

SHELFS (Spurs Health Education and Lifelong Food Solutions):

Developing Community-Academic Partnerships in GES

Hailey Matilton
DVM Candidate
Biomedical Sciences
and Veterinary
Medicine

- Dr. Elizabeth Ryan- Ph.D. Professor, Department of Environmental and Radiological Health Sciences
- Dr. Sheila Juarez-Colunga- Postdoctoral Fellow CSU Spur
- Dan Goldhamer- Director of Engagement and Extension Programs at CSU Spur
- Isabel Mendoza- M.S. Denver County Extension Director

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Spur's Health Education with Lifelong Food Solutions (SHELFS) is a community-focused program designed to address chronic disease prevention through culturally appropriate education on healthy food choices. Located in the Globeville-Elyria-Swansea (GES) neighborhood of Denver, SHELFS aims to empower residents by providing them with the knowledge and resources needed to lead healthier lifestyles.

The GES community faces significant health challenges, including high rates of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and limited access to fresh, affordable food. Through collaborations with local organizations like Tepeyac Community Health Center, GrowHaus, History Colorado, and Focus Points, SHELFS seeks to mitigate these issues by offering workshops, cooking classes, and educational events that are tailored to the cultural preferences and needs of the community.

As an intern at SHELFS, I have been involved in various initiatives aimed at promoting health and wellness within the GES community. My role includes assisting with the development of educational materials, coordinating community events, and supporting our partnerships with local health and food organizations.

INTERNSHIP GOALS

- 1) Increase meaningful engagement of the GES community with CSU Spur to foster stronger connections.
- 2) Launch SHELFS and design it to align with the community's cultural values, local food preferences, and health needs.
- 3) Establish and maintain lasting partnerships with local well-being and health organizations to enhance community impact.
- 4) Write and submit a comprehensive NIFA AFRI grant proposal to secure funding and approval.

HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO YOUR EDUCATION

This internship enhances my understanding of how veterinary medicine intersects with community health by addressing both human and animal health needs holistically. I'm gaining valuable experience collaborating with experts and community members to promote healthier lifestyles. Additionally, I'm learning about the benefits of incorporating rice bran into both human and animal diets, as it promotes a healthy gut microbiome and supports overall well-being for both.



WHAT YOU DID

Established Partnerships

- Tepeyac Collaboration: SHELFS attends community health center events, connecting patients to CSU Spur.
- GrowHaus Collaboration: SHELFS supports food box distributions for GES residents.
- Focus Points Collaboration: SHELFS collaborates and hosts educational activities at a booth every Friday.



Piloted Events

- Made educational Content: Developed bilingual materials focusing on community needs, such as diabetes prevention and cancer nutrition.
- Created Culturally Relevant Recipes: Composed healthy rice bran recipes tailored to community preferences.
- Interactive Learning: Developed content and games to reinforce lessons on whole grains and legumes.
- Second Saturdays: Engaged participants with hands-on experiences such as rice milling and VR technology to teach animal anatomy and inspire interest.



Writing and Collaboration

- Collaborated with specialists to integrate their research into the grant proposal, ensuring alignment with community health priorities.
- Created figures to visually represent key concepts, such as food access, health disparities, and program impact.

