The Eastside Boxing Club and Good Food for All Initiative

Introduction

Our group is working with the Good Food for All (GFFA) initiative, a non-profit organization working in conjunction with the Downtown Eastside Boxing Club (EBC), with the goal of showing vulnerable East Vancouver youth the myriad of food-related jobs and careers available in their community. The youth are vulnerable, as their families may be struggling economically. The children may not be receiving the care they require as a result of the lack of parental figures or parents working multiple jobs in order to provide a steady income.

Initially, GFFA provided the EBC’s youth participants ages 13-19 with healthy snacks. However, upon realizing many children were sneaking food home, Executive Director Elizabeth Fisher, created an open pantry for children to take home snacks whenever needed.

GFFA wanted to take their contribution to Eastside Vancouver’s youth community one step further, by deciding to provide them with the resources needed to obtain food-related jobs such as resume workshops, Food SAFE Certificates, and so forth. The program partnership between the EBC and GFFA aims to increase food security, by showing students the different types of food related jobs and careers available, as well as offering access to resources that will help them receive proper training in order to secure employment and embark on a future career pathway within the food industry. Moreover, GFFA strives to “increase access, interest, and knowledge of healthy and nutritious foods to improve healthy-food security, [and] empower individuals to make healthier food choices” in their community, schools, and homes.

Significance

EBC and GFFA face a limitation in their program: can the current age demographic of youth completing the program conquer food insecurity independently? Within the context of this report, food insecurity will be defined as the inability of obtain healthy and nutritious food at all times.

Key findings of food insecurity state that higher rates of food insecurity could be due to low income and employment, resulting in poor health and diet related diseases. Additionally, if at-risk youth need to buy food, they tend to purchase inexpensive food items that are highly processed with no nutritional value.

The project’s significance is to provide the EBC youth access to resources required to pursue jobs in the food industry reducing predictable food insecurity. Foreseeable food insecurity is a reality for at-risk youth because work is difficult to find when one lacks food related skills that employers are seeking. This project is unique because by educating youth on food industry
employment opportunities, they can acquire an income and reduce their financial food constraints; decreasing financial constraints addresses “availability” at a household level (one of four pillars combating food insecurity)⁶. Acquiring an income also addresses marginal (worrying and limit food selection), moderate (compromise of quality and/or quantity) and severe (miss meals and/or reduce food intake) food insecurity⁷.

Furthermore, initiating an asset-based community development strategy provides a unique approach to recognize the youth’s curiosity in their community’s food industry, thereby inspiring positive attitudes towards the workforce⁴. Our team’s project will contribute to this conversation and support the work of our community partner by delivering the knowledge of resources available to transitioning the youth to the food industry for the foreseeable future, which could positively address food insecurity.

**Objectives**

The project goal is to expose EBC’s youth participants to jobs within the food industry. The primary objectives we aim to complete by the end of the term are as follows:

1. Create a four module teaching program that follows the timeline of highschool seniors from September to April. The four module topics include:
   1.) Jobs and careers in food
   2.) Resources, training, and program workshops
   3.) The speaker and mentorship series
   4.) Resume and cover letter building.

2. Determine appropriate post-secondary schools, programs and prospective job opportunities within the food industry to build an accessible database list for student reference.

3. Develop a pitch to match employers with students, encouraging future partnerships that could potentially lead to scholarship or apprenticeship offers.

4. Build a website to be used as a marketing tool and summary vessel accessible to program participants.

**Methods**

To achieve our goal and objectives, we will conduct a group survey discussion with the youth at EBC on February 7th to gage student needs and priorities. Based on data collected, we will finalize each module by analyzing common trends of student responses from the survey group answers. Ethical considerations to be continuously referred to are the different learning styles of every individual, current career services available and available time students can commit to.
Data collection method: note taking and group survey discussion questions for all modules.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inquiry Questions</th>
<th>Module #1</th>
<th>Module #2</th>
<th>Module #3</th>
<th>Module #4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Current jobs?</td>
<td>- Plans to attend post-secondary or school for food-related careers?</td>
<td>- Who knows what a mentor is?</td>
<td>- Number of students interested in resume workshops (ie. individual advising, group work, both)</td>
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<td>- Interests in potential food-related jobs/ why?</td>
<td>- Anyone completed food related courses outside of school (e.g Food Safe)?</td>
<td>- Anyone with previous mentorship experience?</td>
<td>- Accessible career services? (e.g family member, tutor?)</td>
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<td>- Number of students looking for jobs within next 6 months</td>
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Including the four modules, we will create a database of post-secondary school programs and food-related job requirements through our individual researches and group collaborations. This database will be accessible through the future website to be designed by our group.

Outcomes

Outcomes we hope to achieve include:

1. Development of four modules that follow the typical school year timeline to be used by EBC and GFFA staff as teaching tools (presented individually or in groups)
2. Build a school and career program database
3. Creating a pitch to encourage future employer partnerships
   ○ Potentially providing student scholarships or apprenticeships
4. Developing a website summarizing the four modules: provide direct links/alternative online resources students can use if they unable to attend workshops

Our group intends to have the modules, database and website completed by mid-April as our community partner aims to release workshops by September 2018.
References


