

Cal Poly Humboldt

Digital Commons @ Cal Poly Humboldt

IdeaFest 2024

IdeaFest

2024

College Corps: Food for People's Impact on Food Insecurity in Humboldt County

Petrita Rodriguez

prodriguez988@mycr.redwoods.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/ideafest2024>

Recommended Citation

Rodriguez, Petrita, "College Corps: Food for People's Impact on Food Insecurity in Humboldt County" (2024). *IdeaFest 2024*. 118.

<https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/ideafest2024/118>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the IdeaFest at Digital Commons @ Cal Poly Humboldt. It has been accepted for inclusion in IdeaFest 2024 by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Cal Poly Humboldt. For more information, please contact kyle.morgan@humboldt.edu.

FOOD FOR PEOPLE'S IMPACT ON FOOD INSECURITY IN HUMBOLDT COUNTY

An inside look of Food for People's strive for change within the community.

Petrita Rodriguez

Humboldt College Corps
23-24 AY Cohort
Serving the North Coast

#CaliforniansForAll
College Corps



INTRODUCTION

College Corps has provided more than 100 full time students to work with nonprofit community partners around Humboldt County. Food for People is one of those community partners and from an intern's perspective, it is not difficult to see just how big of an impact “the largest food bank of Humboldt County” makes on the residents of Humboldt County. With a variety of pantries and different programs that provide food for seniors and children that are from the low-income community that impact grows and even more so with the changing economy.

OBJECTIVE

This is an observational study from a College Corps intern's perspective into just one of the biggest food distribution resources in Humboldt County and the different programs that they offer. The amount of food that they distribute serves to feed about 15% of the Humboldt County population, and although it may seem like a small amount, you don't realize just how much of an impact that is until you interact with the families receiving that food and the difference that it makes in their lives.

FINDINGS

I began working at the Choice Pantry, late August 2023. I first started by restocking shelves and helping customers navigate through the pantry. When speaking to them, they sometimes told me why they came in, whether it was because they lost their job or were simply looking to get some food for their family while times were a little tough. I then started conducting intake interviews, where we asked our customers for basic information so that they would be able to get some food, and alternated between working at the front desk and conducting intake interviews. While working at the front desk, I noticed that some people came in a little hesitant before actually signing up to get food, but once they were reassured that they would be able to get food, they calmed down and by the time they had gotten their groceries, they were grateful and with a more calm and happier demeanor than when they came in. A big part of my internship was working with the Spanish speaking community. As a minority in Humboldt County and with so much uncertainty going on, their hesitance to seek help and more importantly could be noticed easily the minute they walked in through the pantry's doors. Once they heard me speaking Spanish to them, they seemed to calm down, knowing at least someone understood them. I then conducted their intake interviews and they told me their stories. One person had lost their job because they were taking care of a sick family member, another person couldn't work or seek help because they were currently seeking asylum and were in desperate need of some food. Listening to all of their stories, it is not hard to understand that these people have come from different backgrounds and situations that have led them to seek any food resource possible, no matter what their fears or uncertainties are. Thankfully, someone who speaks their language is there to understand their situations and answer any questions that they may have. This is part of the impact that Food for People is making and accomplishing their objective of giving food to those who need all the while reducing food insecurity.



CONCLUSION

This observational study showed a small perspective into the amount of households that Food for People helps every month in providing food for their families who are struggling. Almost all of these families are low-income families that come from a variety of backgrounds. Working within the pantry, it is common to hear “thank you, you have no idea how much this food is helping me out”, demonstrating just how big of an impact food for people is making on many families in Humboldt County. In the previous year, food for people has served a total of 21,000 people per month and has distributed a total of 2.4 million pounds of food of which 36% was fresh produce. The Eureka Choice Pantry alone has reached record numbers of going from serving just an average of 1000 households per month, to serving a diverse range of about 1600 households per month (roughly 4,800 people). Although it may seem like a lot, this is just a portion of the people that receive food from Food for People as they have 23 other food pantries throughout the county ranging as far north as Orleans and as far South as

