

Addressing Food Insecurity in Apache Junction: An Innovative & Community Centered Approach

CAAHEC Team: Jodi Bray, Vincent Ekstrom, Brooke Finley,
Joanna Martori, Megan Nichols, Gabriel Rallison, Alexis Stephens, &
Rena Verdugo

CAAHEC Faculty Mentor: Dr. Charlotte Thrall



Physical Environment

- Eastern most community in the Phoenix-Mesa Metro area
- Bordered by Tonto National Forest
- Superstition Mountains
- 20 miles from Mesa; 36 miles from downtown Phoenix



Demographics

- Total population: 51,571
- More women than men
- Minimal ethnic diversity
- 18.8% live below 100% of Federal Poverty Line; 40.6% live below 200% of FPL (ADHS, 2019)



Health Status Data

- Birth defects-leading cause of death for infants
- Cardiac & pulmonary disease impacts adults
- Mortality rate 15.3% per 100,000 (CARES, 2020)



Food Insecurity in Apache Junction

- Pinal County Food Insecurity rate: 13.9%
- 1 in 6 adults & 1 in 4 children are affected
- Poor selection of grocery stores

Influential Community Factors

- Physical environment
- Economics, Housing, Income
- Communication
- Utilities
- Poverty
- Transportation
- Health care



Food Insecurity & Special Populations



Seniors

- Increased risk factors for food insecurity
- Many do not get their recommended intake of fruits & vegetables
- Nutrient deficiencies exacerbate chronic disease



Families

- Food insecurity increases oral health problems
- Spurs the development of chronic diseases
- Food insecurity impacts the whole family; especially pregnant women & children



Mental Health

- Digestive System is the "second brain"
- Neurotransmitter production
- Nutrient imbalances can impact mood, & cognitive function



Children

- Childhood food insecurity effects development
- More likely to be hospitalized for common childhood conditions
- Below average academic performance
- Increased anxiety, depression, and hyperactive behaviors



Pharmaceuticals & Nutrition

- Proper nutrition ensures medications are safe & effective
- Food/medication symbiosis
- Spending tradeoffs: Choosing between medicine & food



