The Good Food Bags

Expansion at West Philadelphia

High School

A partnership between AUNI (Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative) and West Philadelphia High School (a University-Assisted Community School).

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ABSTRACT:

Food insecurity is an issue that is a nationwide concern but is one that has very strong relevance to West Philadelphia communities due to historical redlining. This continues to manifest within West Philadelphia as residents face obstacles and barriers in attaining fresh produce or even accessing a grocery store. These struggles are inevitably seen and felt in schools across West Philly; hunger-induced stress poses as a distractor impacting the quality of students' education as well as their mental and physical health.

For our PSL, we (Sophia and Yeeun) strive to address this issue through the expansion of the Good Food Bag initiative (which is operated under AUNI, the Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative) to West Philadelphia High School (WPHS) and provide students and their families an easier way to access fresh produce. The extension of the Good Food Bag program will be incorporated as a part of the after-school nutrition education curriculum at WPHS that will be newly implemented during the 2023 Fall semester. Therefore, students will receive fresh produce to take home while also learning relevant cooking skills and knowledge of nutrition. This PSL extends the network of partnerships AUNI has with schools in West Philadelphia, and creates opportunities for further community engagement while also allowing for greater agency from community members in striving to address the issue of food insecurity.

This PSL is a first step towards building these types of mutual partnerships between AUNI and community spaces, which we hope can be utilized as a model to be replicated for future initiatives.

MOTIVATION:

Before delving into the bulk of our PSL and problem statement, we will discuss our personal background and motivations that led us to this PSL.

Sophia:

Coming into the PPPS Program and trying to decide what placement I would want to spend my summer at, I was immediately drawn to working at the Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative for the reason that it was centered around food.

As a 1.5-generation immigrant from Korea, I am familiar with the idea of food as a connector. For that reason, throughout my first year at Penn, I searched for communities that also used food as a medium to build connections, joining Penn Appetit, the student-run food magazine on campus. I specifically worked in the Social Impact Committee; as someone who always finds food as a source of reliable comfort, it felt only natural that I look to food as a medium to give back to the community.

My interest in community gardens was sparked when I was introduced to a Philadelphia-based community organization called VietLEAD during an SNF Paideia course I took in the Spring of 2023 titled American Race in Philadelphia. The course invited experts and changemakers in various fields such as food and nutrition, housing, and crime, and through this class, I was able to hear from Duong Ly and Lan Dinh from the organization VietLEAD. They discussed how elderly first-generation immigrants often feel disconnected and isolated due to language barriers between not only community members but also their own children as they grew up being educated in the American school system. They then told us about how VietLEAD organized community gardens which provided a place in which younger and older generation Asian American immigrants could come together and form a sense of unity and connection.

I felt that I could relate to the importance of food as a medium for healing and a connector to your family, culture, and community. However, I had always focused on the consumption of food (grabbing dinner with friends, daily family meals, helping my mom out in the kitchen, etc) and was inexperienced in the aspect of growing and cultivating food. So I was excited to see the opportunity to work for AUNI with students in the gardens–especially since they were gardens at a school, which is already a site that is fundamentally centered and rooted in community interactions.

Even before my official placement with AUNI at Robeson High School started, the moment I began working with kids at the University-Assisted Community Schools (UACS) like Comegys Elementary School, I witnessed a blaring issue of a general hunger and an unmet want and need for food felt by many students. This experience at Comegys opened my eyes to being attentive toward making sure there were always snacks and water available for the students at Robeson as I engaged in the nutrition and gardening lessons during the program. Having access to healthy food and being able to enjoy and feel happy and safe because of food is very important to me, so writing a PSL that addressed the issue of hunger and food insecurity felt natural to me. Specifically, I looked forward to being able to write a PSL initiative that would provide a medium for youth in the community to feel empowered and knowledgeable in not only their own relationships with food but also help them in their process of improving their community and school food access.

Yeeun:

Before starting PPPS, I knew my primary goal for the summer was to be part of a community. Before starting my summer placement, I was also able to work at the Hamilton after-school program and participate in their garden space. Hamilton has a beautiful garden (which is helped maintained by Hamilton students with the guidance and support of Harry Russell). When exploring the garden with Harry, I got to see the various fruits that the students were able to grow. It was also inspiring to see a community form within this garden space. When I began my summer placement with the Career Exploration Program with middle school students at Sayre, I was also able to explore Sayre's garden and witness the blossoming greenery that collectively brings students together.

In addition, my other goals and expectations for the summer involve this integration of praxis when learning theory as well as how to be more actively part of the community organizing that already exists across West Philadelphia neighborhoods. In addition, another goal while participating in PPPS is gaining a deeper understanding of how I, as a Penn student, can still play a meaningful role in the community I reside in. And through my time with PPPS, I was able to ground myself with these goals because learning and unlearning is an ongoing process.

Moreover, as a Korean diaspora, I grew up with the knowledge of food as a form of building, sustaining, and sharing a community. Therefore, I wanted to take this knowledge and apply it to my time at Penn and Philly. I have been involved in a couple of mutual aid food distros in Philadelphia. Mutual aid surrounds the idea that communities take care of communities through deliberate non-professionalized distribution networks to provide food, clothing, personal hygiene items, etc. I also was able to participate in research on mutual aid which has furthered my knowledge and interest in food access across urban spaces.

Lastly, I have always been involved and interested in nutrition and food access within communities of color. But most importantly, I see the power of communities in leading the movement and momentum for change. Community power for community change. Therefore, the expansion of the Good Food Bag was an initiative that furthered my passion for being involved in this form of community leadership and collaboration. Through this PSL, I hope to see the power of community partnerships as a means of supporting food access and healthy living in West Philly.

ROADMAP:

In this paper, we will discuss the issue of food insecurity at a national level—understanding what exactly food insecurity is and the manifestations of this across the country. Then we will move on to Philadelphia's struggle with food insecurity and the history of redlining that has prevented certain neighborhoods from accessing fresh, healthy produce. We also look at food insecurity specifically within educational spaces, and the impact this presents for many students and families who may not have adequate access to nutritious meals. We will then provide background on the current efforts of the Good Food Bag Initiative under AUNI (Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative) before moving on to the importance of this initiative at West Philadelphia High School (WPHS), the site we are planning to collaborate with.

With this understanding, we will provide context to an existing and very successful example of a community food distribution network: Reverend Nock's Food Cupboard at Second Antioch Baptist Church. We then will move on to the solutions and discuss the goals of our proposal, the reasons behind why we chose the Good Food Bag initiative and West Philadelphia High School as our site. Next, we will share our implementation plan and what we plan to do and who we plan to work with in order to see this PSL into sustainable fruition. We will also examine a "Day in the Program" introduction of what may be happening during the Good Food Bag distribution.

Following the implementation section, we move on to our desired outcomes and evaluation efforts where we explore the methods we will use to ensure our evaluation is done in an organized manner. We will then share our immediate next steps and the long-term possibilities of the program and overall goals we envision with this PSL.

Lastly, we share our PSL journey—the reflections, the struggles, and the work we have done thus far to reach this final stage of the PSL.

PROBLEM STATEMENT:

Food insecurity, in part due to the inadequate access to fresh and healthy produce, poses obstacles to maintaining healthy lifestyles. Through the incorporation of the Good Food Bag program into the nutrition after-school curriculum at West Philadelphia High School, students and community members will be able to have easier access to fresh produce, thus having greater agency in leading a healthier, nutritious lifestyle.

BACKGROUND:

Food Insecurity (National Level)

Food insecurity faced by students at West Philadelphia High School can not be fully understood without observing the larger issue of food insecurity that is experienced at the national level. Food insecurity, as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), is when a household is "unable to acquire enough food to meet the needs of all their members because they had insufficient money or other resources for food."[1] By this definition, "10.2 percent (13.5 million) of U.S. households were food insecure at some time during 2021."[2] However, it is important to note that food insecurity is a complex term that describes a multitude of experiences that people face when trying to access food. The term itself is more than just being physically hungry, but also includes these key questions: "Can you access food easily? How far is your nearest supermarket? Is attaining fresh produce a viable option for you?"

For many Americans, food is expensive—and unfortunately, high-quality foods and fresh produce are even more so. Several studies show that "higher-quality diets typically cost more than lower-quality diets—on average, about $1.50 more per person per day."[3] While a daily price difference of around $1.50 may initially seem insignificant, this ultimately accumulates to an annual food budget that is $550 higher per person. For many low-income families, this additional cost is hard to ignore and poses a financial burden that hinders them from choosing a healthier diet.

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[1] "Key Statistics & Graphics." USDA ERS - Key Statistics & Graphics. Accessed July 26, 2023. https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/key-statistics-graphics/#:~:text=In%202021%3A,with%20adults%2C%20were%20food%20insecure.

[2] "Key Statistics & Graphics."

[3] Mayuree Rao et al.,"Do Healthier Foods and Diet Patterns Cost More than Less Healthy Options? A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis." BMJ open, December 5, 2013. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3855594/.

This proves to be especially harmful, as research shows that not being able to eat healthier foods is more detrimental to one's health than consuming unhealthy options. Communities that simply cannot afford healthier options such as vegetables, fruits, and nuts are often "associated with larger proportions of global death and disability than" those who have "excess intakes of saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium."[4] Simply put, eating a lot of unhealthy foods is not the primary destructive force that harms one's health; it is the fact that you can not afford the healthier options. Even if you eat a lot of junk food, if you also have healthier food in your diet, this alleviates the food-related health issues (like malnutrition) that many Americans face. Understanding this reality emphasizes the importance of increasing access to healthy and nutritious food rather than dissuading the intake of unhealthy options.

