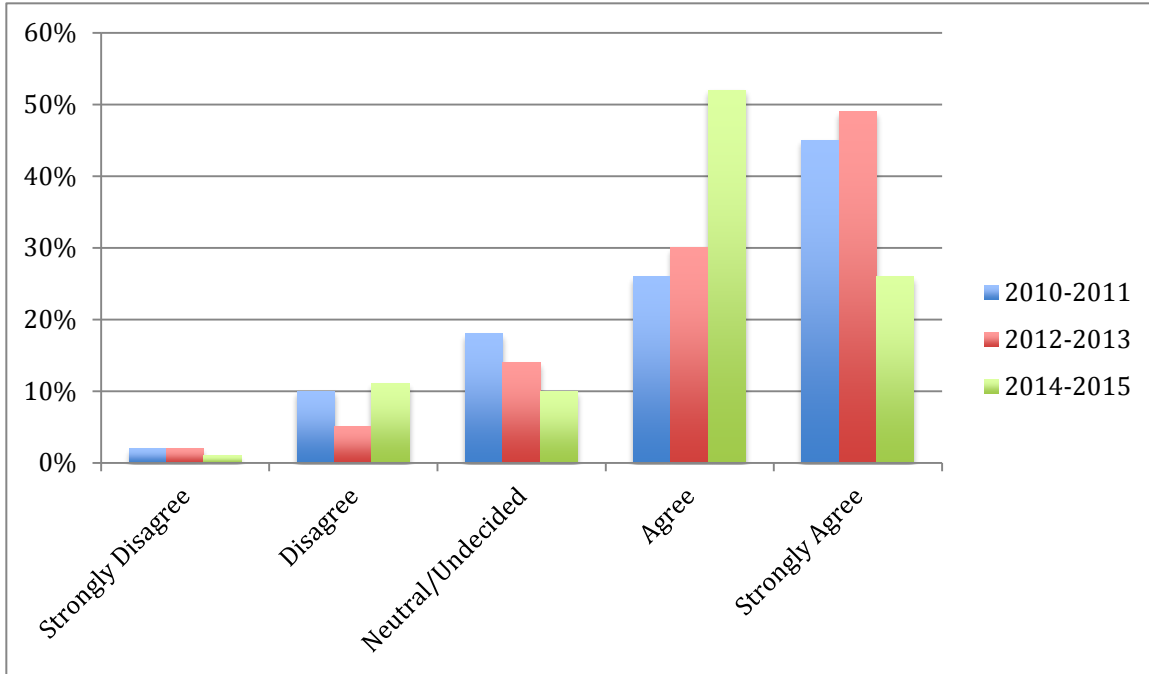


**“I feel comfortable explaining the key programming components of the League’s Impact Area to others.”**

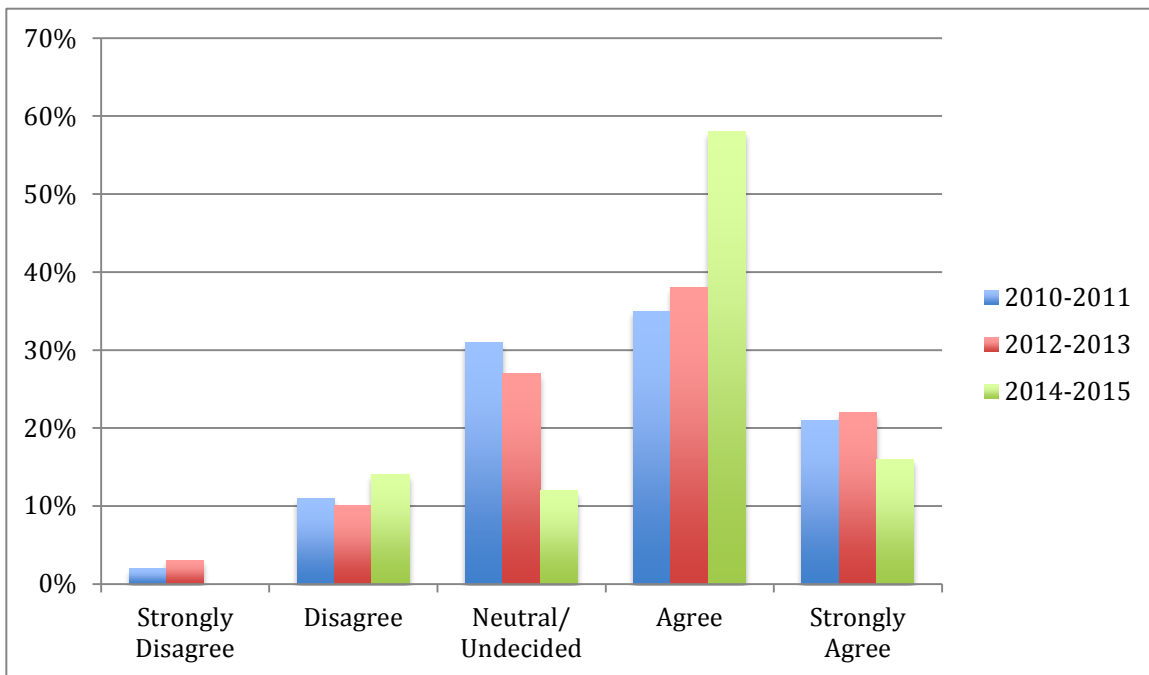


**“I know where to get information about the JLKCMO Impact Area on the JLKCMO website.”**

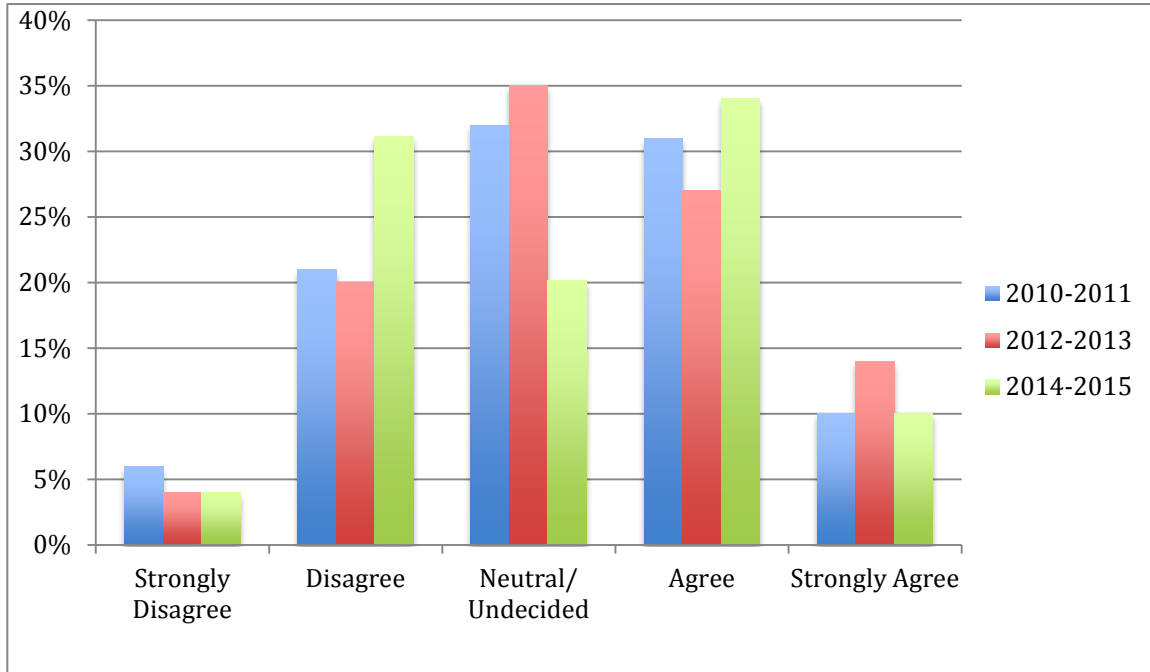




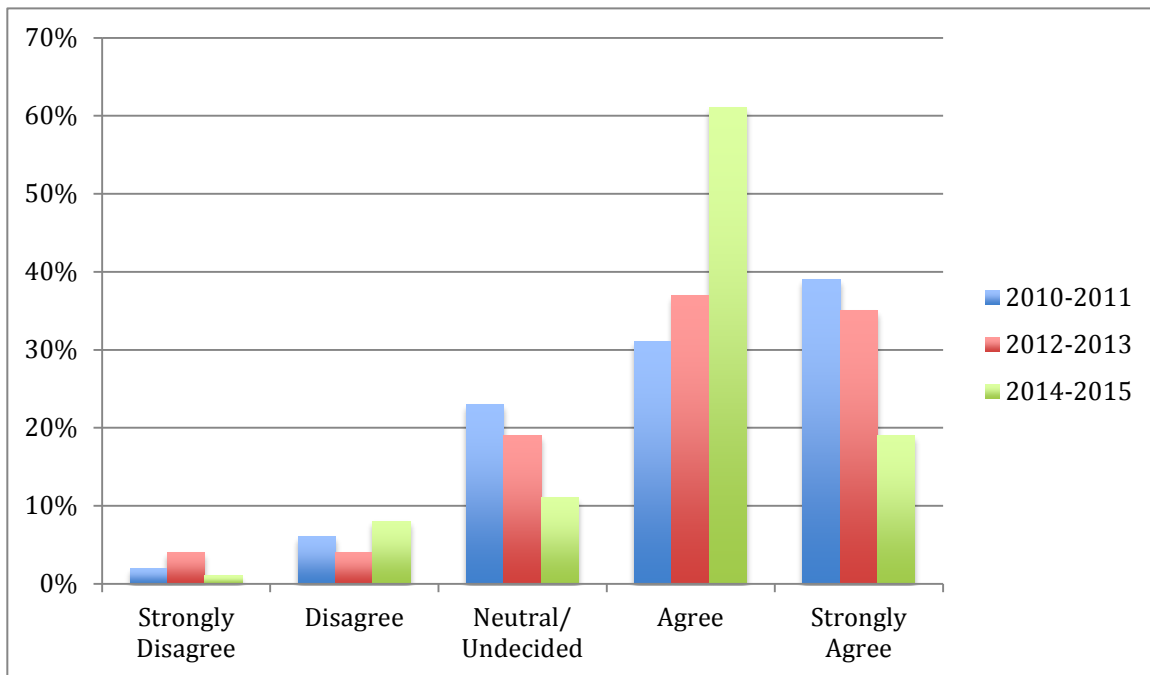
**“I can identify the Impact Area programs that JLKCMO volunteers are involved in.”**



**“I feel adequately trained on the Impact Area Issues to be able to work with the community members.”**



**“I understand the key factors that lead to childhood obesity.”**



Survey Question Posed	2010-2011	2012-2013	2014-2015
The Impact Area of JLKCMO for the next five years is?	97%	-----	91%
What is the greatest risk factor for a healthy life span?	74%	<b>78%</b>	88%
