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Plots or Lots: Can Urban Gardens Be As Beneficial to the Community As New Businesses?

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Lots or Plots?

Exploring responses to food insecurity in urban US neighborhoods

Presented by the Environmental Community of Olney

What does food security
mean to you?

US Food Security: A History

- Colonial Era:
 - Largely agrarian society, unprecedented longevity rates
 - High ratio of productive land to population
- Industrial Revolution:
 - Those without capital lacked high-tech farm equipment as large farms become competitors
 - Family farms dwindle as source of economic capital shifts to industry
- Early 20th Century
 - US Department of Agriculture implements policies to influence food production using price control, credit control, and export support
 - After WWI, large scale agricultural subsidies take root as US exports more foodstuffs to relieve hunger

US Food Security: An Evolution

- 1930 – 1945:
 - Term “food security” popularized as League of Nations sees hunger as a global concern
 - Food becomes major global trading commodity; increased food production theorized to bring prosperity
- 1950 and 1960s:
 - Grocery stores and super markets enter cultural zeitgeist
 - Free distribution of food surplus ends by mid 60s; early form of food stamp programs take root
 - Food banks introduced in 1967
- 1970s:
 - Welfare programs and federal hunger relief grow 500%
- 1980s:
 - Ronald Reagan scales back welfare provision, nongovernment programs become accepted response to hunger

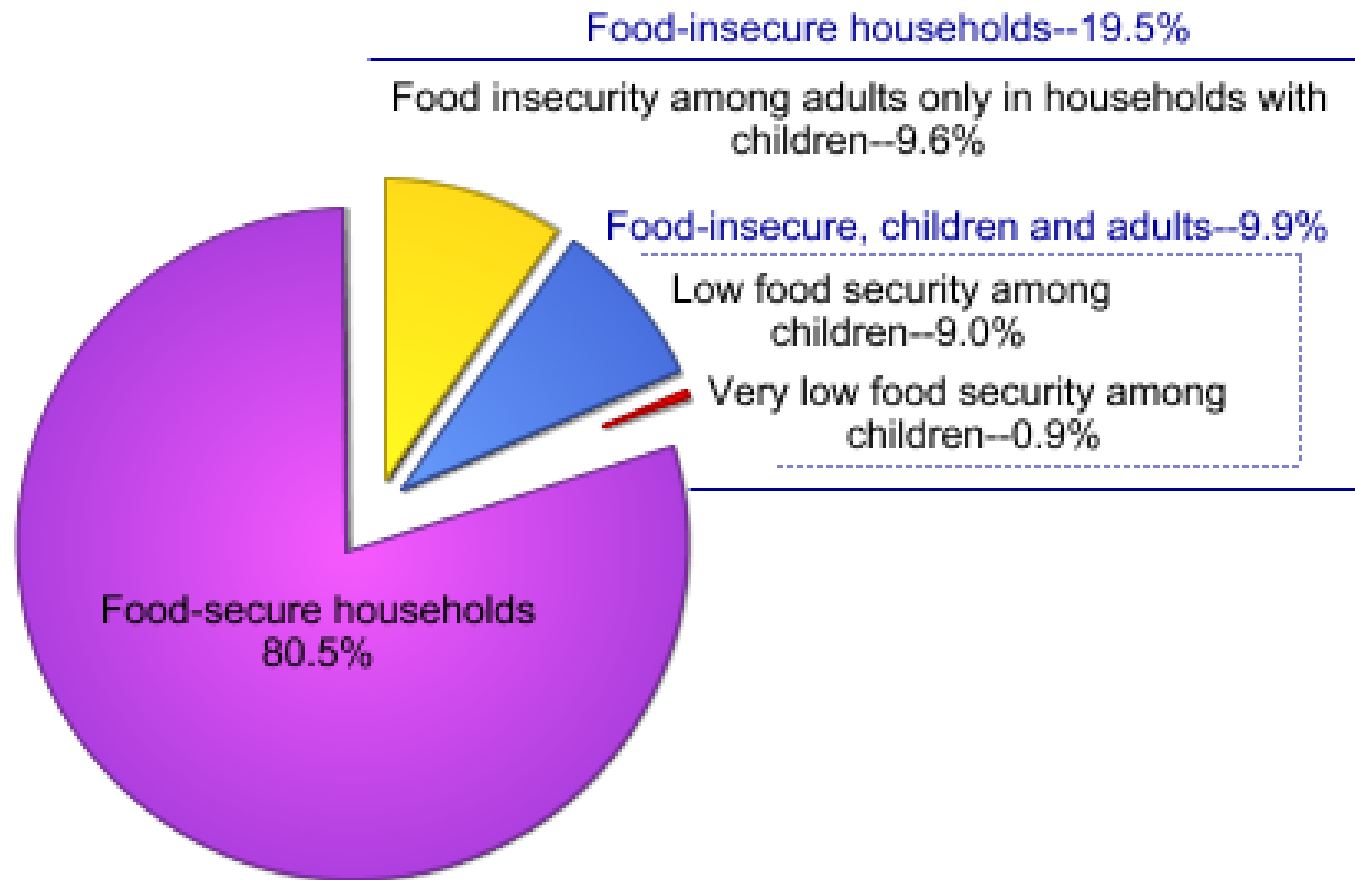
Food insecurity by household characteristics*