Food insecurity may easily be connected to health issues such as malnutrition; however, it is important to note that nutrition is at the core of one's health. Malnutrition induced by food insecurity should not be simplified as a single health issue as it decreases the body's ability to resist infections, thus increasing one's susceptibility to other major health problems such as "hypertension, coronary heart disease, obesity, stroke, cancer, asthma, diabetes, arthritis, pulmonary and kidney disease."[5] Food insecurity also poses a barrier to receiving proper healthcare for existing health problems. This is because people often have to make a choice between spending money on food or medicine, and are not always able to prioritize receiving adequate treatment. Therefore, food insecure families may "postpone needed medical care to buy food or might underuse medicine" which can possibly lead to future, more expensive, and

[4] Dariush Mozaffarian, Kenneth S. Rogoff, and David S. Ludwig. "The Real Cost of Food." *JAMA* 312, no. 9 (2014): 889. https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2014.8232.
[5] Ronald H. Aday et al., "Understanding the Experiences of Food Insecurity in Older Adult Households." *Journal of Gerontological Social Work* 66, no. 2 (2022): 239–62. https://doi.org/10.1080/01634372.2022.2098443.

life-threatening hospitalizations.[6] Furthermore, as there is a positive association between stressors and depression, having to deal with these stressful choices increases one's likelihood of experiencing symptoms of depression.

Food insecurity is an intersectional issue because inevitably, food insecurity *is* racialized, gendered, and socially stratified. Women-headed homes, households with children, Black, Latine, Indigenous households, households headed by people with disabilities, and immigrants (especially undocumented immigrants) are more likely to experience food insecurity. In addition, a study found that "even after controlling for gender, age, educational attainment, and race/ethnicity," LGBTQIA+ adults were "1.62 times more likely" to not have enough money to pay for food.[7] But even within households, the impacts of food insecurity are not "distributed equally within households."[8] Women with children are prone to be more severely affected by food insecurity as they are more likely to make sacrifices to feed their children or families. These disproportionate realities emerge and stem from a deeper, extensive reality of a capitalist, racist America. In America, access to food is a challenge. And access to *healthy, nutritious* food is a luxury.

With an understanding of the intersectional nature of food insecurity, it makes sense to study how this issue is connected to the broader social and economic contexts. For instance, there is "clear evidence that food insecurity is linked to housing instability,"[9] as those who are economically vulnerable often face constant moves, threats of eviction, and higher rent. When

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[6] Food Insecurity: A Public Health Issue. Public Health Reports. 2016;131(5):655-657. doi:10.1177/0033354916664154

[7] Sarah Bowen, Elliott, S. and Hardison-Moody, A. (2021), The structural roots of food insecurity: How racism is a fundamental cause of food insecurity. Sociology Compass, 15: e12846. https://doi-org.proxy.library.upenn.edu/10.1111/soc4.12846

[8] Sarah Bowen, Elliott, S. and Hardison-Moody, A., "The structural roots," 3.

[9] Sarah Bowen, Elliott, S. and Hardison-Moody, A., "The structural roots," 4.

there is instability in one's living situation, attaining food becomes an ultimatum. It becomes either having food or having a place to sleep. Consequently, food insecurity is a housing issue.

Food Insecurity (Philadelphia Level)

After examining food insecurity at a national scope, it is imperative to evaluate this issue on a local scale. And Philadelphia's experience with food insecurity is not a recent nor unfamiliar phenomenon. From a 2020 dataset by Philabundance,[10] about 15.8% of the Philadelphia County population is food insecure. This number does not change too drastically with the 2021 data map by Feeding America,[11] where about 216,630 people (also calculated as 13.75%) are food insecure in Philly. But numbers only tell part of the story.

As previously outlined, systemic racism in America is the direct determinant of these numbers and why these numbers disproportionately affect low-income communities of color, particularly Black and Brown people. We will now study the history (and present-day manifestations) of segregation in Philadelphia and how it is "justified" through policies and deliberate disinvestment in those racially segregated neighborhoods.

Philadelphia is named the "13th most segregated metro area out of the 100 largest U.S. metros."[12] And as outlined in the previous section, housing is a key part of understanding the entirety of food insecurity; therefore, it makes sense to look at Philadelphia's long history of redlining "that keeps people out of certain neighborhoods" and maintains "a very organized disinvestment in other neighborhoods."[13]

Redlining is a term that is unfortunately not unfamiliar to Philadelphia. Despite redlining being outlawed in 1968 through the federal Fair Housing Act, about 55 years later, redlining

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[10] Kathleen Scully, "Food Insecurity Rates for Our Service Area ." Philabundance, July 26, 2022. https://www.philabundance.org/food-insecurity-rates-for-our-service-area/.
[11] "Overall (All Ages) Hunger & Poverty in Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania: Map the Meal Gap." Overall (all ages) Hunger & Poverty in the United States. Accessed July 20, 2023. https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2021/overall/pennsylvania/county/philadelphia.
[12] "Data Investigation: Philadelphia Metro Area among Most Racially Segregated in Country." 6abc Philadelphia, July 23, 2021. https://6abc.com/philadelphia-metro-housing-equality-segregation-census-bureau-data/10901948/.
[13] Henry Savage, "What Is Food Insecurity? How Philly Navigates Hunger, Food Deserts, and Access to Good Food." https://www.inquirer.com, August 8, 2022. https://www.inquirer.com/philly-tips/philadelphia-food-insecurity-resources.html.

continues to persist and these discriminatory policies continue to be legalized and weaponized against communities of color, particularly Black and Brown folks. Published by Zillow and reported on ABC Action News, "majority-nonwhite areas in Philadelphia have about 65% fewer fitness and outdoor amenities" and "63% fewer health services."[14] In addition, in the same report, it was found that these same neighborhoods also have "62% fewer traditional finance businesses, such as banks, credit unions and mortgage lenders," making it more and more difficult for these communities to access wealth-building resources.[15] Therefore, the poor are left poorer and the rich even richer. The hyper-exploitative cycle of capitalism spins once more and continues to abandon low-income, communities of color.

In present-day, (still) redlined Philadelphia, many North (and West) Philly neighborhoods that struggle with poverty have higher rates of health issues such as hypertension and heart disease. Those who live in "North Philly, as opposed to Center City, have a decreased life expectancy of nearly 20 years."[16] And it is no surprise that the more funded and resourced Center City is majority white (67.3%),[17] whereas North Philly has a majority Black population (approximately 70%).[18] For those folks in North Philly, grocery shopping "requires a complex negotiation between proximity, quality and affordability."[19] Community members then must seek food at convenience stores, dollar stores, and low-end grocery stores that primarily dominate these neighborhoods. Therefore, to attain healthy groceries or even to shop at a (big name)

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[14] "Data Investigation: Philadelphia Metro"
[15] "Data Investigation: Philadelphia Metro"
[16] "In Philly, the Neighborhood You Live In Could Determine Your Lifespan. Activists Are Pointing to the Food We Eat." Philadelphia Magazine, January 28, 2020. https://www.phillymag.com/sponsor-content/philly-neighborhood-lifespan/.
[17] "Philadelphia City (Center City) Puma, PA." Data USA. Accessed July 26, 2023. https://datausa.io/profile/geo/philadelphia-city-center-city-puma-pa#:~:text=The%205%20largest%20ethnic%20groups,%2DHispanic.
[18] "Philadelphia City (North) PUMA, PA." Census Reporter. Accessed July 26, 2023. https://censusreporter.org/profiles/79500US4203204-philadelphia-city-north-puma-pa/.
[19] "In Philly, the Neighborhood."

grocery store is to have a car. For families who cannot afford a car or for disabled or elderly folks, this desire cannot become a tangible reality even when considering public transit (due to its poorly designed, inaccessible, and underfunded nature[20]).

"Retail redlining" allows for these "grocery gaps" to persist and food deserts to become an unspoken "norm" in these poor, low-income areas. Grocery gaps refer to the "withdrawal of large food retail chains" from low-income communities which then transition into larger networks of food deserts across entire regions in a city.[21] Retail redlining is the act of retailers deliberately *choosing* to not add stores in specific areas due to their demographic or socio-economic makeup.[22] But redlining is only part of this urban reality. Suburban sprawl and the further reorganization of the city allow for these forms of infrastructural exclusion to persevere.[23] In fact, the origins of the food desert are rooted in the "reorganization of public and private infrastructures dating back to the 1930s in response to the changing spatial structure of population settlements and distribution system."[24] The expansion of suburbia has condoned means of privatization, which inevitably is another tool of capitalism to ostracize and exclude the poor, working-class folks and communities of color. Corporations and policymakers justify it further as an argument for profit—reaffirming the harmful, destructive model of "profit over people" that continues to devastate and destroy the modes of survival and living for many community members.

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[20] Marta Rusek, "Why Under-Funding SEPTA Is State-Sanctioned Discrimination," WHYY, September 29, 2016, https://whyy.org/articles/op-ed-why-under-funding-septa-is-state-sanctioned-discrimination/.
[21] Lise Bertrand, François Thérien, and Marie-Soleil Cloutier. "Measuring and Mapping Disparities in Access to Fresh Fruits and Vegetables in Montréal." Canadian Journal of Public Health 99, no. 1 (2008): 6–11.
[22] Andrew Deener, "The Origins of the Food Desert: Urban Inequality as Infrastructural Exclusion." *Social Forces* 95, no. 3 (2017): 1285–1309. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26166872.
[23] Deener, "The Origins of the Food Desert," 1285–1309
[24] Deener, "The Origins of the Food Desert," 1285–1309

The Impact of Food Insecurity on Education

It now makes sense to discuss how food insecurity can specifically affect one's educational environment. As shown by many studies, food insecurity and the consequent hunger-induced stress and distractors hinder students from having an educational environment in which they can pursue their full academic potential. In fact, "hungry and at-risk for hungry children were twice as likely as not-hungry children" to experience "higher levels of hyperactivity, absenteeism, and tardiness"[25] as well as struggles with socializing and academic difficulties.[26] These realities emphasize the need for schools to spearhead the movement for healthy eating and living.

