

Situation: The City of Niagara Falls is largely considered to be a food desert — lacking access to fresh, affordable, and nutritious food options. The few food markets that exist in the City are typically more than a mile away for many residents. A lack of transportation can be a barrier for residents. In addition, roughly 15% of Niagara Falls' most vulnerable citizens are considered to be in urgent need for food (Healthy Food Healthy People Work Group, 2018).

Event: The LaSalle neighborhood school where I student teach, *G J Mann Elementary*, has a lack of neighborhood food market options. I propose a farmer's market that would take place during the second Sunday of each month at the *St. John De LaSalle Church* parking lot from May through October. The event will feature fresh, affordable produce from local farmers and food producers. Local restaurants would be invited to host a workshop, offer samples, and recipes for basic meals or snacks that can be made at home using seasonal produce found at the market. Local partners and sponsors will be sought to subsidize learning materials and the monthly event. I would collaborate with the Parish and City government for the use of space and applicable permits. Donations will be sought for baskets and giveaways featuring gardening equipment, produce, and locally produced foods.

Outreach: Partners and sponsors will receive their logo on all signage, print materials, and "market dollars." The subsidized market dollars could be distributed at the school, library, and senior center. Event flyers and temporary signage would be posted around the community for awareness. Social media would be utilized for awareness and event promotion. Using my past marketing and design experience, I can design a straightforward, multilingual pamphlet in simple terms and illustrations to educate children and families. The pamphlet will focus on the benefits of eating fresh foods and the basics of growing food at home. The District's robocall system and local community organizations such as *LiveNF* and *Healthy Food Healthy People* could be utilized for promotion and integration with existing programming.

Community impact: The monthly events could generate an economic impact for small and mid-size farmers and local businesses; increase access to fresh, affordable, and nutritious food; and support healthy communities. This safe, family-friendly event would be open to all City residents. Local public officials would be invited to attend. The event has the potential to raise civic engagement as students and families would have the opportunity to volunteer at the event.

Intellectual impact: A unit on agriculture can be woven into the district curriculum across all grades and subjects where appropriate (e.g., science, math, social studies / ELA). Students can experiment with growing seeds in the classroom, measure growth, tend to outdoor school garden spaces, learn where their food comes from, and build food preparation skills. The events can provide culturally relevant education on economic and health benefits of eating local, the basics of gardening with what is available, and composting.

Social-emotional impact: Both the event and learning activities in school will foster a sense of community pride and good citizenship in the students and the community at large. The event is a chance for children and families to meet, learn, and play together. They will learn the benefit of getting involved in their community through gardening at school; community beautification; and growing their own food.

Physical growth and well-being: Students will learn about the benefit of having access to healthy and affordable food. At the event, fruit and vegetable tasting tables could be set up to encourage young children to try different healthy foods. A child could receive a passport stamp card and receive a prize or healthy treat for trying all the foods. Physical activities, games, and art-related activities will be included at each event to promote an overall healthy lifestyle and exposure to culture.

References

Healthy Food Healthy People Work Group. (2018, October 18). *Niagara Falls local food action plan*. Creating a Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative.