

Building Healthy Communities

Healthy Food
Happens Here



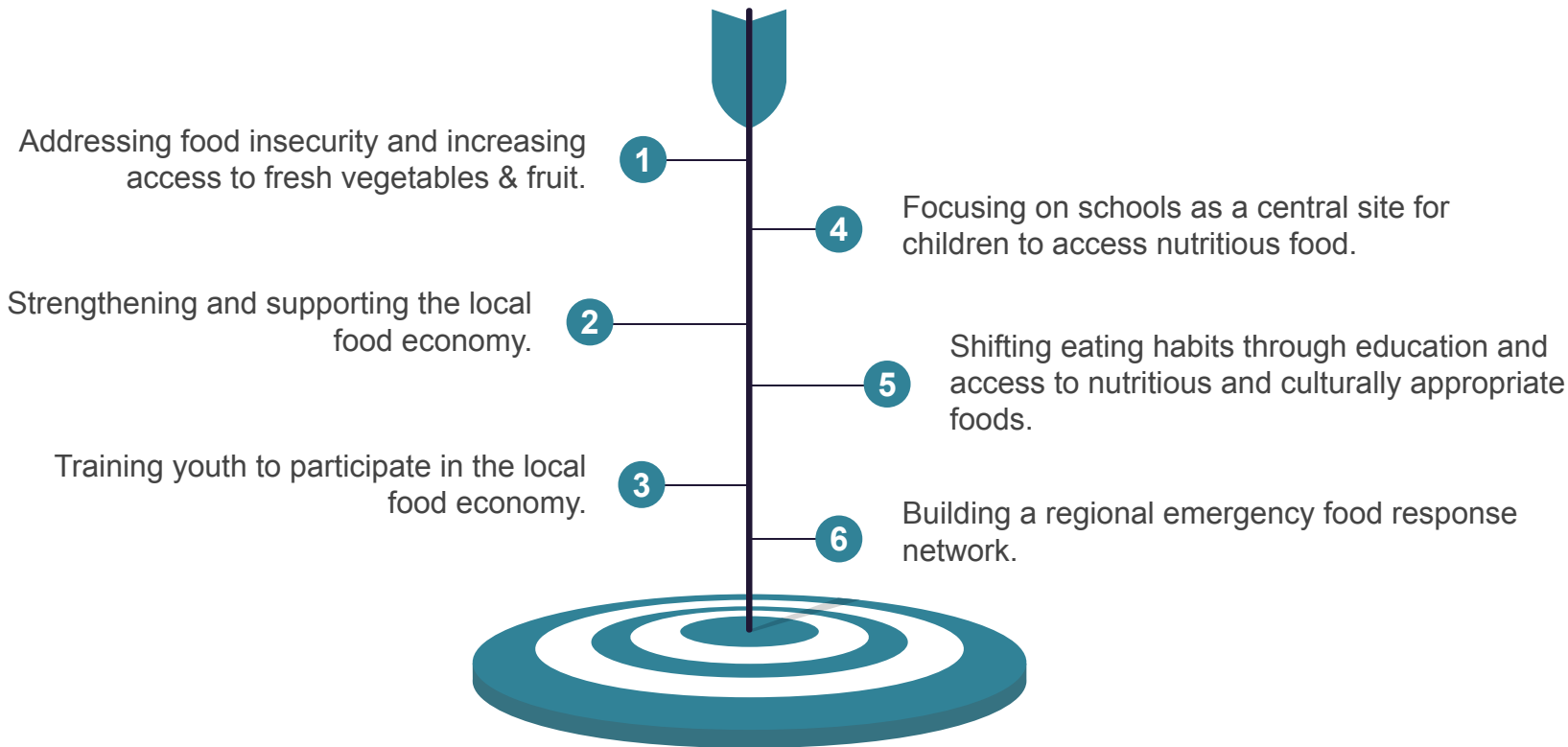
What were we solving for?

Access to healthy and affordable foods can be challenging for rural populations. Many rural areas like Del Norte County and Tribal Lands (DNATL) lack food retailers and producers, and are considered food deserts.

DNATL has one of the highest rates of food insecurity, poverty, and childhood obesity in the state of California.

Lessons Learned

To ensure that all DNATL families had access to healthy, culturally appropriate foods by:



Our Overarching Goal

1

The Importance of Research and Data Driven Change:

- It is critical to have current/updated data available to better understand systemic issues instead of shifting blame on parents and children.
- It is important to build local capacity around data literacy. Data literacy refers to the ability to read, understand, apply, create, and communicate data as information.

2

The Impact of Collaboration and Partnerships:

- Youth in the community played a critical role in advancing access to health food in schools.
- Connecting local farmers to CalFresh beneficiaries increased affordability/accessibility to local produce while supporting the local economy.
- Creating a community-led food council led to the expansion of funding for improving DNATL food systems and the establishment of critical partnerships.
- The collaboration between the DNATL Community Food Council and local schools led to the establishment of school gardens in some of the most food insecure areas in DNATL.
- Racial equity and inclusion needs to be prioritized in food work. Food equity/advocacy work requires local/community ownership and cultural competency.
- One of the main barriers to eating healthy foods is not knowing how to grow, prepare, or cook healthy food.
- The food forest site at the College of the Redwoods is successful for its visibility, accessibility, and the dynamic ways it serves the community
- Conducting empathy research was critical to understand the barriers residents experience in accessing healthy foods—The DNATL BHC Food Initiative applied the results from the empathy research project to create feasible and culturally appropriate solutions towards food insecurity.

Looking to the future—Community vision for the DNATL Food System:

- Resilient rural food systems can benefit from long-term strategies that support food recovery programs and mechanisms to make locally grown food accessible to local residents.
- It is important to create opportunities for youth to interact and participate in the local agricultural/food system as well as advocate for policy changes that support healthy foods in schools.

Policy recommendations for increasing access to healthy foods and food security rates in marginalized, rural, and remote communities like DNATL.

1

Create a strategic planning process to ensure sustainable progress on food systems work in DNATL.

2

Continue to expand regionally and strengthen regional networks/ partnerships.

3

Promote strategies and policies to help people grow their own healthy foods to promote self-sufficiency and decentralization.

4

Replicate the steps that the community took to achieve the policy victories from the first ten years.

5

Create a policy toolkit for local partners (schools, Tribes, non-profits) that highlights local successes and provides sample policies and tools to help further efforts to increase access to healthy foods.

6

Connect the Ancestral Guard Program (Youth-led) to Redwood Voice to recognize and highlight youth leadership and efforts in DNATL.

7

Continue to expand the Agriculture Entrepreneurship Program as part of the Youth Training Academy.

8

Create more food access sites in areas that are considered food deserts.

The majority of DNATL is considered a food desert

Food deserts are residential areas where people have limited access to affordable, healthy foods such as fresh vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.

