

Capital Area Soccer Association (CASA) implements healthier concession stand choices.

SUMMARY

The Capital Area Soccer Association involves around 500 plus players in spring, fall, and indoor-winter soccer programs. The CASA Board of Directors and parents felt a need to offer healthier snack and beverage options—less sugar, fat and salt—to all those involved in our program as players and spectators. In 2011 the Healthy Concessions Policy was implemented during the spring and summer seasons, camps and tournaments with very positive results.

Reason for targeting this type of change:

“As a parent first, I was tired of the concession stand offering fatty/salty/sugary items, so I would pack my own snacks and drinks to avoid the concession stand as much as possible. But as a CASA Board Member, I realized that the association relies on the concession stand for income, and we needed our families’ support and patronage. We strived to make changes that would benefit both the association and the well-being of our players, parents and fans. We now offer healthier snack and beverage options allowing parents to feel more comfortable sending their kids to the concession stand. Knowing the kids can purchase grapes and water instead of candy and pop makes me happier and the kids healthier.” Kim Leiferman, CASA Board President.

CHALLENGE

The prevalence of obesity has risen dramatically among children in the United States. Regional data from the South Dakota 2011 School Height and Weight report shows that region 6 of SD, which includes Pierre, has overweight and obese combined rates of 27.9% for ages 5-8 and 32.8% for ages 9-11. There are multiple causes of obesity, most of which are associated with poor nutritional habits and lack of activity. Parents want their children to participate in soccer because of the physical activity and teamwork benefits the sport provides. But with many soccer games held after work and during the dinner hours, parents are faced with a scheduling dilemma that frequently involves rushed quick dinners, fast-food dinners, or eating at the field. As an association, we don’t want the timing of the activity to negatively impact the players’ nutritional habits. We believe that having a snack and pop or sports drink—with an average of over 300 unnecessary and empty calories—after 45-60 minutes of interval physical activity, negates the health benefits of the sport. Short term, we want to present our kids with healthy choices, and long-term, we want to promote good habits—physical activity and nutritious foods go hand in hand.

INVOLVEMENT WAS KEY

Steps taken to implement the new concession stand policy:

- The CASA board of directors moved the process forward by calling upon two members serving on the state Healthy Concessions Advisory Board to evaluate the resources available and to implement the new policy for CASA.
- The CASA board voted to eliminate team snacks provided by others and to provide healthier snacks in the concession stand.

“The fruit and vegetables went over very well and some other snacks I purchased were easy for kids to eat on the go. The prepackaged items were hard to find, so I had to make them myself which was time consuming and sometimes difficult. I plan to see if the stores in town would prepare some snack packs of fruit that could be purchased at a reasonable price.” Robyn Thorpe, CASA Concession Coordinator.

SOLUTION CASA firmly believes in the benefits – short and long term – of providing healthy snack and beverage options at their events. Board members Kim Leiferman and Tiffany Sanchez served on the state-wide Healthy Concessions Advisory Board working to provide guidance on ways to provide healthy snack and beverage choices at concession stands. With support and collaboration from Robyn Thorpe, CASA Concession Coordinator, the MUNCH CODE was implemented at CASA concession stands. The MUNCH CODE categorizes snacks and beverages according to color for easy selection by youth and families. The colors to live by are: GREEN: eat a bunch; YELLOW: eat just a little; RED: not so much. The CASA organization came together in an effort to provide healthy snack and beverage options for families, players and fans when present at events where the CASA concession stand is available. The Healthy Concessions Model Policy and the Munch Code is a statewide effort led by the South Dakota Department of Health. The DOH provides materials and technical assistance for those interested in implementing this policy. For more information on the DOH Healthy Concession Model Policy and the Munch Code go to <http://healthysd.gov/Communities/PDF/ModelConcessions.pdf>

RESULTS

CASA has had only positive responses to their Healthy Concession efforts. Parents and players enjoy the opportunity to snack on grapes, carrots, and on-the-go yogurts. Candy bars and pop are no longer top sellers as demand has drastically declined. The only negative comments come when we sell-out of the healthier snacks! We look to provide additional healthy options in the future and hope to see our vendors embrace the Healthy Concession movement thus increasing availability of pre-packaged healthy items we can offer. In addition, eliminating the after-game team snack provided by families saves families time and money and cuts down on unnecessary empty calories given to the kids. The end benefits: our kids are physically active; after-game team snacks and drinks are no longer encouraged, and the sales of healthy snacks and drinks at the concession stand generate income to support the CASA organization. It's a win-win-win effort! "I don't want my children to associate soccer with treats and pop. I want them to be active and fuel their bodies with healthy and needed calories -- not high-fat, high-sugar junk food! As an association, we should promote healthy snack and beverage options in conjunction with the physical benefits of soccer." Tiffany Sanchez, CASA Board Member

Contact

Robyn Thorpe
CASA Concession
Coordinator
Cell phone: 1-605-280-5999

Tiffany Sanchez
CASA Board Secretary
Cell phone: 1-605-280-8313

www.healthysd.gov provides access to the Healthy South Dakota Concessions Model Policy

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

CASA will continue to provide healthier snack options at their concessions providing parents peace of mind in knowing choices are healthy and encouraging participants to develop good snacking habits.

CASA will increase the number of healthy snack and beverage choices by working with local grocery stores and food vendors to provide additional items to be sold in the concession stand.

STATE EVALUATION COMMENTS: (Healthy Concessions Pilot Project August 2010 – January 2012):

- 17 organizations adopted the Healthy Concessions Policy.
- An estimated 62,900 people were reached annually.
- An estimated 249,354 people were reached by the Munch Code social media and Facebook campaign.
- There was a 76% increase in the number of organizations that adopted the Healthy Concessions Policy.
- Profitability and lack of space/storage were identified as the most significant barriers to offering healthy concessions.
- Additional comments from concessions contacts:
 - Made conscientious decisions to offer healthy food choices
 - Became more knowledgeable about nutritious foods
 - Intended to offer healthier food options within their respective organization or concession stands
 - Initiated discussion about healthy eating