

A Closer Grocer: Addressing Food Insecurity in Lower Price Hill

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Introduction

Lower Price Hill (LPH)

- Small historic neighborhood in Western Cincinnati
- Population: 1,200 people
- Median Household Income: \$15,257 (low)
- Poverty Level: 83%¹
- Unemployment: 44% (national average: 8.1%)
- Crime Rate: 1365 incidents/100,000 people (high)
- Community Matters is an organization that utilizes the assets of residents to improve LPH



(Photo: Cincinnati Enquirer)

Food Insecurity

Lower income neighborhoods tend to have a lower concentration of grocery stores. The lack of competition between grocery stores drives high prices; additionally, the cost associated with traveling to food sources (i.e. distant grocery stores) is high. This is a unique challenge for low income neighborhoods that higher income neighborhoods evade.² These problems currently face the residents of Lower Price Hill, as many residents rely on either the food pantry or the local corner stores which mostly stock canned foods.

Event Design

After discussion with Community Matters, LC 3 utilized the funds to hold an event on 15 March 2019 (4-6pm) in the under-construction grocery store. This event was an effort to allow the residents a chance to make their voice heard, provide education on the affordability of healthier food options, and understand the needs of the community in terms of inventory for the grocery store. We advertised this event around the Community Matters center as well as at community hubs such as the local laundromat (Washing Well). Additionally, we sought community member's input in order to determine which food options they were interested in purchasing at the new grocery store (Figure 1).

