

## Spearfish Rec & Aquatics Center implements healthier concession stand choices.

### Summary:

The Spearfish Rec & Aquatics Center (SRAC) receives 150,000 plus visitors annually to its water park and rec center. Since opening in 2008, the center has wanted to offer healthier concession items in their snack shack. The Healthy South Dakota Munch Code was an obvious fit to our goal to offer an increased variety of healthy food and beverage options to help customers make more informed decisions about what they purchase. We wanted to help educate the public in an easy and fun way. With that in mind, the SRAC Munch Code menu was launched with the opening of our 2012 Water Park Season.

### Reason for targeting this type of change:

The mission of the Spearfish Rec & Aquatics Center is to encourage personal growth, physical fitness and social development in a safe and friendly environment. Along with our mission, we had multiple requests from parents and customers to increase healthier food and beverage options. We decided our concession stand items needed to be more in line with our mission of promoting a healthier lifestyle. We started on a smaller scale in 2010 by eliminating candy bars from our concession stand but in 2012 decided we needed to fully embrace the movement towards Healthy Concessions. The SRAC has also partnered with several other agencies from the Connect Spearfish group to have healthier concessions at all community youth activities. We strive to encourage, support and sustain a healthy community that is fit, tobacco-free, eating right and playing more.

### CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

The biggest challenge was to offer healthy choices while keeping prices affordable. This challenge was solved by increasing the price of some of our unhealthy items and keeping prices to a minimum on our healthier items. This allowed a balance of our profit margin on both ends.

The second challenge was the shorter shelf-life of healthy food items. This was addressed by ordering smaller quantities. We realized that it was okay to run out of an item from time to time rather than to throw away food.

The third main challenge was to offer foods that customers actually wanted. We listened to the suggestions of our customers, made mid-season changes to our menu, and used trial-and-error to decide what the best menu for our facility was. The SRAC continues to make adjustments to our menu on a regular basis to ensure a popular and profitable menu.

### SUCCESS IS DUE TO:

- **Cooperation between SRAC and other Connect Spearfish programs**
- **Implementation of suggestions from customers**
- **Early planning**
- **Working with good vendors**
- **Ongoing evaluation and implementation of new food and beverage choices**

"The first reviews of our updated menu were mixed. But as customers became accustomed to it we received tremendous positive reviews! Parents thank the concession staff on a daily basis. The parents could tell their children to get whatever they wanted as long as it was a green item. Implementing the Munch code has empowered the youth and adults to make their own healthy food and beverage choices." Kelly Elletson.

## RESULTS

Several menu changes were made. For example, in 2011 the SRAC offered six types of sodas, one water option, eight frozen drink options and a myriad of other beverages. In 2012 the trend shifted to one regular and one diet soda, different sizes of water bottles, two frozen drinks and an addition of iced and green tea. .

In comparison to our 2011 menu, our 2012 Much Code menu increased the number of green options from eight to sixteen, the number of yellow items remained consistent at 15, and the number of red options dropped from 28 to 20. We are striving to continue the shift from red to green with our upcoming menu.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The SRAC plans to offer a greater number of healthy items in 2013 while further decreasing the number of unhealthy options. We also look to increase options for our customers with special needs diets by offering more items that are free of gluten, eggs, milk, peanuts and other allergens. We are always seeking more creative ways to offer a better variety for the entire population.

The SRAC continues to keep nutrition a focus, not only in our facility, but also in the community by working with Connect Spearfish to educate, support and collaborate on healthy concessions at all youth activities.

For more information regarding the Healthy South Dakota Concessions Model policy visit:

[www.healthysd.gov](http://www.healthysd.gov)

## For more information about the Spearfish Rec & Aquatics Center project you can contact:

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