- All households with children (19.5 percent)
- Households with children under age 6 (20.9 percent)
- Households with children headed by a single woman (34.4 percent)
- Households with children headed by a single man (23.1 percent)
- Black, non-Hispanic households (26.1 percent)
- Hispanic households (23.7 percent)

*Calculated by the USDA's Economic Research Service using data from the December 2013 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement

US households with children by security status of adults and children, 2013

*Calculated by the USDA's Economic Research Service using data from the December 2013 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement



What are the current
responses to food insecurity in
urban communities?

Features of responses to urban food insecurity



Grocery Stores

Economic Benefits

- Grocery stores attract small businesses to shopping complex
- Food to neighbors 365 days a year; large nutritional range
- 200-300 Jobs to be had
 - Brown Super Stores in Philadelphia

Social Benefits

- Corporate social responsibility
- Increased access to nutrition

Social and Faith-Based Institutions

Economic

- Most social institutions are funded by a grant or by the government
- Most faith-based institutions receive ample donations from community members

Social

- Soup Kitchens provide meals daily
- Classes/ministries on healthy eating, budgeting, family planning, drug/alcohol usage, etc
 - Knowledge people can take and implement to better their lives

Community Garden

Economic

- Increase property value of neighborhood
- Less expensive than parkland area
 - Gardens can function as parks in some cases...
- Tax breaks
- Employment opportunities

Social

- Provide space for families to retreat to
- Indiscriminately provide educational services and entrepreneurial opportunities
- Increased nutritional awareness
- Increased community morale



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#1 Scenario

Population: 34,600

Average Income: \$36,600

Poverty Rate: 36%

Unemployment Rate: 17%

No High School Education: 28%

Crime Index (100 is safest): 10

#2 Scenario

Population: 270,600

College Graduates: 74%

Unemployment Rate: 16%

Average Income: \$50,000

Poverty Rate: 14%

#3 Scenario

Population: 75,000

Average Income: \$40,000

Crime Index (100 is safest): 24

Unemployment Rate: 8%

Poverty Rate: 22%

Environmental Community of Olney





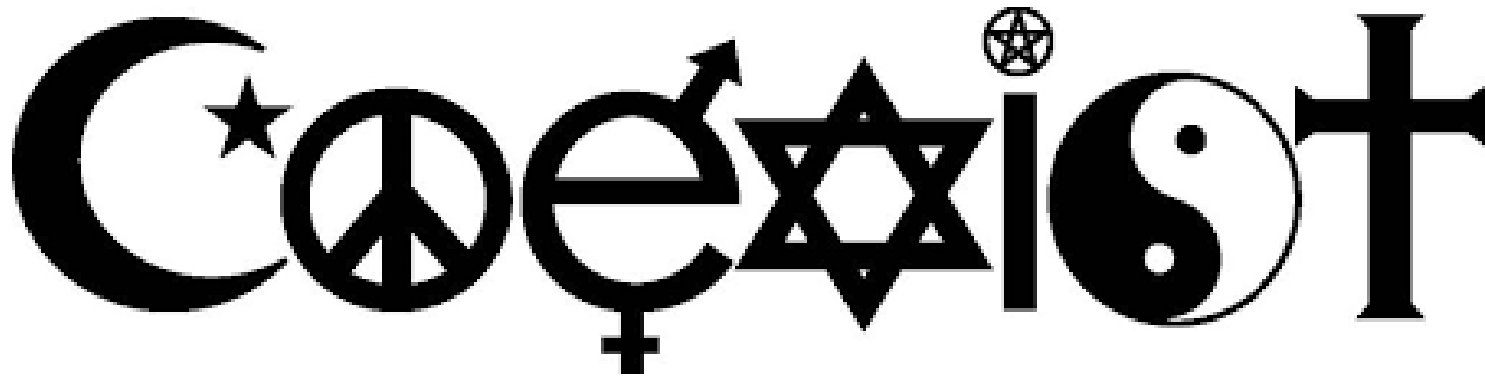
the **fresh** grocer



Face to Face

hospitality • mutuality • transformation

Faith-Based Communities and on-campus groups



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