



[Click to Print This Page](#)

[Close This Window](#)

KP and CART partnership leads to healthy outcomes

By Meredith Murillo, Communications Manager

February 23, 2018

Getting first grade students to choose water over juice or to choose an outdoor activity over screen time may seem like insurmountable tasks, but those health lessons were core teachings in The Permanente Medical Group CART Program.

This eight-week partnership between KP Fresno and The Center for Advanced Research and Technology (CART) was funded by a \$5,000 KP Fresno Community Relations grant.

This program was made possible through a collaborative partnership between KP, Fresno Business Council, Food Commons Fresno and CART. Physician in Chief Smita Rouillard, MD, is a member of Fresno Business Council's Executive Committee.

"This project is something I have wanted to do for a long time," Dr. Rouillard said. "The ripple effect of taking our organizational knowledge into the community had an impact with students, teachers, parents and administrators. It was impressive to see our KP brand in action."

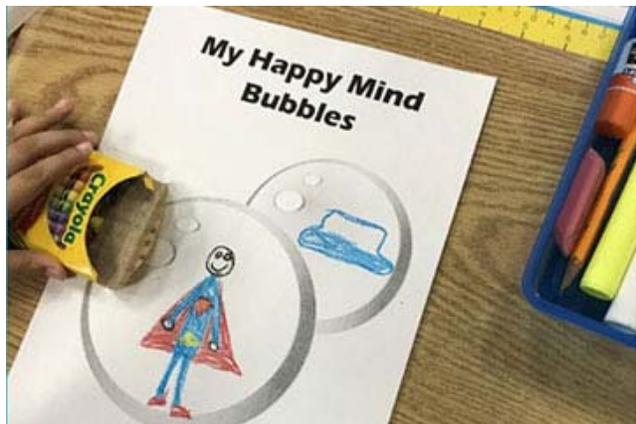
Service Area Director of Health Education Lisa Huiras created the curriculum, which included topics like "Serving up MyPlate," "Fast Food Frenzy," and "Rethink Your Drink." Huiras collaborated with CART Biomedicine Teacher Lindsey Johnson and taught the lessons to senior Biomedicine students. The high school students then taught the healthy curriculum to first graders at Tarpey and Vinland Elementary Schools.

"It is easier to teach a child the importance of good health rather than to repair an unhealthy adult," Huiras said. "This was such a fabulous program and experience. Students were challenged to develop healthy, life-long habits."

Huiras said the program had a "ripple effect." As the high school students started learning the "Unplug and Play" module, they also became aware of their own screen time and the need to balance that with activity and exercise.

"The first-grade students were starting a culture change and pointing out things that were healthy or unhealthy. It even affected choices some of the teachers made at lunch about where to eat or about whether to spend the time taking a walk," Huiras said.

Johnson agrees that the program got the CART students thinking about their own choices and aiming toward better ones to maximize their wellbeing.



Service Area Director of Health Education Lisa Huiras.

"The lesson that hit home the most for me and my students was about mindfulness," Johnson said. "The students have a lot of stress and some of the techniques they taught the elementary students are just as useful for them like 'popping the mind bubbles' and 'shaking glitter jars.'"

The curriculum included a classroom lesson, an interactive activity and homework for the kids to take home and engage their families. Fresh produce was often served.

"When the CART students started the MyPlate lesson, many of the first graders couldn't name a vegetable," Huiras said. "At the end of the lesson, they understood the difference between an adult and child-sized plate, what the different food groups did for their bodies, and why it's important to eat fruits and vegetables."

Administrator and teacher feedback was overwhelmingly positive for the program. One teacher said, "The lessons were very engaging for my class. They enjoyed the hands-on activities and the healthy food." Another teacher added, "The information was very valuable. I learned new things too."

Wellness-check questionnaires were sent to the first-grade students' parents before and after the program to gauge its success. Plans are in development for expanding the program in 2018.

"It was amazing to be in the elementary classrooms each week and watch the lessons come to life. I could feel the energy," Johnson said. "The first-grade students were so excited to see the CART kids walk through the door every week and were eager to learn more about healthy choices."

"This has been one of the best projects I've ever done," Huiras said. "The program was creative and impacted so many people – the students, teachers and parents. Beyond the classroom teachings, it also got these Biomed students to understand the opportunities in health care."

