

THCU Literature Search

Community Kitchens and Best Practice

Search conducted June 2007

Bielawski, J. A. (1993). *A cost and nutrient analysis of Lansing area community kitchens*. Michigan State University.

Abstract: Thesis: The objective of this study was to obtain baseline cost and nutrient information from Lansing, Michigan community kitchen meals. This study is important because little information is available on community kitchens. Data were collected on population demographics of guests (n = 428), portions sizes of menu items, corresponding recipes or menus, and actual and equivalent market values of labor and food costs. Meals were analyzed to determine the percent of 1/3 of the US Recommended Daily Allowance (USRDA) supplied to the highest need USRDA age-sex group. Actual labor costs ranged from 39 to 57 percent of the total costs for that meal. All kitchens provided adequate protein for the highest need USRDA age-sex group. Calcium, iron, magnesium, folic acid, vitamin B-6, vitamin A, and vitamin C, were inadequate in some meals. This data supports the need for further development of comparable methodology to identify the cost and nutrition of community kitchen meals.

Crawford, S. M. & Kalina, L. (1997). Perspectives in practice. Building food security through health promotion: community kitchens. *Journal of the Canadian Dietetic Association*. Winter; 58(4): 197-201.

Abstract: Over a decade ago, Canada's Health Promotion Framework identified reducing inequities as a fundamental challenge to be addressed by health promotion. More recently, food insecurity has emerged as one of the most urgent issues in the practice of dietetics. This paper describes the application of basic health promotion principles to the problem of food insecurity in low-income families. It outlines the development, implementation and evaluation of a community kitchens program that evolved through local concern and action. While such a program could not aim to solve all the problems associated with food insecurity, it is shown to be an effective format for the development of enhanced food-related capacity, self-efficacy social support, mutual aid and community awareness among participants. Also described is the change in the practise of dietetics that can develop through participation in this type of health promotion programming.

Engler-Stringer, R. & Berenbaum, S. (2005). Collective kitchens in Canada: a review of the literature. *Canadian Journal of dietetic practice and research*, 66: 246-251.

Abstract: PURPOSE: Collective kitchens are community-based cooking programs in which small groups of people cook large quantities of food. They have developed over the past 20 years, and hundreds of groups have been formed across the country. However, collective kitchens described in the literature vary considerably in structure, purpose, and format. The purpose of this review is to synthesize research on this topic. METHODS: Articles and theses were collected through searches of major databases, and synthesized to improve understanding of current information, and of continuing gaps in the knowledge of collective kitchens in Canada. RESULTS: The limited published research on collective kitchens suggests that social and learning benefits are associated with participation. Some indication exists that participants also find the food cooked to be high quality, culturally acceptable, and acquired in a manner that maintains personal dignity. Whether collective kitchens have an impact on food resources as a whole is unclear, as research has been limited in scale. CONCLUSIONS: The role of collective kitchens in community building and empowering participants often is noted, and bears further investigation. Dietitians and nutritionists have a unique opportunity to facilitate the health promotion and food security benefits of collective kitchens.

Engler-Stringer, R. & Berenbaum, S. (2007). Exploring food security with collective kitchens participants in three Canadian cities. *Qual Health Res.*, 17, 75-84.

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Abstract: Collective kitchens are small groups of people who pool their resources to cook large quantities of food. With the help of semi-participant observation and in-depth individual interviews, this study is an exploration of participants' perceptions of changes in food security since becoming involved in a collective kitchen. Several important themes emerged, including Increased Variety, Making Ends Meet, and Comparisons to Food Banks. Participants in groups that cooked large quantities of food (upwards of five meals monthly) reported some increases in their food resources. Participants also reported increased dignity associated with not having to access charitable resources to feed their families. Some participants reported decreased psychological distress associated with food insecurity. Overall, participants reported increases in food security; however, collective kitchens are not a long-term solution to the income-related food insecurity experienced by many Canadian families.

Long, C., Page, J., Hail, B., Davis, T., & Mitchell, L. (2003). Community Mental Health -- In an Alternative School, in the Public Schools, and in the Kitchen! *Reclaiming Children and Youth: Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Problems*, 11(4): 231-5.