This may be due to having a low income, having to travel a long distance to a grocery store or farmers market, and being in close proximity to convenience stores, fast food chains, or gas stations that often provide fringe food*.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) criteria for a food desert:

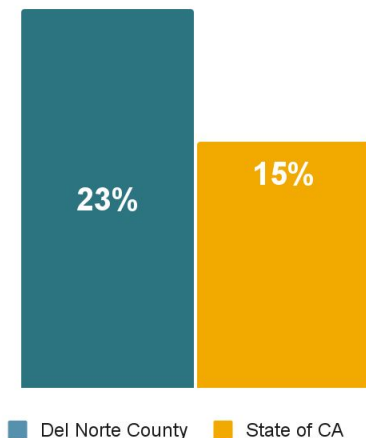
- 1** A census block with at least 20% of residents living in poverty.
- 2** Must be at least a mile away from a large grocery store.
- 3** USDA defines a large grocery store as a supermarket that profits about 2 million dollars annually.

**Fringe food refers to cheap, highly processed, easy to prepare, and non-nutritious food.*

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is defined as the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.

Percent of Residents Living in Poverty (2019)

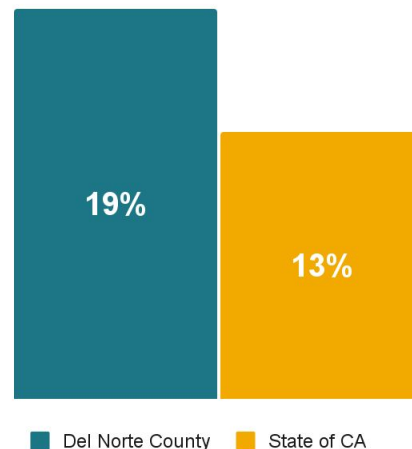


Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which is designed to help low income households purchase nutritional food.

In California, this program is known as CalFresh.

Percent of Households enrolled in SNAP (2019)



Childhood Obesity

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), childhood obesity is one of the most pressing public health issues. These children are more likely to:

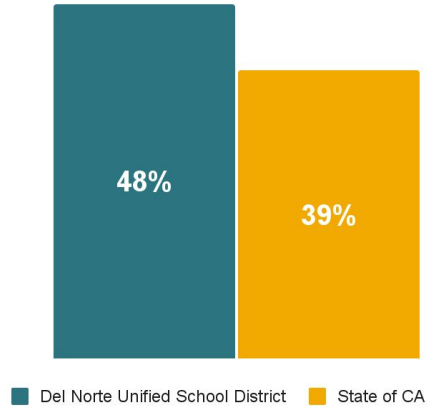


One of the main causes of obesity is the over-dependence on highly processed unhealthy food, which may occur in regions designated as food deserts.

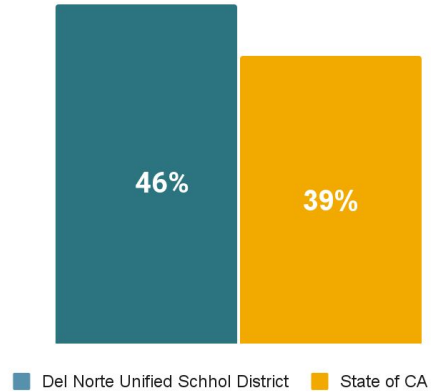
Childhood Obesity

An analysis by the California Center for Rural Policy (CCRP) in 2013 revealed that the prevalence of overweight and obesity among students in DNATL was disproportionately higher than the state of California.

Percent of Students Class 5-9 Who Overweight or Obese (2014)



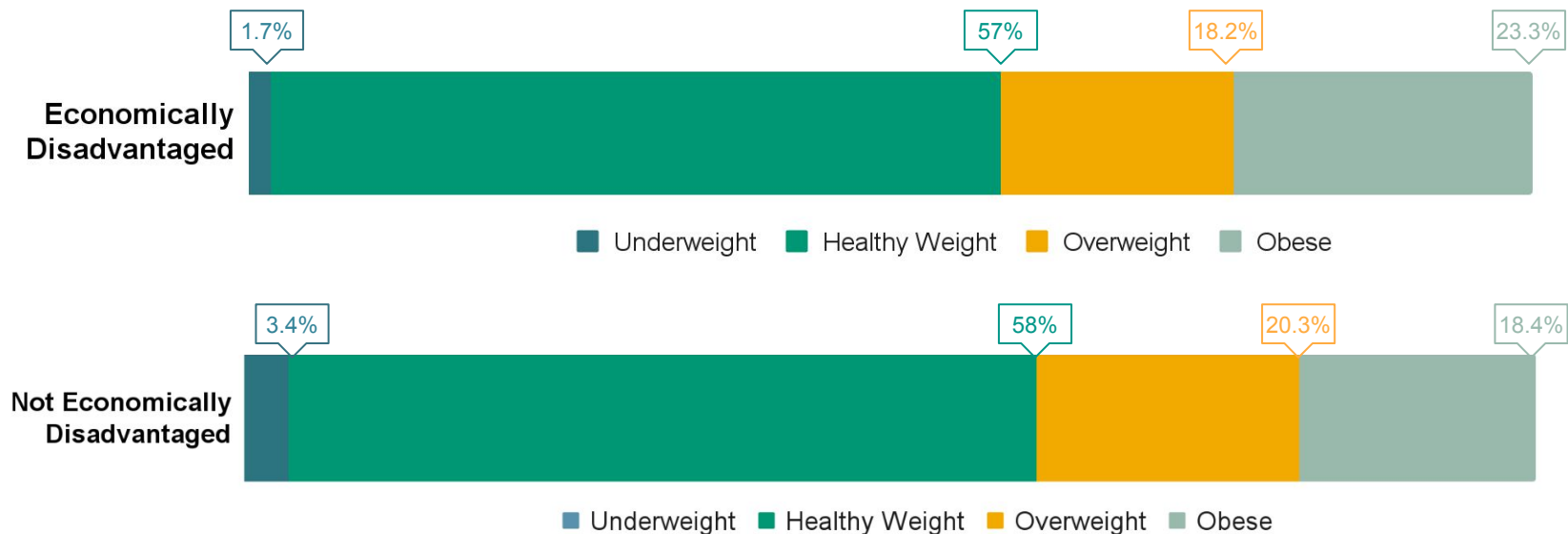
Percent of Students Class 5-9 Who Overweight or Obese (2018)



