A Community Garden for Bloomington

Grant program being submitted to: The Kresge Foundation

Proposed start and end dates: May 2018-May 2022

Funds requested: $9304

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Abstract

One out of seven people in Indiana are food insecure (feedingindianashungry, 2017). There are 4 community gardens in Bloomington. Community gardens provide fresh fruits and vegetables to food insecure citizens as well as a way to learn how to cook healthy meals. The purpose of this community garden is to provide middle school children in Bloomington, Indiana with access to fresh fruits and vegetables and have them reach and maintain a healthy weight. The program will begin April, 2018 and end April, 2024. The total cost to execute this project is $9304.
Statement of Problem

The middle school-age children of Bloomington are not consuming enough fruits or vegetables, which is detrimental to human health.

Purpose of Program

A proper diet containing fruits and vegetables is integral to maintaining a healthy weight, boosting the immune system and preventing disease. A poor diet increases one’s risk for communicable diseases, cancer and obesity. The community garden program will suit the following needs: lowering the prevalence of obesity among children in Bloomington, Indiana, ensuring the children of Bloomington consume a substantial amount of fruits and vegetables and help decrease food insecurity among children of lower income families. This program is going to set these young individuals on a more guided path to a healthier lifestyle. They will learn not only what fruits and vegetables can do for the body, but also how to cultivate and maintain these food products.

Significance of Problem

Community gardens are a proven way to help reduce food insecurity within the community because they make for an easier and more efficient way for individuals within the community to have reliable access to fresh foods. In one study, the rate of fresh vegetable intake
among those who participated in a community garden program almost quintupled (Carney et al., 2012). The CDC has an entire page of their website dedicated to the helpfulness that the community gardens bring to the table. The University of Massachusetts also released a case study focusing on community gardens. It focused primarily on using community gardens as a tool for eliminating food insecurity in Hampden County, Massachusetts. The study found that in response to a survey given to participants in community gardens, the majority agreed to help promote them. Also, the majority of those who responded believed that community gardens were valued in their community. The CDC also points out that community gardens can offer health benefits by providing chances to eat fruits and vegetables as well as participate in physical activity. The knowledge and experience that children will be able to gain because of this program can be carried with them, ensuring beneficial decisions in regards to their health throughout their lifetime. On their page relating to community gardens, the CDC linked a study by the Local Government Commission (LGC) on the topic. The study stated that not only can community gardens help lower food insecurity among certain areas and lower income families, but can also help reduce obesity by giving people within the community a chance to work in the garden and do physical labor (LGC, 2017).

The Mayo Clinic has released many articles stating that the consumption of fruits and vegetables on a daily basis can significantly benefit an individual’s health in a multitude of ways (Zeratsky 2015). These benefits include an increase in the amount of energy throughout the body, reduced risk of heart disease, various forms of cancers, and high blood pressure, all of which stem heavily from unhealthy eating habits (which can be significantly influenced by having poor access to healthier foods) and a lack of physical activity.
There is a community garden here in Bloomington, Indiana that is run by Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard. It is operated by mostly volunteers and the compost for it is made by MHC themselves. There are over 100 community gardens in Indianapolis alone, as they are becoming quite the healthful trend (Mann, 2017). Visiting various resources and reading what positives impacts community gardens have made, it is quite astonishing the good that a project like this can bring for the health of each individual within a community. Our program chooses to build and run a community garden where children can plant, take, and learn how to prepare meals with fruits and vegetables to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables in Bloomington because it will address the issue of middle school children not eating enough fruits and vegetables.

**Goals and Objectives**

Our goal for our community garden program is to help the middle school age children of Bloomington, Indiana consume more fruits and vegetables, as well as to prepare meals consisting of fresh fruits and vegetables. By achieving this, the children will reach and maintain a healthy weight.

