

Proposal Report

Group 16

Gordon Neighbourhood House Pay-What-You-Can Community Lunch

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Introduction

The aim of our project is to work collaboratively with the Gordon Neighbourhood House (GNH) to plan, prepare and serve a healthy, low-cost meal to 25-30 guests at the Pay-What-You-Can (PYWC) community lunch. We will assist in providing a nutritious and sustainable meal that adds some variety to their current menu.

Although the GNH is situated in the West End of Vancouver that encompasses a diverse and dynamic economy located near fertile lands and water, food insecurity is still an issue (Babolet *et al.*, 2004 & City of Vancouver, 2012). Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) states that income is the underlying cause of food insecurity, as well as identifying that high housing costs and insufficient government assistance further exacerbate conditions (Vancouver Coastal Health, 2008). British Columbia's minimum wage remains among the lowest in Canada, forcing approximately 10% of Vancouver's workforce into working poverty (Government of Canada, 2016 & Ivanova, 2016). Additionally, the West End median household income is substantially lower than Vancouver's overall average, and a larger percentage of the population are in low income households (City of Vancouver, 2012). Due to such circumstances, individuals in this area may experience food insecurity to varying degrees and may turn to community programs for additional support.

VCH found 10% of Vancouver households currently experience food insecurity (Provincial Health Services Authority, 2016). Food insecurity is a public health concern as it affects a household's ability to afford nutritious food which consequently impacts physical and mental health (Vancouver Coastal Health, 2014). The GNH continually strives to eradicate food insecurity by nourishing the community through a variety of different lunch programs (Gordon Neighbourhood House, 2017). We are determined to build on their success thus far by focussing in on the PWYC Wednesday lunch program to work collaboratively with the GNH in order to empower, enrich, and diversify healthy eating throughout the community.

Significance

The PWYC lunch program provides many community members with dignified access to a healthy and cost-effective meal. GNH promotes food justice by providing access to affordable,

culturally-appropriate, and healthy local food in a community setting (Gordon Neighbourhood House, 2017). Our work with the GNH is distinct, as there are currently no other collaborative projects working to expand their PWYC community lunch menu.

Food security exists when people have the physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet the needs of their diet, health, and food preferences at all times (FAO, 2002). The impact of food insecurity is prevalent across Vancouver and in the West End, leading to meal programs being essential to alleviate this issue. As a team, we aim to contribute to community food security through the GNH lunch program. We will implement a meal that aligns with the provision of food security and utilize an asset based community development approach to conduct a survey with community members by identifying the lack of diversity in their menu and strategically utilizing the community's assets to increase variety (Session 2 Notes, 2016). We will involve community members in the development of an appropriate, realistic, and sustainable plan (Hamm and Bellows, 2003). Our survey, conducted on March 8th, after we have prepared and served our meal, will strategically collect feedback to assess if the meal was well received by the surrounding community. Furthermore, informed interviews conducted on the GNH partners will allow us to obtain and extrapolate qualitative information, in order to pinpoint the sustainability of our meal. We will actively listen to concerns and opinions, as well as include and support everyone in the process of implementing change. We will work cohesively with the GNH to further address and conquer the roots of food insecurity in the surrounding community.

Before we prepare our meal, we will visit the Wednesday PWYC lunch twice to gain a better understanding of the program and engage with the community members. During these visits we will identify the needs and preferences of all the volunteers, staff and meal patrons. This information will better equip us to provide a meal that is suitable to both the community and the GNH.

Objectives and Inquiry Questions

Our objectives are to:

1. Develop, prepare, and serve a low-cost, nutritious and sustainable meal for the Gordon Neighbourhood House Pay-What-You-Can (PWYC) lunch program.
2. Evaluate the results of our intervention by conducting a survey on March 8th for the GNH community members in order to obtain, analyze, and extrapolate qualitative information into a box plot. This will be cross-analyzed with informed interviews that we will also facilitate on March 8th on the GNH community partners, to identify the effectiveness of our meal in terms of adhering to both the GNH and the surrounding community.

Inquiry Questions

1. How satisfied are the GNH community members with the new alternative meal?
2. How effective is the recipe we developed in terms of creativity, cost-efficiency, and being sustainable for the GNH to implement in future Wednesday lunch programs?

Research Methods

Data Collection and Analysis

We will conduct a survey on March 8th to all community members to evaluate our meal and obtain qualitative information (see appendix). The questionnaire will identify whether the community members were satisfied with our meal and allow them to further elaborate on their particular decision in the comments section provided. Furthermore, on March 8th we will also be observing and interviewing our community partners, the GNH chef, and their volunteers. The feedback received from the survey, interviews, and observations will be assessed and put into box-plots in order to be cross-analyzed. This cross-analysis method will pinpoint if our meal aligns with both the preferences of the surrounding community, as well as the desires of the GNH, to identify if it is suitable to be implemented in future Wednesday lunch programs.

Budget

GNH aims to serve cost-effective options that do not compromise quality. As our team hopes to provide a menu option than can be served regularly, we will keep the cost of our meal within their proposed budget. This will be achieved by selecting low-cost ingredients from their current inventory and local donations, as well as utilizing available harvest produce from the GNH farm.

Conclusion

Upon completion of this project we hope to improve the quality and diversity of the GNH PWYC community lunch program, while also improving community food security. In addition, we hope to demonstrate that money is not a barrier towards adhering to healthy eating practices. By doing so, we hope this will empower community members to be conscious and mindful in their decisions to ensure their meals are both nutrient-rich and cost-effective.

Appendix

Sample Community Member Questionnaire

Did you enjoy the meal?

Circle one: Yes No

Explain which aspects you were most pleased with? (if applicable)

How would you suggest the meal to be improved for next time?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

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