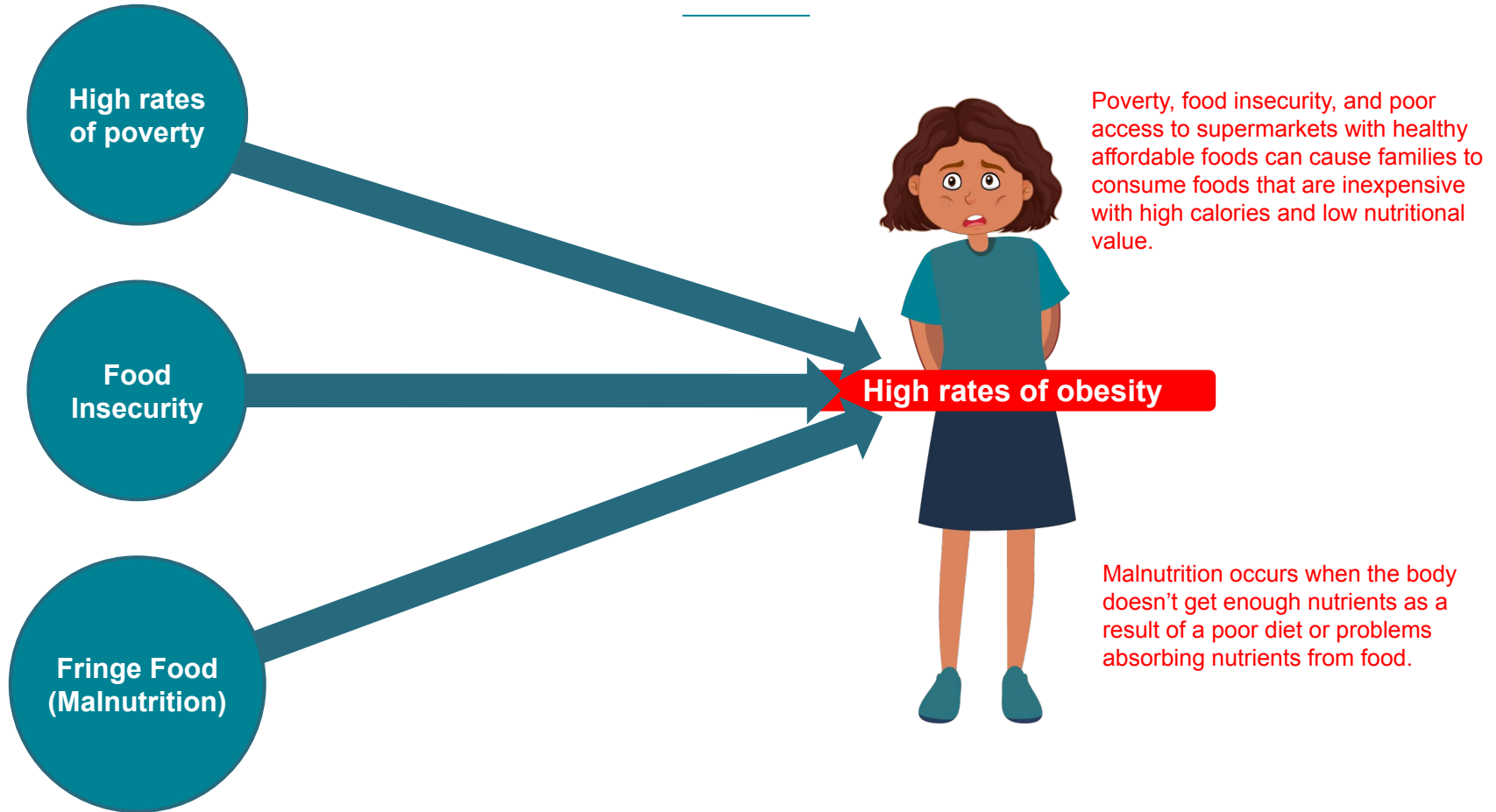
Childhood Obesity

Childhood obesity was more prevalent in economically disadvantaged DNATL students when compared to DNATL students who are not economically disadvantaged.

Weight Category Distribution by Economic Status



Childhood Obesity



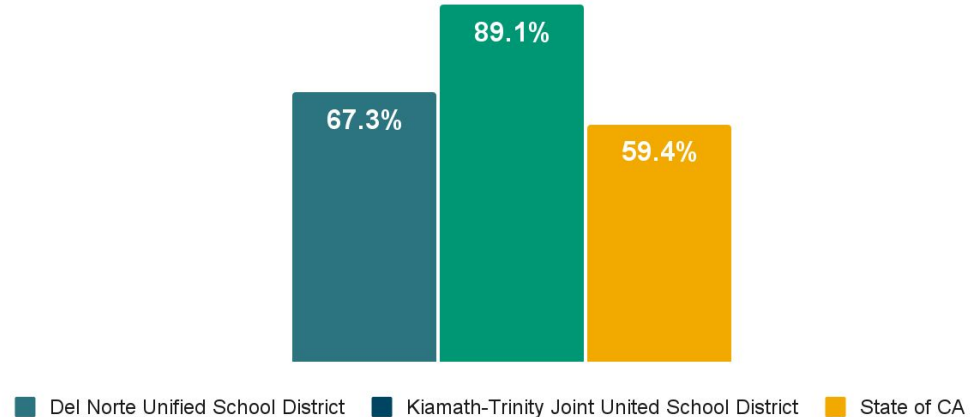
Food In Schools

The school setting provides multiple opportunities for interventions designed to prevent and reduce childhood obesity.

Schools located in food deserts also have the opportunity to decrease the risk of food insecurity by providing free healthy nutritious meals to students.

Many DNATL students rely on school meals as their most consistent source of nutritional food, with low-income children eligible to receive free/reduced-price meals (FRPM) at school.

Percent of DNATL Students Enrolled in Free/Reduced Priced Meals Compared to State of CA



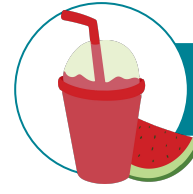
The Nutrition of Food In Schools

School meals are uniform across the nation with a certain criterion on looks, taste, salt, and fat content. However, the guidelines for the nutritional value may not meet the needs of children's health.

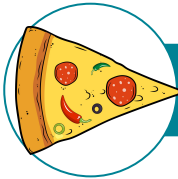
Every public school receives funding for food, but the majority of it goes to food processing companies that convert the food into highly processed nutritionally deficient food. For example:



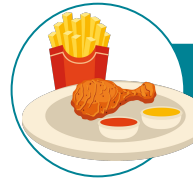
Ketchup is considered a vegetable



Fruits become juice



Cheese and tomatoes are converted to frozen pizzas



Chicken and potatoes become deep-fried chicken and fries

Maintaining a kitchen and staff requires funding, therefore highly-processed food becomes the most affordable and practical option.

Research Findings

1

Research and Data Driven Change

It is critical to have current/updated data available to better understand systemic issues instead of shifting blame on parents and children.

2

Research and Data Driven Change

It is important to build local capacity around data literacy. Data literacy refers to the ability to read, understand, apply, create, and communicate data as information.

3

Collaboration and Partnerships

Leveraging the expertise and knowledge of community partners increased capital, capacity, and impact in the community.

4

Collaboration and Partnerships

Youth in the community played a critical role in advancing access to health food in schools.

5

Collaboration and Partnerships

Connecting local farmers to CalFresh beneficiaries increased affordability/accessibility to local produce while supporting the local economy.

Research Findings

6

Collaboration and Partnerships

Creating a community-led food council led to the expansion of funding for improving DNATL food systems and the establishment of critical partnerships.

7

Collaboration and Partnerships

The collaboration between the DNATL Community Food Council, the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, and local schools led to the establishment of school and community gardens and food forests in some of the most food insecure areas in DNATL.

8

Cultural Competency, Racial Equity, and Inclusion

Racial equity and inclusion needs to be prioritized in food work. Food equity/advocacy work requires local/community ownership and cultural competency.

