



East St. Louis, IL

Health is the Catch of the Day at Bond Ave Fish & Poultry

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Summary

With 42 corner and convenience stores and only 2 full-service grocery stores, East St. Louis, Illinois could easily be classified as a food swamp. However, the Conrads at Bond Ave Fish & Poultry won't let that be the case. Bond Ave Fish & Poultry was built from the ground up by the Conrad family over 70 years ago, and they've been keeping shop ever since. During this time, the Conrad family faced many challenges but persevered to make their business a success. As an African American store owner, produce vendors refused to sell to Mr. Conrad's father. So, he posed as a purchaser for a store run by a German family, and succeeded in supplying the community produce just the same. In 1986, a flood covered the streets and people could not get out of their homes on foot, by bus or car--but that couldn't keep customers away! Fittingly, community residents reached Bond Ave Fish & Poultry by boat. The trend continues as the Conrads are stepping up to their next big challenge: expanding the amount of healthy options available to their community. And they have found a way to make that happen, by participating in the Make Health Happen Healthy Corner Stores Initiative.

Quote:

"We are the community" says Mrs. Conrad, as she explains why it is so important to her family to support health in East St. Louis. Bond Ave Fish and Poultry is much more than a place to shop. The store is a hub for community interaction and generation of ideas for great events, like the coming health fairs and exercise classes. Everyone who walks in the

door gets a handshake and warm greeting from the Conrads.



Challenge

Over half of East St. Louis residents have limited access to food. Access to convenience stores; however, is unlimited, but not all corner stores are created equal. Corner and convenience stores often advertise alcohol, tobacco and soft drinks, but have little to offer in the way of fresh produce. This creates a problem when many residents get to the grocery store by bus or by walking. With difficult to access full service grocers and an abundance of corner stores lacking healthy choices, how can East St. Louis become a healthier food environment for its residents?

Solution

The Conrads at Bond Ave Fish & Poultry are a great example of how small community retailers can make health a priority. By partnering with The Healthy Cornerstore Initiative, the Conrads have made it their mission to offer the community healthy food choices. The Healthy Cornerstore Initiative provides storeowners support and resources to stock healthy foods including fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat milk, and eggs. In order for customers to make healthy choices, healthy foods first have to be available and the Conrads have taken steps to make this happen.

Results

Prior to adopting Healthy Cornerstore practices, Bond Ave Fish & Poultry did offer potatoes and onions. Today, the Conrads have broadened their selection to include carrots, spinach, apples, bananas, limes, and lemons along with milk and eggs. The Conrads have also begun to advertise and promote these healthier options by displaying shelf-talkers and offering recipe cards. Now that the supply of healthy options has increased, so has the demand. Mr. Conrad has noticed that he has to restock healthy items more often, since customers are purchasing them more frequently.

Sustaining Success

Bond Ave Fish & Poultry will continue to expand their selection of healthy foods. The Conrads' mission to make East St. Louis a healthier place to live expands beyond the four walls of Bond Ave Fish and Poultry. Supporting health through community outreach is also a priority. The Conrads encourage their customers to increase their physical activity by participating in exercise classes and the Mary Brown Community Center. There are plans to host a health promotional event during which community residents can check their cholesterol levels, blood pressure and learn more about health and community resources.

Get Involved

On March 3rd- 5th, we will be repainting the outside of Bond Ave Fish Market! If you'd like to come join us please contact Laquitsha Bejoile-Hayes at lbejoile-hayes@eshd.org.