[Sophia's observations]

From various discussions during the seminar and with fellow PPPS, many students seem to be hungry and very reliant on the snacks and food provided by the aftercare programs. When I was at Robeson High School during the academic year, I saw how some students would come into the room where AUNI programming usually takes place and ask to take frozen fruit and other miscellaneous food left over from the AUNI cooking classes at Robeson.

When I helped out at after-school programming at Comegys and Lea, I noticed how many of the students at the schools would tell me that they had headaches or would be in bad moods and less willing to participate in activities, but these problems would be fixed most of the times as soon as the kids were given water and snacks. I could see the clear difference in willingness to learn and participate when basic needs like hunger and thirst were fulfilled, and I can imagine that not having enough food to nourish oneself would drain the energy and motivation of any

[25]Murphy et al., "Relationship between Hunger and Psychosocial Functioning in Low-Income American Children." Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry 37, no. 2 (1998): 163–70. https://doi.org/10.1097/00004583-199802000-00008.
[26] Elizabeth Poole-Di Salvo, Ellen J. Silver, and Ruth E.K. Stein, "Household Food Insecurity and Mental Health Problems among Adolescents: What Do Parents Report?," Academic Pediatrics 16, no. 1 (2016): 90–96, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acap.2015.08.005.

student trying to learn in a classroom. Not having ready access to enough food is not only an issue regarding health but also detracts from a student's willingness to learn and is a direct obstacle to academic pursuits.

As I work at the Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN) Summer Nutrition and Gardening program at Robeson High School, I continue to notice students actively seeking food and snacks during the program. For example, when the cooking and nutrition class next door also gave out small cups of fruit salad, the students were super enthusiastic about the small snacks and asked students coming out of the nutrition class who were holding extra fruit if they had more. The students are also always very enthusiastic when we make smoothies in class and frequently take fruit from the bowl of fruit (that is always stocked with apples, oranges, and bananas) we have in the classroom.

While the high school students are generally less vocal about being hungry than the elementary school students, I feel like the students always appreciate anytime food is provided. Also, at my own high school, students usually brought snacks from home in case they got hungry at school but I notice that most if not all of the students do not bring any snacks (so they rely on the school to provide water and snacks).

[Yeeun's observations]

When working at my site at Sayre High School amongst the CEP (Career Exploration Program) students, I notice the impact of what hunger and lack of delicious, nutritious food can do on growing middle school students. Middle school is a critical time in a young person's life. It is at the prime of their adolescence and growth. Therefore, the provision of food and what kinds of food are being provided is vital. Instead of seeing those healthy, nutritious foods in the cafeteria, the students are often given old, tiring sandwiches and chips as snacks. There is very

little exposure to fruits or vegetables eaten outside of the Family Farm Stand. Because the school lunches are not fulfilling or delicious, students usually go about their day either choosing to not eat at all or bringing their foods from home (which consists of primarily snacks, such as chips, sugary drinks, etc.). Once, a student asked me for food. I, too, not having any food readily available, sneaked into the counseling room at Sayre to attain some snacks (granola bars and gummies) for the student. Even my food choices for the students were not the most healthy—showcasing how very little healthy eating is prioritized even during and at these summer camps.

The Current Situation of the Good Food Bags

The Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative (AUNI) works to "help build and sustain healthy communities by promoting nutrition education, food access and sovereignty, and physical fitness in West Philadelphia."[27] As a part of this effort, AUNI organizes the Good Food Bag Program, in which bags of locally grown produce are distributed cost-free on a weekly basis. Each Good Food Bag (GFB) contains "five pounds of fresh, delicious, locally grown, chemical-free produce,"[28] and recipients can expect "a root crop, a vegetable, a cooking green, a salad green, a specialty item,"[29] and recipes using the produce in that week's GFB. The Good Food Bag sources produce from the Penn Park Farm and Lancaster Farm Fresh, an organic farmers' co-op of over 100 small farms in Lancaster County. Each week, nutrition education coordinators at AUNI choose what types of produce to order based on what is in season.

Currently, the main branch of the GFB Program serves undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Pennsylvania. Fresh produce is delivered to AUNI's office on Monday and staff at AUNI package the produce into bags which are then distributed on Wednesday to various facilities on Penn's campus such as the LGBT Center or the Penn Women's Center. Participating students sign up for the bags beforehand, and can either pick up Good Food Bags from these facilities or come to AUNI's office to pick them up.

The current statistics of the Good Food Bag distribution at Penn's campus are stated on the chart below:[30]

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[27] "Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative," Netter Center for Community Partnerships, January 4, 2023, https://www.nettercenter.upenn.edu/what-we-do/university-assisted-community-schools/agatston-urban-nutrition-initiative.
[28] "Good Food Bag," Netter Center for Community Partnerships, January 13, 2023, https://www.nettercenter.upenn.edu/what-we-do/university-assisted-community-schools/agatston-urban-nutrition-initiative/good-food-bag.
[29] "Good Food Bag."
[30] Halle Watkin, "Re: [IMPORTANT] Info Request!," email message to Sophia Lee and Yeeun Yoo, July 25, 2023.

Quarterly Report 3/20/2022-6/26/2023:	
Total Number of Bags Distributed (with repeat participants):	881
Number of Different Students Served (no repeats):	243
Total Number of Bags Distributed:	881
Average weight of bags distributed:	5lbs/bag
Total poundage of food distributed:	4,405

In addition, with the help of Halle Watkin, she provided us with a spreadsheet of all the Good Food Bag costs. We have provided a sample below:[31]

Date	Crop	Pounds	Supplier	Program (Penn GFB/ Sayre GFB/Robeson GFB)	Price Per Unit	Price Total	Notes
12/7/2022	Apples Empire	80lbs (2x 40lb)	LFF	Penn GFB	$28.19	$56.38	
12/7/2022	Beets Gold	20lbs	LFF	Penn GFB	$42.00	$42.00	
12/7/2022	Onions Sweet	80lbs (2x 40lb)	LFF	Sayre GFB	$50.00	$100.00	
12/7/2022	Potatoes Red	50lbs	LFF	Sayre GFB	$60.00	$60.00	
12/7/2022	Turnips Purple Top	20lbs	LFF	Sayre GFB	$45.00	$45.00	
12/7/2022	Squash Acorn Starry Night	35lbs	LFF	Sayre GFB	$37.00	$37.00	

While the Good Food Bag Program at Penn is the largest branch that serves the most people, the GFB program is part of a larger food sovereignty project by AUNI which encompasses gardens at William L. Sayre High School and Paul Robeson High School, where Sayre has a "1/3 acre school courtyard garden" and Robeson has "multiple raised beds, and aquaponics unit, and an aeroponic unit."[32] Various plants such as zucchini, tomatoes, basil, mint,

[31] Halle Watkin, GFB Costs, Excel sheet, screenshot, July 25, 2023, https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1IZtlw8Sj1EQfvNlBLs2Yx2-65uFVdDyPpjZ-TknKjkc/edit#gid=1754449127

[32] "Good Food Bag."

sage, cucumbers, sunflowers, kale, cabbages, and more are grown across these gardens, and students at Sayre and Robeson High School's gardening and cooking clubs are "involved with all aspects of the gardens through planning, maintaining, and harvesting."[33]

While AUNI has a presence in Sayre and Robseon High School in the form of gardening, cooking classes, and nutrition education, the Good Food Bag program does not serve the students at the respective high schools. The Good Food Bag program at Sayre High School is limited to its partnership with the Dr. Bennett L. Johnson Jr. Sayre Health Center and the Red Cross House, where "these organizations serve as CSA pick-up and market locations."[34] At the Sayre Health Center, high school students work with AUNI staff to package and distribute Good Food Bags to patients at the center and other community members. Again, it is important to note that the Good Food Bag program at both Sayre and Robseon is not distributed to students at Sayre High School. In hopes of addressing this issue, AUNI included weekly Good Food Bag packaging and distribution as a part of the 2023 PYN summer programs at both high schools. As a part of a curriculum connecting gardening, nutrition, and food sovereignty, the students in the gardening crew are able to supplement the Good Food Bags they pack with produce that they have helped grow and harvest themselves. The students are then able to take these Good Food Bags home (on an alternating biweekly basis) where the students in the cooking crew are then encouraged to cook a recipe using at least one of the produce included in the Good Food Bag. While the Good Food Bag programs are run during the PYN summer programs at Sayre and Robeson and are distributed at the Sayre Health Center during the school year, overall, the Good Food Bag program is largely centered around Penn's campus and student body and has a limited outreach and availability for residents, students, and community members of West Philadelphia.

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[33] "Good Food Bag."
[34] "Good Food Bag."

The Importance of Good Food Bags at West Philadelphia High School

After speaking with Kavon, we gathered a lot of insight into the current situation at West Philadelphia High School, such as how there is *currently no* nutrition education.[35] However, there is a confirmed and soon-to-be-launched nutrition curriculum for the Fall 2023 semester. The timing works out perfectly as Will Kebbe, a Nutrition Education Coordinator, will be leading the gardening and nutrition education at West Philadelphia High School. Kavon shared his enthusiasm for possibly distributing the GFBs at the same time as the start of the nutrition curriculum.

