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STUDENTS AS LIFESTYLE ACTIVISTS

October 2014

We are very happy to announce that the SALSA program was the winner of three prestigious awards in October 2014.

1. **The WSLHD Quality Awards**
2. **The Community Choice Award**
3. **The Chair of the Board Award**

Thank you everyone for your support!

SALSA (Students As LifeStyle Activists) is a partnership program with Mt Druitt & Blacktown Medical Practitioners Associations, Rooty Hill High School, University of Sydney and Western Sydney Local Health District (WSLHD). The Australian Government Department of Health has provided funding support for the project until January 2016.

The Mt Druitt and Blacktown Medical Practitioner Associations also support their local SALSA schools with a \$200 donation to each school.

SALSA School Activities

2014 has been a productive year for the SALSA project. We have implemented the program in 13 high schools with over 2,000 students taking part. We were able to do this with the support of volunteer students from the University of Sydney. We are now holding debrief session and presenting SALSA Peer Leaders with certificates.

SALSA reaching out to families

We have visited five school P&C meetings to discuss the program with parents. We have plans to visit at least three more this term.

In September, Nepean Creative and Performing Arts High School was the first school to trial a SALSA event for students and their families. The Healthy Food Family Forum, hosted by the SALSA Peer Leaders and the Head PDHPE teacher Ben Berriman was a great success.

Four guest speakers, including our very own Associate Professor Smita Shah, Dr Vivienne Sharma (Mt Druitt GP), a local nutritionist and chef, shared their knowledge about healthy eating with over 40 people who attended.

Following this event, SALSA Peer leaders from Holroyd High School also put their learning into action by promoting healthy food with their own SALSA stand at their Multicultural Day in September. The delicious fruit and yoghurt snack they prepared was a hit with all guests.

Advisory Committee

The SALSA Advisory committee has held three meetings in 2014. The final meeting scheduled for the end of October will focus on planning for analysis of the data collected from schools.



Evaluation of SALSA in schools

We greatly appreciate the time and effort invested by 10 of our schools, including over 1,300 students, who are participating in a formal evaluation of the SALSA program. The evaluation involves students completing a non-identified online questionnaire on three occasions about their eating and activity behaviours. Schools will receive preliminary data from the evaluation in January 2015.

My Canteen Rules project

We are supporting our partners, the WSLHD Centre for Population Health, to engage Canteen managers to sell healthier food and drink options. *The My Canteen Rules* project will start in Term 4 at Rooty Hill High School.

Meetings & Conferences

Local meeting presentations

Shah S, Andrew A. *Extending the SALSA program to families: a qualitative study*. Children's Hospital Obesity Metabolism and Energy Researchers (CHOMPERS) meeting, The Sydney Children's Hospital at Westmead (CHW), June 2014.

Shah S, Shrewsbury V. *The SALSA Project 2014-15*. CHOMPERS, CHW, September '14.

SALSA in Jordan

The SALSA Peer Leader's manual was translated into Arabic and piloted in one girl's high school by A/Professor Nihaya Al-sheyab. A randomised controlled trial of the SALSA program was conducted in four high schools in Northern Jordan. Follow-up data is being collected in October 2014.

SALSA was recognised by the United Nations Inter Agency Technical Task Team on Young People as a good practice program for adolescents/youth in the Middle East and the North Africa (MENA) region. The program will be accessible via an open online link through UNICEF MENARO.

For further information please contact Nihaya Al-sheyab:
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A huge thank you to all our schools, SALSA Peer Leaders and Educators, Advisory Committee members and the Blacktown and Mt Druitt General Practice Associations for your help and ongoing support.



SALSA won 3 Quality Awards

From left : Crystal Hillary, Dr Smita Shah & Amy Andrew

Conference presentations

Andrew A, Patching C, Lim KS, Pesle A, Shah S. *Potential strategies for SALSA program messages to reach families: A qualitative study*. Primary Health Care Research Conference, Canberra, July 2014 (oral)

Shrewsbury V, Wu MH, Andrew A, Patching C, Hillery C, Pesle A, Lim KS, Hardy L, Flood V, Steinbeck K, Shah S. *A snapshot of Year 10 SALSA Peer Leaders' lifestyle behaviours*. Westmead Association Hospital Week Research Symposium, August 2014, Sydney (poster).

Shrewsbury V, Andrew A, Patching C, Steinbeck K, Hardy L, Shah S. *Healthy lifestyle behaviours and intentions in adolescents from Western Sydney*. Australian New Zealand Obesity Society Annual Scientific Meeting, October 2014, Sydney (poster).

Social Media and Website

We are in the process of updating the SALSA website. Please check it out and send us your feedback! We are also active on both Facebook and Instagram, with over 200 likes on Facebook. Do not forget to like and follow us (details in footer).

SALSA App

Following research and consultation, we are working towards creating our very own fun and interactive SALSA App. Watch this space!