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### “Redlining and Food Justice in America” Reflection

A huge obstacle for many individuals who wish to have a wholesome and sustainable diet is the sheer lack of options available. I had heard of food deserts and redlining before, but I wasn't fully aware of their connection and implications. “Redlining and Food Justice in America” describes the magnitude of the issue, with 8.4% of Americans in food deserts which lack readily available, healthy, and affordable food sources. Poverty is the largest barrier for eating well, and as the article describes, BIPOC communities are disproportionately affected by poverty. The area around my campus is a fairly standard small rural lowan town. According to the Northeast Iowa Food Bank, over 2,300 individuals in the county experience food insecurity. Several student and community-led initiatives intend to address the issue. Food Recovery Network, a club at Grinnell, has student volunteers package meals from food leftover from the dining hall and deliver them to people in need. This not only cuts down on food waste, but it also allows people to access fresh, nutritious food that would otherwise be unavailable. There is also a food bank on campus for community members and students alike. However, as mentioned in the article, food banks and services like Food Recovery Network are only short-term solutions to a much larger and more complex problem. I also found an [article](#) about local food insecurity in Grinnell College's newspaper, *The Scarlet and Black*. According to students and community members, food donations are heavily concentrated around the holiday season, while supplies are scarce during other parts of the year. There is an organization fighting poverty in the area, MICA, that was founded by a Grinnell alum. Overall, I learned many interesting things about the connections between community and food insecurity, as well as some of the often-overlooked nuances of food donations and underlying causes of food insecurity.



Personal plan (posted in Instagram caption)

Personally, I plan to integrate these steps into my life by joining Grinnell College's Food Recovery Network and volunteer at least once a week by packing up meals. Politics can feel really intimidating, but I plan on reaching out to elected officials in my hometown about the topic of food insecurity. Just demonstrating interest may influence them to make meaningful policy changes. Many low-income people live in our city, and through personal experience of volunteering at a soup kitchen, I know many people are in need. As a distance runner, I thought Move For Hunger's fundraising through racing was a super cool idea! I would love to get involved over the summer.