Hidden Benefits of Food Pantries

- Melissa Kono - Clark County UW-Extension Community and Natural Resource Educator
- Nancy Vance - Clark County UW-Extension Family Living Educator
Goal for Presentation

- Understand the Demographics of rural counties
- Discussion of the hidden benefits for the community to host a food pantry site
  - Economic advantage
  - Referral for other county services
  - Programs on site
  - Screening for other family issues
  - Volunteerism and the individual benefits
Clark County, Wisconsin
Dairy County yet still a Food Desert
Population per square mile
Large Format Saturates Market

75% of Wisconsin’s small villages/cities are within a 30-minute drive of a Wal-Mart store.
What are the Hidden Benefits of a Food Pantry in the Community
Economic Impact
Downtown Development

- Use of downtown storefronts
- Rental costs
- Appropriate space
- Parking
Community Impact
Child-friendly spaces

Grandma’s Cupboard

Library with books and toys.
Communication Hub

- Needs Assessment for underserved population
- Health Department Immunization Schedule
- Social Services Announcements
- Referral for Other Services
Communications Hub
Screening for other Services

- Domestic Violence
- Homelessness
- Fuel Assistance
- Health department immunization schedule shared
Community Programs

- Teaching by local agencies such as Food-Wise
- Seasonal Items for children such as Halloween items, Easter Baskets
- Clark County Community Arts class offering for low-income families
- Community Gardens
UW-Extension Food for Thoughts Literacy Project

- History-Grant through United Way
- Objective
- Process
- Data Collection
- Results of Data
Meeting with Food Pantry Director
Samples of some of the books
Food pantry volunteers receiving the new books.
Food Pantry guest picking out a new book. She gave us permission to use her picture. Look at her smile!
Survey Results

How long do you read to your child?

- not at all
- 5-10 minute
- 10-20 minutes
- 20 to 30
- more than 30 minutes

after receiving books how many more minutes are you reading?
Individual Benefits

- Volunteers are often the glue that holds a community together while making it a better place. However, volunteering is a two-way street, and it can benefit you and your family as much as the cause you choose to help.
Volunteering helps you make new friends and contacts
Volunteering provides many benefits to both mental and physical health.

**we are A Community**
# Workplace Evaluation Survey

Please complete the following evaluation. The results of this evaluation will be used to understand the benefits of volunteering. Your participation in this evaluation is voluntary and confidential to the extent allowed by law. If you have any questions, please contact Melissa Kono or Nancy Vance UW-Extension, Clark County Family Living Educators at 715-743-5121.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I felt supported by co-workers and supervisors while volunteering</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I found the experience of volunteering rewarding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have a better understanding of the reason for poverty and food shortages within families in Clark County</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you now or have you ever used a food pantry to supplement your monthly food budget?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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____ I volunteer at the food pantry as a requirement for the W2 program

Please provide the reason you decided to volunteer at the food pantry

__________________________________________________________

Please provide any additional information that you would like to share about your volunteer experience.

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________
Results of the Survey
Q1 - I felt supported by co-workers and supervisors while volunteering
Q2 - I found the experience of volunteering rewarding.
Q3 - I have a better understanding of the reason for poverty and food shortages within families in Clark County
Q4 - Do you now or have you ever used a food pantry to supplement your monthly food budget?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Volunteering</th>
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<tr>
<td>I want to give back to the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have a desire to help the community, I have time and because of my faith in God.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I went to the organizational meeting to learn more about it and I felt it was a worthwhile endeavor to become involved in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to help community, have time, my faith in God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I finally had time to volunteer and I wanted to give back to the food pantry. The food pantries in Clark County were such a blessing to me in my time of need.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After retirement I was looking for a way to give back in my community. I felt my skills were a good match for the work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To help others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting to know the community and meeting friendly faces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy said they needed help and I thought it was a good cause</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please provide additional information that you would like to share about your volunteer experience.

I am valued by the manager of the food pantry. She often expresses appreciation and her attitude easily is shared with other volunteers and clients.

I have gotten to visit with former students!

I am valued by the food pantry manager. She often expresses appreciation and her attitude is shared with other volunteers and clients.

I have enjoyed getting to know more people in my community both participants and other volunteers. There have been many times when it was clear we made a real difference in someone's life.

I have been working for two years. I could write a book of how people are so happy that we are here.

I really look forward to my volunteer day.
Discussion Groups

What have you seen that has been a success with your local food pantry? How could your community incorporate some of the presentation ideas?
Community Approach

Taking a Community Approach to Implement the Safe & Healthy Food Pantries Project

Any volunteer or pantry coordinator can confirm that finding ways to creatively engage your community in your pantry is a win-win. As you promote food security in your community, your pantry will strengthen existing relationships or uncover partnership opportunities, volunteers and donors along the way. Involving your clients in food pantry operations and connecting them to community resources will support the pantry and the families you serve. As you implement the steps of the Safe & Healthy Food Pantries Project, consider ways to engage community members and clients in meeting your nutrition and food safety goals.

Ways to involve and recognize members of the community
Ways to involve and recognize members of the community

Ways to involve and recognize members of the community in supporting a safe and healthy food pantry include:

- Organize food drives that focus on donations of healthy and safe foods.
- Fundraise so the food pantry can purchase nutritious foods.
- Provide emergency food storage for overflow inventory.
- Offer a variety of volunteer opportunities.
- Refer clients to other services such as jobs, housing, childcare, transportation, health insurance, mental health, drug/alcohol recovery, child support, energy assistance, home repairs, education, domestic violence and more. 2-1-1 Wisconsin is a free call service that provides information and resources to Wisconsin residents.
- Connect clients to agencies conducting FoodShare outreach. These organizations can provide information on how to apply and assist clients with online applications.

Provide other services to support food pantry clients by collecting and distributing items such as toiletries and other non-food items, toys and books for children, free clothing and/or furniture, holiday gift programs, etc.
Take Aways

- Food pantries located in downtown spaces can help fill the gap caused by exiting retail.
- Food distribution centers are one-stop shopping for other services as well.
- Food pantries provide volunteer opportunities that link people to their communities and provide benefits for the individual.
- Food pantries are not just about food!
Thank You

Nancy and Melissa