

# Pop-Up Produce and Downloadable Education: How the University of Pittsburgh and American Heart Association Partnered to Provide Food Access and Education During the Pandemic

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## INTRODUCTION & MOTIVATION

- Food insecurity (FI) describes when the ability to access nutritionally adequate, safe foods, is uncertain.<sup>1</sup>
- The AHA wanted to address increasing rates of food insecurity in the city of Pittsburgh since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The SHRS Nutrition & Dietetics program is skilled and equipped with providing nutrition education in a virtual capacity for community settings.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### American Heart Association (AHA)

- The AHA implemented the USDA Farmers to Families program in association with Monteverdes Produce to distribute fresh produce to six neighborhoods in Pittsburgh, including Homewood, Northside, Hill District, East Liberty, Wilksburg, and Sharpsburg.<sup>2</sup>
- Participating neighborhoods were identified based on elevated rates of food insecurity and provided produce to feed a family of four.
- Pop-up produce markets were set up within community gardens, churches, after-school programs, and hospitals. Neighborhood residents were able to attend the markets and receive produce for their household.
- Markets distributed food 2x/month for 6 months, beginning in January 2021.

### University of Pittsburgh

- Nutrition & Dietetics program worked to provide complementary recipes for the monthly produce boxes, highlighting the featured fruits and vegetables.
- Food demonstration videos shows how to make the monthly recipe and discussed:
  - The benefits of fruits and vegetables in the diet
  - Nutrition facts on monthly highlighted produce
  - Recipe modification tips
  - Food safety information
- The provided recipes followed AHA recommendations and were low in sodium, added sugar, and saturated fat.

## ABSTRACT

Accessing produce and the education necessary to its utilization are barriers to consuming the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables for adults and families in Allegheny and Fayette Counties. The American Heart Association (AHA) and Pitt's SHRS Nutrition & Dietetics program established a partnership to support the AHA's pop-up produce box initiative. During the 6-month program, this partnership created videos, tips, and recipes outlining produce-focused nutrition education. These materials corresponded with weekly produce received and followed AHA's heart healthy diet. This partnership demonstrated the ability to collaborate with a national organization on nutrition content while impacting the Pittsburgh community.



## DATA & RESULTS

- The Nutrition department created 5 produce-focused recipes and accompanying demonstration videos that were distributed amongst the markets.
- The AHA was able to serve the following population numbers:

Allegheny County	Fayette County	Allegheny + Fayette Counties	Total Distributions	Home Distributions
16,500 boxes/ households	4,850 boxes/ households	~85,400 people served	110 total markets	12 home delivery

## POTENTIAL IMPACT

### Community

- Increased frequency of consumption of fresh produce.
- Introduced new food and recipes to families in Allegheny and Fayette Counties.
- Increased access to fresh produce options to Pittsburgh neighborhoods of: Wilksburg, Homewood, East Liberty, Sharpsburg, North Side and the Hill District.
- Increased access to relevant nutrition education information.

### Nutrition & Dietetics Department

- Built on established partnership with the AHA.
- Reached wider audience for nutrition education and information during the pandemic.
- Provided nutrition resources to Pittsburgh communities.

## MOVING FORWARD

- The pop-up produce markets are now in their second year and continue to offer produce around the city of Pittsburgh.
- The AHA and SHRS Nutrition & Dietetics department are currently working on a Produce Rx program with help of the Food Trust to increase produce consumption in individuals diagnosed with chronic disease and/or facing food insecurity.

## REFERENCES

1. Edelstein S. Nutrition in Public Health. 4th ed. Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning; 2018.
2. American Heart Association. Redirecting Food: From Waste to Families. June 2020.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Thank you to the AHA for reaching out to SHRS Nutrition and Dietetics to collaborate on this project and providing the opportunity to share nutrition education to a wider audience.
- Thank you to the market distribution centers for providing the space and volunteers for to allow food distribution to happen.