Kavon also explained to us how he noticed and witnessed many students asking for food.[36] Therefore, he mentioned that he may assist in the recruitment for the nutrition curriculum by inviting students who may be interested in the program and the Good Food Bag distribution. He also described how there are often not enough free after-school meals offered.[37] For instance, he told us that there are many athletes who come back hungry after practice, but there is not enough food or meals ordered.[38] Therefore, possibly expanding the Good Food Bags to those students could present an opportunity to gather fresh produce to take home to create a healthy meal.

In addition, the implementation of the Good Food Bags *with* the nutrition education curriculum also presents an opportunity for the Good Food Bag produce to be utilized for cooking activities or taste testing. This allows students to also learn what they could do with the bags of produce they receive and the various meals they can create with them. It creates a crucial sense of agency for students as they are learning the skills to cook the produce they receive.

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[35] Kavon Bailey, interviewed by Sophia Lee and Yeeun Yoo, July 19, 2023, In-person.
[36] Bailey, interview.
[37] Bailey, interview.
[38] Bailey, interview.

Kavon also shared how he noticed students feeling hesitant to take free or reduced lunches because of any associated stigma.[39] Kavon believes that the Good Food Bag addresses this concern, as the GFBs would be a part of the after-school nutrition program where students can find a safe space to freely and comfortably attain the bags of produce and (if desired or if applicable) share their experiences with food insecurity.

This concern is one that shapes the rest of our PSL as we navigate the logistics of creating this expansion in a manner that not only ensures sustainability but is also meaningful for the students and families as well as everyone else involved in making this a possibility.

[39] Bailey, interview.

CASE STUDY: Reverend Nock's Food Cupboard

For our case study, we decided to interview Reverend Nock to learn from his knowledge and experience in running the Second Antioch's Food Cupboard, an extensive food distribution effort serving West Philly community members for over 20-30 years.

The reason for choosing Rev. Nock's work as our case study is because we wanted to gain insight from a long-standing community member and network that has sustained such a successful community organizing initiative. In addition, we originally proposed our PSL as the expansion of the Good Food Bag into communities of faith. Despite this PSL idea no longer being carried out, we still believed that Reverend Nock's work is very relevant to our current PSL goals with regard to food insecurity and food access.

First, we were able to learn about the details of the delivery and distribution of the Food Cupboard. Reverend Nock explained how food is distributed on Mondays from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., Wednesdays from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m., and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. There are three different organizations that the Food Cupboard receives food from: the Share Food Program, Caring For Friends, and MOM's Organic Market. On Wednesdays, which have the largest attendance, the Share Food Program delivers a truck with 10 pallets of food. The Share Food Program has a partnership with restaurants that allows them to rescue excess food from restaurants and supermarkets. From Share, they receive about 17 to 22 items of food, with the food items ranging from dairy products, produce, meat, and non-perishable items. (On the week of July 18th, 2023, the church received cheese, Dole products, black and garbanzo beans, eggs, sweet potatoes, oranges, canned tomato soup, orange juice, pancake mix, 2 percent milk, grapes, and produce boxes with onions, tomatoes, apples, and more.) Instead of packaging these items into bags (like the Good Food Bags), the volunteers at the Food Cupboard lay all of these items

onto tables so that people can choose what food items they would want to take. On Saturdays, food from Caring For Friends is received and distributed, as well as any leftover food items from Wednesday's distribution. On Mondays, which have the lowest attendance, food from MOM's Organic Market, as well as any leftover food items from Wednesday and Saturday's distribution, is distributed. Moreover, the Share program has given grants which have allowed the Church to buy 4 commercial fridges, 2 commercial-grade freezers, and shelving where they can store food before it is distributed.[40]

We then asked Rev. Nock what were some initial and persisting challenges faced with the Food Cupboard. He listed some of those challenges being volunteer sustainability and turnover rates. There are times when there are many volunteers, whereas other times there are not enough. But Rev. Nock also mentioned how many of those volunteers included people who received the food. The cycle is able to sustain itself in this mutually beneficial relationship. Rev. Nock also mentioned the church is an old building with many steps, making it inaccessible for people with disabilities or for elders. However, he mentioned that a quick solution has been to deliver the food to those folks based on what they request. Another major challenge is how foods are handled. There are many cases when there is excess food, which cannot all be saved and stored in fridges. Therefore, many foods become wasted and there are overwhelming amounts that often become unused or expired. Despite this challenge, Rev. Nock elaborates how Second Antioch has been able to partner with four other churches (Church of Faith, St. Matthew's, Holy Cross Baptist Church, and a church in North Philly). He gives the list of what foods are available and distributes them to the four sites.[41]

[40] Joe Nock, interviewed by Sophia Lee and Yeeun Yoo, July 18, 2023, Zoom.
[41] Nock, interview.

Based on these challenges and compromises, we then asked Rev. Nock what were some big learning moments from this community food space. He shares the lessons he has learned throughout the growth of the Food Cupboard. For example, the Food Cupboard used to only be a Saturday event, which has now been extended to three days a week, every week. This has been a key factor in evaluating their success—there is a need and Second Antioch is addressing and responding to that need comprehensively and actively.[42]

Rev. Nock also described an initiative he helped lead involving college students. There was a college food/resource drive for FGLI students—providing them with toothbrushes, detergent, snacks, etc. When telling stores what they were doing, many of these stores would help out and even share some more resources for Rev. Nock to contribute to the drive.[43]

We then asked him about the people who were receiving the food and the "criteria" that they must abide by to receive the goods. He shared that many of the people who were attaining the food were people everywhere from as far as New Jersey and nearby suburbs, but primarily folks from the 19104 zip code area. The rigidity of the criteria was based on the days. He shared that Wednesday was stricter, whereas Monday—anyone from anywhere could essentially get the food. But most of the criteria, as explained by Rev. Nock, are just going by what the Share program lists (since that is where they get most of their food).[44]

As Reverend Nock had mentioned difficulty in finding enough people (volunteers) to help unpack, store, and distribute the food, we were curious about how many people were needed to supervise and oversee the program as a whole. To our surprise, Reverend Nock told us that only two people supervise the program, one of the two being his wife. He told us that his wife is in charge of handling paperwork and organizational tasks such as ordering food.

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[42] Nock, interview.
[43] Nock, interview.
[44] Nock, interview.

Toward the end of the interview, we talked about the community at the Food Cupboard and the push that keeps the work going. He explained how he wants to ensure that everyone involved is treated with dignity, respect, and good service. Rev. Nock described that movies would be played and there would be chairs for people to rest if needed. The goal is to serve people with warmth and commitment. Because when they see "you're committed and invested—that's community."[45]

Rev Nock reminds us that this (food distribution work) is a long process. He has been doing it for decades and building it has been a series of partnerships and reorganizing.

"People will tell us when they no longer need us…we came into this because of the need…we want to get to a point where we no longer have to do this…[and] work our way out of this."[46]

Speaking with Rev. Nock gave us practical knowledge on how to store and distribute food and the power of community organizing. This process of starting these types of efforts in communities is a tedious process that requires patience. And our work in implementing this PSL, we had many moments when we were frustrated by the long timeline. But we learned that to make our initiatives organic and community-sustained, time is necessary.

[45] Nock, interview.
[46] Nock, interview.

SOLUTION:

By understanding food insecurity at a national, Philadelphia, and educational level, we can then shift to our proposed solution and how this solution can tangibly and effectively address food insecurity at a hyper-localized scale at West Philadelphia High School.

What is it?

As stated in our problem statement, our solution is to expand the Good Food Bag Initiative to West Philadelphia High School, specifically amongst the high school students who are a part of the nutrition education program. We find this solution very strategic because it is expanding upon an existing program at Netter Center (the Good Food Bag initiative) as well as supplementing a soon-to-be-implemented nutrition education program at West Philadelphia High School. Therefore, our PSL aims to work alongside these existing programs in order to ensure that our goals can be reached realistically and sustainably.

The Importance of the Solution

Just as our background section explains, having access to good quality, fresh produce is a vital factor in living and leading healthy lives. We also understand the current situation of retail redlining and historical contexts that have created these food deserts and "grocery gaps"[47] across low-income, working-class Black and Brown neighborhoods. When these "grocery gaps" continue to exist, these communities consequently have to rely on small grocery stores and corner stores (which often do not have fresh produce) and this dangerous cycle continues. To slowly break away from this cycle, the need for fresh produce must be addressed by collaborating with communities on creating long-lasting solutions.

[47] Lise Bertrand, François Thérien, and Marie-Soleil Cloutier. "Measuring and Mapping Disparities," 6–11.

Why West Philadelphia High School?

This is why we decided to work with West Philadelphia High School. The Good Food Bag collaboration with West Philadelphia High would provide an easy, accessible avenue to attain healthy, fresh produce as well as recipe cards for suggestions on how to utilize the produce. As a pilot program, the GFBs will be distributed to high school students and their families who are a part of the after-school nutrition education program. The reason for the hyper-localized scale of the GFB distribution is to first work alongside a small pool of students and families to measure the success and effectiveness of the food distribution. We will further discuss our plans for GFB assessment in our "DESIRED OUTCOMES + EVALUATION" section of this paper.