Abstract: Centerstone Community Mental Health, a private nonprofit agency based in Nashville, TN, has responded to community needs by establishing new service programs to address them with whatever funding is available. Three described here are: an alternative school for students who cannot "make it" in public schools, school-based mental health services, & a community kitchen combined with a culinary school. These are examples of the ecological models of Re-EDucation (Re-ED) as developed by Nicholas Hobbs (1994). 1 Reference. Adapted from the source document.

Mackereth, C. (2007). The Family Initiative: a community kitchen in action. *Primary Health Care*. 17(3): 24-7.

Abstract: Catherine Mackereth outlines an initiative to get the whole family involved in healthy eating.

Marquis, S., Thomson, C., & Murray, A. (2001). Assisting people with a low income to start and maintain their own community kitchens. *Can.J Diet Pract Res.*, 62: 130-132.

Abstract: Q'wlut tu cicut ("My Parents Are Cooking") is a community kitchen program designed to help low-income people to facilitate their own cooking groups. Participants attended 20 weeks of instruction and received practical experience in topics such as meal planning, cooking, communication, and team building. At the end of 20 weeks, each participant was assisted in recruiting other people to start their own cooking group. To support the formation of these secondary groups, program staff and cooking group leaders met every second week for a further ten weeks. Another 30-week session has taken place since the initial session. The program had a high rate of completion. Each of the 24 participants who completed the program recruited an additional two to four people and started a cooking group with these people. Four months after completion of the first session, 80% of participants were facilitating their own cooking groups. After eight months, 50% of participants were still cooking in groups. All participants who completed the program stated that they had met their food- and nutrition-related goals, and they cited numerous program benefits to themselves and their families.

Mills, J. (2004). Dignity, Financial Literacy, and Food, Glorious Food! The Legacy of Kathy Goldman. *Affilia*, 19(3): 317-21.

Abstract: A tribute to Kathy Goldman, founder & executive director of the Community Food Resource Center (CFRC) in New York City, notes that Goldman also founded the Henry Street Settlement & the Visiting Nurse Service of NY. Goldman underestimates her contribution by insisting she only creates the circumstances that allow people to advocate on their own behalf. Special attention is given to the tremendous impact that three important CFRC projects have had on the lives of low-income

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individuals/families. The Earned Income Tax Credit campaign promotes financial literacy & provides tax assistance to low-income families. Welfare Made a Difference focuses on interviewing individuals who have overcome poverty & adversity with the help of welfare. CFRC's food initiatives include senior meals, a community kitchen in West Harlem, a food bank, the dissemination of information on the Food Stamp program to needy households, & implementation of the Special Supplemental Nutritional Program for Women, Infants, & Children. Although Goldman has reached retirement age, she claims retirement means "to remain working & to keep changing." J. Lindroth

Racine, S. & St-Onge, M. (2000). [Collective kitchens: the way to promote mental health]. *Can.J Commun.Ment Health, 19*, 37-62.

Abstract: Collective kitchens represent a relatively new social and community practice in the province of Quebec. They provide support that goes far beyond the food they supply, affecting the participants' life conditions and personal development. This qualitative study aimed to evaluate the effects that collective kitchens have on participants. We carried out semistructured interviews with a stratified sample of 25 people between the ages of 20 and 60, a majority of whom were single parents. These 20 women and 5 men were involved in 13 different groups for an average of 1 to 2 years. The results showed that the main reasons for participating in these groups were economic, nutritional, and psychosocial in nature.

Prominent among the psychosocial reasons was a desire to overcome a feeling of isolation, which a majority of respondents perceived as one of the most disturbing features of their lives before they were involved in the collective kitchens. We identified 3 types of factors that influence the effects of the respondents' participation in collective kitchens: (a) factors related to the internal dynamics of each collective kitchen (their modes of functioning and organizational structure), (b) factors related to the personal situation of the participants and (c) factors related to the use of other services or to the participants' social involvement. The various effects differ not only in character (psychosocial, economic, nutritional, etc.) but also in the time they appeared in the participation process and in their direct or indirect links with participation in collective kitchens. It would be interesting in future research to evaluate whether the benefits of participation in collective kitchens identified in this study have a long-term impact on the lives of the people in these groups.

Ripat, G. W. (1998). *Community kitchens in Winnipeg: People cooking together, building community together (Manitoba)*. University of Manitoba (Canada).

