Healthy Food Pantries

A Food Bank Progress Report

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Overview

Food Insecurity
Introduction to Manna Programs and Initiatives
Results
Next Steps
The Need

43% of Michigan families cannot afford basic needs (up 6% from 2010)

12% of families in our service area live at or below the poverty line

1 in 5 children are food insecure

Sources: United Way 2019 ALICE Report, Feeding America West Michigan
Healthy food items, like fresh fruits and vegetables, are often bypassed in the grocery store due to their cost. Inexpensive convenience meals are often substituted as a result, which are full of saturated fats, sodium, and sugar. Regular consumption of these items increase chances of chronic diseases.

Food pantries are uniquely situated to positively influence the health of the individuals and families most affected by diet-related illnesses. By changing the food we provide, we can improve the health of our communities.

Data: FAWM | by Mintaka Design
Manna Food Project

Mission: To help feed the hungry in Antrim, Charlevoix, and Emmet counties

- 501 (c) (3) established in 1987
- Located between Petoskey & Harbor Springs
- 7 staff + over 500 volunteers
- Over 50 partner food pantries, meal sites, and human service agencies

Programs
- Food Bank (distribution center)
- Community Food Pantry
- Food Rescue
- Food 4 Kids Backpack Program
Programs & Initiatives
Food Rescue

● Over 650,000 pounds of each year from area businesses, restaurants, grocery stores, and farms
  ○ Dry goods surpassing “best buy” dates
  ○ Breads and baked goods
  ○ Frozen items
  ○ Produce naturally rotated off the shelves

● All sorted, free to partner agencies

● Unfortunately, rescued produce is not abundant and is often on its “last legs”
Produce for People + Cook Well, Eat Well

- Community-wide partnerships to ensure a variety of fresh produce is available throughout the year for pantry distribution
- Started with grants from the Health Department of Northwest Michigan and Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities
- Granted additional funding from area community foundations and United Way
Working with Local Farms

Models

- Wholesale purchases
- Pre-season contracts
  - Designating existing fields for Manna
  - Purchasing & expanding production
- Gleaning
- Paying farm crews to harvest, receiving donated product
- Donating excess products
Contracted Farmers (2016-2019)

Coveyou Scenic Farm Market
Bill’s Farm Market
Gruler Farm
Burgess Farm
Bear Creek Organic Farm
Open Sky Organic Farm
Bolt Farm
Dhaseleer Farm
Blue Stem Farm
Spirit of Walloon
Providence Organic Farm
Soul Springs Permaculture
Friske Orchards
Peaceful Valley
Kitchen Farms
Elmaple Farm
Ziibimijwang Farm
Heeren Produce
Berg Farm
Cooking Classes

- Designated funds from grant proposals
  - Crock-Pot classes for 450 clients
  - Blender classes for 200 clients
  - Electric skillet classes for 250 clients

- Participants receive appliances, utensils, educational materials, fresh produce, and other ingredients free of charge

- HDNWMI, MSU Extension, & Groundwork
  - Nutrition Environment Assessment Tool (NEAT) test for each pantry location (throughout tri-county area)
  - Working with partner pantries to schedule and conduct classes

- Manna supplies equipment, ingredients, staff, and helps coordinate participants / support
Educational Materials

- Harvest of the Month
- Recipes slips
- MyPlate information
- Posters
- Other handouts
Organization and “marketing” tactics

- **Client choice pantry**
  - First step in Fresh Place guide
  - Retains client dignity
  - Fosters independence
  - Reduces waste

- **Changing the “shopping” experience**
  - Start shopping for the healthier foods first
  - Moving healthier items to eye level
  - Displaying produce prominently and in an attractive way
  - Incentivising produce and healthy options
  - Limiting sweets, beverages, condiments, and “specialty items”
Organization and “marketing” tactics

- Procuring healthier shelf-stable foods
  - Low sodium or no salt, no sugar added, whole grains, etc.

- Taste-testings
  - “Unpopular items”
  - Easy recipes
  - Results

- Monthly nutrition topic
  - Whole grains, sodium, sugar, fiber, etc.
Cohesiveness

- Created Nutrition Guidelines to solidify commitment and serve as an example to partner agencies
- Training staff and volunteers in order to assist clients
- Continuing the “healthy” mindset into our backpack program
- Promoting healthy foods on website, Facebook, at events
- Working with organizations like Fustini’s and the Outfitter to promote message
- Healthy Food Donation Guidelines
- Surveying clients, class participants, and pantry directors
PUMC Garden - Ten Years of Generosity

- All harvested produce is delivered directly to Manna
- Church invites all church and community members to get involved
- Estimated 25,000 pounds of beautiful produce to Manna over the last decade
Results
Highlights

- Pantries offering fresh produce every time pantry is open increased from 46% to 77%
- Positive feedback from clients, volunteers, pantry directors, and farmers
- Increased collaboration with health department and other community organizations
- Continuing to acquire more data as time passes
Next steps

1. Secure long-term funding
2. Explore mobile pantries for underserved areas
3. Build on partnerships to create more cohesive resource network
4. Advocate for policy changes to improve economic and physical environments