

Where's the Kale? Continued victories of a community-based participatory research partnership

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Healthy Eating in Context: Local Solutions, Global Challenges

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Background

- A healthy and nutritional diet is important in addressing the health problems of minorities.
- Studies have found that both supermarkets and smaller stores serve as major food shopping outlets for households.
- Limited numbers of stores that offer healthy food options have created barriers to good eating habits among poor and nonwhite communities.

Where's the Kale? Findings

- Thesis study of whether a predominantly African American neighborhood had disproportionately less availability of fruits and vegetables than a predominantly non-Hispanic White neighborhood.
- Availability was judged on the bases of the types of stores available in each community and the specific types of fruits and vegetables made available in each store.
- The availability of fruits and vegetables in the food stores of each community was assessed by physically canvassing neighborhood food stores and taking a census of available fruit and vegetable items based on a list of fruits and vegetables derived from the DASH diet.
- The predominantly African American community under study had fewer varieties of fresh fruits and vegetables and fewer stores offering larger varieties of fruits and vegetables.

Williams, E.M., Tayo, B.O., McLean, B., Smit, E., Sempos, C.T., & Crespo, C.J. Where's the Kale? Environmental availability of fruits and vegetables in two racially dissimilar communities. *Environmental Justice* 1(1): 35-43, 2008.

Background

- The Environmental Justice Action Group (EJAG) of Western New York was awarded a grant to address the issues of food justice on Buffalo's eastside through community gardening.
- The project involves phytoremediation and bioremediation of the soil on a double lot purchased by EJAG in the shadow of a local Superfund site.
- The community found that some of the toxins had migrated from the site to the soil of the purchased property.
- Research was expanded to engage the community in food production and the lack of access to fresh foods.

Study Population

- The Eastside of Buffalo, New York, specifically census tracts 34-35.
- This region has a population of approximately 11,000 per the 2,000 census.
- There is only one small supermarket in this area that carries fresh fruits and vegetables.

Goals/Objectives

- Determine how many growing seasons it takes to get the soil to a safe level for gardening.
- The goal is to create a self-contained garden of raised beds in mini hoop houses on part of the land.
- There will be a rain barrel watering system and a compost box to grow enriched soil for the gardens.
- Produce from the garden will be available to residents and any excess will be donated to a local food pantry.



Assessment and Offerings

- Dietary knowledge, behavior, and perceptions of residents will be assessed before planting and end of project.
- A six month assessment will determine whether healthy eating habits have been sustained.
- This project will offer free classes on nutrition, eating healthy on a budget, and healthy cooking.



Expectations

- The garden is expected to build community capacity.
- The garden is also expected to provide free fresh fruits and vegetables to residents.
- The garden is expected to help meet the requirements for Urban Farming to sell the produce at local farmer's markets or become a co-op.



Who Will Be Involved?

- The residents of Model Block and members from True Bethel Baptist Church
- Project Coordinator (Americorps Volunteer)
- A horticulturist will oversee the project



Questions

