



Students and Partners Serve Up Fresh Local Food for the Neediest in Lima

CHALLENGE

The United States Department of Agriculture recommends making half your plate fruits and vegetables to reduce and prevent chronic diseases.¹ This is a challenge for residents who live in one of Lima's "food deserts" where access to healthy and affordable foods is limited. The majority of patrons, approximately 150, at Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen live in a food desert. About three in four patrons have physical, cognitive, or mental health challenges; 78 percent walk, bike, or use public transportation as their main mode of transportation and have financial challenges that make it difficult for them to

access fresh produce.² With this in mind, the CHC program at Allen County Public Health collaborated with Transition Lima and Lima Senior High School teaching staff to assist Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen to expand their garden and develop solutions to barriers such as pests, inadequate water supply, and a need for volunteers.

¹ 2010 USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans

² A Snapshot of People Who Ate at Our Daily Bread, Survey, Jennifer McClure, December 2010



SUMMARY

The goal of the Allen County Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) coalition is to create sustainable solutions that increase access to healthy food for the most vulnerable in Lima and Allen County. With the support of Transition Lima, Lima Senior High School, and other community partners, the Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen expanded its garden and provides a learning laboratory for Lima Senior High School students.

SOLUTION

Lima Senior High School carpentry students built raised bed boxes. Biology students worked to fill the boxes, plant seeds – including seedlings grown at school, and prepare the gardens for winter. Soup kitchen director Steve Jenkins developed a watering system and fence around the garden to keep away pests. Transition Lima coordinated volunteers to assist with watering and weeding the garden throughout the summer. Funding from the CHC program provided garden equipment and supplies. To raise community awareness about the project, a large mural painted by a Lima Senior High School art student is scheduled to be installed next to the garden in the Spring of 2014.

ALLEN COUNTY

RESULTS

Because of this community effort:

- Soup kitchen patrons are eating more fresh local produce.
- The cook at the kitchen incorporates fresh herbs and vegetables from the garden, as well as other donated local produce, into salads, vegetable dishes and entrees.
- Over 80 Lima Senior High School students gained hands-on experience with gardening—from building, planting, and preparing the beds for winter.
- 20 adult garden volunteers from the community, as well as 4-H and agriculture club members, participated in urban gardening as a sustainable solution to healthy food.



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The goal of this initiative is to strengthen our regional food system in order to increase access to affordable, local, healthier food options for Allen County residents. Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, Transition Lima, and Lima Senior High School's biology program are committed to continuing their collaboration to grow fresh produce.

Short-term goals include the support and expansion of gardening initiatives in the community. Long-term goals include conducting a local food policy audit to more accurately assess and quantify strategies that will support our local economy and increase affordable local food for all.

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Other 2013 Initiatives for Allen County CHC program included:

- Community Gardens
- Healthy Beverage Promotion
- Healthy School Celebrations
- Worksite Lactation Support
- Bike/Pedestrian Infrastructure
- Tobacco-Free Multi-Unit Housing
- Tobacco-Free School/University Policy

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

Go Green! Start your own garden or participate in a community garden.

Buy Local! Support local foods in your area by buying local produce at community farmers' markets or farm stands.

Give! Share extra produce from your garden with neighbors and friends, or perhaps a food pantry that accepts fresh produce.

Some of our elderly have commented on how **inspiring** it is to see the **youth of 'tomorrow'** assist at the Soup Kitchen.

Stephen Jenkins, Executive Director,
Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen

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