To help children reach a healthy weight, we plan to: Have food insecure children eat at least 1 serving of fruits and vegetables per day. Have children take home at least the equivalent of 7 servings of fruits and vegetables home for the week. To accomplish this we will provide at least 5 different fruits and 5 different vegetables growing in the garden year round and teach children how to prepare meals with fruits and vegetables.
Methodology

Our community garden is going to suit the following needs: lowering the prevalence of obesity among children in Bloomington, Indiana by ensuring that these children incorporate a substantial amount of fruits and vegetables into their diet to help decrease food insecurity among children of lower income families. The garden will have its own space, full-time employees, various fruits and vegetables, supplies and tools, and data collected and analyzed throughout the course of time to keep track of the successes of the garden throughout our three year time frame.

To start, we must first promote our garden. We plan to do this by posting information within the needed communities where low income families reside, setting up a booth and passing out brochures with extensive detail on where our garden will be located, all the different fruits and vegetables it will grow, volunteer opportunities for the children to assist in cultivating these fruits and vegetables, hours of operation and benefits surrounding the garden itself. We will also be posting information to larger business around the Square, College Mall, and various restaurants of popularity so that all individuals can become aware of the community garden and further recommend it to families they may know so that more children can become involved.

We plan to acquire a facility for the services of the garden that can be equipped with adequate land space as well as building space for data collection and analyzation, storage of all the supplies that will be needed for planting, charting and documenting the children's’ activity levels within the garden, their body mass index and any positive and significant changes in health, and whether or not they are taking home the intended amount of fruits and vegetables that week. We will also need to chart the hours of our employees who will be working with the children and supervising while the garden is open. For such data collection, we will require at
least one computer and printer, paper, writing utensils and printer ink, we will also need wifi services. To acquire a facility, we will be in contact with various property managements within the community of our intended location. We will need to keep in mind the prices for renting monthly, including all utility bills. We will also need to acquire a greenhouse (to insure year-round growing and supply). This will be bought and kept on facility.

**Evaluation**

We will conduct two separate evaluations: formative and summative. They will occur in this order.

The formative evaluation will focus on budget, resources and workforce. First, we will evaluate if we have the proper funds. To accomplish this, we will evaluate not just our pledge donors, but our committed donors as well as the funds which we already possess. We will also evaluate how receiving or not receiving the grants we apply for will affect our budget. Also, we will evaluate how we are spending our funds. For example, we will determine if we are receiving an economical price for our materials and other expenses. Next, we will determine if the resources we have collected are adequate to complete our objectives. Finally, we will evaluate our workforce. We will examine the number of workers we have as well as the efficiency of our workforce.

The summative evaluation will focus on budget efficiency and attendance rate. To do this, we will examine the money we spent. We will determine if there was a budget surplus or if we went into debt. We will examine the amount of children who participated in our programs and the rate of return and satisfaction among those children.
The summative evaluation will also focus on our objectives and goals and if we met, exceeded or failed to meet them. We will complete this by questionnaires completed by the participants of the program and interviews conducted with their parents or guardians. The questionnaire will focus on the participant's fruit and vegetable intake, a rating out of 10, and their thoughts on how the program might improve. The questionnaire will be the method of choice for the participants since it will be the easiest for middle schoolers to complete. The interview will be given to the parents and focus on the child’s weight and how long they have maintained a healthy weight since participating in the program.

**Budget**

For our community gardens, our main sources of budget will come from government grants and private donations. Our budget is based off of a sample estimate from the Vermont Community Garden Network. They are based in Burlington, Vermont which has half the population of bloomington. Therefore, our estimates are doubled.

**Direct Costs**

Gardening

Seeds = 300
Signage = 350
Compost bin supplies = 400
Compost = 950
Fencing = 1200
Greenhouse = 500

Tools

Hand tools = 480

4 Wheelbarrows = 160

Personel

Dietician 4 hours/month per year ($30/hr) = 1440 per year

Total Direct Costs = $5780

Indirect Costs

Service provided by 2 volunteers = 1440

Cost of evaluation (done by volunteers) = 500

Indirect administrative costs at 30% of $5280 = 1584

Total indirect costs = $3524

Total Costs = $9304
References