We decided to work with West Philadelphia High School for a number of reasons. One of them is that West Philadelphia High School is the only site out of the three high schools that Netter Center partners with that has no GFB distribution at the school or near the school. Therefore, we believed that implementing this initiative at this particular location would provide a pipeline that has not existed before. In addition, realistically, Kavon Bailey, the site director at West Philadelphia High School, was the most available and open to collaborating with us to put this PSL into action. This collaboration is very important to us because, without Kavon and the school staff at West, our vision would only be alive on paper. In addition (and as stated previously), we chose West Philadelphia because there is a working effort to build a nutrition curriculum at the site for the upcoming school semester. Therefore, the Good Food Bag expansion will supplement the nutrition curriculum, as students who are in the program will also be able to attain the GFBs as part of their participation. Throughout this PSL process, we have

learned that working with programs that have already been under approval or already operating is the best, most efficient, and most meaningful way to ensure the success of our goal.

Centering Students

We wanted to ensure that this work was centering students and student experiences. Therefore, by working with the nutrition education program's students, we also have a direct audience to gather feedback on what kinds of produce students prefer which can be directly used to make the GFB distribution more tailored to the needs of the target recipients (the students). In addition, with the expansion of the Good Food Bag being incorporated as a part of a larger nutrition education curriculum, our PSL also allows students to simultaneously learn cooking skills and nutritional knowledge to cook the produce they receive. They also get to learn about the value of healthy produce and healthy eating. The Good Food Bags then organically can become an interactive, moving project that *integrates* and *collaborates* with the nutrition curriculum that students can *engage with* rather than just receive.

Why Good Food Bags?

We decided on Good Food Bags as the most realistic and productive means of fresh produce delivery and distribution for a number of reasons. The Good Food Bags are pre-packed into paper bags with fresh vegetables and fruits. They also include recipes with instructions guiding recipients on how to prepare the produce into healthy, nutritious meals.

We believed that a distribution system like the GFB program was the most realistically plausible and effective means of bringing fresh produce to the community. Using an orderly structure of the after-school nutrition education program ensures a setting in which produce can be distributed to students on a consistent basis, and students or other community members do not have to go out of their way to obtain the produce (as the students would already have the

afterschool program incorporated into their day-to-day schedules). This can be compared to community fridges or pantries—which require additional and external staffing and overwatch (which is out of our own capacity). Furthermore, the GFB program ensures no food is being wasted and creates a sustainable cycle that delivers the bags directly to students and families. In addition, GFBs are part of an existing program under AUNI (making it an easy transition into the communities that Netter Center partners with). If we decided on community fridges or pantries, there may be more logistical errors—such as how these fridges or pantries would be maintained, located, etc. This is a logistical issue regarding capacity—an issue that we believe is not the most realistically resolvable right now. Lastly, we believe an expansion of the GFB distribution is the best option because of how flexible it is and how it has the potential to be extended to the entire high school population of West Philadelphia High School or even across all high schools that the Netter Center partners with. With these qualities, the Good Food Bag initiative presents itself as a successful model that has plenty of room for improvement, growth, and redevelopment.

IMPLEMENTATION:

The Who, What, When, Where, and How of Implementation

AUNI GFB x West Philadelphia High School:

Who *(Agents and catalysts? Who else is involved?)*:

Agents: Eric Williamson, Halle Watkins, Maris Altieri, Will Kebbe (AUNI staff), Marla Travis (Principal of West Philadelphia High School), Kavon Bailey (Site Coordinator at West Philadelphia High School)

Catalysts: Sophia Lee & Yeeun Yoo, Kavon Bailey (Site Coordinator at West Philadelphia High School)

Participants: Parents of students at West Philadelphia High School, the students at West Philadelphia High School (specifically those who are participating in the after-school nutrition program)

Resources: Rev. Nock & Second Antioch Baptist Church (as a case study), Penn Park Farm & Lancaster Farm Fresh Cooperative (the source of the produce)

What: Distribution of the produce bags to West Philadelphia High School as a part of the after school nutrition program.

When: Once a week throughout the academic year.

Where: At West Philadelphia High School (during the nutrition program)

How:

How the produce is chosen:

- Staff at AUNI (the nutrition education coordinators) will select produce that they know are in season and would be most nutritionally relevant every week to order for the GFBs. Students will be surveyed (through

simple discussion within the afterschool program or taste-testing events) on their specific preferences (such as their favorite type of apples) and will be reflected in the ordering of the produce.

How the produce is packaged:

- The students will package Good Food Bags every Wednesday during afterschool programming hours. There will be boxes of produce (most likely 3 to 4 boxes) that will have been brought to the high school by the AUNI Staff running the program (Will Kebbe). Students will then be given a large brown paper bag and will then package their individual Good Food Bags with a specified amount per type of produce. (The boxes will be opened on a table and students will, in a line, take produce from each box.) Recipe sheets for each type of produce will also be provided for the students to pack into their Good Food Bags.

How the produce is distributed:

- As mentioned in previous sections, we envision the produce to be distributed through the Good Food Bags. The GFBs will then be distributed to students who are participating in the (soon-to-be-launched) after-school nutrition program at West Philadelphia High School.
- After making their own individual Good Food Bags during the program, the students will be able to take home the bags of produce after the end of the program (when being picked up by families or when they are commuting back home). This also presents an opportunity for parents and

guardians to pick up the produce on behalf of the student (if the guardian is planning to pick up the student after the nutrition program).

- This distribution ensures every student in the nutrition program will be guaranteed a Good Food Bag (since there is a set roster of the participating students).

Agents & Catalysts

Agent	**Tasks**	**Catalyst**	**Tasks**	**Time and Status**
Eric Williamson (Nutrition Education Partnerships Manager)	Mr. Eric approves the nutrition education program and Good Food Bag Program at West Philadelphia High School. He will additionally assist in organizing program logistics using his past experience in overseeing the nutrition education programs at Sayre and West Philadelphia High School.	Kavon Bailey, Sophia Lee & Yeeun Yoo	Kavon would prompt a meeting to discuss the inclusion of the GFB in the nutrition education program. We (Sophia and Yeeun) would be present at the meetings and would be corresponding to any emails regarding the curriculum and GFBs.	**Partly Confirmed (To be further confirmed in August):** During our discussion with Kavon, Kavon told us that the nutrition education curriculum had already been approved to be implemented during the upcoming 2023 fall semester. However, Kavon told us that the inclusion of the Good Food Bag program as a part of the nutrition education curriculum was something that he would have to continue to discuss with Mr. Eric and Will in planning meetings during the month of August. Kavon also confirmed with us that he would CC us
Will Kebbe (Nutrition Education Coordinator)	Will teaches and leads the after-school nutrition education program. Will has	Sophia Lee & Yeeun Yoo, Kavon Bailey		

	experience in running after-school nutrition education programs at Robeson High School during the school year, where he led cooking classes and gardening with students in Robeson's cooking and gardening club. Will also has experience in engaging students with the Good Food Bag program during the 2023 Summer PYN Program at Robeson, where students at Robeson packaged Good Food Bags to take home using both produce harvested from the Robeson gardens and produce provided by AUNI. Will will be able to use his experience in leading			(Sophia and Yeeun) in any meetings that he would have with Mr. Eric and Will regarding the GFB expansion.[48]

[48] Bailey, interview.

	constructive and open discussions with students about their experiences with food (what they notice about the supermarkets near them, what their ideal school lunches would look like, etc) and help pilot, run, and later expand the nutrition education and GFB program at West Philadelphia High School.			
Halle Watkin (University-Assisted Schools Data & Evaluation Coordinator)	Since the Good Food Bags are under AUNI's SNAP grant, Halle would write out logistical details and budget expectations of the Good Food Bag programming at West Philadelphia High School in the next grant proposal for 2025. This way, the Good Food Bag expansion at West Philadelphia High	Sophia Lee & Yeeun Yoo, Kavon Bailey	We (Sophia and Yeeun) would relay information needed for the grant writing between Kavon and Halle. We will continue to provide any logistical information and data that Halle can offer to Kavon. Kavon would provide the hard data, such as	**Confirmed on July 17, 2023:** In our meeting with Halle, Halle confirmed with us that she would be more than happy to write out any expansions of the Good Food Bag programming into the next grant proposal for SNAP-Ed. She told us that the grant would be written in October of 2024.[49]

[49] Halle Watkin, interviewed by Sophia Lee and Yeeun Yoo, July 17, 2023, Zoom.

	School will be able to maintain sustained funding from SNAP in future years.		attendance of students participating in the nutrition program, that can be used in the process of writing the grants.	
Maris Altieri (UACS Nutrition Systems & Education Manager)	Maris will develop the nutrition education curriculum as the Nutrition System & Education Manager. Maris uses curricula provided by a non-profit organization called Leah's Pantry, which creates SNAP-Ed approved trauma-informed nutrition education programs. Maris is also in charge of choosing the produce to order for the Good Food Bags as well as the recipes to print out and include in the Good Food	Sophia Lee & Yeeun Yoo, Kavon Bailey	Kavon would share preferences & feedback from the students of recipes, produce types, etc that they would like to see in the Good Food Bags and the nutrition curriculum. If Kavon thinks that students would benefit from changes in the curriculum, that information would also be relayed to Maris. We (Sophia and Yeeun) would help Maris make the graphics for the recipes (examples provided in "Day in the Program"	**Partly confirmed on July 13, to be further confirmed in August:** In conversations we have had with Maris, she was excited about the possible expansion of the Good Food Bag program. Further logistical discussions with Maris will most likely happen in August as Kavon and other AUNI staff plan out the upcoming 2023 fall semester.[50]

[50] Maris Altieri, interviewed by Sophia Lee and Yeeun Yoo, July 13, 2023, In-person.

