

Food Cupboards: Improving Access to Nutritious Foods



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Presented by: Allison Harris, BA

The Community Nutrition Program

- 35.1 million people in US households are considered to be food insecure (USDA, 2005)
- Overweight and obesity substantially raise the risk of illness for a variety of chronic conditions
- Obesity is especially prevalent among women and adolescents from poor households
- Individuals from low income households are more likely to suffer from chronic diseases as a result of high instances of obesity (Healthy People 2010)



Community Nutrition Program

- North Penn Region – A suburb of Philadelphia with pockets of poverty
- Program seeks to address unmet nutritional needs of customers and to provide strategic coordination of resources among emergency food providers



Building a Community Coalition

- Convened emergency food representatives
- Conducted one on one interviews to est. trust and begin building relationships
- Group worked together to define vision, barriers, assets and core values
- Sought to facilitate fun meetings with ample time for networking and informal information sharing



Community Nutrition Coalition - Core Values

Serving Faithfully and Humbly

Serving faithfully and humbly is what we do everyday in our respective positions. This includes being patient, honest, compassionate, and empathetic with both the people we serve and the people we work with.

Valuing the Intrinsic Worth of Others

With an awareness of the intrinsic worth of all, we will operate with a spirit of trust and respect. All will be welcome at the table as we strive to bring food equality to our community. With openness and creativity we will strive to make a positive impact on the collaborative process of food acquisition, distribution, and awareness among agencies, faith based organizations, and community groups. We will embrace and include all in our efforts to level the disparity of resources among members of our community. Trust and respect will be the hallmark of our organization.

Sharing our Energy and Resources

Sharing our energy and resources starts with the commitment to work collaboratively with each other to implement new ideas, maintain quality of service and resolve differences while respecting the contributing agencies goals and foci. Emphasis on the positive, listening to each other, and good communication are necessary to enable the sharing of both tangible and intangible resources.

Moving Forward

Moving forward takes place as new ideas are expressed through dreaming and thinking 'outside the box.' The team considers a variety of approaches including radical ideas, outside existing practices, as well as wanting to 'keep things the same.' The team works to modify ideas and design a plan of action, collaborating with one another and involving other people or groups as needed. As ideas are implemented, regular evaluation takes place with necessary changes made to improve outcomes.

New and Expanded Partnerships

- Community Food Drives
- Food Retailers
- Farmers and growers
- Regional Emergency Food Leaders



Community Food Drives

- National, regional and local drives are the major sources of food for Coalition members
- Developed media campaign
 - Created awareness of need in the community
 - Provided nutrition education
 - Increased donations by 20%
 - Improved nutritional quality of donated foods



Food Retail Partners

- Coalition members had existing relationships with many area food retailers
- Donations were limited to breads and baked goods
- Group worked to redefine relationships with food retailers to include the donation of fruits and vegetables while limiting their acceptance of foods of low nutritional value



Food Retail Partnerships

- Conducted Fresh Food Drives – “Give the Gift of Good Health”
- Resulted in the donation of 500 pounds of high quality produce per event
- Promoted Awareness
- Provided opportunity for client nutrition education



Local Farmers and Growers

- Worked with area farmers to promote fresh produce donations
- Worked with regional Mennonite Conference to create a program for congregations to donate locally grown fruits and vegetables to local pantries



Regional Emergency Food Leaders

- Participated in group trip to visit several food pantries in New York City
- Established tradition of regular trips to visit local emergency food agencies



Evaluation Measures

- Levels of collaboration scale -Frey B et al. Measuring collaboration among grant partners. *American Journal of Evaluation*. 2006;27(3):383-392
- Food inventories provided concrete evaluation over time on what families receive at pantry
- Surveys
 - Coalition Opinion Survey
 - Coalition Activities Feedback Survey
 - Boy Scout Survey

Outcomes to Date

- Successful increase in the percentage of fresh foods
- Development of a strong coalition resulting in enhanced levels of collaboration among area emergency food providers



Shifts in Food Inventory

- An analysis of food inventories show a 17% increase in fresh fruit and vegetable offerings

	July %	February %	August %
Fresh fruits/vegetables	0.00	12.71	17.39
All fruit/vegetables	41.88	51.27	50.17
Dairy	2.89	4.24	2.34
Grain	25.63	12.29	15.72
Meat and Beans	15.52	13.56	15.05
Fat	0.72	0.00	0.33
Other	13.36	18.64	16.39

Increased Collaboration

Table 1. Mean Level of Perceived Collaboration

Agency	Core Partners		Community Support		Overall Mean	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Manna	0.33	0.71	0.8	1.8	0.57	1.26
Community Housing Services	1.83	1.33	1.4	2.6	1.61	1.97
IVOC	0.67	1.57	0.4	0.8	0.53	1.20
Hatfield Church of Brethren	1.50	2.14	1.6	1.8	1.55	1.80
North Penn Visiting Nurses	1.33	1.71	2.4	1.8	1.87	1.76
Emmanuel E.C.	1.00	1.14	2.0	1.25	1.5	1.20
IV SAAC	1.00	1.29	0.2	1.6	0.6	1.44

Next Steps

- Building leadership
- Sustainability and fundraising
- Recruitment of additional members and community partners
- Expanded voice in community
- Nutrition education tool kit
- Food awareness pilot
 - Community gardening

Building Strong Communities Through Healthy Food

www.thefoodtrust.org

Allison Harris

aharris@thefoodtrust.org

