

# **Richmond Food Asset Map: Kitchen and Food Programs Project Proposal**

## **Introduction**

The goal of our project is to assist dietitians from Vancouver Coastal Health in developing a food asset map for Richmond. This has already been done for Vancouver, as a reference. This map at its conclusion will compile all of Richmond's consenting and available food assets. A food asset by definition is "a place where people can grow, prepare, share, buy, receive or learn about food . . ." (Romses, 2017). Our project addresses the portion of the map that will highlight local kitchen and food programs. Kitchen and food programs are either a kitchen available for community use or programs with facilitators that aim to grow an individual's food skills. These food skills include food safety, menu selection, shopping, preparation and cooking. Access and utilization are two of the four pillars of food security as defined by the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2009). Food access refers to affordability, allocation, and availability. Food utilization implies that acquired food is actually metabolized by an individual. We feel that knowledge of kitchen and food programs in Richmond may help contribute to the access and utilization aspect of food security. Our group, along with VCH and its partners hope that this tool will contribute to their ultimate goal of supporting healthy individuals and communities.

## **Significance**

According to demographic data released in 2011, 38.5% of the families in Richmond earns a household income under \$40,000 and 25% of children live in poverty. 38% of the population has an education level of high school or less (City of Richmond, 2017). Besides that, only 20.9% of residents are consuming more than 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day, which is at least 2 servings below the recommended amount (City of Richmond, 2017; Government of Canada, 2011). The demographics also revealed that Richmond has the second highest visible minority population in Canada (City of Richmond, 2017). It is deducible that achieving food security could be quite challenging due to above-mentioned socioeconomic, educational and cultural status. Vancouver Food Asset Map has successfully listed 885 food assets and received more than 13,000 views (Vancouver Coastal Health, 2017).

In contrast to the needs-based approach, the ABCD approach brings positivity into community development. It can help bring the people in the community together and involves active citizenship (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003). When people are working towards a common goal, connections are formed and relationships are built. Instead of hiring experts to "fix" the community, this approach focuses on the skills and resources found within the community and helps to foster a self-reliant community. It is not necessary to attract resources from other communities by exaggerating the severity of the problem in the ABCD approach. People (not necessarily professionals) with different skill sets are brought together to help maximize the use of community food programs and kitchens for this project. Citizen-to-citizen ties are created when people attending various facilitated workshops build connections with each other, while increasing their food knowledge. The community could benefit greatly from the diversity of its citizens and their culturally contextualized knowledge.

This map will fill key knowledge gaps: Firstly, filling an organizational need by compiling available resources in one place to be used efficiently. And secondly, it gives residents opportunity to increase their food literacy – knowledge of food and food handling.

## **Objectives**

- To provide a tool to community members and agencies for locating community food assets that is current, dynamic, and easy to use - these assets will look like community kitchens and food programs that are either cheap or free so that all citizens have a place to go to learn about food, eat food and build community around food.
- To build capacity and support food access for community members dealing with food insecurity – by equipping service providers with a tool that connects people in need to resources

## **Methods**

We will be researching online for any community centers or spaces that have kitchens and food programs available to the public. After gathering this initial information, we will be contacting by phone any organization that does not have all the information we need for the excel spreadsheet. On top of conducting online research, we will be calling 13 different community centers in Richmond to ask if they offer food or kitchen programs, and subsequently getting their consent to be a part of the Richmond Food Asset Map. Our community partners (Anne Swann and Rani Wangsawidjaya) from VCH will be reviewing the excel document that we construct containing all information collected of existing organizations that provide kitchen and food programs. The VCH staff will further be using this information from the excel document to create a food asset map on Google Maps that professional organizations may use to help food insecure households in Richmond. We will also be interviewing a group of select (chosen by our community partners) individuals in the community to gather their feedback on trialing the food asset map. We will be doing this in person with a questionnaire that was used by the Vancouver Food Asset Map. We will be doing this in pairs and each pair will do roughly 3-4 interviews. Having compiled the feedback from different community stakeholders, we will provide our recommendations and summarize the feedback on the mapping tool so that improvements and minor changes can be made in the future.

## **Outcomes**

A presentation for this project will be done on November 29, 2017 at UBC. A final report on the project will be submitted on December 6, 2017 and will be available for VCH and other organizations that will be using the food asset map. The ultimate outcome being; health professionals such as dietitians having an easily accessible and updateable tool to connect their communities to resources, improving the food security status of Richmond residents.

### **Deliverables:**

- Excel sheet
- Interview results of trial runs

## **References**

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