



After School All Stars – Los Angeles

After-School All-Stars, Los Angeles Program Promotes Healthy Habits Through Hands-On Seed-to-Plate Learning

In Los Angeles County and the Lucerne Valley, [After-School All-Stars, Los Angeles](#), (ASAS-LA) is turning unstructured time into an opportunity. This comprehensive K-12 [program](#) is working to make the most of that free time for students who have the greatest needs and the fewest resources. Founded on five core pillars that include academics and S.T.E.M., health and nutrition, arts, leadership and career exploration, the program reaches more than 20,000 students through its after-school and summer programming every year.

As an organization that is focused on advancing children's health, the Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation is particularly inspired by ASAS-LA's work in health and nutrition. Through hands-on cooking and gardening programs, students and their families discover the joy of growing, harvesting and preparing nutritious meals while building healthy eating habits from the ground up.

That hands-on learning experience is of vital importance to the community ASAS-LA serves, since many of the students and families associated with the programs experience higher rates of chronic, diet-related health conditions such as obesity and diabetes.

To punctuate the impact these programs have, and reinforce the positive impact they are making, the Sprouts Healthy Community Foundation has provided ASAS-LA with grant funding that will allow it to expand its culinary education initiatives and gardening programs.

“Our partnership with the Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation means so much to our All-stars,” said Tiana Gayton, Director of Development at After-School All-Stars, Los Angeles. “Through hands-on cooking and gardening, our students are gaining lifelong skills they then take home to inspire their families—while building confidence, leadership, and pride. We're not just witnessing their growth, we're fueling their potential to lead and create lasting, healthy change in their lives.”

Perhaps most importantly, the unique programming offered by ASAS-LA creates a vital connection between youth and the entire food process, infusing the students with a sense of confidence when it comes to making healthy food choices. Specifically, the organization's

Seed-to-Plate model allows students to acquire an appreciation for fresh, homegrown ingredients by enhancing their nutritional knowledge, developing culinary skills, gaining gardening experience, and building ties to their community.

It is that thoughtful and intentional programming that we at the Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation appreciate. Because we know, and research has shown, that instilling youth with meaningful connections to healthy eating habits fosters invaluable lifelong behaviors.

But, what does this program look like in practice?

Each semester, students engage in cooking classes that include hands-on instruction and essential learning — like sanitation and food safety — that allow them to prepare nutritious meals. A junior high gardening program serves as both a classroom and community hub where students learn about nutrition, sustainability, and teamwork.

Beyond planting, weeding, and harvesting that garden, the students are taught to build wooden or metal garden beds, they gain knowledge on watering and soil preparation and they learn about seedlings and starter plants. And once it's time to harvest, students are encouraged to take what they've grown home with them, extending the education and enrichment they've received to their family's dinner table.

ASAS-LA is a shining example of how schools can engage students on subjects related to nutrition and healthy lifestyle habits while incorporating culturally significant recipes and encouraging students to expand their capabilities, leading to a greater sense of confidence.

At the Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation, we're excited to see where it grows!