Food Gatherers’ Healthy School Pantry Program distributes free fresh produce and other healthy foods to families at eligible schools in Washtenaw County. This evaluation looked at six of the twelve total participating schools in order to determine the impact the program has on families and how it can be improved. 66 families were surveyed, 18 families were interviewed, and those who help out with the program at the schools as well as Food Gatherers staff were interviewed to determine further program improvements that could be made. This evaluation was implemented in order to make this program work better for everyone involved, especially families that participate in the program.

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<th>%</th>
<th>Convenient location</th>
<th>Comfortable visiting the school</th>
<th>Saves time</th>
<th>Saves money</th>
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“This program has made it easier for my family to access fresh fruits and vegetables because:

“It’s easy to get the veggies and fruits. My children are a lot more open to trying different things, where before I couldn’t pay them to try anything new; so thank you for that.”
- Program participant

“I like this program. If they got rid of it, I don’t know what I would do.”
- Program participant
IMPACT ON ATTITUDES TOWARDS FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- 55% of families said their child is very interested in fresh fruits and vegetables and 38% said their child is somewhat interested as a result of this program.
- 66% of respondents said they are very comfortable trying new fresh fruits and vegetables as a result of this program, 27% said they are comfortable, and 5% said their comfort level has not been affected by this program.

These are all important program outcomes as positive attitudes toward fresh fruits and vegetables contribute to increased consumption of these foods.

“IT'S A VERY COMMUNAL ATMOSPHERE. THEY APPRECIATE THAT THEIR PRESENCE IS VALUED AS A CLIENT AND AS A VOLUNTEER.“ - A STAFF MEMBER INVOLVED AT ONE OF THE SCHOOL DISTRIBUTIONS DISCUSSES WHAT FAMILIES LIKE ABOUT THE PROGRAM.
KEY FINDINGS

- Many participants appreciate the opportunity to try new foods through this program, and some participants continue to purchase those new foods.

- The majority of participant interviewees found out about the program through the school. This highlights the importance of the school's involvement in outreach, promotion, and implementation.

- The majority of families (78%) reported that the food lasts them either 1 or 2 weeks. Families may benefit from the distributions being held twice per month so that they have fresh fruits and vegetables in their home all month long.

- Most of the interviewees do not have SNAP benefits or go to other food pantries. This shows the need for SNAP outreach and information about additional resources during the distributions.

Because of this program, my family:

- 80% Spends less on fresh fruits and vegetables
- 13% Spends the same amount on fresh fruits and vegetables
- 5% Spends more on fresh fruits and vegetables

“I like this program because I save money and I get fresh food.”
- Program participant

“My kids realized that fresh fruits and vegetables must be pretty important if there is a program dedicated just to providing them to families!”
- Program participant
“I get a lot of stuff I normally wouldn’t buy. I didn’t think about these different fresh fruits and vegetables until we received them from this program.” - Program participant

How would it impact your family if you did not participate in this program?

- 75%: We would eat less fresh fruits and vegetables
- 20%: We would eat the same amount of fresh fruits and vegetables
- 5%: We would eat more fresh fruits and vegetables

We are happy to have the ability to get the results of this evaluation to our partners at the schools as well as the families who participate in the program. If you have any comments or questions about the evaluation, please do not hesitate to contact Brianna Henderson at brianna@foodgatherers.org. If you would like to share your own story about the program or if you have any additional feedback about the program, please feel free to contact Brianna by email as well.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to participate in this evaluation. Because of you, our Healthy School Pantry Program will be better than ever!

“Believe it or not, this program actually helps a lot.” - Program participant