

Domain 7: Businesses

“Shaping a Healthy Future” Award- Jeff Rossman

Chef and owner of Terra Restaurant, Jeff Rossman has demonstrated a unique commitment and passion in his efforts to combat childhood obesity. Jeff initially partnered with Central Elementary School in the underserved neighborhood of City Heights to develop a school garden as a way to teach children about nutrition in a hands-on way. Harvesting of the food grown in the garden led to garden celebration events, where students are fed delicious and nutritious foods as part of the school-wide arts and education program. The positive effects of Jeff’s activities are seen among the students and faculty at Central Elementary, who have adopted him as “their personal chef” and have taken the lessons learned about healthful eating into the classroom and into their homes.

Excited by the success of the first garden at the school, Jeff, along with Central’s principal Staci Monreal, saw the opportunity to expand these initial efforts into a holistic program that integrates nutrition education, culinary experiences, enhanced physical activity opportunities, environmental awareness, mental health and family health services into a comprehensive school-based project. Jeff’s expertise and enthusiasm has been the catalyst for the creation of the School Gardens Collaborative, which has developed into an outstanding example of cross-domain collaboration involving the government, schools, healthcare, media/marketing, CBO and business domains.

Jeff Rossman is a creative and positive force in our community working to enhance the health of children and is an exemplary model of how businesses can partner with schools and other domains in the fight against childhood obesity.