Midterm Paper

Community Project: Atlanta Community Food Bank

Amy Barrow, Kaitlynn Bobik, Tiffany Boea, Danny Drew, Mollie Treff

2/11/13

I. Introduction

The Atlanta Community Food Bank has proposed a community project to showcase the work of one of their partner agencies. Upon further collaboration, the Atlanta Community Food Bank has selected Collins Memorial United Methodist Church for the purposes of this project. The issue the community project is addressing is to help identify common interests of community members, key stakeholders, and mutual areas of focus in order to engage and bring the community together for a common cause: to end hunger and food insecurity. The utilization of social media will also help to dispel myths of hunger, and show hunger as a prevalent social issue that affects varying classes and populations, regardless of socioeconomic status, race, or gender. The community project requires students to develop written and video content for use on the Atlanta Community Food Bank's website, as well as the Food Bank's "Story Bank" for future generations to view and enjoy. The MSW group will be responsible for collecting the "story" of Collins Memorial through a community assessment, organizational assessment, as well as through staff and client interviews with those at Collins Memorial and the Atlanta Community Food Bank (ACFB). In addition to the mentioned tasks, the community project will also result in a sustainability plan, in order for future groups and Food Bank staff to be able to replicate our project at a later date for telling the "story" of supplementary community partners of the Food Bank.

II. Participants and Ethical Issues

A. Participants

The food pantry at Collins Memorial Church was started three years ago by Cindy Corona, a childhood resident of the Bolton Road neighborhood, who returned after moving to Cobb County to raise her family. Upon returning to the Bolton Road community in Northwest Atlanta, Cindy noticed the need for greater access to food and nutritional items. She took it upon herself to start the

food pantry, and along with the help of her parents, childhood babysitter, as well as numerous volunteers, has grown the Collins Memorial food distribution into a large operation that serves between 200 and 400 families every Wednesday. In the past 12 months, Cindy and her team of volunteers have ordered over 400,000 pounds of food from the Atlanta Community Food Bank to be distributed at Collins Memorial.

The recipients of food at Collins Memorial Church live within the Bolton Road community. Though the makeup of the surrounding area is largely Hispanic, only two percent of the food recipients at Collins Memorial are Hispanic/Latino. One percent of the population receiving food is White, and the remaining 97 percent are African-American, according to their estimates. Significant portions of the recipients are senior citizens, of which, many are struggling with a disability. Homeless/ displaced men, women, and families receive food from Collins Memorial as well, but the homeless population is not the main client of the food pantry. The majority of recipients are working part-time to full-time jobs, or are in between jobs. In addition, many families with children receive food from Collins Memorial, and there are often children ranging from infants to 17-year-olds that walk along side their parents to receive food each Wednesday. An interesting dynamic to the food distribution is that many of the volunteers are also recipients of food, and live in the neighborhood.

Our group interacts with the food recipients every Wednesday at the food pantry. At least three group members have been there each week, to hand out food and meet the volunteers and recipients. During these initial meetings, we have spoken briefly with many of the recipients as they make their way through the line, and we have heard many of their stories through informal conversation. These informal meetings will further enhance our future interactions with participants for the purposes of our community project. We will conduct face-to-face interviews with recipients for the video and audio portions of our social media project. In addition, we will conduct face-to-

face interviews with volunteers, many of whom have been volunteering since the program began about three years ago. With their consent, we will film these conversations, as well as important events at the food pantry.

B. NASW Code of Ethics

Our project with the Atlanta Community Food Bank and Collins Memorial raises a number of ethical issues. Since we will be filming recipients and volunteers, and potentially releasing the recording material to the public, we need to ensure that those who are filmed give their consent. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics (2008) clearly states, "Social workers should obtain clients' informed consent before audio taping or videotaping clients or permitting observation of services to clients by a third party" (p. 8). As such, our group has obtained an information release form from the Atlanta Community Food Bank, which grants us permission to use any form of media obtained during the making of our project. We will inform each volunteer and participant of their right to abstain from being in the videos, photographs, audio recordings, or any other part of our media project, and explain that their signature gives us the right to use the media for any and all ACFB related materials. The ultimate goals of our project are to shed light on the problem of food insecurity, highlight the efforts being made to combat hunger, and privilege the voice of those who are forced to seek nutritional assistance. We will therefore use the information and media gathered to tell the stories of the recipients of food and volunteers as they are told to us and will not manipulate the media for a purpose that will not benefit those who are food insecure.