Over the past three decades, childhood obesity has tripled. (T/F)	<b>97%</b>	96%	96%
Food insecurity is?	58%	<b>59%</b>	-----
What is the recommended amount of servings of fruits and vegetables a day that a child should have?	<b>76%</b>	74%	68%
Young people should be physically active for how long each day?	58%	58%	50%
Our Signature Project, Healthy U, was started as a partnership with the following two organizations?	79%	<b>82%</b>	94%

In the 2013-2014 year of Healthy U, members were asked, “How can the League improve its impact in the Kansas City Community?” Their responses varied greatly but included these ideas:

The need to market the Junior League better to the community

- *“Use media to highlight our efforts and accomplishments. If more people know what the Junior League is doing to impact our community, the reach of our impact becomes that much greater.”*
- *“Sponsor a 5K for kids and families to promote Junior League’s vision to the community.”*
- *“Educate Holiday Mart vendors about the vision of this fundraiser.”*

The need to communicate a shared vision with Junior League members

- *“Communicate with us how to be better advocates.”*
- *“Elevator Pitch for each Junior League member about Impact Area. Review frequently so it is natural to talk about when with families and friends.”*

The desire to expand community outreach more broadly

- Some suggestions for other outreach opportunities included KC Hospice, post-partum women in the hospital, other needier schools, literacy, poverty, women’s abuse prevention programs, child abuse prevention programs.