	Bags. She makes sure that the recipes are nutritious, healthy, and easy to follow.		section).	
Kavon Bailey (West Philadelphia High School Site Director)	Kavon develops and oversees the program as the site coordinator at West Philadelphia High School. Kavon will be the main communicator and will act as the head person for parents at West Philadelphia High School, AUNI Staff, and the principal of West Philadelphia High School to communicate with when it comes to the GFB distribution at West Philadelphia High School. He will also keep track of attendance, success (measured by continued participation rates), etc. and report back to	Sophia Lee & Yeeun Yoo	We (Sophia & Yeeun) would advocate and do our best to smooth out the process of implementing the program by acting as communicators, messengers, and fulfilling any other duties that are presented to us.	**Confirmed on July 19, 2023:** Kavon is open and excited about the possibility of implementing the Good Food Bag Initiative at West Philadelphia High School. During our meeting, he has expressed that he is willing to gather and lend us support through this process.[51]

[51] Bailey, interview.

	AUNI staff for data on roster for GFBs (which can then be used to improve the program). First, he will identify the students who will benefit most from this nutrition program. He will also identify parents and guardians who would be most open to their children participating in the GFB distribution (he would do this using his previous experience and the relationships he has built with certain parents and guardians). In the future, he will be the head person who will organize and oversee Family Nights and other events centered around nutrition curriculum and Good Food Bag Distribution.			
Marla	The principal will	Kavon	Kavon meets with	**To be confirmed in**

Travis (Principal of West Philadelphia High School)	be another key figure who will approve the nutrition curriculum, Good Food Bag Program, and subsequent events (such as Family Nights) hosted and operated at West Philadelphia High School.	Bailey	Principal Travis and shares what is happening within the Good Food Bag program. Kavon would also be identifying students and families of students who may benefit from the nutrition curriculum program to be approved by the principal.	**August.**

Timeline of Implementation

We estimate and hope to see the Good Food Bag distribution at West Philadelphia High School (WPHS) in fruition at the start of the Spring semester of 2024. It is important to mention that we have already confirmed with Halle that SNAP has approved to provide SNAP associated programming at WPHS.[52] This means that it is possible to expand the GFB program to WPHS as soon as the Fall 2023 semester and also that there is guaranteed SNAP-provided funding that can be used to sustain the program. However, logistically and realistically, we have estimated the start of the Good Food Bag program to be in the 2024 Spring semester because we (Sophia & Yeeun) will not be present for the August 2023 planning period for the Fall semester. We see this initiative truly being put into action during the Spring semester because then we can take the Fall semester to actively be a part of the planning process for the Good Food Bag distribution.

Furthermore, we believe that it would be better to wait one semester after the after-school nutrition education curriculum is first implemented at WPHS before implementing the Good Food Bag program. We both plan to be involved in the implementation process as Civic Development Interns throughout the Fall semester. This way, we can spend the semester as Civic Development Interns planning the Good Food Bag while also being equipped with data gathered throughout the Fall semester. For example, as the WPHS afterschool nutrition education curriculum is planned in August of 2023, Kavon will identify students who he sees as most fit to be a part of the program. This means we would be able to know how many students would be a part of the after-school program, thus allowing us to more specifically plan details for the GFB such as how many boxes (pounds) of produce would be needed. However, from discussions we have had with Kavon and Will, we are aware that since the nutrition education curriculum will be

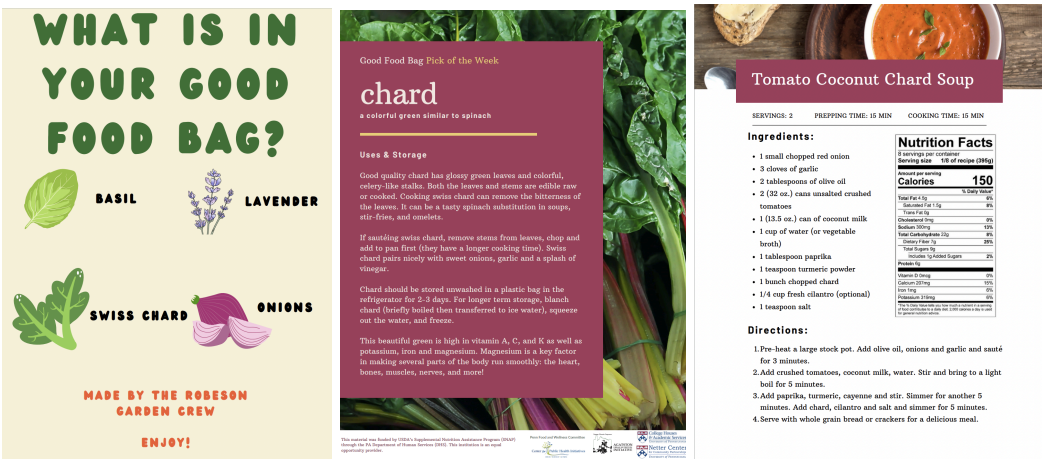
[52] Watkin, “Re: [IMPORTANT] Info Request!”

implemented at West Philadelphia in the 2023 Fall semester, logistical discussions about including the Good Food Bag in the nutrition education curriculum may also occur alongside the initial planning. Therefore, we have confirmed with both Kavon and Will that we can be present in any Zoom meetings that occur during the month of August. We understand that one of the most important elements of planning behind the implementation of the PSL is that we (Sophia and Yeeun) are part of the conversations and meetings surrounding the nutrition curriculum. This connection is critical to being able to bridge our GFB initiative with the (confirmed) nutrition curriculum and making sure the GFB is a seamless incorporation that supplements and enriches the nutrition curriculum.

<u>Day in the Program</u>

To truly envision the program in action, we will walk through a day of the GFB distribution.

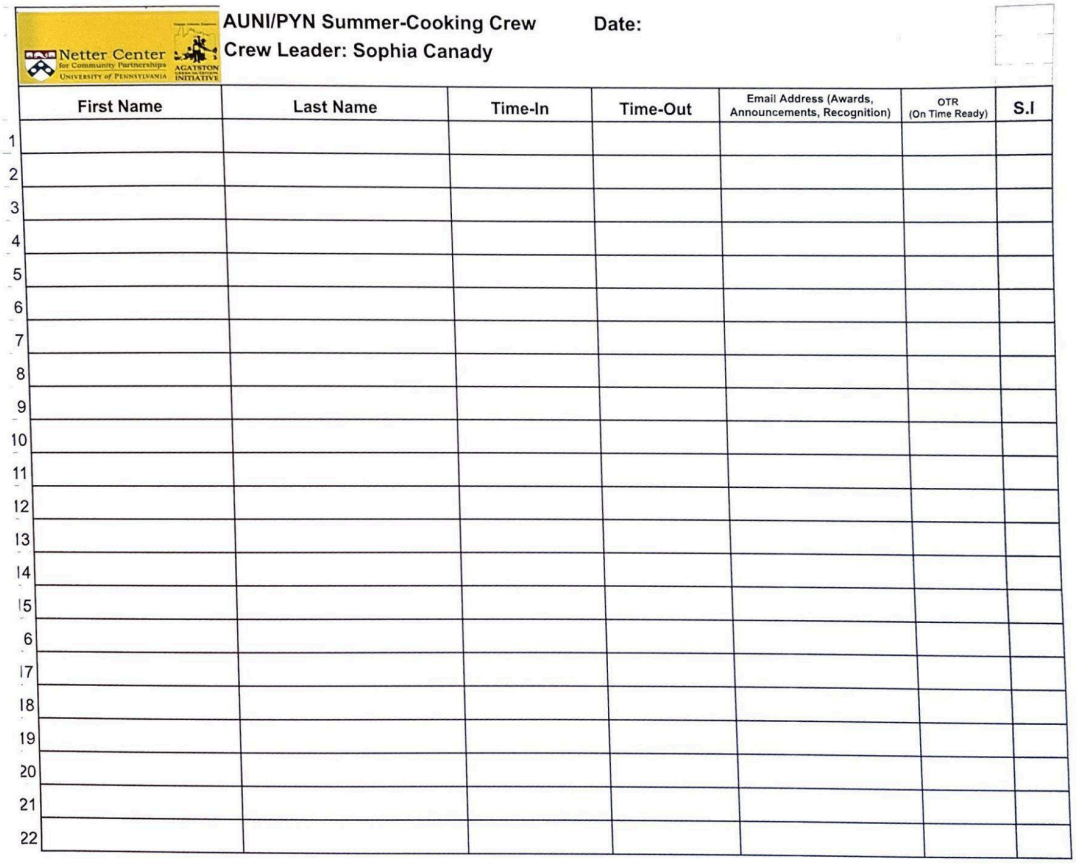
Before classes end for the school day, Will and Kavon will bring the printed-out recipes for each produce as well as the 3 to 4 boxes of produce needed for the Good Food Bags and will set them up on tables.



(Above: Examples of the recipes included in GFBs at the Robeson High School Summer Program)[53]

[53] Will Kebbe, "Examples of the recipes," graphic, screenshot, July 25, 2023.

Once the school day ends at 2:34 p.m., the students who are part of the after school nutrition program will begin gathering at the designated location at the school for the program. As students walk in, they will sign in using a simple printed-out sign-in sheet we will have for them near the door. The sign-in sheet will closely model the ones used at the 2023 PYN Summer Programs at Robeson and Sayre:[54]



Netter Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania — Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative

AUNI/PYN Summer-Cooking Crew **Date:**
Crew Leader: Sophia Canady

	First Name	Last Name	Time-In	Time-Out	Email Address (Awards, Announcements, Recognition)	OTR (On Time Ready)	S.I
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
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21							
22							

On Wednesdays, which would be the day designated for the Good Food Bag program, students would engage in a short lesson taught by Will (and guided by the Leah's Pantry curriculum) on nutrition, cooking, food access, and healthy eating before packaging the Good

[54] Sophia Lee, "Example of sign in sheet," chart, picture, July 26, 2023.

