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November 30, 2012

NFSC 465L

FIELD REPORT

My field work was done at VECTORS, a transition home for homeless veterans. My role was to cook a meal every week and to educate the residents on the recipes used, any changes that were made to increase the nutrient value of the recipes, and any questions they had relating to nutrition.

My objectives did not change as my experience progressed at the facility. My goal was to find ways to incorporate the food the residents enjoy, while broadening these foods. Each week I managed to reach my goal. The ultimate goal in being at VECTORS is to help them live healthier lives through providing them with resources, and education relating to nutrition.

V.E.C.T.O.R.S. stands for Veterans Executive Committee to Organize Rehabilitative Services Center. As described on the VECTORS website, it is a transitional home for Veterans by Veterans and currently houses 16 veterans. It is a non-profit, private company categorized under Fund Raising Counselors and Organizations. It provides clients of the North Valley Veterans Center with services from various government agencies including the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Employment Development Department and Butte County Health Department. The establishment ran by VECTORS in Chico is the Jerry L Knight housing facility. At this facility services include room & board, assessment of needs, budget management,

initiating claims for VA and social security benefits, coordinating services with the VA as well as referrals to other community agencies for mental, medical and employment needs. In order to ensure the eligibility of the Veterans they are screened to ensure maximum potential for a successful transition experience. While living at VECTORS residents are required to find and obtain work or have a fixed income. The Veterans are case managed to ensure a successful outcome. All of the individuals had lived on the streets and hit rock bottom. These people have done so much for our country; they deserve to be given a second chance. Apart from the government agencies already listed, VECTORS also receives donations from various groups such as Trader Joe's, or even from individuals.

My nutrition education plan I implemented was on fruit. At the first day of our program, my partner and I passed out a survey. This survey included food allergies, favorite meals/dishes, food they would like to try, and any questions or concerns related to food and/or nutrition that they would like answered. One of the questions they wanted answered is what vitamins are available in fruits and vegetables. We decided to conduct our nutrition education plan based off this question. I created a nutrition education plan on fruits, and my partner created a nutrition education plan on vegetables. I made a poster on fruit. It included, what is considered a fruit, how much fruit is needed in the diet, what counts as a cup, how to shop and store fruit, helpful tips in incorporating fruit in the diet, and what nutrition are found in fruit. I also created a seasonal fruit calendar that they could refer to when shopping for fruits that are in season. In an oral discussion of the effectiveness of my nutrition education plan, I found that the residents really appreciated the information given in the presentation. They said they learned a lot of

useful information. They were also very pleased that they were able to keep the posters and seasonal calendars to refer to for help in picking out fruit at the store, incorporating fruit in their diet, and the nutritional value of fruits and the impact on health. I would say this nutrition education plan was very successful.

Overall, I found that helping people who greatly appreciate it is most valuable. I truly felt like I was giving back to the community and helping those who needed the help the most. I greatly enjoyed serving the veterans because they do so much for our country, and may have sacrificed a lot to do so. The residents were so polite, funny, and very grateful. They were excited every time I was there, which made me feel real good about being there.

The only thing I would change is incorporating more nutrition education and materials for the residents to better prepare them for living on their own and living healthier lifestyles. Many residents had diabetes so I feel we should have included a simple nutrition education plan on diabetes and food. This is something that could be looked into for the following semesters. There are so many things that can be done to help the residents understand the benefits of nutrition. Maybe encouraging the residents to step out of their comfort zone, and help with demonstrations could be another idea that will provide some hands-on learning.

I would most definitely recommend my field work site to another student, in fact, I already have. It was an amazing experience, and I found it very rewarding. The residents and managers were very appreciative, which made me feel more than happy to be there.