Another ethical issue that we have already encountered involves the close relation between the food distribution and the church service at Collins Memorial. According to Collins Memorial, and to the best knowledge of our supervisor at the food bank, there is an optional church service prior to food distribution at Collins Memorial. In actuality, however, the food pantry's process for

organizing the recipients and giving out food makes the church service effectively mandatory instead of optional. In order to receive food, members of the community must have a number that is given out each morning on the pamphlets handed out at the Methodist service at Collins Memorial. The members of our group have witnessed members of the community turned away because they were not in the service and therefore did not have a number. This practice may violate the clients' rights to self-determination (NASW, 2008, p. 7). By effectively forcing someone to attend a Methodist Church service and listen to the sermon, the food pantry is forcing beliefs of a certain sect of Christianity on others, regardless of their personal religious beliefs. There is a power differential created between the volunteers and employees of Collins Memorial and the recipients because of the fact that Collins Memorial controls the distribution of food. Whether they intend to or not, the food pantry at Collins Memorial is using the fact that they have food, which the recipients need, to control other aspects of their lives. Our group will be consulting with our supervisor at the ACFB to determine any actions that need to be taken to avoid this breach of ethics.

Another ethical issue that is associated with our work with the food pantry is that of food safety. So far, our group members have witnessed items of food passed out to recipients that we would deem unsafe or unsanitary. Such items include bread with visible blue mold and fruit that is well past its prime. However, our personal biases may be affecting our judgment in these cases. Our opinions on what is inedible may be different than those of others who are in more desperate situations. In order to address the issue, we will seek out the opinions of the experts at the ACFB, who are ultimately responsible for deciding what food is safe to provide to recipients. As social workers acting as providers of food, we must be sure that we are not putting our clients in danger of nutritional or health problems.

III. Literature Review

The issue of food insecurity and hunger is important for the social work community to address. In a country of excess, many families do not get enough to eat or have access to fresh foods. Lack of food is a violation of basic human rights deserved by all people in order to live a healthy and fulfilling life. Hunger affects all types of people from all walks of life and food insecurities have truly become a global issue. The Atlanta Community Food Bank estimates that 17.4% of Georgia families are affected by hunger or food insecurities (ACFB, 2013). Nationally the USDA estimates 14.9% of all families or 50.1 million people across the country suffer from food insecurities (USDA, 2013). This community project will shed light on the issue of food insecurities in the metro Atlanta area through the use of social media advocacy.

A. Frameworks and Models for Community Practice

Rothman's (2007) Capacity Development will be the framework used to complete this project. This framework best fits because it operates on the idea that change is possible through empowerment. Our project seeks to empower the participants by giving them their own voice through a social media campaign. This model believes that total community empowerment is possible when the people in that community competently and take civic action (Rothman, 2007). This approach works when a large number of people in one geographical area work together (Rothman, 2007). Our project highlights the community partnership shared by Collins Memorial church and the Atlanta Community Food Bank. We will also highlight relationships built between members of the Bolton Road Community and the volunteers at Collins Memorial. This tight-knit community is a working example of Rothman's (2007) Capacity Development in practice.

Other frameworks, which may apply to our project, include advocacy. This project is largely based on the use of advocacy among the community or people power to create change. While social

advocacy is largely associated with more distinct forms of change such as sit-ins and civil disobedience, this project uses social media as a form of non-aggressive change.

Utilizing Capacity Development is a great way to improve the overall process of completing this project. By focusing on the strength of the community and allowing clients and volunteers to tell the story in their own words we are creating a project that is truly community driven. The overall outcome this project hopes to achieve is to dispel hunger and food insecurity myths and to get the general public involved in the fight to end hunger. Using the Capacity Development Model can enhance these outcomes. Empowering one community at a time is a great way to start the conversation that will help to end hunger myths. Capacity Development hopes to achieve large-scale change, or change that effects entire communities. By creating a social media campaign that can be accessed easily by large groups of people, we are putting into practice the idea of broad participation as outlined by Rothman. It is our hope that by using a Capacity Development approach we will realize, "social progress through active participation" (Rothman, 2007, p. 22).

