Partnering with low-income mothers to address hunger:

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University of South Carolina March 29
…How ‘linking communities’ brings trouble & opportunity
Overview

- Food Insecurity in US
- Health Impacts
- Participatory Research
  Witnesses to Hunger
- The trouble
- The opportunity
Food Insecurity Definition

- Lack of access to enough food for an active and healthy life
Rates of Food Insecurity 2011

- **General population**
  - 49 Million (14%)

- **Children (under age 18)**
  - 17 Million (21%)

- **Young Children (under 6)**
  - 9 Million (24.9%)
Disparities in Food Insecurity by Household Type

- **HP 2010 Target**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Households</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with Children</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household with Children &lt; 6</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Headed Households</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- White: 21.8, 24.9, 26.9
- Black: 22.8, 26.9, 33.0
- Latino: 20.5, 30.4, 31.0
Health & Social Impacts of Food Insecurity

- Food Insecure children suffer more health problems compared to food secure children
  - Poor development
  - Stomach aches, head aches, colds, ear infections
  - High hospitalization rates

- Food Insecure children suffer more psychosocial and behavioral problems
  - Aggression, hyperactivity, anxiety
  - Greater need for mental health services

- Food Insecure children have more trouble with learning and academic performance
Food Hardship for Families with Children 2009-2010

49.5%

Nationally 23.4%
Ranked 2nd
Food Hardship rates: Families with children 2009-2010

South Carolina
Rate for families with Children: 27.9%

National Rate 23.4%
Informing Evidence-Based Policy Decisions that Prevent Child Hunger & Promote Children's Health

State Costs of Growing Up Poor in the U.S.

55,000 children & families (~5,500 in Philadelphia)
Federal Assistance Programs--monitored by

- Food Stamps
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- Medicaid
- Federal Housing Subsidies
- Energy Assistance

Health

- Food Insecurity
- Hospitalizations
- Child Wellbeing
- Maternal Depression
- Child Growth
- Child Development
Why children 0-3?

- rapid brain growth, essential for cognitive, social and physical development

- Any interruption in good nutrition, or other hardship may have lasting effects
Food Insecurity & Health Outcomes
Adjusted Odds Ratios*

Controlled for site, race, child age, caregiver age, marital status, education, birth weight, child breastfed

- 73% Increased risk for developmental concerns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Food Secure</th>
<th>Food Insecure</th>
<th>AOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fair/Poor Child Health</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>1.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hospitalizations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.79</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maternal Depressive Symptoms</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Development Concerns</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All differences p value < .0001
Economic Hardship

- Food Insecurity
- Housing Insecurity
- Energy Insecurity
Evidence for Policy Solutions

- Food stamps improve child health and prevent food insecurity
- WIC protects against underweight, and promotes child health and development
- Energy Assistance protects against food insecurity and poor child health
- Housing subsidies protect against underweight and promote child health and development
“Expert” Witnesses
Translating Science Into Action

Policy Brief

Policy Change

Congressional Testimony

Press

Public knowledge

Research Article
Digging Deeper
Research
Exploring difficult to understand associations

Advocacy
Changing the Dialogue about Hunger & Poverty

Witnesses to Hunger

Ethnographic research
 Participatory action research / photovoice
 Investigate associations between food insecurity and
  - Public assistance
  - Poor health
  - Maternal depression

Exhibit
 Speaking engagements and testimony
 informing the press
 Website
 Blog
 YouTube
 Social networking (Twitter/Facebook)
Photovoice Methodology & participatory action research

- One-one-One semi structured interviews
  - Why did you take the picture?
  - What do you want people to see?
  - What do you want people to do?
- Focus Groups to share photos and choose themes for exhibit
- Reciprocal ethnography with (24 / 45) women
All interviews transcribed

Interviews & Photos managed through Atlas.ti

Coding, family codes, supercodes, and network analyses (clustering).

Phenomenological approach
Examples of Primary Topics

> 10,000 Photos, > 200 videos, >1,000pp transcription

- Children
- Motherhood
- Neighbors & Neighborhood
- Jobs and Education
- Housing & Homelessness
- Food & Hunger
- Health
- Child care
- Isolation
- Pain / Depression
- Violence and Safety
- Breaking the cycle
Participant (advocate)

Policy Maker

Research
Digging Deeper

The Trouble...
Income

“My Little Tiny Pay Check”
Income (unofficial)
Welfare is like a chain
Imani Sullivan
The anguish of families: “It makes me feel like less of a mom not to have food.”

Brianna Scott, 10, brother Joey, 8, and siblings wait for sloppy joes in Juniata Park. Their mother filled cups halfway with punch, telling them: “Please don’t drink before you eat. There’s no more.”

“It makes me feel like less of a mom not to have food”

A Portrait of Hunger

10 part series
Blood on the street from shooting the night before
Mother beats 20yr old daughter

Intimate partner violence
The opportunity.
Enrich what’s already there

Desire to Help Others
- Peer Mentoring, Self Help Groups
- Entrepreneurship

Asset Building: Changing the system
The U.S. Senate

Private schools and colleges

National webinars

The White House
Boston, Baltimore, Providence, Harrisburg, Camden NJ...