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Being an enrolled member of a Federally Recognized Indian Reservation, I wanted to find an article that showed food insecurity on Indian Reservations. I came across this article, <http://www.nativepartnership.org/site/DocServer/2017-PWNA-NPRA-Food-Insecurity-Project-Grow.pdf?docID=7106#:~:text=At%20least%2060%20reservations%20in%20the%20United%20States%20grapple%20with%20food%20insecurity.&text=Households%20of%20Native%20American%20families, supplies%20and%20jobs%20are%20scarce>, titled “Combating Food Insecurity on Native American Reservations.” I chose this article because of the statement, “At least 60 reservations in the United States grapple with food insecurity.” (Northern Plains Reservation Aid, n.d.)

This article reflects my own opinion of food insecurity in my own community. According to the article, 35 percent of Native American children live in poverty. Native American households are 400 percent more likely than any other United States household to not have enough to eat. This is due to extreme poverty caused by lack of jobs, transportation and resources. In my own community, there is a food pantry program that provides one household every three months. Most of the items given are expired cake boxes and baked items. These items are not healthy in any way and can not sustain a household long term. Food Trucks come regularly but also give expired food. I've seen produce that was spoiled with some fruits and vegetables having mold. The commodity warehouse gives to individuals and households that meet low financial need guidelines. Most food given is processed and unhealthy. It is rare for fresh produce to be given. Because of this regular access to unhealthy food, Native Americans have a higher rate for heart disease, obesity and diabetes.

What can be done?

The article focused on working with “Partnership with Native Americans.” This program partners up with Walmart Foundation and Newman’s Own Foundation. By doing so, they bring healthy eating to 300 reservations in the United States. However, I do not see contacting this program as an immediate step toward food insecurity in my own reservation. However, the article mentioned gardening support and nutrition training. There is a diabetes program at my local Indian Health Service (IHS). They have had trainings in the past and they post daily exercises on Facebook. There is a program at my local community college (Turtle Mountain Community College-TMCC) called “The Maximizing Family Resources Extension Project”, that gives fruit and vegetable seeds to families in our community. There is an application that one person per family can apply for that will till a small area enough for a small sustainable garden.

Plan of Action

Create a Survey. Survey community members with specific questions regarding their amount of access to Fresh Produce and if they are willing to take the steps necessary to long term garden care.

Contact these programs and spread the word. These programs are specific to diabetics and college students. Sharing the word would impact more than specific tribal members.

Talk with the Food Pantry and Commodity Warehouse to see if we can bring more fresh produce and less unhealthy items

Talk with the Anishinaabe Farmers Market to see if members of the community can earn fresh produce by working on the Anishinaabe Garden