The desire to have more volunteer opportunities that utilize individual members' skills

- Volunteers showed interest in duties beyond “stuffing BackSnacks for 20 minutes and staffing Holiday Mart. “

## **Qualitative Data from Surveys**

### **Teacher Feedback**

All teachers at University received a survey in spring 2015 with the following questions:

- What grade do you teach?
- How many years have you taught at University Academy?
- Are you familiar with Healthy U programming provided by the Junior League of Kansas City? If yes, with which programs are you familiar? Please check all that apply.
- With the following questions, teachers were asked to respond with a scale varying from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.”
  - My students' grades have improved
  - My students' behavior has improved
  - My students are ill less often
  - My students show more interest in being active
  - My students show more knowledge and interest in healthy snacks
  - When my students have had to miss class time for Healthy U programs, their time was used well and they were not badly affected by missing class
  - I think Healthy U has benefited my classroom and I hope for programs to continue
- They were then asked to rank each program based on its value, then explaining their reasoning for their top 2 ranked programs as well as their lowest ranked program.
- Do you feel that Healthy U programs were coordinated smoothly?

Only two teachers responded this survey, and due to the lack of response, their feedback was inconclusive.

## **Quantitative Data on UA Students as a Result of Healthy U**

Of the hundreds of children who participated in BackSnacks, 70 children participated in the program for 3 and 5 years, respectively. With a constant food source in their lives and the support of Healthy U, the League and its community partners were curious to see if these changes made a (statistical, tangible, numerical, proven) difference in these children's lives in regards to their behavior, rate of illness, and academic performance. Therefore, the behavior charts, attendance records, and standardized test scores of these children were analyzed.

### **Changes in Behavior**

According to the Missouri Department of Education, the average rate of discipline incidents per student per year was **2.3** as of 2012. However, for these 70 children, their cumulative average discipline incident rate over the five years of Healthy U remained well below the UA average, with only **1.3** incidents recorded per child per year.

### Attendance

UA defines their minimum goal for attendance as 95%, in order to keep their children engaged in their education. As of 2012, the Missouri Department of Education listed the UA average attendance rate as 95.7%. These 70 students who participated in BackSnacks logged an average attendance of **94.75**. It should be noted that, even though these students were provided consistent nutrition, it is likely that there were other factors that decreased their likelihood of attending school.

### Standardized Test Scores

Lastly, out of these 70 students, many of them participated in standardized MAP testing during their 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade years. 30 students were in the program during their 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade years who had been involved in Healthy U for three and five years. Their scores were combined to evaluate their academic success as a result of Healthy U. The chart below shows the percentage of students amongst this group that achieved Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced scores in their English Language Arts testing in the last three years of Healthy U.

	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
Below Basic	14%	5%	--
Basic	86%	50%	70%
Proficient	--	40%	26%
Advanced	--	5%	4%

### Parent Feedback

A survey was also sent out to a segment of parents/guardians of University Academy students with an incentive offered as a chance to win one of two \$25 Visa gift cards. This survey was only sent to the parents of the children we analyzed in the aforementioned data. These surveys served to gain feedback on the effects of Healthy U on the children, as reported by their parents.

Out of the seventy recipients of the survey, five responded. All had children who had been involved in the program for more than one year. UA parents received the following questions and below each question are their answers.

As a result of Healthy U Programming:

- My child’s grades have improved
  - 3 of 5 agreed or strongly agreed

- My child's behavior has improved
  - 1 strongly agreed, 4 were neutral
- My child is ill less often
  - 3 of 5 agreed or strongly agreed.
- My child has shown more interest in being active
  - All agreed or strongly agreed.
- My child asks for healthy snacks more often
  - All agreed or strongly agreed.
- My child has shown a greater knowledge of healthy nutrition and exercise habits
  - All agreed or strongly agreed.
- My family as a whole as benefited from Healthy U Programming
  - 3 of 5 agreed or strongly agreed.

Among their answers to what they appreciate about Healthy U were the following responses:

- *"Convenient"*
- *"Educational"*
- *"Healthy eating habits"*
- *"Meal and snack preparation"*

## **Lessons Learned**

### **Communication:**

Many individuals, from UA, Harvesters, and the Junior League expressed a desire to see better communication take place throughout the partnership and within the League. This includes engaging our community partners earlier on in the planning process in order to ensure all entities are on the same page in regards to the vision of and commitment to the programming. This was also referenced as a way to help other organizations understand

the unique characteristics and strengths the Junior League brings to a collaboration that many community partners do not understand at first. This includes the Junior League's strong volunteer force and commitment to long term programs. Community partners shared that while the League members communicate frequently and effectively, these partners felt that, due to the fact that the positions in the organization change every year, they did not know who to contact. Further, they felt that it was easy for communicated information to get lost amongst transitions. Lastly, members within the League who had leadership in Healthy U shared that, if they were to do this again, they would institute a different plan for communication amongst Healthy U Committee Chairs, Harvesters and UA. As there is a great amount of coordination to be done for Healthy U programs, they suggested setting brief, weekly phone meetings to ensure all understand the plans for that week. Lastly, they suggested the idea that the League create a joint calendar online to share with community partners so that all can be notified if a class time, pantry session, or delivery date is to be changed.