One common weakness that is associated with this framework includes low participation among clients (Rothman, 2007). Rothman (2007) states that many people may not see the value of participating in such a capacity. This weakness may become an issue when applied to our project. For this project to be successful we must rely on participation among the community. Their involvement is paramount. The recipients of food from Collins Memorial must see this project as a way to empower the community at large. In order to do this they must be willing to share their stories of hunger, struggle, and survival. This disclosure may be difficult for many of the community members to participate in, as sharing such stories may be seen as an embarrassment or even weakness. Part of our job in completing this project is to empower these clients to share their stories, thus moving the greater community to come together to fight with their fellow community members in the battle against food insecurity.

B. Theoretical and Empirical Literature

It is well known that hunger is not a domestic issue. Adopted by the world's leaders at the United Nations in 2000, the first of the Millennium Development Goals "was a promise to fight poverty and reduce the number of the hungry in half by 2015, from 850 million to 425 million hungry souls on this planet... By 2008, the figure had actually risen to 950 million and is estimated to reach 1 billion in a few years" (Serageldin, 2009, p. 35). As a result, hunger causes nearly 40,000 deaths every year. Serageldin (2009) believe that a global goal should be set to ensure that all people enjoy food security: reliable access to a sufficient quantity, quality, and diversity of food to sustain an active and healthy life. Naturally, the term "global" includes the battle that is being fought in our own local communities. The US Department of Agriculture's 2011 report on household food security in the United States showed that 14.9% of households were food insecure at some point during the year (p. v). Food insecurity was identified by multiple indications of food access problems, while very low food insecurity was defined by reduced food intake and disrupted eating patterns of one or more members of the household because of insufficient money and resources for food (p. 4). Rates of food insecurity were highest in low-income households with incomes below the 185% poverty threshold, households with children, single parents, belonging to a Hispanic or African American racial background, or elderly (p. 10). A study by Frongillo and Horan (2004) expands on the effects of food insecurity on the elderly by showing that without the appropriate amount of food nutrition, the elderly could experience tremendous medical conditions that could cause disability or the need for long-term care. Since the body requires proper nutrition in order to function at an optimal level, the results of the Frongillo and Horan (2004) study could be generalizeable to differing age populations as having a significant implication.

A large part of establishing a platform for the fight against hunger is to determine which areas are in the most need of assistance. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (2009), the

term "food desert" describes low-income neighborhoods, both urban and rural, that have limited access to full-service supermarkets or grocery stores. Because supermarkets generally offer a variety of healthy foods at reasonable cost, food access is defined by proximity to a supermarket or large grocery store. It is important to note that including supermarket food affordability in the definition of food desert seemed essential, because vulnerable populations are more sensitive than the general population to the cost of food. Physical proximity to a high-cost supermarket has no service a low-income household, due to the inability to actually afford the groceries supplied by the high-cost market (Jiao et al., 2012, p. 32).

A study conducted by Jiao, Moudon, Ulmer, Hurvitz, and Drewnowski (2012) sought to introduce a new approach to identifying food deserts. They established criteria based on income, physical access for different modes of travel, and supermarkets based on food price with the assumption that low-income populations need to access low-cost supermarkets (Jiao et al., 2012, p. 32). Classifying supermarkets by food costs clearly changed the identification of food deserts (Jaio et al., 2012, p. 35). In addition, the authors (2012) found that when supermarket access was defined as "pedestrian access" to a low-cost supermarket, the area defined as a food desert significantly increased (p.38).