9

Cultural Competency, Racial Equity, and Inclusion

One of the main barriers to eating healthy foods is not knowing how to grow, prepare, or cook healthy food.

10

Cultural Competency, Racial Equity, and Inclusion

The food forest site at the College of the Redwoods is successful for its visibility, accessibility, and the dynamic ways it serves the community.

Research Findings

11

Cultural Competency, Racial Equity, and Inclusion

Conducting empathy research was critical to understand the barriers residents experience in accessing healthy foods.

12

Cultural Competency, Racial Equity, and Inclusion

The DNATL BHC Food Initiative applied the results from the empathy research project to create feasible and culturally appropriate solutions towards food insecurity.

13

Future Vision of DNATL Food System

Resilient rural food systems can benefit from long-term strategies that support food recovery programs and mechanisms to make locally grown food accessible to local residents.

14

Future Vision of DNATL Food System

It is important to create opportunities for youth to interact and participate in the local agricultural/food system as well as advocate for policy changes that support healthy foods in schools.

Findings – Research and Data Driven Change

1

Research and Data Driven Change

It is critical to have current/updated data available to better understand systemic issues instead of shifting blame on parents and children.

“What we needed was a common understanding of current conditions in schools...You’d walk into a coffee shop and people would say the school system is failing. You would ask ‘What about the system is failing?’ But they didn’t know. Nobody could really talk about it.”

Student Survey Results

- Forty-six percent (46%) of DNATL’s students did not eat the lunch provided by their school on a regular basis.
- About 36% of these students said it was because they didn’t like the taste, and about 25% of students prefer to get healthy food off school property/campus.

The Center for Effective Philanthropy conducted a Youth Truth survey among 164 high schools across the country. All four high schools in DNATL were included in the survey, with a total of 1,415 DNATL students.

The results of CCRP’s evaluation efforts and the Youth Truth Survey created a critical shift from:

Having no data available and victim blaming



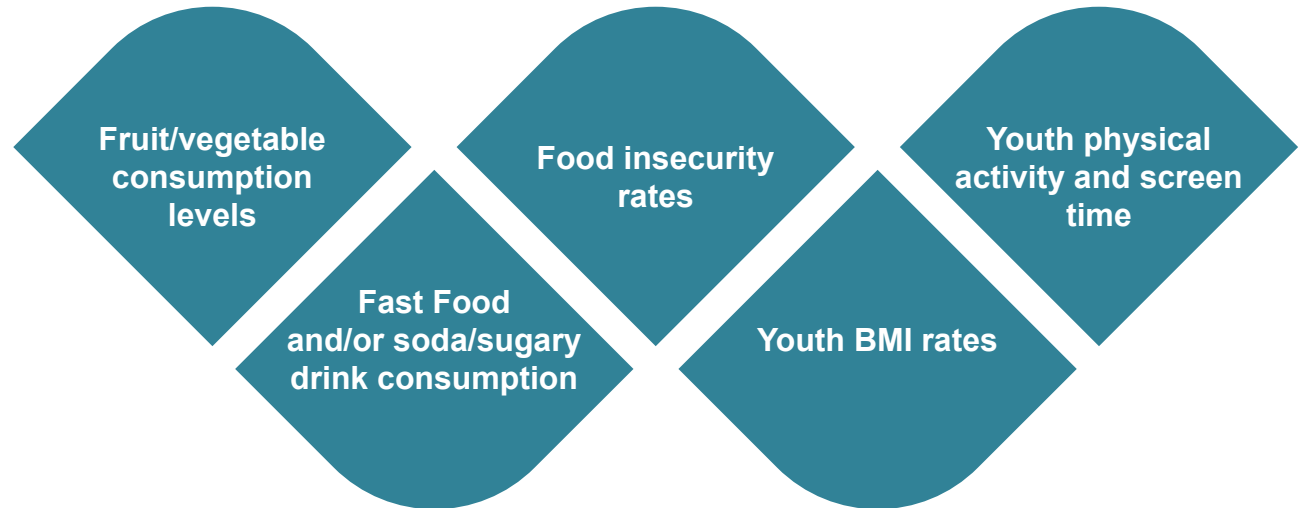
Gathering and analyzing data that shed light on systemic issues

Understanding the systemic issues that played a role in high obesity rates helped community partners identify multiple strategies to address childhood obesity.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends the following strategies to reduce or prevent childhood overweight and obesity:

- Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables (as well as legumes, whole grains, and nuts).
- Limit the intake of sugars, saturated fats, and processed foods with little or no nutritional value.
- Increase physical activity to at least 60 minutes a day.

There are five key indicators to track progress towards reducing childhood obesity:

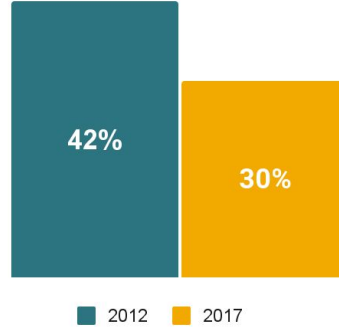


Comparisons from 2011 to 2017 of what students consumed in the past 24 hours

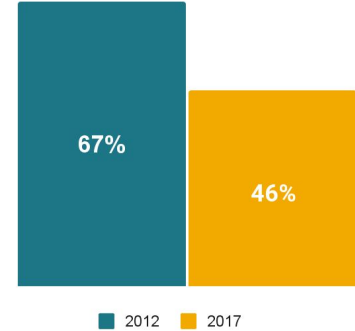


A significant decrease of fast food, soda, or sugary drinks.

Fast Food

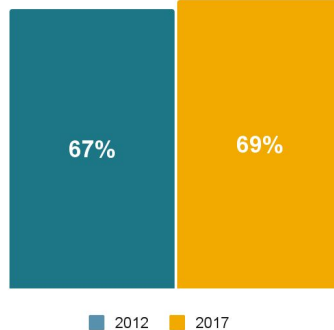


Soda/Sweetened Beverage

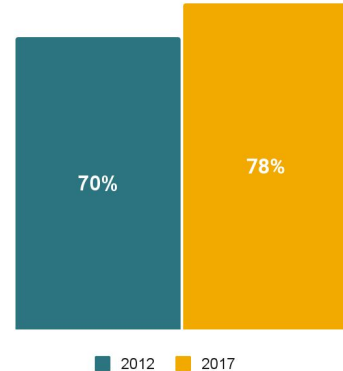


A slight increase of raw vegetables and fruits.

Vegetables



Raw Fruit



Findings – Research and Data Driven Change

2

Research and Data Driven Change

It is important to build local capacity around data literacy. Data literacy refers to the ability to read, understand, apply, create, and communicate data as information.

Being data literate includes the ability to recognize the following:

- The issue/problem (Example: childhood obesity)
- Refusing to share or ignoring population data does more harm than good to the participants the data represents
- The systemic barriers contributing to the issue (Example: poverty, food insecurity, lack of nutritional food in schools)
- Something can be done about it on a community level

**“The final stage of data awareness:
We have a problem and can do
something about it, and also what
else do we not understand so we can
do something about it?”**

Findings – Research and Data Driven Change

School data revealed that there was a disconnect between what partners assumed students prefer to eat and what students said they wanted to eat.