### **League Member Buy In**

It was shared by League members that Healthy U was not received well as the chosen Impact Area. As reported, members felt that they did not have a say in the decision and some disagreed strongly with the impact area chosen. Many members had questions surrounding why UA was chosen as opposed to other schools, as well as many other questions about the reasons the Impact Area and Healthy U were chosen. Although membership did eventually become more interested in Healthy U, it was suggested that there needs to be increased communication about the decision making process as well as a way for members to give feedback before an area is chosen. As referenced in the membership feedback, many members requested increased promotional opportunities for the League in the community as well as more information about how to communicate the League's goals to their friends and families. Lastly, many members in the survey suggested other causes and impact areas to consider. There seemed to be a lack of understanding about the great deal of work and research done in order for the League to choose Children's Nutrition and Fitness.

### **Volunteer Opportunities and Time Restrictions**

Since the vast majority of JLKCMO's membership is employed, it was explained that it was often difficult to provide volunteer opportunities that were accessible to busy members while also providing a fulfilling volunteer experience. On the other side of this is the fact that most of UA's needs occur during the day, when most of our membership is not available. Balancing the various needs of programming at the school during the day but working with a volunteer base that mostly is occupied during the day proved to be a challenge.

### **The Need for Measurements of Success**

As JLKCMO becomes more involved in programming like Healthy U, a powerful way to engage members and the community is to demonstrate the community impact made by the League. One of the considerations when choosing the League's community partners

included the pre-existence of systems in place to monitor progress of participants in order to show the outcomes of Healthy U. As the nonprofit sector becomes increasingly competitive for funding and support, nonprofit organizations have found great success in establishing determined indicators and measurements for success at the beginning of said programs that would remain throughout the existence of the program. Some internal stakeholders expressed uncertainty in regards to whether or not these indicators had been put in place.

## **Healthy U General Successes**

### **Strong, Reliable Volunteer Force**

Community partners praised the Junior League as a strong volunteer force committed to excellence. Many nonprofit organizations and other entities that utilize volunteers are not accustomed to the commitment and determination present in League women. A Harvesters employee shared:

“What made this successful is the Junior League’s dedicated volunteers. We have never seen anything like that. We would look at expanding our programs to other locations if we had a volunteer base like that.”

### **Fulfilling Endeavor for Women Involved**

Although there was a lack of buy in by membership at some points throughout Healthy U, the buy in and excitement surrounding the Healthy U increased as the programs continued. The women who were involved consistently reported on how happy they were to make a difference in the community and help the children of UA. One could see the passion behind these women’s words when speaking of their role in Healthy U. Many women became dedicated to their positions in Nutrition Club and Family Dinners as they built relationships with students, and New Members became engaged fully in the League and the Healthy U at the beginning of their time as a member.

### **Supported Community Partners**

Below are quotes from our community partners:

*“Great partnership”*

*“So organized and willing to help”*

*“We consistently feel valued by Junior League leadership.”*

*“They are always willing to step up and provide anything we ask for.”*

*“We have always been asked our opinion.”*



*“They have done a great job of getting the BackSnack kits to the school every week, working with the school on delivery schedule, and supervising Nutrition Club.”*

### **Collaboration Leading to New Endeavors**

During the inception of Healthy U, one of Harvesters’ goals was to capitalize on this collaboration in order to initiate pilot programs. As a result of this combined effort, expertise, and funding, Family Dinners was created and became an overwhelming success, serving and empowering families, while forming bonds between the League and their community.

**This Concludes the Healthy U Case Study by Chanelle Zak**

Addendum (6/4/15):

The Healthy U Budget for 2014-2015 (p. 12) should be adjusted to reflect the final spending total, \$48,843.14. The original version of this case study was completed before the end of the Junior League's Fiscal Year, hence the change in the amount spent.