In order for the community project group gain an even deeper understanding surrounding food deserts, the populations that live and work in those areas must be further researched. Through her book, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America*, Ehrenreich (2001) discusses the trials and tribulations of the working poor in the United States. In order for Ehrenreich to describe the life of this specific population, she lived and worked along side of them, and took on the role of a person belonging to the working poor-class. She tells of her struggles to pay bills, deplorable living conditions, and the labor-intensive work she needed to accomplish in order to receive a meager paycheck. She tells the tales of the majority of the working poor in the United States, and of the

great effort it takes to afford decent housing, transportation, and to keep healthy food on the table. To further illustrate the description of the daily life of an impoverished population, as described by Ehrenreich's (2001) text, Lappe, Collins, and Rosset's (1998) book entitled, *World Hunger: Twelve Myths*, delves deeper, and explores the common misconceptions of the face of hunger. For example, the authors (1998) help to define who is, in fact, hungry. The common misconception is that only the homeless are hungry. This is certainly not true, as the cost and availability of food make it nearly impossible for people belonging to working-class and middle-class families the ability to afford what can be considered the "luxuries" of fresh fruit and vegetables. A study by Coleman-Jensen (2010) that examined answers to USDA questionnaires to determine food insecurity showed that food insecurity numbers are much higher in number than reported by the USDA, and the problem increases when the number of members of the household increase, as well as among racial minorities. Furthermore, a study by Cook and Frank (2008) showed that food deprivation has a positive correlation with developmental and cognitive delays in children. Hunger and food insecurity do not discriminate. They can happen to any gender, race, or class, at any age.

In order to end hunger and food insecurity, interventions must be employed to make healthy food accessible and available to all classes and populations. Dreze and Sen (2003), describe a type of intervention that they feel would be effective, in their book titled, *Hunger and Public Action*. Dreze and Sen (2003) discuss the possibilities for public action, such as advocacy, government supported nutrition programs, and education programs in relation to combating the social issues of hunger and food insecurity. The text also explores interventions used by Indian and Chinese governments to reduce the malnourishment of its people. Dreze and Sen (2003) conclude that education and healthcare are the top two ways to combat food insecurity. Similar to Dreze and Sen (2003), Chilton and Rose (2009) and Himmelgreen and Romero-Daza (2010) suggest reframing the problem of food insecurity using a human rights framework through a national plan that includes

mapping the prevalence of food insecurity, government accountability, and public participation. Chilton and Rose (2009) expand upon Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which identifies the basic human rights to a minimum standard of living, which, as they point out, includes access to food (p. 1204). Furthermore, through a study of nutritional deficiencies specifically researched in Georgia, the U.S. state with the sixth highest prevalence of food insecurity, Lee, Fischer, and Johnson's (2010) findings suggest food insecurity be addressed through community-based integration of nutrition assistance and education, due to the significant positive outcomes of participants that had been exposed to community supported programming.

A second type of intervention to raise awareness of the issues of hunger and food insecurity revolves around the use of social media. Chilton, Rabinowich, Council, Breaux (2009) examined an intervention tactic utilizing the "Witness to Hunger" program. Results of the program showed that the use of social media gathered attention, and was effective at influencing social policy through personal experiences. Rock, McIntyre, Persaud, and Thomas (2011) examined how using social media advocacy campaigns furthered the awareness about income related food insecurity. This study was aimed to target all types of families through radio, Internet, and television in hopes of educating and raising awareness of food insecurity issues, and how they relate to levels of income. Results of this campaign were considered to be successful as multiple news programs, Internet sites, government interaction, and members of the general public participated in online discussions, and interviews about poverty based food insecurities and solutions.

Due to the effectiveness of the utilization of social media in bringing awareness to issues of hunger, and influencing social policy, our community project group hopes to achieve the amount of success that the social media studies have received in the past. Through showcasing an important community partnership and the recipients of food from the work and coordination efforts of the

Atlanta Community Food Bank, we hope to enlighten others in immediate and distant communities to lend their support to those that are experiencing food insecurity.

IV. Goals/Objectives and Methodology

Establishing clear and precise objectives are necessary in determining whether or not the overall goals are achievable. The purpose of the community project is to highlight the services of ACFB in the efforts to end hunger and food insecurity. The objective for our community project with the ACFB and Collins Memorial collaboration is to conduct five interviews. These interviews will consist of one ACFB employee, two volunteers from the partner agency, and two weekly participants. The interviews will be portrayed in the form of storytelling that captivates the history, purpose, and the need for ACFB services. Through telling the story of the collaboration and weekly recipients of food from the distribution, our project will also attempt to end the unfathomable myths that surround the idea that only the homeless and displaced are in need of food. These narratives will be emphasized through a minimum of four pages of statistical data, two hundred photographic images, two hours of video from the weekly food pantry distributions, and five hours of audio sound and recordings.