The report prompted the formation of the Children's Health Collaborative (CHC), consisting of parents, educators, and physicians. The CHC conducted research with the Del Norte Unified School District (DNUSD) about food in local schools resulting in a collaboration between the Director of Nutrition for DNUSD and the DNATL BHC Food Initiative to achieve their goal: ensuring that all students have access to wholesome, healthy food options.

Findings – Collaboration and Partnerships

3

Collaboration and Partnerships

Leveraging the expertise and knowledge of community partners increased capital, capacity, and impact in the community.

The Food Initiative worked closely with the school district's Nutrition Director to expand the school food program and improve nutrition by building local capacity for schools to offer bulk meals made from scratch and salad bars.

The Nutrition Director connected schools to the Let's Move Salad Bars to School Initiative. This nationwide initiative had a goal of increasing children's access and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables by donating salad bars to schools nationwide.

To ensure that school staff had the capacity to do bulk cooking from scratch, BHC funded training in two schools for scratch-bulk cooking.

A chef from Sutter Coast Hospital worked with school staff on how to create hot meals from scratch.

Ocean Air Farms (a local organic farm) is added as a local food vendor.

DNUSD connects with the California Thursday Program. This program allows schools to serve healthy, freshly prepared school meals made from food grown in California.

Findings – Collaboration and Partnerships

4

Collaboration and Partnerships

Youth in the community played a critical role in advancing access to health food in schools.

Sunset High Students and BHC: Youth Organizing for Healthier Schools

Students at Sunset High were frustrated by the pre-packaged and processed food options, and that fresh fruit and vegetables were only available once a week. After participating in a listening campaign with a community organizer from True North Organizing Network, students passionate about changing school lunches planned an all-student assembly, and the Student Organizing Committee was born.

The Student Organizing Committee met with community experts to determine the best way to make a plan for accessing healthier foods and lunches. The students suggested that healthy food was not prioritized due to lack of awareness.

Findings – Collaboration and Partnerships

The students figured out that if they could give up the unpopular frozen pizzas and hamburgers, the school district could add fresh fruits and vegetables without breaking the budget. They came up with the following four requests:

A hot entree and
salad bar 3 days a
week

Keep the spicy
chicken sandwich
once a week

Implement these
changes by May
21

Have a follow-up
meeting with the
deputy
superintendent in
June

The committee hosted a meeting at their school and invited teachers, parents, policymakers, community members, and other students. They gave speeches and testimonies, offered solutions, and held the primary policymaker in the room accountable by requesting their four policy objectives.

As a result of their efforts, all four policy requests were granted, with the changes happening about a week after the meeting.

Findings – Collaboration and Partnerships

More Youth-driven Food Projects That Led to Policy Changes for Youth in DNATL:



Local Youth Grant \$11,000



Sunset High weight room upgrade



Healthier lunches at Sunset High



Abolished styrofoam trays from their cafeterias



Youth driven policy to bring in Food Trucks

Findings – Collaboration and Partnerships

5

Collaboration and Partnerships

Connecting local farmers to CalFresh beneficiaries increased affordability/accessibility to local produce while supporting the local economy.

Establishing an Equitable and Inclusive Farmers Market

The sustainable “Go Local” food movement challenges consumers to rethink where their food comes from and encourages people to eat local and grow their own food. The movement is primarily accessible for families who can afford the high costs of local products at food stores or farmers markets, and/or have the means to grow their own food. It often neglects the needs of low-income and diverse communities. Local farmers’ prices are often higher than the products sold in chain grocery stores, and this struggle creates an equity gap for those who can afford to purchase local products and those who can’t.

The DNATL BHC brought farmers and community members together to create an inclusive and equitable Farmers Market by bringing awareness that people could use CalFresh benefits at the Farmers Markets.

“It wasn’t that residents were uninterested in the opportunity to receive healthy local organic food, it was that they could not afford it.”

Findings – Collaboration and Partnerships

6

Collaboration and Partnerships

Creating a community-led food council led to more funding for improving DNATL food systems and critical partnerships.

The DNATL Community Food Council

Formed in 2011, the DNATL Community Food council is a group of individual residents and agency representatives who are working together to build a local food system that provides healthy, culturally appropriate food to all families in DNATL by:

1

Addressing food insecurity and increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

2

Strengthening and supporting the local food economy.

3

Shifting eating habits through education and access to nutritious and culturally appropriate foods.

They brought in over \$500,000 in USDA funding and \$250,000 in State funding for food-related projects.

Accomplishments of the DNATL Community Food Council from 2010 to 2020

Hosted over 50 cooking/gardening DIY classes and workshops

Hosted several conferences and events

Helped the Harvest of the Month program gain long-term funding

School mini gardens located in 9 DNATL schools

Community Outreach & Education

Implemented the Rethink Your Drink Campaign

Created a holiday event centered around celebrating local food producers

Facilitated a Farm Camp

Srtaa~Shvm (hii) Mvlh Ghee-saa-ghit-na'
Good Food Makes Us All Healthy (food forest/community garden sites)

Accomplishments of the DNATL Community Food Council from 2010 to 2020

Secured grant funding for Crescent City & Downtown Farmers Market to participate in statewide Market Match program

Established a “Go Local” campaign to promote local food producers

Hosted a Del Norte farm tour for food and agriculture representatives from Oregon and Humboldt County

Local Food – Economic Development

Provided a pathway of educational opportunities through the Youth Training Academy

Started the DNATL Food Recovery Program to work with the local producers and rescued over 70,000 pounds of food in a year

Started a Farm and Food Academy

Secured grant funding from USDA Local Food Promotion Program for Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation to explore agriculture enterprise options

Accomplishments of the DNATL Community Food Council from 2010 to 2020

Created and/or provided funding support to 15 school gardens, 5 community gardens, and 4 food forests in DNATL

Expansion of Seamless Summer Meal program

Formed partnership with the Yurok Food Sovereignty Department

Conducted 25 empathy interviews & developed 6 prototype solutions from interview findings

DNATL Food Recovery Program – Rescued over 70,000 pounds of food in one year

Food Insecurity

Won the USDA's "Summer Sunshine" award for the Western Region of the US two years in a row

Home Gardens installation program created in partnership with Open Door Community Health Center

Seamless Meal – Delivery of School Meals to DNATL youth during the Summer at 14 sites

Received a Community Development Block Grant to open a choice food pantry at the Family Resource Center of the Redwoods

DNATL Community Food Council Partners



Findings – Collaboration and Partnerships

7

Collaboration and Partnerships

The collaboration between the DNATL Community Food Council, the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, and local schools led to the establishment of school and community gardens and food forests in some of the most food insecure areas in DNATL.

DNATL School Gardens

In 2016 the DNATL Community Food Council applied for a mini grant to fund 11 schools with \$500 annually to grow and maintain a garden.

School gardens provided a place for students to learn about where food comes from and served as a living laboratory for learning about biology and plant science.

The schools are all located in districts with disproportionately high rates of food insecurity.