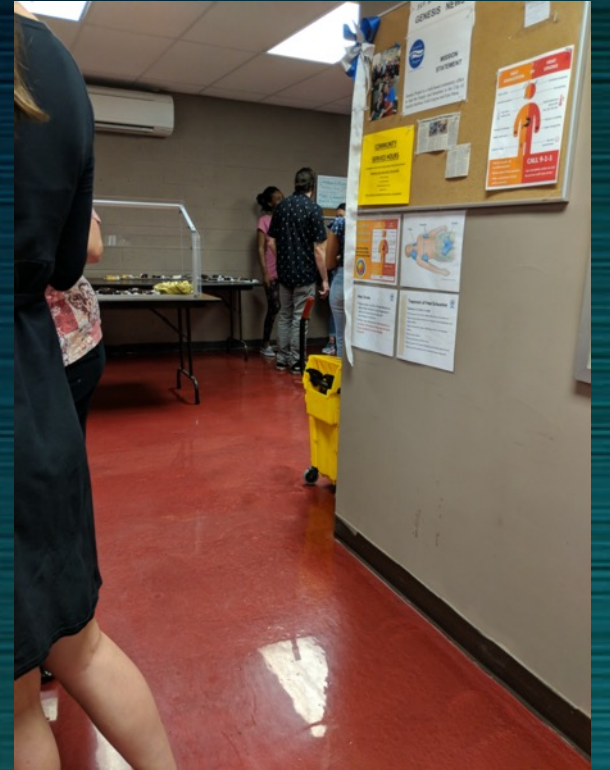
Public Health & Nutrition

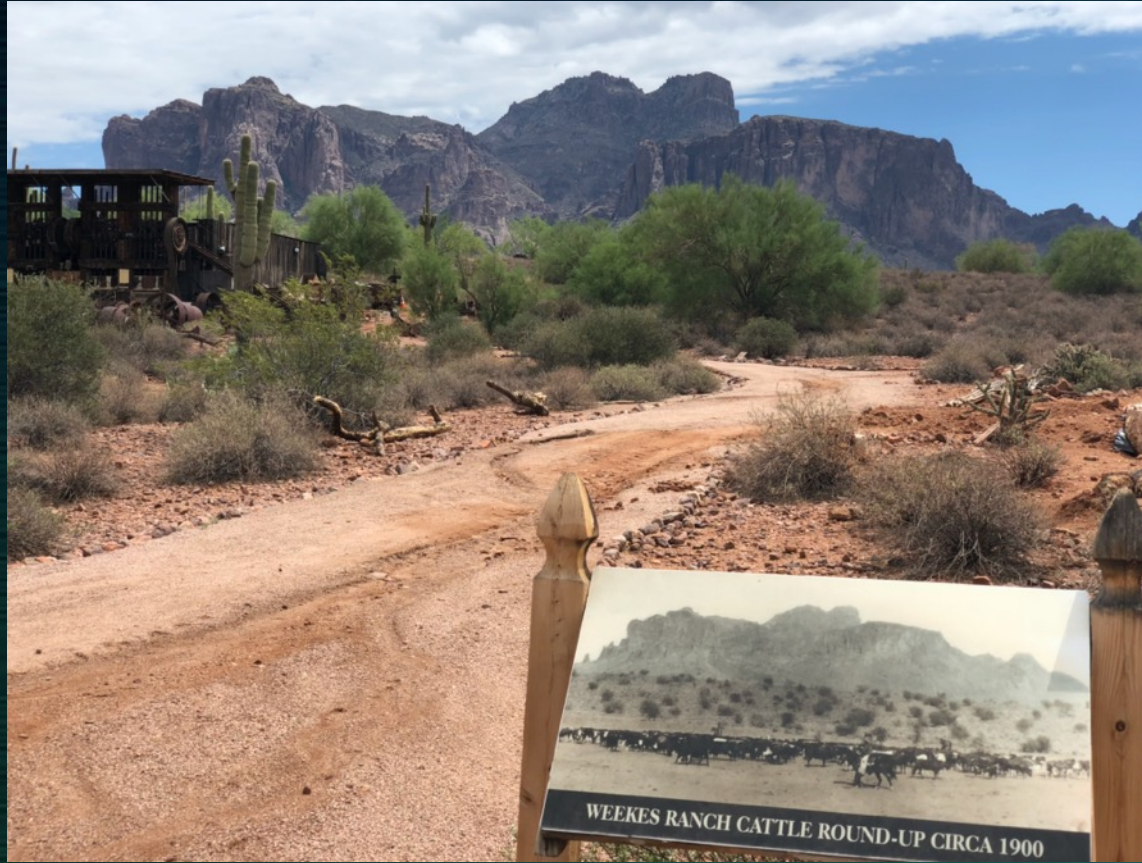
- Individual & population health outcomes are effected
- \$77.5 billion in excess annual health care expenditures (FRAC, 2017).
- Healthy People 2020 has added food insecurity to the initiative



Implications For Practice

- Nutritional Assessments
- Connecting individuals & families with community resources
- Ensuring compassionate & holistic care





References

- Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS). 2019. *Apache Junction primary care area: Statistical profile*. Retrieved from <https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/prevention/health-systems-development/data-reports-maps/primary-care/pinal/70.pdf>
- Bahadur, K., Shilpa, P., Estherline, T., & Petrova, A. (2018). Frequency of food insecurity and associated health outcomes in pediatric patients at a federally qualified health center. *Journal of Community Health*, 43, 896-900. doi:10.1007/s10900-018-0499-8
- Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems (CARES) Engagement Network. (2020, March). Health indicators report. Retrieved from <https://engagementnetwork.org/assessment/>
-

References

- Feeding America. (2018). Hunger and poverty in Arizona: Map the meal gap. Retrieved from <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2016/overall/arizona>
- Feeding America. (2018). Facts about child hunger in America. Retrieved from <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/child-hunger-facts>
- Food Research & Action Center. 2017. The impact of poverty, food insecurity, and poor nutrition on health and well being. Retrieved from <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/hunger-health-impact-poverty-food-insecurity-health-well-being.pdf>
-



Questions??