The second objective to the community project is to reduce the lengthy narratives to a one to four minute video that will showcase Collins Memorial's partnership with ACFB. The last objective for the community project is to have the final video published on the ACFB website and other social media outlets. Once the objectives are clearly defined, the instruments and outcomes used to measure the progress of meeting the project objectives include journaling, oral and written feedback, assessments, and evaluations.

The journaling method will consist of creating and keeping track of things that needs to be accomplished as well a list of achievements. Journaling will also help encourage and motivate the

group to remain focused and take action each day. The other technique used for measuring the community project objectives is constant oral and written feedback. Feedback is a fundamental tool to successful learning, and is an essential part of the community project. Feedback will also enable each group member to reflect and develop on his or her own strengths and weaknesses. Group members will receive feedback from our community project professor, project supervisor at ACFB, partnership agency funders, and the Georgia State University community. Peer-to-Peer assessment is another form of a measuring method that will be performed during the duration of the community project. This particular structure will allow team members to assess other members of the team, as well as themselves. This course of action will also provide each team member with adequate direction and consistency throughout the continuation of completing the community project. The last methods that will be utilized as a measure tools are oral and written evaluations during monthly supervision meetings with the project supervisor at ACFB. The purpose of supervision is to discuss, review, and evaluate the progress of the team member's work and performance against objectives set out in the work plan, while also sharing supportive ideas and recommendations. Monthly supervision also grants the opportunity for two-way communication and to develop a focus in order to meet the overall targets, goals, and objectives.

The detailed monthly time-line for implementation of the project for the month of January consists of meeting with partner agency staff and key representatives from ACFB to coordinate and develop an action plan. Group members will also visit, tour, and complete the Hunger 101 workshop to grasp a full understanding of the of ACFB mission. Next, the GSU group member will attend the first supervisory meeting on 1/17/13 to discuss the objectives, goals, and expectations for the food bank community project. Subsequently, group members will start volunteering at the Collins Memorial food pantry and begin meeting with the weekly participants. GSU group members will submit weekly reports of the progress of the food bank community project.

February will consist of focusing on building relationships at ACFB and Collins Memorial food pantry. Group members will also select and meet with a photographer and/or videographer to discuss the main objectives and expectations of the video project. The GSU group members will secure equipment from the Georgia State University Digital Aquarium, and begin filming footage from the mobile food pantry provided by ACFB and Collins Memorial volunteers. Team members will also begin selecting weekly food pantry participants to interview. These participants will be subject to sharing their personal stories about the ACFB and Collins Memorial collaboration via audio and/or video recordings. Each group member will also work diligently to complete the necessary assignments that are required for the GSU community project: weekly progress reports, skills checkpoint I, and midterm paper. Furthermore, GSU student will attend the monthly supervision meeting on 2/14/13 to discuss further plans and developmental options. Lastly, GSU group members will begin to devise and develop a sustainability plan detailing the policies and procedures for completing a project such as this in the future.

The group members will utilize the month of March to attend the ACFB Annual Hunger Walk, and the last mobile food pantry drive of the semester. The walk and mobile food pantry drive will be featured in the community food bank video project. Group members will meet with the photographer/videographer to discuss the final edits and to finalize all audio and video content. Team members will continue to submit the weekly progress reports and attend the monthly supervision meeting. Lastly, group members will complete a draft of sustainability plan that recognizes their opportunity and need to address hunger issues in communities in a collectively influential way.

The month of April will be utilized to attend the final community project meeting with the project supervisor on 4/4/13 to review and discuss the final video content. Group members will also discuss, develop, and practice the community project presentation, as well as complete the final

draft of sustainability plan. Group members will participate in two oral presentations that will be held at the Atlanta Community Food Bank and Georgia State University. Students will also submit the final required community project assignments: weekly progress reports, skills checkpoint II, and final paper. Lastly, GSU will submit a peer evaluation of the performances of their group members.