Food Bags. These lessons would take around 45 minutes and would range from conversations reflecting on students' access to the types of supermarkets and grocery stores within their neighborhoods to casual discussions on what their ideal school lunch would look like. As the program develops, students may participate in discussions reflecting on the Good Food Bags; these discussions can be used as a means of evaluation (further described in the "DESIRED OUTCOMES + EVALUATION" section).

After this discussion, Will will tell students what produce is included in the GFBs this week and would write how many of each produce would be included in each bag on the board. Then, students will be handed out one large brown paper bag each and a marker to write their name down on and will begin to prepare their individual Good Food Bags. The finished Good Food Bags will be set aside on the table used for assembly until the students can take them home at the end of the program. Afterward, any student-athletes in the group can leave for practice if they need to, and when they come back for dismissal, they can simply pick up their bags from the classroom before going home. This would alleviate any problems of student-athletes having to carry their bags of produce to practice and potentially engaging in unsafe food safety regulations.

After Good Food Bag packaging, students can engage in cooking demonstrations where they can cook recipes using one of the produce for that week. The recipes they cook do not have to be the recipe provided by AUNI in the GFBs but can be any nutritious recipe that the students enjoy (which can be talked about during the small discussions that students engage in at the beginning of Wednesday programming). For example, students could make salsa using tomatoes provided by the Good Food Bag or vegetable wraps using onions in the GFB. Through these cooking demonstrations paired with the Good Food Bags, students would not only learn about

healthy eating but also be able to apply cooking skills using fresh produce to create nutritious, tasty, yet easy recipes.

DESIRED OUTCOMES + EVALUATION:

For West Philadelphia High School

Our desired outcome for the West Philadelphia High School community is very simple: that students and families have a bag of produce they can rely on and look forward to every week. This sense of reliability and consistency in accessing produce is what we hope to foster through the Good Food Bags at West Philadelphia High School. By establishing West Philadelphia High School as a crucial point of coordination and participation, our program creates and sustains a mutual partnership between AUNI's Good Food Bag and West Philadelphia community members with the West Philadelphia High School as a community-centered avenue. In addition, the school is planning a nutrition curriculum program to take advantage of its recently finished garden. These two developments at West indicate that the Good Food Bag expansion would be both an appropriate and very vital project to augment existing programs and initiatives.

For AUNI

For AUNI, our desired outcomes are also centered around building a sustainable relationship with the West Philadelphia High School community. We rely on the fact that the community will want the Good Food Bags and that this distribution cycle will continue (in other words, this partnership will continue). Moreover, another major desired outcome is to see the Good Food Bag reaching those beyond Penn. This expansion is motivated by a singular critical factor—a need for accessible fresh produce from the community. After speaking with Kavon, the site director at West Philadelphia High School, he confirms that he is aware of the need based on student testimonies and personal observations. Therefore, our desired outcome is to see this

partnership between AUNI and West Philadelphia High School flourish for years to come—as long as the need exists.

Evaluation

We believe in evaluation that is responsive to and interactive with the community that the initiative is serving. Therefore, we aim to implement the evaluation portion of this PSL through the nutrition curriculum. We believe that this not only prevents the passive act of surveying students but also allows for student engagement during the nutrition program as it connects to the Good Food Bags. The evaluation would be part of the curriculum—for instance, we envision discussions and student-led focus groups where students can lead the conversation regarding GFBs, food insecurity, nutrition, etc. These can be structured through commonly used group strategies, such as the “glows and grows" approach. The discussions would consist of questions such as: What do you think about the produce within the Good Food Bags? What does your family think about the Good Food Bags? What would you wish you could change about the GFBs as a whole? Students will evaluate the Good Food Bags Program and describe what they wish would change or what has been successful.

Another major source of feedback stems from the principal of West Philadelphia High School. These conversations would extend to the principal in hearing their thoughts and assessments of the Good Food Bags (such as, do they believe these are helpful or meaningfully providing an access point for students & families?). Lastly, evaluation would also come from simply checking if these bags are being picked up and if the need is consistent based on student attendance and requests. This will be key in quantitatively determining the success of the Good Food Bags in being at these community sites—especially since this collaboration with West Philadelphia High School will be a pilot project.

LOOKING FORWARD:

Now that we have established our plans to implement the GFB program in the immediate school year, we will now discuss how we hope to see the program enrich itself and further nurture healthy nutritional practices within the West Philadelphia community.

As we have discussed in the "IMPLEMENTATION" section, a common goal for both us (Yeeun and Sophia) and Kavon is to make sure the program is student-led. What sets the Good Food Bag program at the high school sites apart from the GFB Program on Penn's campus is the direct engagement with West Philadelphia high school students. While the GFB program at Penn is more of a food distribution effort, the West Philadelphia High School GFB program extends beyond that; the bags are tailored to the students and are part of a larger curriculum that promotes a healthy relationship with food.

To encourage student participation, once the GFB program is well established within the after-school nutrition education curriculum, we plan to tailor the produce included in the GFB to the preference and tastes of each of the students. To do so, Kavon proposed the idea of organizing food tastings in which different varieties of fruit or vegetable would be set up in the classroom for the kids to taste and rate. For example, there would be 6 varieties of apples (Gala, Honeycrisp, Fuji, etc) lined up for students to taste. These tastings would take place during usual after-school program hours and would also serve as a form of being able to receive feedback from students. For example, if Gala apples had typically been included in GFBs but students rank Honeycrisp as their favorite apple, then this group rating would be collected as hard data to be used in future GFB orders. It is key that such feedback collected from students is actively reflected in the details of the GFB; this allows students to understand the importance of their role

in the functioning of the GFB program and encourages the program to stay as a partnership between AUNI and the West Philadelphia High School students (and not a donation).

Furthermore, as garden beds have just been built at West Philadelphia High School, we also hope there can be a gardening component within the GFB and nutrition education program in the future. In the long term, we believe that produce grown at the gardens can be harvested and included in the GFBs (as it is at the 2023 PYN Summer program at Robeson and Sayre). In this way, the GFB continues to be incorporated as a part of the whole nutrition program; students will learn to tend to plants in the garden that they will then be able to harvest and ultimately cook with and eat.

A key aspect of our initiative regarding the expansion of the Good Food Bag program is to make sure that it enriches the overall after-school nutrition education curricula. However, we also understand from both our research and interviews with Kavon and Reverend Nock that the produce provided by the GFB would be appreciated by students and family members outside of the after-school nutrition education program. Therefore, we have discussed with Kavon how this initiative can be thought of as a pilot to learn from and build upon and how the long-term goal would be to be able to distribute GFBs to all students and family members at West Philadelphia High School. We believe that the GFBs should still maintain the student-led aspect even if it grows to be distributed to the whole school, and we hope that the growth of the GFB within WPHS will also mean the growth of the nutrition education afterschool program as a whole. Although the pilot implementation of the GFB is our immediate focus, we envision that the increased demand for GFBs as it expands can be met by the increased number of students involved in the afterschool program and perhaps the packing and distribution of the GFB expanded to twice a week in the nutrition education curricula.

Kavon also discussed future plans where he hopes to be able to host family dinners and cookouts to increase parent involvement and engagement with the GFB program. Although not thoroughly planned out, we (Sophia and Yeeun) discussed with Kavon the possibility of organizing monthly community dinners (modeled off of Sayre's) where students would be cooking recipes with produce that have been or would be in the GFBs. This not only would allow students to show off the cooking skills and knowledgeable handling of produce they have learned but would also highlight the social aspect of the Good Food Bags. This emphasizes once again that the Good Food Bag is an initiative centered around the community while also getting kids (and parents) more excited about the GFBs as well. Kavon also discussed how he envisions these events serving as key methods of increasing communication and outreach with parents as a whole. A schedule of produce that would be distributed in GFBs could be physically handed out to parents. This is important as parental involvement encourages student participation, as parents encourage students to take home Good Food Bags (solving the potential problem of GFBs being left behind after programs). As Kavon emphasizes the importance of having different modes of parent outreach (email, flyers, etc), these community dinners would serve an important purpose as a hub for parent and community outreach.

LONG TERM POSSIBILITIES:

We see the expansion of the Good Food Bag to West Philadelphia High School as the first step to a longer and bigger journey. We hope to see this expansion across all the UACS high schools (and even possibly the elementary schools).

If the collaboration at West Philadelphia High School proves to be successful, implementing this program across all the UACS sites would be an incredible possibility that we would be excited to see in action.

Ultimately, however, we hope that our largest long-term goal is to see a point where this initiative is no longer needed. In other words (and as also stated by Rev. Nock in our "CASE STUDY" section) we hope to see a point where the need for fresh produce bags are not needed. This can be seen through greater access to grocery stores being a reality or fresh produce being more affordable and attainable across low-income neighborhoods. But until the need no longer exists, the Good Food Bag is one critical and vital resource that the community not only has access to utilize but also ensures a sense of agency for themselves to be accountable to healthy eating and living.

OUR PSL JOURNEY:

Obstacles & Challenges:

Our PSL journey was (unsurprisingly) not an easy one. We encountered many challenges from the very start through the various stages that this PSL went through. We started off this PSL with the expansion of the Good Food Bags to all the UACS high schools with no specificity or context. Then we moved to expansion to garden spaces and creating community fridges across West Philadelphia community centers. However, after much-needed conversations with Dr. Harkavy, Theresa, and Claire, we realized that the PSL was too broad and overlapped with too many problems with no specificity or directness to the approach. When we were going through this, we contacted folks from VietLead, a community group that has been involved in building garden spaces in Philadelphia. We even reached out to Penn Dining staff to possibly also incorporate a food recovery network—until we realized how the idea was also beyond our capacity or control.

