



HUNGER IN CHARLOTTE?

INNOVATIVE COLLABORATION TO ADDRESS LOCAL FOOD SECURITY

STUDENT POSTER SESSION ABSTRACTS

Living Through Giving: Delivering Lunches and Compassion Through Community and Organizational Partnerships in The Charlotte Area

Alexis Beckton

UNC Charlotte, Africana Studies / Sociology

#HashtagLunchBag or Living Through Giving Foundation is a registered 501(c)3 non profit organization based in Los Angeles California with more than 100 partnering cities worldwide. This humanity service movement dedicated to empowering and inspiring humanity through the use of social media platforms, community volunteers, businesses and non profit organizations, show the importance of local aid. #HashtagLunchBag Charlotte meets need with compassion by providing brownpaper bag lunches complete with a sandwich, piece of fruit, chips and or a granola bar, a bottle of water and an inspirational note. Current partnerships around the Charlotte area include but are not limited to the Urban Ministry Shelter, Triple C Brewing Company, Revolt Charlotte and NoDa Yoga.

Assessment of the Friendship Gardens Mobile Market 2013 and 2014*

Rebecca Bubp

UNC Charlotte, Anthropology

(Authors: Nicole Peterson*, Jessica Ballard, Lauren Ballard, Rebecca Bubp, Josh Buck, Mary Cassada, Ucha David, Benjamin Douglas, Monica Dyer, Brianna Fulp, Bryan Guess, Athina Hinson, Eric Holsinger, Michele Kohan, Kristy Lally, Nicholas Evan Mathis, Erica McLeod, Gabrielle Peterson, Patrick Preudhomme, Hayden Sisk, Lauren Whipp, Jordan Kitchens)

The Friendship Gardens Mobile Market Assessment was originally completed in 2013. In 2014, the FGMMA continued the set goals: reducing barriers to food access for people who use the Charlotte Transit Center at least two or more times a week by evaluating the accessibility, use, and satisfaction of the Friendship Gardens mobile market and determining if the mobile market should be available other days and times to increase access to fresh produce for transit center riders. Additionally, the 2014 assessment includes questions pertaining to food scarcity that were absent from 2013. This will hopefully provide a more thorough understanding of any at-risk population.

Information was obtained through observations, surveys, and interviews. In analyzing data from the 2013 and 2014 Mobile Market Assessments, emerging trends were uncovered such as an increased knowledge (21%) of the mobile market, unfortunately decreased use (13.5%), no change in population, purchase use (snacks most frequently), or overall customer satisfaction (very satisfied). Data also revealed that customers would like to see the mobile market open on more days and an increase in hours. In addressing food security, data did not reveal an increase or decrease but instead builds a strong metric to establish a trend in future surveys. Additionally, data shows that people believe that stores close to their homes, better food prices, and starting farmer's markets in their communities would benefit their communities the most. These suggestions do not change much for the food insecure, however, they believe that providing public transportation, enforcing standards of cleanliness for stores, and teaching community residents how to cook better would also improve their communities.

Importance of Qualitative Research in a Community Food Assessment

Maura Condon

UNC Charlotte, Anthropology

In 2015 the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Food Policy Council conducted a county-wide food assessment with the support from researchers at Johnson C. Smith University and Elemental Research & Consulting. During the summer of 2015 I assisted with the qualitative aspects of the State of the Plate Community Food Assessment as a graduate research assistant. Part of this assessment involved a community-based survey and listening to the voices of the community through focus groups with Mecklenburg County residents. The focus groups, rather than repeating the questions in the survey, were designed to take the study a step further by developing a more communal understanding of the ways in which values drive decision making around food. The focus groups shared a common framework for talking about food choices and we saw that knowing what is "typical" is not always "ideal", and that various events in daily life can affect how eat.



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Navigating the Food Environment: Assessing an On-campus Student Food Pantry at UNC Charlotte

Tre'Sean Cooks and Kelsea Smart

UNC Charlotte, Niner Student Pantry

In 2014, UNC Charlotte opened its doors to its students, whom faced food insecurities. The research conducted focused on the substantial amount of UNC Charlotte students who suffer food insecurities. Research shows that an estimated 29% of students on American college campuses face some sort of food insecurity (Cady, 2014). Our program operates every Monday and Thursday from 2pm-6pm, and Thursdays from 8am-10am; always having at least two volunteers on duty. However, our hours vary on university holidays. The pantry's service includes non-perishable items, toiletries, school supplies, and a variety of clothing. Preliminary data from our client intake process revealed that of the 808 clients served during our tenure, 82.4% were graduate students and 14.4% were undergraduate students. In the subject variable, it reflected gender with 65% male clients, and 35% female clients. Intake data also revealed that more clients used the pantry on Thursdays with 69.3%, than on Mondays with 30.7%. Another observation was that very little traffic occurred during the morning shift, with only 10.6% of our clients utilizing this time. "First" time clients were 26.5%, with "regular" clients at 20.8%, and "occasional" clients sitting at 49.9% of the population. We concluded with an important question: Who are the students being served and what is the pattern of use among these students?