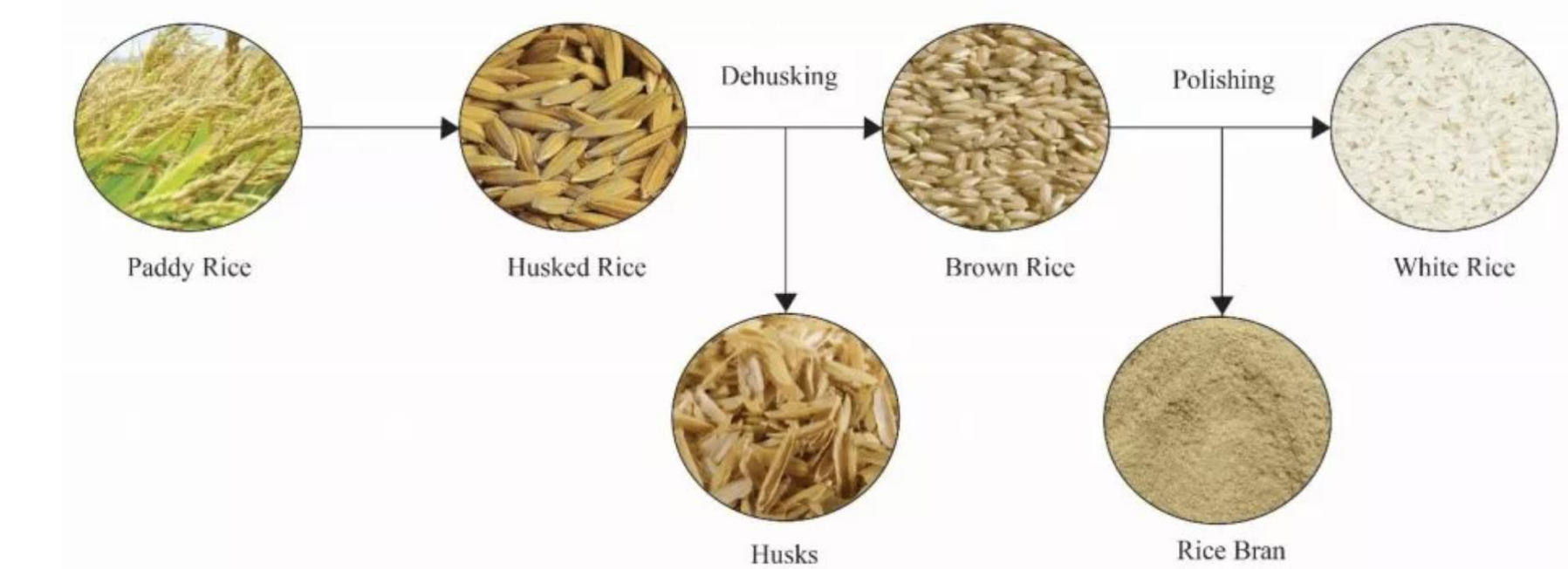
SHELFS PILOT EVENTS



WHAT YOU LEARNED

Chronic Disease Prevention and Interventions

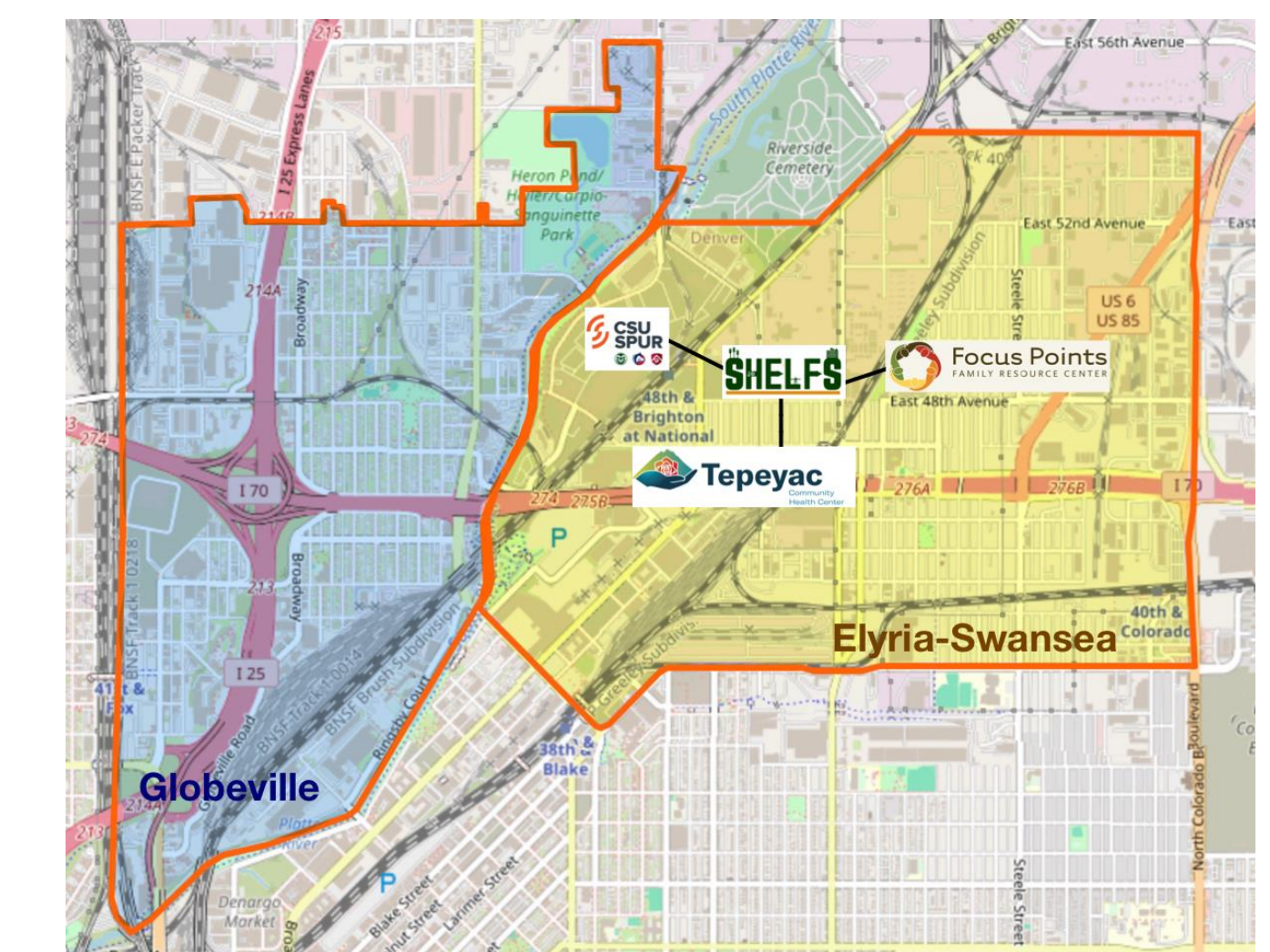
- Rice Bran: Learned about harvesting and the rice milling process.
- Health Benefits: Discovered the advantages of incorporating whole grains and rice bran into diets, such as regulating blood sugar levels, promoting cognitive function, and reducing the risk of colon cancer.



Public Health Education and Program Development

- Content Creation: Developed skills in translating complex nutrition information and research into relevant and easy-to-understand materials for the public.
- Survey Design and Analysis: Acquired skills in designing and analyzing surveys to gather valuable feedback and insights.
- Tracking Outcomes: Monitoring and reporting on program effectiveness to ensure goals are met and improvements are made.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS



NEXT STEPS

SHELFS won't stop there—our work continues. After submitting the NIFA grant proposal, we will continue to host pilot events to deepen connections between the GES community and Spur, gathering feedback to refine programs and strengthen partnerships with local health organizations to ensure our efforts create meaningful, lasting change.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to our community partners—Tepeyac, Focus Points, GrowHaus, and Lucas Garcia for their dedication and commitment to SHELFS.