Srtaa~Shvm (hii) MvIh Ghee-saa-ghit-na' – Good Food Makes Us All Healthy

In 2015 the DNATL Community Food Council and the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation received a five year grant from the USDA Community Food Project that was used to create new food forests and support school and community gardens.

Goals of project



Although the grant did not cover the cost of infrastructure materials or labor, project staff were able to collaborate with other DNATL BHC initiatives and establish critical partnerships to assist with funding these costs.

Two food forests were created, representing a community site where residents can gather, children can play, people can attend free educational events, and families can receive healthy organic produce and traditional medicinal plants.

Findings – Cultural Competency, Racial Equity, and Inclusion

8

Cultural Competency, Racial Equity, and Inclusion

Racial equity and inclusion needs to be prioritized in food work. This work requires local/community ownership and cultural competency.

In the United States, American Indian/Alaskan Native communities experience disproportionately high levels of preventable, non-communicable chronic diseases* compared to communities who identify as non-Hispanic/White. According to the CDC, American Indian/Alaskan Native adolescents are 30% more likely than non-Hispanic white adolescents to be obese. The percentage increases to 50% for adults.

It is important to consider the history of racist policies, forced relocation, deprivation of ancestral foodways, inequity, exclusion, and genocide when navigating the systemic barriers that contribute to lower life expectancy and higher rates of obesity and related diseases on Tribal Lands.

The legacy of colonialism continues to have devastating health consequences.

Food advocacy work requires cultural sensitivity and not prescribing ethnocentric solutions.

**e.g. heart disease, obesity, type II diabetes*

Au-Minot We-nue-nep-ueh – The Klamath Food Forest

This food forest is located at Margaret Keating Elementary School, nestled inside the Yurok reservation.

It also includes a school/community garden and an outdoor classroom. The food forest was strategically located at a school to:

Involve and inspire youth to learn about and participate in their local food system

Revive traditional approaches to sustainable food, including passing along cultural values and practices

Create future food producers for their community

An immediate goal for this food forest was to serve the Klamath community in a culturally appropriate way by bringing indigenous plant food sources and traditional basket weaving material plants to a central location.

Xaa-wan'-k'wvt Cheetne' Tetlh-tvm' – Howonquet Head Start Food Forest

Xaa-wan'-k'wvt Cheetne' Tetlh-tvm' Food Forest is part of the collaborative project (Srtaa~Shvm (hii) Mvlh Ghee-saa-ghit-na' – Good Food Makes Us All Healthy) with the DNATL Community Food Council and the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation.

The goal is to revive cultural practices surrounding native plants and address chronic food insecurity in the community. Within the first year over 700 pounds of food was produced. The food was used for multiple programs including the elder nutrition program and other food programs serving Tribal members.

Local Tribal members have been hosting various workshops about gardening techniques, herbs, planting food, and medicinal use.

In 2019, project staff converted the food forest to a community meeting place by adding a new playground for the children.

Native Plants

The food forest project also inspired the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation to begin an agricultural program that makes edible native plants more accessible to Tribal members and is aligned with cultural traditions such as prescribed burns and selective harvesting.

Native plants are not sold in stores in DNATL, and this agricultural program offers residents who are unable to hike and gather an opportunity to access native plants.

The Tolowa Dee-ni' nation also established an affordable housing project with 21 units, each with a yard planted with edible native plants.

The DNATL BHC Food Initiative wrote a grant for a native plant library in the Tolowa language. This native plant library will be the first published library in the Tolowa language.



Partnering with Yurok Food Sovereignty Division

The DNATL Community Food Council worked with the Ancestral Guard* to develop gardens, deliver fresh produce, and assist families with growing and preserving produce in Yurok Tribal Lands.

This collaboration led to the following projects/changes:

- The Yurok Tribe purchased 40 acres of land to create food forests and help address food insecurity. The Community Food Council assisted the Yurok Tribe with garden design.
- Local community members steward the food forest in Klamath. Youth are leading efforts to address food insecurity issues in their community.
- Project staff are utilizing the food forests to grow and deliver food to 30 families.
- The Community Food Council plans to install 60 raised beds in 2021.
- In 2020, the Community Food Council applied for the Fisherman COVID relief grant with the Yurok Tribe. The grant will allow Tribal members to harvest, sell, and distribute fish. This effort will make fish more accessible for DNATL residents.
- As part of the COVID relief grant, Yurok youth will have the opportunity to learn how to harvest seafood and distribute seafood to elders.



** The Ancestral Guard is an indigenous youth-led organizing network. Their programs combine traditional ecological knowledge, science, and values of world renewal.*

Findings – Cultural Competency, Racial Equity, and Inclusion

9

Cultural Competency, Racial Equity, and Inclusion

One of the main barriers to eating healthy foods is not knowing how to grow, prepare, or cook healthy food.

DIY Garden Workshops for Community Members

The DNATL Community Food Council started organizing cooking and gardening workshops with local instructors to provide free educational opportunities for residents to learn how to become more self-sufficient in obtaining and preparing their food.

Workshop topics have included:



Gardening in containers



Beginning beekeeping



Creating raised beds



Foraging for wild mushrooms



Water bath and pressure canning



Breadmaking



Soil testing and amendments



Starting a cottage food business

Findings – Cultural Competency, Racial Equity, and Inclusion

10

Cultural Competency, Racial Equity, and Inclusion

The food forest site at the College of the Redwoods is successful for its visibility, accessibility, and the dynamic ways it serves the community.

College of the Redwoods – Food Forest

The empty lot at the College of the Redwoods (CR) in Crescent City was transformed into a food forest, and is the most publicized site due to its prominent, highly visible location in Crescent City. The food forest serves the community in many ways:

- As an educational site
- As a training site for youth
- A place to socialize
- A place to receive organic produce
- A supplier of produce to local food pantries
- Convening site for community events including free workshops and harvest festival celebrations

A 2017 survey of 71 Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation residents found that:

Survey Results

- The average amount spent on food per month was \$479.97.
- Almost half the respondents were experiencing food insecurity.
- Less than half of the respondents were utilizing food assistance programs, even though they were eligible.
- Almost half (45%) of the respondents said they “often” or “sometimes” could not afford to eat balanced meals.
- Ten percent indicated they were able to use the community gardens.
- Seventy percent indicated being interested in eating locally grown or produced food.

Most common reasons for not eating locally grown or produced food:

15% Too expensive

33% Lack of availability

29% Poor selection in stores and food assistance programs

Findings – Cultural Competency, Racial Equity, and Inclusion

11

Cultural Competency, Racial Equity, and Inclusion

Conducting empathy research was critical to understand the barriers residents experience in accessing healthy foods.

In 2017, a Food Security Core Design Team was formed. The team consisted of:

- Food security service providers
- Tribal employees
- Health care professionals
- Community workers
- Educators

In order to understand the lived experience of those experiencing food insecurity in Del Norte, the team utilized the Human-Centered Design approach, in what was called the “Food Empathy Project”.