After many drafts and redrafts, we then decided to create a partnership between communities of faith in West Philly and AUNI to expand the Good Food Bags to existing food distribution services that these faith spaces would have. We spoke to many key figures that helped us in understanding the scope of this issue. One of them was Halle Watkin, who gave us elaborate and detailed context to how the Good Food Bag initiative worked. This included the logistics of the project—such as how the GFB is under the SNAP grant and the different bureaucratic regulations AUNI would have to follow. She also explained the staffing limitations and how it would create difficulties in sustainably working with communities of faith (due to the

high turnover rate of Netter Center staff). This discussion with Halle provided us much-needed context but also left us very lost on what exactly our next steps would be.[55]

We then spoke with Rev. Nock and learned more about the Food Cupboard at his church. We came into the interview knowing we wanted to build a case study based on Rev. Nock's work. He shared and provided us with a lot of context on how food distribution works, such as where he attains the food, how the food is distributed, and the system that he was able to modify and enact over the years. We were left very inspired as he reminded us of the power of building *with* the community—which he has demonstrated through the Food Cupboard as recipients serve back as volunteers for the food distribution.[56]

Despite the very informative interview with Rev. Nock, we were still unsure of where or what our next steps were. We even spoke with Paige Lombard during one of our class feedback sessions. Paige provided us with a lot of support and even suggested the possibility of seeing the Good Food Bags at UACS elementary schools. She also suggested speaking with Jarrett Stein, the person who leads the Family Farm Stand (another source for families to attain free, fresh produce).

Although we had many meetings and gathered valuable information, we were still uncertain what to do next. It felt like we were overloaded with information. This is where Theresa and Kavon came in. Our meeting with Theresa and Kavon provided us with a lot of the answers we were searching for. Kavon gave us a direct connection (West Philadelphia High School) and how we could shift our expansion idea to the expansion of the Good Food Bags to West Philadelphia High School. It feels ironic to a degree because this PSL idea began with the hopes of expanding GFBs to high schools.[57] It feels as if we circled back to the beginning.

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[55] Watkin, interview.
[56] Nock, interview.
[57] Bailey, interview.

However, the key difference is that we have a direct connection to a specific site, we are implementing a project for a newly launched (and approved) nutrition program at West Philadelphia High School. With this background, it allows for our PSL to be expanded and built upon without the burden of needing more staff or out-of-capacity support. The critical part of our PSL is how we are amplifying and supplementing an existing program.

Our Personal Reflection:

Prior to meeting with Theresa on Wednesday, July 19th, we felt lost and a bit unsettled about the direction of our PSL. Our PSL ideas had already shifted and transformed throughout our process of brainstorming, researching, and interviewing. Our very first idea had been to expand the Good Food Bags into high schools within West Philadelphia, but we then changed our idea to expanding the Good Food Bags to existing food distributions systems in West Philadelphia communities of faith such as the "Food Cupboard" at Reverend Nock's Second Antioch Baptist Church. However, after speaking with both Isabel and Reverend Nock, we realized that the Food Cupboard did not need the supplement of Good Food Bags as it was already a robust program with extensive types of food being distributed–including meat, dairy products, fresh produce, and non-perishable items of food. This meant that we now had to find a different community of faith that either would want to distribute Good Food Bags at their site or would want Good Food Bags to supplement food distribution programs that they were already running. While we researched potential communities of faith to reach out to (such as the Renewal Presbyterian Church's "Small Things" program), we were able to speak to Halle Watkin (Data and Evaluation coordinator) about the possibility and logistical details of our PSL.

While the interview with Halle was incredibly helpful and informational, it did leave us feeling a little lost and discouraged. Halle explained to us how the GFBs are under AUNI's SNAP grant. Organizations have to provide plans of how they would use funds for that year, which means AUNI has to decide how they would use the money given to them by the grant almost a year beforehand in order to have the grant proposal approved. This essentially meant that any expansion of the Good Food Bags would have to be put into the SNAP grant proposal for 2025. She also explained that Good Food Bags have to be distributed at sites that are

pre-approved by SNAP. She suggested that in order to bypass the hurdle of getting new sites approved by SNAP, we could reach out to a list (that she sent us) of pre-approved communities of faith/community centers (food pantry, public site, shelter) that AUNI had already approved as food distribution centers with SNAP.

After this interview, we realized that this meant we needed to change our plans yet again. Before we acted further on this potential new plan, we were able to speak with Paige during a seminar on July 18th. When we explained our current situation of the PSL (why we sifted away from expanding GFBs to schools and then churches) and how we were leaning towards expanding Good Food Bags to programs run by the Netter Center (such as UACS Family nights), Paige brought up how she sees food insecurity as a prevalent issue at K-8 sites. She discussed how expanding GFBs at K-8 sites would eliminate the problem of high school students not wanting to take home GFBs home to their families (since parents come directly to pick students up at K-8 sites). The input and suggestions from Halle and Paige were insightful and deepened our understanding of the large issue and logistical details of food insecurity. We left Tuesday (7/18)'s seminar feeling worried because we essentially did not have a PSL topic determined with only 10 days left until the due date. We also were concerned because both options (either expanding GFBs to Netter programs for adults or expanding GFBs to K-8 afterschool programs) would require yet another interview with key figures (the agents) to make sure they were plausible and realistic–and it seemed like we were running out of time.

When we explained our process and current situation to Theresa during our meeting on Wednesday (7/19), Theresa suggested that we talk to Kavon (site director at West Philadelphia High School). She told us that Kavon had always been enthusiastic about supporting students with PSL ideas and efforts. While we had previously shot down the idea of expanding GFBs to

high schools due to the issue of students not wanting to take bags home, Theresa suggested posing the idea to Kavon and seeing what he had to think about it. To our surprise (and relief), Kavon talked to us about how not only was the expansion of the GFBs something he would want to implement at West Philly High School, but he was already discussing with Will and Eric (from AUNI) about nutrition/gardening/cooking education after-school curriculum to implement in the upcoming school year of 2023. Overall, after a discussion with Kavon (and his enthusiasm in helping us plan and discuss the implementation of the GFBs into West Philadelphia High School) as well as the incredibly helpful guidance from Theresa, we were able to finally decide on our PSL topic.

We decided on incorporating the Good Food Bags into the nutrition education, gardening, and cooking curriculum that is planned to be implemented at West Philadelphia High School as our PSL topic.

One of the most important things we have learned through this PSL writing and drafting process has been to work with the existing infrastructure. In other words, expand programs that already exist. Our entire PSL process has been a rollercoaster of navigating different avenues of what we could do or how we could do it. The major hurdles that prevented us from pushing forward our initial goal of expanding the Good Food Bags to communities of faith in West Philly have been due to bureaucracy and bureaucratic limitations as well as the high turnover rate of Netter Center staffing. For instance, our initial desire to implement the GFB to communities of faith meant trying to navigate federal government bureaucracy and regulations—which would ultimately prevent our PSL from being a sustainable, implementable reality. These federal regulations created drawbacks to the desired timeframe of when this initiative could finally be culminated. In addition, to want to create this new program of AUNI x Communities of Faith

partnership meant ensuring that there is strong staff support. However, with the current reality of Jacob (coordinator of GFBs at AUNI) leaving Netter Center, there is now a very uncertain state that prevents any form of a new program to be created in a sustainable or meaningful manner.

We also learned the importance of flexibility and being okay with the changes that may face us. This flexibility is what has allowed us to finally have a clearer idea of what we hope to do with our PSL and ensure that this is something that is mutually desired on both ends. After speaking with Kavon, the site director at West Philly High School, we were so excited to learn that the GFB expansion is an applicable reality that can truly create transformative changes to the nutrition curriculum and food access.

We would not have changed our PSL process despite all the hurdles we faced and the drafts that our initial PSL idea has gone through. We fully believe that those hurdles were key determinants in allowing us to land where we are now and the next steps we are planning to take. We began our PSL idea with something broadly related to community fridges, Good Food bag expansion, and garden/greenery expansion in West Philly. We then moved to the expansion of the Good Food bags to communities of faith to narrow the scope. Finally, we have moved towards the expansion of the GFBs to West Philadelphia High School (during the school year, which does not occur at any UACS partner high school currently). Concluding our PSL, we believe that these struggles have been vital in understanding what exactly our playing ground is and where we could truly seek deeper connections and forge relationships based on who is willing to see our initiative in action.

We have learned a lot this summer—about PSD (Philadelphia School District) and the role of UACS in the West Philadelphia community. The summer has given us an opportunity to form new relationships with Netter Center staff and community members which we believe are

vital resources that will inevitably accompany us as we navigate our time at Penn. We also believe that our attitudes about Penn have not really changed, but our knowledge of Penn's role in West Philly communities has expanded. It has also given us an opportunity to reflect on our own role as Penn students and how we truly can and should meaningfully be involved to take action and call for transformative change within our communities.

Lastly, we believe it is critical to note that we understand that our PSL is not a complete solution to the larger issue of food insecurity as a whole. Despite this, we also *strongly* believe that this initiative showcases the power of community organizing and partnerships. Therefore, one should *not* disregard the impact that Good Food Bags have on communities. We pushed forth this PSL idea because we were passionate and confident about the impact that this could create on the communities. This bag of goods may not change the world, but it has the power to hopefully change someone's next meal.

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