Wellness Grant Feature of the Month: Phoenix Cluster

Wellness Ambassadors: Elizabeth Lowrie, Sam Arcement and Maria Tuccori

The UC Davis Phoenix Cluster, which supports both the Plant Pathology Department and the Entomology & Nematology Department, was able to use its mini-grant funds to support various events such as a fairy/Zen garden-making event (pictured right), lunch and learn seminars, and a vision board-making event.

The fairy/Zen garden event had the highest attendance out of all other Phoenix Cluster events, drawing in 28 people from across the cluster. During this event, employees created their fairy or Zen garden (pictured left) using over 100 succulents and small plants donated by the Botanical Conservatory, various vessels purchased using the mini-grant funds, and an assortment of decorative items, such as miniature mushrooms, colored sand, pebbles, animal figurines, etc. The goal of this event was to create a social environment where employees could meet staff from other labs while creating their own decorative gardens, which they could keep at their desks and use to give their eyes a break from the computer screen during workdays. The wellness ambassadors were very pleased with the event turn out. They found it was a great way for employees to improve their mental health in a stress-relieving environment. The wellness ambassadors issued two surveys, one before and one after the event, which assessed employee stress levels. Before the event, 60% of attendees reported feeling moderately stressed, but after the event 72% reported feeling extremely calm.

Lunch and Learn seminars that were supported by the mini-grant included “Pollinator to Plate,” “Department Microscope Demo & Brown Bag,” “The Myths of GMOs,” and “No Taste Like Home For The Holidays.” At these events, the mini-grant funds were used for various giveaway items for seminar attendees. The goals of these seminars were to promote healthy eating and the importance of ecologically friendly agriculture. The wellness ambassadors hope to continue supporting events such as these in the future.

Lastly, the wellness ambassadors hosted a vision board-making event where employees could create a visual representation of their goals and aspirations for 2019. Mini-grant funds were used to purchase foam boards, markers, glue and stickers. With these items, and clippings from magazines brought in by various employees, everyone had the opportunity to explore their creativity and create a visual of what they hoped to experience or achieve in 2019. The wellness ambassadors hoped this event would promote self-care and self-love by encouraging employees to think about what fulfills them in their personal and professional lives.

Overall, the wellness ambassadors feel that they have been very successful hosting these various events. In the past, the Phoenix Cluster wellness ambassadors have had difficulty organizing events for their colleagues, so they each feel accomplished knowing they were able to host and execute a variety of well-received events this past year. In the future, the wellness ambassadors hope to continue offering more events that promote positive mental health and self-care, such as rock painting, guided meditation, and additional lunch and learn seminars.