

Team Name: Carlmont Green Team

Username: Carlmont Green Team

School: Carlmont High School

- **Investigate food insecurity among students in your community.**

- **How widespread is it?**

Nearly 8% of children under the age of 18 in San Mateo County, California, experience some significant level of food insecurity. This 8% translates to roughly 11 thousand students.

- **What barriers prevent students from accessing fresh, healthy food?**

Since food is a commodity that must be paid for, a big factor in food insecurity is insufficient income, as with San Mateo County's high housing prices averaging \$1.6 million, parents or self-supporting students often don't have enough funds left to spend on adequate amounts of healthy food. In addition to housing prices, even though there are organizations and programs in place to mitigate the effects of food insecurity, about 40% of families and their children are ineligible for participation in these programs because of strict income criteria. A third obstacle to access to healthy food is the scarcity of good-quality supermarkets. Many low-income families live over half a mile from "healthy" supermarkets, which makes getting quality food difficult.

- **Explore how food insecurity impacts academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being.**

Aside from the obvious effects of food insecurity on academic performance, like tiredness and lowered cognitive ability due to inadequate nutrition, it also leads to distraction during instruction time and lower grades due to stress. At our high school, Carlmont, specifically, only 9% of students experience food insecurity. This number correlates with our school's relatively high district rankings, as other schools with higher food insecurity, about 30%, perform at lower levels.

- **Look into whether funding cuts have further limited students' access to nutritious meals.**

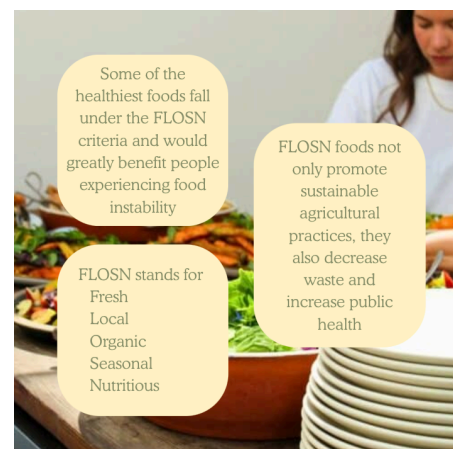
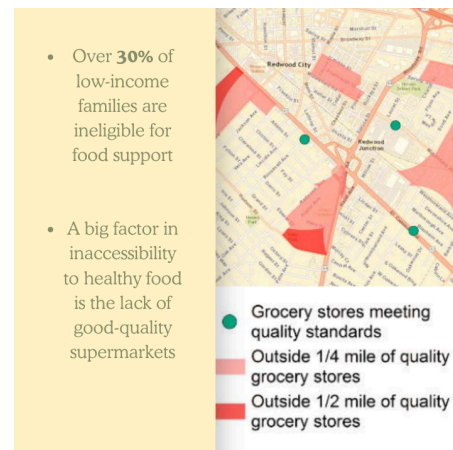
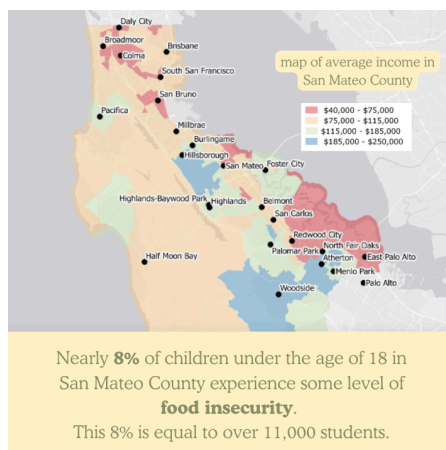
In our school district, we are fortunate to have such good food accessibility policies that all students are eligible for a free lunch and breakfast every day, regardless of income. We have not had any budget cuts restricting our access to food during the

school day. In California, all public schools are required to provide free lunch to all students every school day.

- Identify a local organization addressing student hunger, especially one that uses FLOSIN principles. Highlight their work and suggest ways your school could adopt similar initiatives, such as school gardens, farm-to-school programs, or improved cafeteria offerings.

The community colleges in San Mateo County serve as food pantries for low-income students and other individuals. On about four days out of the week, anyone can go to certain locations on campus to receive free groceries without the need to provide identification or proof of income. The organization that runs this program is the Second Harvest Food Bank of Silicon Valley. They provide food to over 500 thousand people a month, delivering an average of \$200 of groceries to low-income families. One of their main forms of food distribution is having clients pick up food at a designated point, so maybe our school could allow students to take home extra lunches at the end of the day to take home. This would cover all three meals of the day, breakfast, lunch, and dinner, through school.

- Design an infographic that explains food insecurity in your community and outlines clear action steps. Show how FLOSIN foods not only improve health but also support sustainability and justice.



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pgc\_cmontgreenteam While access to food isn't the biggest issue for the residents of San Mateo County like ourselves, there are still thousands of people in our communities who struggle to receive three meals a day. Food insecurity impacts families and students and their abilities to carry out caretaking and academic duties. Our county does its best to provide food for low-income individuals alongside amazing organizations like Second Harvest Food Bank, but there is more that can be done for millions of Americans, especially students. California mandates schools to provide free meals to all students every school day, but not all states are that fortunate. Contacting lawmakers has an impact, so please be brave and voice your concerns to your representatives. We can all help by volunteering, donating, and educating ourselves on these struggles in order to care for each other and our communities. @turninggreengr @environmentalworkinggroup @organiccen @consciouskitchn #PGC2025

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