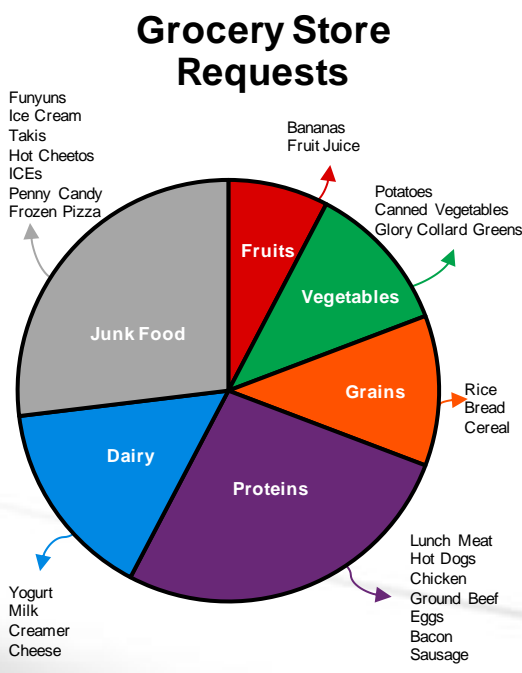


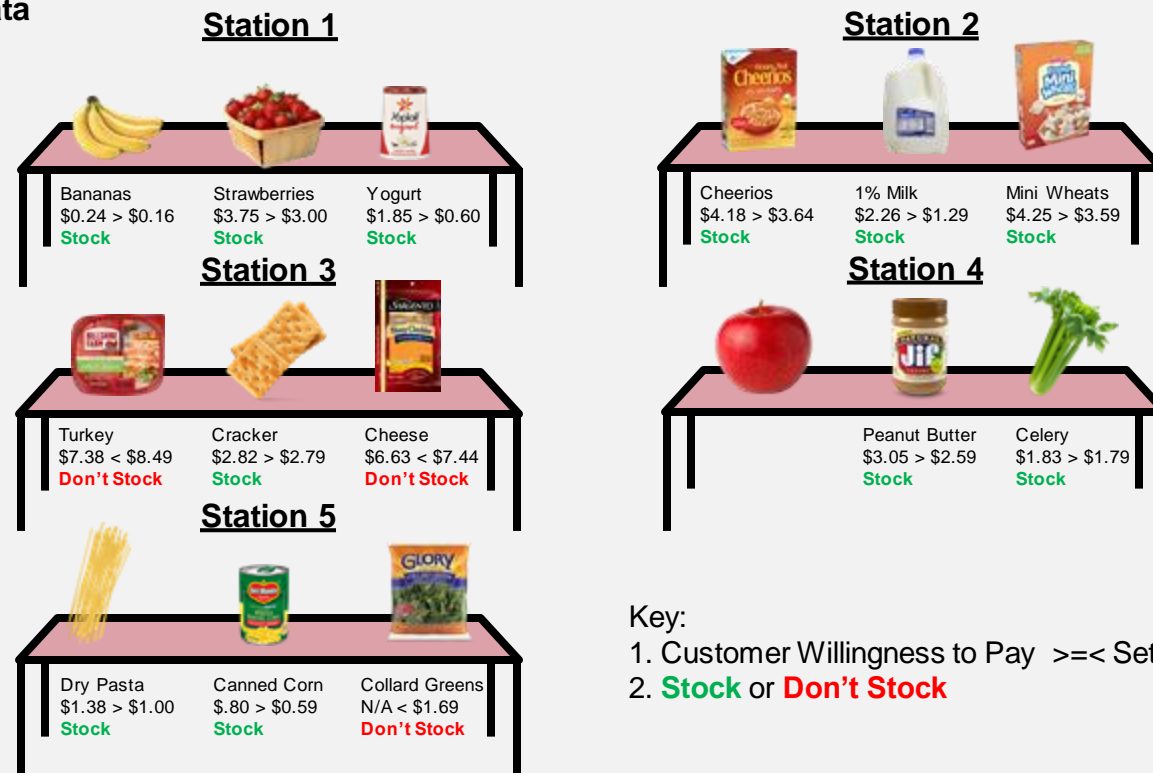
Figure 1

Data Collection & Analysis

Format

- 5 Stations with different healthy food options were made available for the community members to sample³.
- Community Members were encouraged to fill out a survey about food prices and purchase habits.

Data



Key:
 1. Customer Willingness to Pay \geq Set Price
 2. **Stock** or **Don't Stock**

Simulation	Price	%
3 Bananas	\$ 0.50	100%
1 6oz Yogurt	\$ 0.50	38%
Can of Corn	\$ 0.50	13%
3 Apples	\$ 1.00	63%
Box of Pasta	\$ 1.00	25%
1 lb of Rice	\$ 1.00	25%
Bunch of Celery	\$ 1.50	13%
Can of Glory Collard Greens	\$ 1.50	13%
Gallon of 1% Milk	\$ 1.50	38%
Gallon of Whole Milk	\$ 1.50	50%
Jar of Peanut Butter	\$ 2.50	38%
Box of Ritz Crackers	\$ 3.00	0%
1 lb of Boneless Chicken Breast	\$ 3.00	75%
Box of Strawberries	\$ 3.00	38%
Box of Cheerios	\$ 3.50	13%
Box of Frosted Mini Wheats	\$ 3.50	25%
1/2 lb of Deli Cheese Slices	\$ 3.50	0%
1/2 lb of Deli Ham Slices	\$ 3.50	13%
1/2 lb of Deli Turkey Slices	\$ 4.00	25%

Figure 2

Simulation

In order to impose a realistic economic restriction, attendees were asked to pick items when limited to \$10. The percentage of people who chose each item helped reinforce **Stock** or **Don't Stock**

Results

- Bananas, chicken breast, and apples are items that would be purchased the most often and at a greater price point than currently offered.
- Deli cheese, ham, and turkey would need to be offered at a lower price in order to be consistently purchased.

Discussion

- The community was excited to see the space and provide input on products to stock for purchase when it opens in late spring; this enthusiasm bodes well for the longevity of the store.
- Despite the success of the event, our data was limited by number of responses and inconsistencies in literacy. With better advertising and more community engagement we may have been able to collect more data to provide the grocer.
- Next step is to share results with the grocer who can utilize this information to stock shelves with profitable healthy items
- We additionally recommend that Community Matters in coordination with the grocer plan more events to introduce members to healthy alternative food options.



(Photo: Cincinnati Enquirer)

Conclusion

- Price and convenience were the major factors in determining items desired
- LPH currently has narrow preferences in terms of fruits and vegetables
- Vegetables were rarely chosen. If they were, they were paired with other items, such as peanut butter
- Children were reluctant to sample unfamiliar foods, unless encouraged by their parents
- Adults should be educated on nutrition to improve the health of both the adult and pediatric populations
- To allow for community ownership, it has been requested that the grocer employ from within the community

References / Acknowledgments

¹ Census & Demographics. Home - City of Cincinnati. <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/reports-data/census-demographics/>
² Walker RE, Keane CR, Burke JG. Disparities and access to healthy food in the United States: A review of food deserts literature. *Health & Place*. 2010;16(5):876-884.
³ Please see Key Findings Report for full list
 We'd like to thank Jenna Hippensteel for introducing us to the neighborhood and providing us with information about the community's demographics and needs.