# Improving Meal Quality and Nutrition Education in Seattle Parks and Recreation Teen Programs

## Background
- **Seattle Parks and Recreation ("Parks")** = municipal governmental organization which "provide[s] safe and welcoming opportunities to play, learn, contemplate, and build community"
- Provides a large number of after-school and late-night programming for teens
  - Most involve meals
  - Some involve teen cooking classes
- Although meals and classes already offer opportunities for teens to improve dietary habits, room for improvement
  - The teen programs face the following issues:
    - A lack of curriculum in Parks’ teen cooking classes
    - A small budget for teen meal programs
    - A lack of systematization in the procurement of foods for the teen meal programs
    - A lack of efficiency in the preparation of food for the Teen Late Night program

## Objectives
- Improve the capacity of teens to cook healthy meals for themselves.
- Obtain outside funding for teen meals to improve meal quality
- Start a path toward forming a sustainable sourcing system for Parks.
- Improve efficiency and lower costs of the Late Night program.
- Collect a set of healthy recipes for teens

## Actions
- Conducted independent research on nutrition education curricula, teen-friendly recipes, and sources of donated food
  - Interviewed numerous staff members of Parks as well as partnering organizations
  - Attended cooking sessions at two community centers
  - Reviewed a vast number of documents about Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
    - CACFP is a federal meal-funding program
    - Documents culled from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI—the state institution that decides who receives CACFP funding) website
    - Completed a cost-benefit analysis for CACFP enrollment
    - Attended a CACFP training in September 2012
    - Contacted many Parks staff members via email and telephone
    - Looked up nutrition information for recipes

## Deliverables
- Baseline cooking guide
  - Comprehensive set of topics that should be covered in any Parks cooking class, for teens and other populations
  - 8-week Teen Cooking Curriculum
    - Each lesson covers a different cooking skill and integrates nutrition information
    - To be used in Top Teen Chef Competition and other cooking classes for teens
  - Began enrolling Parks in CACFP for 3 of its Teen Late Night sites (CACFP application nearly complete)
  - Sourcing document
    - Potential sources of donated foods
    - Needs of Parks meal programs
  - Catering manual: Instructs Teen Late Night staff in how to implement catering
  - Teen Cookbook: 30 healthy recipes that appeal to teens

## Implication
Helped Parks become a leader in empowering teens to make healthy choices

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