The preliminary plan for analyzing the results from the food bank community project starts with gathering information about ACFB, Collins Memorial United Methodist Church, and the Bolton Road community. During this time, GSU students will also be exposed to oral and written feedback from their professor, project supervisors at ACFB and Collins Memorial regarding social media release forms, and potential social media websites that will display the video content. Upon the request and submission of the release form, GSU project members will be granted permission to begin filming and recording the necessary materials provided by the weekly food pantry participants. This phase ends when the ACFB project supervisor and the representative from Collins Memorial review and approve the preliminary plans.

V. Social Media and Conventional Media

The community project that we have chosen with the Atlanta Community Food Bank heavily relies on conventional media to relay a message to the community about hunger. We will be using video, audio, and photography to portray the mission of the organization, as well as attempt to break the myth or stereotype that people who obtain necessities from a distributor are homeless. Ultimately, the use of conventional media will enhance our project by providing a visual piece to create an emotional impact on viewers.

With regard to social media, this piece will be displayed on the ACFB website for all visitors of the site to view. If successful, we can hope for a long-term goal of spreading our video and "blog-style" written materials throughout the community in various forms, such as Facebook or

catching the attention of other agencies that are interested in partnering with the Atlanta Community Food Bank. In turn, they may become compelled to share information with other people; however, at this point, it is unknown if there are any copyright or consent issues when it comes to material sharing. Overall, there is going to be a heavy reliance on conventional media to create a short video that will help to further expose the agency's mission, and inform the public of the extensive population they serve, and who benefits from their services.

VI. Draft of Budget

Out of Pocket Expenses:

- Copying/ printing of project's written content and sustainability plan workbook: \$75
- Expenses related to media/ video content (CDs, tapes, memory cards, editing of content by professional): \$125

VII. MOU

Memorandum of Understanding

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between The Atlanta Community Food Bank (ACFB) and Georgia State University (GSU).

Georgia State University Students: Amy Barrow, Kaitlynn Bobik, Tiffany Boea, Daniel Drew, and Mollie Treff.

Project Supervisor: Chris Ferguson, MSW

Project Summary: The purpose of this project is to create awareness about hunger through collecting stories of those experiencing hunger, as well as those fighting against hunger. The GSU students will highlight the work of one of ACFB partner agencies to be used on the ACFB website and social media outlets. The GSU students will also develop a sustainability plan regarding the policies and procedures for completing this type of project in the future.

GSU students will do the following:

- Perform a community assessment of the efforts between ACFB and Collins Memorial
- Create a description of Collins Memorial to be used on the ACFB website
- Interview staff from ACFB and Collins Memorial UMC
- Interview clients from Collins Memorial UMC
- Interview funders from Collins Memorial UMC
- Develop written content, as well as video and photography, for use on ACFB website and social media.
- Develop a blueprint/ sustainability plan detailing the policies and procedures for completing a project such as this in the future.

ACFB will do the following:

- Provide a proposed timeline
- Provide any necessary training
- Meet bi-weekly or as needed with GSU students to discuss progress and issues
- Provide the name and contact information of the partnership that they would like the students to highlight

The GSU students will respect all levels of confidentiality and privacy of the ACFB and their partners. If any issues or disagreements arise between the GSU student group members or community partners during the duration of this project, the GSU student group will defer to Chris Ferguson, the ACFB project supervisor for input and ultimate decision.

This application is submitted by the GSU MSW student group to Dr. Fred Brooks, for participation in the GSU MSW Community Project for Spring Semester 2013. The GSU MSW student group will be completing the above stated tasks voluntarily and for no compensation. This agreement will be terminated at the end of April 2013. This agreement may be revisited and updated at any time between January 2013 to April 2013. All parties must approve and sign to any changes to the above agreement.

Spring 2013 Memorandum of Understanding: ACFB & GSU 2

Signatures:	
Chief legu-	(1/13/12
ACFB Project Supervisor Chris Ferguson	Date
	12/3/12
GSU Student, Amy Barrow	Date
Kairlum Robik	12/3/12
GSU Student, Kaitlynn Bobik	Date
A Brea	12/4/12
GSU Student, Tiffany Boea	Date
	12/4/12
GSU Student, Daniel Drew	Date
VVIdlu Tul	12/4/12
GSU Student Mollie Treff	Date

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