Food Justice: Addressing Hunger on Campus

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GVSU Women’s Center
Overview

- Reality on GVSU’s Campus
- Context of the issue
- History of the GVSU Student Food Pantry
- Food Justice Framework
- How can you help?
57% of GVSU students
Ways financial hardship was experienced

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>77.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University meal plan/food</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-curricular events or activities</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social events</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traveling home during university breaks</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traveling to campus</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Context for our Work

Higher Education History

○ Trend can be traced to 2007/8 economic recession
○ More than 200 colleges and universities (mostly at public institutions) operate food pantries
○ Tuition has increased 25% at four-year public institutions since 2007

Wall Street Journal:
“Colleges Launce Food Pantries to Help Low-Income Students”
(April, 2015)

Chronicle of Higher Education Article on Campus Food Pantries:
“Money Worries Keep Students Going to Campus Food Banks”
(September 10, 2012)
Facts & Figures: USDA 2011 Data

- 50.1 million Americans live in food-insecure households (16.1% of population)
  - 16.7 million children

- Food Insecurity higher than national average for:
  - Households with children
  - Single Parent
  - Black households
  - Hispanic households
"Although we in the U.S. don't see the starvation situation found in developing countries, we do grapple with transient hunger and meal skipping. Without an adequate daily refueling of nutrients from food, the body places learning behind its need to sustain life-support functions."
**Key Terms**

- **Food Access**: the ability to produce and consume healthy food
- **Food Sovereignty**: a community’s right to define their own food and agricultural systems
- **Food Security**: Having access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members
- **Food Insecurity**: a lack of access to enough food to fully meet basic needs due to lack of financial resources
- **Community Food Security**: a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice
Feminist Food Justice

○ How is food justice gender justice?
Food Assistance Myths
Myths

Someday, I hope to be able to afford a new iPhone...like the girl in front of me with the food stamps.
Myths

We're losing up to $400 billion annually to tax evasion. That's five times more than the entire SNAP (food stamp) program costs to feed 50 million people. Think about that the next time you try to blame the struggling mom for our debt.

FB.com/ForwardProgressives
Context Continued: Michigan Food Assistance for College Students

- As of April 2011, students qualify IF they are:
  - Working
  - Caring for young children
  - Receiving cash assistance
  - Have a disability
  - Under age 22 and living with a parent who qualifies
History of the Student Food Pantry at GVSU
History
## Student Food Pantry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Period</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011-Winter 2012</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012-Winter 2013</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013-Winter 2014</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014-Winter 2015</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total number of unduplicated* students per academic year.**

*Unduplicated refers to the numbers of individual students who utilize ReStore.*
Why a Pantry on Campus?

Access to healthy affordable and safe food is not a privilege, it’s a basic human right

- Difficulty for students of obtaining adequate food supply
- Accessibility of community resources
ReStore

- Sustained through donations by the campus and community
- Frequently utilized by students all year round
- Food Justice framework: While this is an important resource for students, it does not address the root issues of poverty and food insecurity
- New hours of operation
- Fresh food alert
- Contact information 331-STOR (7867) KC 0074
In the words of...
Jeremy Hobbs,
Executive Director of Oxfam:

“Our **world is capable of feeding all of humanity** yet one in seven of us are hungry today. In this new age of crisis, as climate change impacts become increasingly severe and fertile land and fresh water supplies become increasingly scarce, feeding the world will get harder still. Millions more men, women and children will go hungry **unless we transform our broken food system.**”
A Broken System, Especially for People of Color

- Corn syrup and hydrogenation process
  - Obesity, diabetes, cardiac disease
- Lack of access
  - Supermarket redlining
- Production
- Farm owners of color

Figure 6. Race and Gender in the Food Chain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race &amp; Gender</th>
<th>Ratio of Median Annual Wages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Men</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Men</td>
<td>$0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Men</td>
<td>$0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Women</td>
<td>$0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino Men</td>
<td>$0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Women</td>
<td>$0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Women</td>
<td>$0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latina Women</td>
<td>$0.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the words of...

Setting the Table for a Sustainable and Just Food System:

“As Winona LaDuke, founder of the White Earth Land Recovery, says, ‘If you’re not at the table, you’re on the menu.’ This is the reality faced by low-income people of color who have historically been on the ‘menu’ of agriculture and food policies as laborers and consumers without having a seat at policy-making tables.”
TedTalk: Ron Finely

http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=gorilla+gardener+ted+talks&FORM=VIRE3#view=detail&mid=80C8DDF68C5B262A8B8580C8DDF68C5B262A8B85
America's hunger bill

America's hunger bill was $167.5 billion in 2010. The hunger bill is the cost of avoidable illnesses and poor educational outcomes that occur as a result of hunger and food insecurity as well as the value of charitable donations for emergency food to address hunger. As more Americans become hungry and food insecure, states' costs have grown. Roll over a state to see the size of its hunger bill.
Michigan

The hunger bill for Michigan is $5.51 billion. That's an increase of 22.36 percent since 2007.

Of Michiganders:
- 16.8 percent are in poverty.
- 14.7 percent of households suffer from food insecurity.
- 1,776,368 are on food stamps.
- 257,388 are receiving WIC.

Cost of the state's hunger bill
- less than $2 billion
- $2 to $4 billion
- $4 to $6 billion
- more than $6 billion
Food and Identity

- Pollan’s “Great-Grandmother” rule
- Food as an “intimate commodity”
- Can reflect, and even create, social and economic hierarchies
Murray storage location
How can you help?

○ Spread awareness about the new location

○ Get involved in food justice on a local or national level

○ Advocacy for future goals (long-term impact)

○ Continued support through donations
Questions?

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