

ALTERNATIVE BREAKS 2017

IMPACT STORIES

FOOD SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL WELLNESS

A Partnership with Best Buddies



HOURS:

With University Settlement- 8 people x 19.5 hours = 156 hours

TOTAL HOURS - 156 hours

HOURS PER PERSON- 19.5 hours



Food for the Champs: Providing Resources for Growth Through Food Justice Cleveland, OH

BEFORE: The group did not have much cohesion at first. The first few times we gathered, everybody was very shy and timid, which is understandable. There was also a lot of excitement before the trip. All of the participants were excited to work with the community partner and to start volunteering. There was also a lot of excitement for our cultural immersion day.

"I was excited to help"

-James

"I was excited to learn more about our issue of focus and to volunteer"

-Haley

"I was excited to work with our community partner"

-Kelsey

"I was excited for the cultural immersion day"

-Joey N

DURING: We had some trouble with the community partner at first. They did not have enough tasks for us to complete, so we found ourselves getting creative in order to help. In the course of the three volunteer days we helped with daily meals of lunch and dinner, we cleaned up trash inside and outside of the building, we worked with the participants of the senior program and served as companions, we worked in the food pantry loading cars and stocking shelves, and finally we cleaned the rooms where the programs were held.

"I enjoyed working with the Seniors in the program and being their companion"

-Debbie

"It was cool picking up the trash and seeing the difference we made"

-Joey B

AFTER: After we completed our service, we spent a long time reflecting on what impact the miscellaneous tasks had. It was a bit hard for some of us to realize what impact preparing meals, cleaning up trash, and helping in the food pantry had on our community partner. It was not until we talked with the volunteer supervisor that we understood how much we had contributed. She had stated that they are not used to receiving so many volunteers, so to have us come and give our time and complete tasks so efficiently was a huge help. This week really allowed us, as a group, to realize how much you can do with just a few volunteers and how easy it is to make an impact. Just a little time and effort can make a huge impact.

"I learned a lot from this experience. I learned that just giving of myself in a small way can make a big difference to the organization."

-Haley

"I greatly enjoyed this trip and the learning experience it provided. It showed me how much of a need there is and what can be done to help it"

-Kelsey

"This week showed me how to be mindful of others"

-Joey N

"I learned how much you can help with little effort. It was nice talking with the people there and helping out"

-James

Our Community Story

What was the issue that your trip focused on:

Food Justice

What are three statistics about this issue in Ypsilanti/Washtenaw County:

- In 2013, 46,850 individuals were 'food insecure' in Washtenaw County, "13% of the county population." - wemu.org
- According to a 2005 Ypsilanti Health Coalition Study of the 37 food stores in Ypsilanti, 31 are party/convenience stores, gas stations and pharmacies." - wemu.org
- In 2005, 23% of adults report eating fast food 2 or more times a week - ewashtenaw.org (availability of healthy food in Ypsilanti, MI).

What are three organizations in Ypsilanti/Washtenaw County that do work around this issue?

- Swoop's Pantry (For EMU Students)
- Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels
- Growing Hope

What are three things that have gone on/are going on in Ypsilanti/Washtenaw County to combat this issue?

- Ypsilanti healthy food access initiative.
- Downtown Ypsilanti farmer's market.
- "Farm to stomach" initiative through Growing Hope.

What kind of changes have taken place since these organizations started doing their work?

- Focused on needs/desires of residents on the south side area of Ypsilanti. New grocery store opened in the downtown business district of Ypsilanti.
- Wireless electronic benefits transfer machine to process food stamps/bridge cards, coupons to low income families, nutrition program for low income seniors.
- Teaching young people gardening/growing skills and how to cook their food.

What are some things that community members can do to make a positive impact around this issue?

- Donate to food banks.
- Volunteer at local organizations.
- Do some research.
- Support local food businesses/ go to farmer's markets.

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