The Food Empathy Research Project

The work involved:

- Designing a robust research approach
- Conducting empathy interviews with people using the local food security system and those working in the system
- Analyzing the interview data

There were 9 key insights that emerged from the empathy research analysis, and they helped illustrate the experience of being food insecure in DNATL.

Key Insights

Cooking and nutrition education is needed to increase food security

Food-based trauma can last a lifetime

Eating well while homeless has unique, extreme challenges

When relying on food services, accessing food requires a full-time effort

Local food service organizations struggle to maintain funding and support

Food sharing builds family and community support networks

Parents will provide food for their families at all costs

Many children rely on school meals, but the system has gaps

Food insecurity services run on a complicated monthly schedule

The Five Personas

Following the interview analysis, the team developed five personas to bring the characteristics of the people they spoke with to life.

They mapped out the food security experience for these personas and identified system shifts required to make a new food security experience for people interacting with or working in the system.

“I would go to any lengths to feed my family. This has included breaking the law to get formula for my baby.”

The Exhausted Juggler

“I’m homeless. The availability of cooking facilities or a way to cook is the number one problem among the homeless population.”

The Daily Struggler

“I have to keep track of so many things. If it wasn’t for what I get, I don’t know how I would make it to the end of the month financially.”

The Thrifty Elder

“We’ve met a lot of people from the same state in Mexico so we’re getting to know them through sharing meals with our neighbors.”

The Cultural Connectors

“Both of my foster children are food hoarders. Sometimes they hoard food and eat until they throw up. I don’t know if they will ever break these habits.”

The Stability Providers

The Five Personas

The final step in the project was to generate ideas to create a future experience and prototype ways to improve the food access experience for the personas.

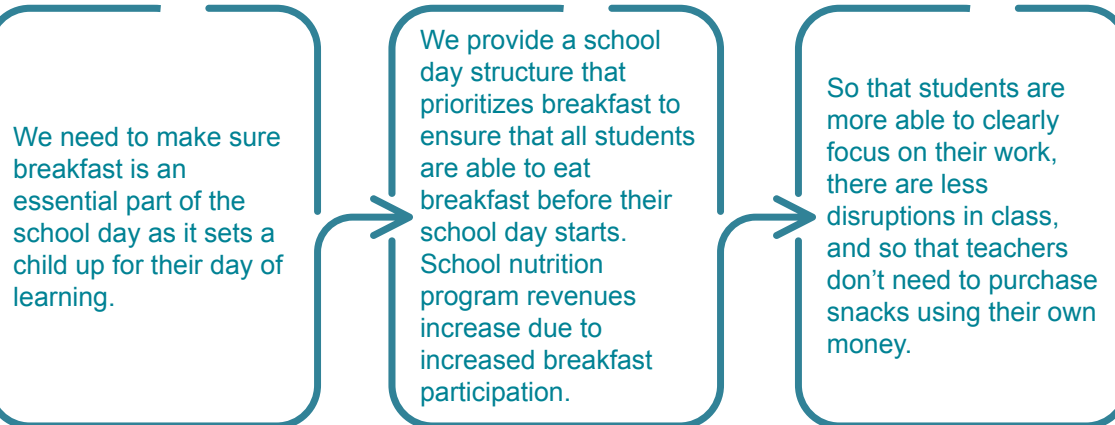
This process enabled the team to understand DNATL's food security system from a user perspective.

Example of a previous food experience

A fourth grade student named Thomas gets dropped off at school at a different time each day. Some days he has time to eat breakfast but some days he arrives at school too late. He often misbehaves in class in the morning if he misses breakfast.

Breakfast Plan in Place

Each student receives a healthy breakfast at school and has plenty of time to eat in a relaxed environment with their teacher and other children.



Findings – Cultural Competency, Racial Equity, and Inclusion

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Cultural Competency, Racial Equity, and Inclusion

The DNATL BHC Food Initiative applied the results from the empathy research project to create feasible and culturally appropriate solutions towards food insecurity.

The results from the food empathy project helped the Food Security Core Design Team learn about real-life experiences and inspired the creation of the Pacific Pantry and bringing breakfast into the classrooms.

Real-life experiences of the DNATL community

It was impossible for working people to get to existing food banks that were open during business hours.

People experiencing homelessness couldn't prepare the food they received from existing food banks.

People experiencing homelessness could not track when the pantries were open and didn't know when food was available.

People were often disappointed with the highly processed foods available at food banks.

People often felt ashamed about participating in food banks.

The lack of healthy foods and choice at food banks was un motivating.

The Pacific Pantry

The Family Resource Center of the Redwoods opened Pacific Pantry, the first choice-based food bank in Del Norte County. The choice-based food model means that clients are able to “shop” in the pantry, selecting the foods that go into their food boxes. This model creates a dignified experience for clients, allows for cultural and dietary needs to be met, and minimizes food waste.

Pacific Pantry mainly serves low and moderate-income clients, with 99% of their clients living below 80% of the federal poverty level.

Local and organic foods are sourced whenever possible, including:

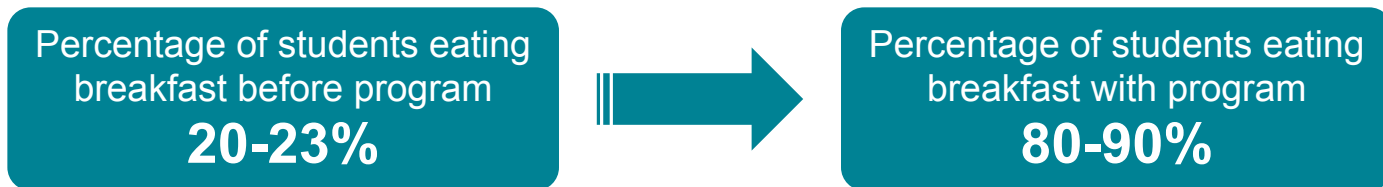
- > Locally raised meat and eggs
- > Produce grown in Taa-`at-dvn Chee-ne' Tetlh-tvm' community food forest
- > Rumiano cheese and butter
- > Produce from Ocean Air Farms
- > Crystal and Alexandre Farms milk
- > Products produced from other local producers and community members

Breakfast in the Classroom

Prior to the DNATL BHC Food Initiative, the free breakfast program had low participation rates, often due to students not arriving early enough to receive it. Two DNATL BHC campaigns (Literacy and Food) worked together to participate in the *Breakfast After the Bell* Program.

Breakfast After the Bell is a nationally recognized program that has been shown as one of the most effective ways to boost breakfast participation in schools. Teachers are able to provide breakfast foods during the beginning of class. It is an initiative to assist in food insecurity issues and enhance student performance.

In 2018 two classrooms participated in the pilot program, leading to a huge increase in DNATL students eating breakfast. Teachers who participated observed that their students are now calmer with fewer nurse visits and anxiety about when they would get snacks.



Findings – Future Vision of DNATL Food System

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Future Vision of DNATL Food System

Resilient rural food systems can benefit from long-term strategies that support food recovery programs and mechanisms to make locally grown food accessible to local residents.