Healthy Food Availability in SNAP-Authorized Drugstores in North Carolina

Ashley Kennedy

UNC Charlotte, Sociology

The number of major drugstore chains (such as CVS, Rite Aid, and Walgreens) that accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in North Carolina has dramatically increased. From 2000 to 2015, the number of stores accepting SNAP increased from 7 to 796 stores. This study examines the availability of food and beverage items among a sample of SNAP-authorized drugstores in three regions of NC. Research assistants observed and documented 53 foods and beverages offered at 108 stores across 3 major chains (36 CVS, 36 Rite Aid, and 36 Walgreens). The frequency and percent of stores that offered each food and beverage item were calculated. Chi square tests were employed to compare available food and beverage items by drugstore chain and to compare available food and beverage items by neighborhood income level. Only 3% of drugstores offered fresh fruit and 4% offered fresh vegetables. More than 90% of drugstores offered the following items: frozen entrees, whole or 2% milk, 100% fruit juice, white rice, peanut butter, dry pasta, low sugar cereal, potato chips, low sugar granola or cereal bars, soda, beer, and wine. The frequency of 20 food and beverage items offered differed significantly by chain. The frequency of food and beverage items offered did not differ by neighborhood income level. While drugstores may not be used as a primary source for groceries, there are many SNAP-authorized drugstores in NC. Researchers studying community food environment are encouraged to consider the role of drugstores as a food source for SNAP recipients.



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Convalescence: Recovering Cities + Endangered Infrastructure by Reconsidering Food Ecosystems

Mason Linkous

UNC Charlotte, School of Architecture

While 42,000 items, on average, fill the shelves of every grocery store in America, globalization, which enables such demand, cannot sustain the food system or the people in which it supplies. Within the surplus of items, an average of 1,500 miles is traveled for each item to reach its respective shelf. These systems, mysteriously stocking distant shelves with products that are devoid of a known source, require an intricate delivery system, and subsequently, fuel. Remove this delivery system, and the meager three day supply stocked in every grocery store quickly renders itself inadequate and the community it supplies is left without food. Aside from the environmental toll and potential dangers found in an overt reliance upon a globalized food system is another very real issue: food insecurity. Throughout the country are communities facing a severe lack of access to health-promoting food. Only four generations ago, the first supermarket appeared and was quickly duplicated across the country. Parallel to this retail innovation was the beginning of the decline of the US Postal Service. In only the past ten years, mail volume has declined by 60% and over 200,000 employees have lost their jobs, being quickly replaced by digital technologies. Coincidentally, online grocery services are experiencing rapid growth, proving the demand for such services.

This thesis therefore proposes that the USPS will replace the sorting and delivery of mail with the growing and delivery of food to produce a truly local food system that is accessible to all residents of the community. The existing properties of the postal service will be retrofitted with a kit of component pieces seated inside unique architectural interventions. From each postal site, a short, nodal delivery network will service local residents with fresh food, while also retrieving food waste to be composted. This re-appropriation of the USPS will effectively maintain jobs, utilize resources and work to repair a very broken food system.

Creating Culinary Communities: Food Performance as a Social Intervention

Amy Stewart

UNC Charlotte, School of Architecture

The public views the current food system as separate methods of action that rarely overlap in an individual's typical day. Although awareness of the issues with the food system increases, it primarily addresses the importance of a regional food source and awareness of where food originates. It misses how food enacts memories, stories, and important dialogue between people. It also overlooks the blatant racial divide in terms of food options. Thus, a paradigm shift proves necessary in the ecological, social, and physical environments for food production in urban contexts. My thesis focuses on the action of place-making through culinary performance. I am interested in creating a sequence of spaces that allow the opportunity for communities of differing backgrounds to grow food, cook, and eat together. I aim to address the potential that food has to break barriers in urban settings. This thesis focuses in on the refugee and international community in Charlotte, NC.

