

GELH Application Submitted: 2/8/2013 2:05:37 PM

Applicant Name : Armbruster, Katelyn

Class: Sophomore

Expected Graduation: Spring 2015

Individual or group: Individual

ABSTRACT From Garden to Table: A Fresh Food and Nutrition Education Program for Families Dependent on Free Food is my proposed project that concentrates on improving the health of local food pantry participants by bringing access to nutritional, organic food to their tables. The goal of this experiential learning project is to offer healthy foods options and nutrition education to low income families by investigating and creating health education programs that can make it possible for these families to become resilient and self-reliant. By working with New Bethany Ministries to create this program I hope to increase the value that free food recipients attach to their nutrition. Part of the project will entail growing fresh and healthy food that can be distributed to recipients. Through documenting the difficulties and successes of the programs developed and applied through the New Bethany Ministries food bank, I plan to determine the different avenues of health education that are suitable for this particular community.

PROPOSAL For people who are dependent on free food through food pantries and soup kitchens, the quality of their diet is determined by the quality of the food that is donated. Nutritious foods are often lacking in food pantries, specifically fresh, organic produce from farms. Typically the diets of food pantry recipients are filled with starchy and cheap sugary foods, which can eventually contribute to the large number of Americans who are obese and diabetic. By developing a food and nutrition education program families that are dependent on free food will have greater opportunities for achieving wellness and health.

Part of this program's mission is to bring fresh food to the table. The grant will allow me to continue my ongoing work in the South Side Initiative's community gardens to grow produce that can be donated to the New Bethany Ministries Food Bank in south Bethlehem (at 339 W. 4th Street). The New Bethany Food Ministries takes care of hundreds of recipients a week with donated goods, which are often of low nutritional value. The food bank serves many people who live outside of south Bethlehem, but it is still an ideal place to develop this kind of program because some of its clients are local and because south Bethlehem is considered a "food desert," which means that the USDA defines it as an area that is deprived of a grocery store that offers fresh and affordable foods as part of a healthy diet.

Beyond cultivating and harvesting fresh produce in south Bethlehem's community gardens, the more central part of this project will involve working with New Bethany Food Ministries to create a fresh food and nutrition education program that also introduces health and wellness information to food box recipients. The program will develop and test several projects intended to improve the diets of the

recipients. For example, the fresh produce will be accompanied with resources like recipes, “vegetable cooking tips” sheets, diet balancing advice, and other information that will make cooking and eating the fresh produce easier and more meaningful. Another element of this project will be to cook some produce in advance of the food box pick-up so that prepared dishes can be packaged for families to take home as a sample, where they can then recreate the same dish and share the nutritional information. By providing families with health and nutritional information alongside both the ingredients and the information about ways to cook fresh produce, I hope to get more healthy food into the diets of families that are dependent on free food.

This project is scheduled to begin in June of 2013 and will be coordinated with Diane Elliot, the Director of New Bethany Ministries, and my mentor, Dr. Breena Holland, Professor in the Political Science Department and the Environmental Initiative, who also runs the South Side Initiative’s Community Gardens Working Group.

As I work with the staff at New Bethany Ministries to develop this fresh food and nutrition education program, my plan is to draw on the ideas and support from many other organizations, such as The Weller Center, Bethlehem Food Co-op, Kellyn Foundation, Buy Fresh Buy Local, and The Nurture Nature Center. Most important, I intend to model the educational part of this program on two successful programs run by Just Food (a non-profit organization) in New York City. In one of these programs nutritionists provide free cooking classes and nutrition information to food pantry recipients of all ages to encourage healthier eating habits. Another one of these programs provides nutrition education to staff, volunteers and clients of emergency food programs, as well as support for food pantries and soup kitchens that impacts the quality of the food prepared, offered and served. Topics covered in these programs include making healthy choices, balancing calories, portion size and physical activity, food safety, stretching your food dollars, menu planning and recipe modification, and customer services.

Developing a fresh food and nutrition education program for people in the community who are dependent on free food will bring the importance of wellness, nutrition, and health into focus. Fresh food is not often the donation norm and leaves many hungry people with un-nutritious diets. Consequently, diabetes and obesity often afflict low income Americans. My plan is to develop a nutrition and fresh food education program that allows the community to become resilient and self reliant. Gardening projects in Lehigh University south side garden beds will also serve as a outdoor classroom that can be instituted into program planning

<http://mhcfoodpantry.org/2012/10/waste-not-eat-well/>

DELIVERABLE The deliverable of this project will be a notebook with instructions for how to implement the fresh food and nutrition education program that I develop and test over the summer at New Bethany Ministries. Through experiential learning I hope to discover th

BUDGET REQUEST \$4,000

BUDGET DESCRIPTION \$3,000 will go towards an hourly wage for 10 weeks, 30hrs/week at \$10 an hour.

\$800 will be for ingredients for recipes, containers, recipe cards, and printing materials.

\$200 will be for travel to NYC to get information and learn from Just Food's food pa

Activity Start Date: June 2013

Activity End Date: August 2013

Location of Activity: This experiential learning project will take place in the South Side Initiative community gardens around Bethlehem and at the New Bethany Ministries Food Bank.

Mentor: Breena Holland Professor of Political Science and Environmental Initiative
Lehigh University
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Letter of support requested? Yes

Additional information for committee to consider:

Submitted to other funding sources? No

Is IR approval required? Yes