Abstract: Changes in the job market and in government responses to providing social security have resulted in increasing difficulties for Canadians in meeting their day-to-day needs. High among these needs is food security. The study examines local community kitchens, a community development response to meeting this need which has benefits beyond just feeding hungry people. The study uses a qualitative research methodology, and gathered information by conducting twelve open-ended interviews with people who work in and around community kitchens as participants, facilitators, and organizers. The study examined the origins, structure, and goals of the groups, as well as the needs that members felt that they were meeting. The study also examined the differences in structure and potential between community kitchens and food banks as places for enhancing food security, self esteem, and personal and community empowerment. The interviewees generally felt that community kitchens were successful in meeting the goals that they aimed to accomplish. These goals and successes came in the areas of skill building around cooking, budgeting and nutrition, with many of the skills being transferred laterally within the group as members learn from one another. Community kitchens were also identified as places in which members received tangible, emotional, and informational supports, and linked participants to both formal and informal helping networks within the community. They were also identified as vehicles through which individual and community empowerment was built. While there are difficulties that were

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identified both in the day-to-day operations of the kitchen groups as well as with the model itself, community kitchens provide many benefits to their members, sponsoring organizations, and host communities. They are stepping stones in the process of building individual capacity and community development.

Tarasuk, V. & Reynolds, R. (1999). A Qualitative Study of Community Kitchens as a Response to Income-Related Food Insecurity. *Can. J Diet Pract Res.*, 60, 11-16.

Abstract: A variety of self-help and community development strategies have recently emerged to address problems of hunger and food insecurity at a local level. One such strategy is community kitchens. Loosely defined as community-based cooking programs, "kitchens" are groups of people who regularly come together to prepare food for themselves and their families. This study employed grounded theory methods to examine the potential of community kitchens to enhance food security among those with constrained resources. Insights gained from participant observations of ten kitchens in progress were augmented by in-depth interviewing of a sample of participants and facilitators. Study findings suggest that, in some cases, community kitchen participation may enhance coping skills and provide valuable social support. However, the programs have limited potential to resolve food security issues rooted in severe and chronic poverty because they do not alter households' economic circumstances in any substantial way

Turbis, J. & Hurtubise, Y. (2003) Mutual Assistance and Local Services: The Experience of Collective Kitchens. *Recherches Sociographiques*, 44(3): 593-7.

PHAC Best Practices Portal

Public Consultation to Inform the Integrated Pan-Canadian Healthy Living Strategy Report on the Toronto, Ontario Roundtable March 6, 2003. Prepared by The Alder Group

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hl-vs-strat/pdf/html/toronto_report.html

Taking action on population health: a position paper for health promotion and programs branch staff

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/phdd/pdf/tad_e.pdf

Language, Literacy and Healthy Development: The Work of CAPC and CPNP Projects

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/pubs/lang/pdf/literacy.pdf>

Pape, B., Galipeault, Pierre. *Health promotion for people with mental illness: a discussion paper.* 2002

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/mh-sm/mhp02-psm02/pdf/mh_paper_02_e.pdf

The CAPC/CPNP Think Tank: Partnership and Intervention in Dealing with Child Abuse Prevention

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/publications/abuse_e.html

Community action program for children

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/capc-fs-3n1_e.html

Canada prenatal nutrition program

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/cpnp_reaching_e.html

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/cpnp-healthy moms_e.html

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/cpnp_goals_e.html

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McIntyre L. (2002). *Food Insecurity as a Determinant of Health*. Paper presented at The Social Determinants of Health Across the Life-Span Conference, Toronto, November 2002.

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/phdd/pdf/overview_implications/08_food_e.pdf

Healthy Living Symposium Proceedings Annex, *Toronto Sheraton Centre Hotel, Toronto, Ontario. June 16-17, 2003*

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hl-vs-strat/symposium/fl_nov10.html

Public Consultation to Inform the Integrated Pan-Canadian Healthy Living Strategy. Report on the Winnipeg, Manitoba (and Saskatchewan) Roundtable, March 19, 2003.

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hl-vs-strat/pdf/winnipeg_report.pdf

Hagey, Rebecca S. (1997). Guest Editorial: The Use and Abuse of Participatory Action Research. *Chronic diseases in Canada*. 18(1).

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cdic-mcc/18-1/a_e.html

Creative Spice: Learning From Communities About Putting The Population Health Approach Into Action

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/phdd/pdf/Creative_Spice.pdf

Internet Search

Creating a vision for our future

<http://www.nada.ca/docs/11/243.pdf>