Food Rescue Del Norte Project

The DNATL Community Food Council created the Food Rescue Del Norte Project with funding from a CalRecycle grant. In Del Norte County, nearly four million pounds of food goes into landfills each year. Soon after, the DNATL Community Food Council partnered with the Del Norte Solid Waste Management Authority to focus on meeting state law SB-1383.

SB-1383

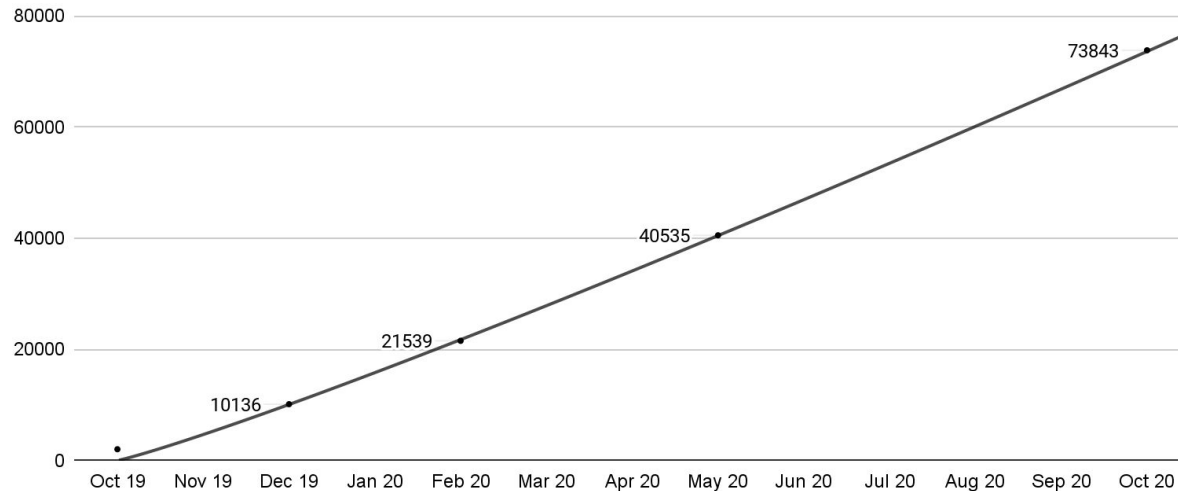
Sets out goals for reducing emissions from methane and other short-term pollutants

Sets out to divert food waste from landfill for composting and animal feed.

Findings – Future Vision of DNATL Food System

The Community Food Council's goal is to prevent 400,000 pounds of edible food from going to the landfill by April 2021.

The project has rescued and served over 70,000 pounds of food to residents in Del Norte County as of October 2020. Local farmers and producers also participate, providing rescued food to other food security programs such as the Pacific Pantry.



Findings – Future Vision of DNATL Food System

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Future Vision of DNATL Food System

It is important to create opportunities for youth to interact and participate in the local agricultural/food system as well as advocate for policy changes that support healthy foods in schools.

In 2020, the DNATL Community Food Council Spearheaded New Projects:

Food and Farm Academy

A shift from training on how to farm to include entrepreneurial training for youth.

The DNATL BHC Food Initiative plans to create a year-round program with youth managing the food forest and selling produce at an onsite farm stand.

Four interns grow food and sell it at their local Farmers Market!

Food and Farm Camp

(Harvest Season Adventure)

A week-long camp for youth that included:

- Gardening activities
- Garden inspired arts & crafts
- Cooking
- Learning about ecology
- Learning about healthy food

Creating a New Resilient Local Food System

The DNATL BHC Food Initiative created and supported the expansion of sites where DNATL residents can access healthy and nutritious foods by recognizing and addressing the gaps and barriers that low-income households faced.

“The biggest victory is the number of community members coming together.”

The Emergency Food Task Force

The DNATL Community Food Council was able to convene a group of community members committed to ensuring food security through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Accomplishments:

- Purchased two delivery vans
- Five hundred (500) food boxes delivered during the 2020 holiday season
- Delivered around 175 boxes for Meals on Wheels when Senior Center staff was in quarantine
- Rescued around 17,000 pounds of produce from the Blue Lake Rancheria
- Applied for a Community Development Block Grant to bring food in mobile pantries to outlying areas

Tangible Wins and Benefits

2012

- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant supports purchase and deployment of mobile teaching kitchen.
- The Del Norte Open Door Community Health Clinic supports dental van delivery of services to all Del Norte children through the education system. It permanently funds dental van services to children and bilingual outreach/promotora workforce.

2013

- City Council of Crescent City inclusion and adoption of “health” in official city vision statement.
- The Del Norte Open Door Community Health Clinic provides prescriptions for fresh produce at farmers market.
- Hydration stations are installed at three schools and a healthy food service program is implemented in all schools including salad bars, increased scratch cooking and local farm to school strategies (vendor contracts), and harvest of the month.

2014

- School Board passes resolutions restricting sugary drinks and snacks as incentives and supporting placement of hydration stations.
- School Budget includes additional funding to support school gardens, local produce vendors, salad bars at all schools, and a higher percentage of from scratch meals.
- The City changes its policy on Farmers Market fees in order to support vendor participation and ensure they are successful, leading to better access to healthy food in neighborhoods.

2015

- School Wellness Policy is created and adopted.
- The USDA supports development of community gardens and farmers markets.
- The Tolowa Dee-ni’ Nation is awarded \$400,000 USDA grant to create four Food Forest sites in food deserts across Del Norte and Tribal Lands.
- City of Crescent City creates a farmers market fund to ensure clinic prescriptions are filled.

Tangible Wins and Benefits

2016

- Crescent City Council adopts a youth-driven policy to expand food trucks' service areas and hours as a result of the growing local, healthy food economy.
- The Del Norte School District nutrition program is recognized by the USDA with the "Western Region 2016 Summer Sunshine" award. By leveraging partnerships, the district is able to acquire \$30,000 and increase the summer meal program.
- Del Norte Unified School District commits to purchasing local, organic meat and produce for its school nutrition program.

2018

- Breakfast after the Bell program is piloted to increase student access to healthy foods.
- The DNATL Community Food Council and the Del Norte Senior Center team up to form a Del Norte Local Board for FEMA Emergency Food and Shelter Program funding. This project leverages an additional \$12,500 renewable on an annual basis.
- Grand opening of Pacific Pantry, a partnership between the Family Resource Center of the Redwoods and the Community Food Council.

2019

- Del Norte Community Food Council holds Grand Opening/Harvest Festival at the Taa-'at'dvn Chee-ne' Teth-tvm' Community Food Forest.
- DNATL Community Food Council partners with CalFresh Healthy Living from Public health to offer a Seed to Supper course designed by the Oregon Food Bank to empower people to learn how to grow, harvest, and prepare their own healthy food.
- DNATL Community Food Council receives a \$306,000 CalRecycle grant to initiate the county's first ever food rescue program.

2020

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the DNATL Community Food Council convenes the Emergency Food Security Task Force. The group is working to build effective collaboration to both address food security needs now and a better system for the future.
- The Family Resource Center of the Redwoods and Del Norte Community Food Council acquire extra food storage capacity for Pacific Pantry to ensure the County is better prepared for emergencies.