

YMCA Training Manual & Online Resources

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Abstract

The YMCA of WNC is an awarded 21st Century Community Learning Center through the NC Department of Instruction. The YMCA implements academically focused after-school programs at varying schools across Buncombe County. Each after-school program that the YMCA offers is divided equally among incorporating an hour of tutoring and an hour of enrichment programs in the arts, wellness, and service. My work with the Nutrition Program at the YMCA has been centered around developing an online document for volunteers, interns, and employees. This online document will help individuals sign up for and record their hours logged while participating at a "YMCA event". This type of online record keeping has not existed for the YMCA's Nutrition department. This online document is comparable to a google doc and functions accordingly. I have been working directly with the YMCA's nutrition program Director Nicole Coston on this project. I have also developed a training manual that will teach trainees how to operate and run the mobile kitchen and mobile market. This manual also contains new policies the YMCA has instituted for the 2014-2015 year. A code of conduct has also been included in this manual. The manual itself has been derived from interviews that have synthesized current employee information and safety procedures associated with each vehicle and related equipment. My work has taken place in two locations. First, the online resource documents I established was done solely on my computer. Next, I worked at the YMCA Beaverdam location at 201 Beaverdam Rd, Asheville, NC 28804 to develop and write the YMCA Nutritional Services employee and volunteer manual under the sponsorship of Nicole Coston the Healthy Living Director for the YMCA of WNC.

Keywords: YMCA, Minorities, Stigmas, Fitness, Produce Distribution, Mobile Kitchen & Mobile Market

Origins of the Project

The Department of Nutrition for the youth services section of the YMCA also serves the minorities of the surrounding Western North Carolina communities. Minorities face an uphill battle when uprooting their lives and moving elsewhere. They encounter the social stigmas we as a society place on the idea of a “handout” (Marxer, Wilfried). Minorities are not a decreasing development in fact by 2050 it is projected that the total population of the United States will rise to 438 million due to this trend (Loue, Sana). “The representation of non-Hispanic Whites is expected to decrease from 67% to 47%. Conversely, the representation of Hispanic/Latino and that of Asians and Pacific Islanders is expected to grow during that time period from nearly 14% to 29%, and from 5% to 9%, respectively. During that time period, the proportion of African Americans is expected to remain relatively stable at 13%”(Loue, Sana). With the rising influx of immigrants moving to the United States not all have the same socioeconomic capabilities that average or lower middle class citizens experience. This leads to economic polarization of certain immigrant groups which in turn experience a lower quality of life due to the lack of affordability of living conditions. These immigrant groups are a growing trend and many of the children of these immigrant families experience a much different view of life than other students face.

The Youth Services section of the YMCA usually establishes after-school programs in elementary schools that have students on free and reduced lunches. Of these students many minority groups can be observed participating in activities that are critical for early childhood development that without the YMCA these students would not have access to otherwise (Bekerman, Zvi). For decades the thought of accepting a “handout” was stigmatized to not be ok for individuals to take part in, especially if their need was directly dependent on that handout (Thornton, Lucia). The YMCA distributes produce that has been donated by Trader Joe’s and Manna Food Bank on a biweekly basis. This food is free to anyone of any orientation or ethnicity. The goal is to make the idea of accepting groceries more appealing to those who are suffering without. Minorities and low income households are the primary target of the YMCA produce distribution because the goal is that if awareness is available for local and fresh produce and other ingredients than individuals will feel more compelled to continue eating healthier food for themselves. The YMCA in the past year alone distributed thousands of pounds of donated fresh produce and groceries to anyone who wanted to fill two free paper bags.

The YMCA uses their after-school programs to help foster the positive development of their students. In the United States, the way in which mass media, such as entertainment, social media, and radio, play apart in our daily lives often times is at the disadvantage of many children and their development. “Films have the power to reveal a positive psychology, pro-social construction of a ‘healthy family’” (Gregerson, Mary Banks) This small excerpt explains in part to why the need for action and change is needed. Mass media is teaching children how to exist in an “American” lifestyle without ever teaching the basics of social interaction, physical activity, and healthy self expression (Bilandzic, Helena). This lack of teaching leads to children who are not encouraged to find stability in faith, or community. This lost growth results in the absence of

personal responsibility and rich extended relationships (Gregerson, Mary Banks). The YMCA helps to aid and support positive growth amongst the students. This is done by giving students conceptual ideas that can be solved either through communication with other students or with volunteers, interns, and employees and allowing students to physically engage in the concepts of what they have learned and how each concept is relevant and applicable to their daily life (Mjagkij, Nina). Communication, nutrition, physical activity, and learning are the cornerstones of the YMCA and because they refrain from the use of electronics on site and during their programs, the students are more actively engaged to develop connections with other students who face similar questions. The transmission of culture that is advertised and solicited to adults also plagues children equally. The mass media conveys an unhealthy overload of subliminal messaging that is harming the development and perception of children in this country (Gregerson, Mary Banks).

Among the multiple areas of improvement the YMCA strives to assist, the most recognizable would be physical fitness. Physical fitness is also a growing concern for the YMCA, in fact in recent years there has been a switch of attention brought to the nutrition of children attending their programs. From this surge in attention, the nutrition program has grown into a fully recognized department of the YMCA. Nutrition is understood to be a vital role for early childhood development and for the rest of our lives. The YMCA's Nutrition Department paid close attention to the growing rate of obesity in our country and felt that improving the quality of nutrition and lifestyle education would serve to be a better preventative measure against obesity. Many studies link the effects of physical activity and nutrition together. With increased physical activity our cells mitochondria (the powerhouse of each cell) age less quickly and remain at a higher level of functionality within the body (Stocchi, Vilberto). This increased performance is a joint result of proper nutritional awareness and appropriate physical activity (Meyer, Aleta L). The YMCA separates their after school programs into two equally timed sections that use this philosophy. With a portion of the after-school program devoted to didactic education, there is also an equal amount of time spent combining nutritional education and physical education into the second period of each after-school program.

From about four years of age, I have had memories of what it was like to take part in the after school programs and classes held at the YMCA Youth Chapter. From this early age, I remember what it was like to have outside activities and didactic sessions devoted to my development. One of the many reasons I felt empowered to continue my work with the YMCA Beaverdam location was because I appreciated the amount of time and effort it took for councilors to make an afternoon fun for myself and other students. The after-school programs offered by the YMCA always allow me to feel comfortable and accepted. The way councilors planned group-based learning objectives gave me a basis for making new friends and connections during the afternoon hours on site. I remember building forts in the woods, learning about the biology of salamanders I would catch in the small creek on site, playing board games like Risk or Chess during a thunderstorm, and coloring turkeys every Thanksgiving. Whether the activities I took part in were conceptual ideas about nature, science, or math, I wanted to learn because in part I watched my friends' desire to learn and our collective enthusiasm felt contagious. To this day I feel that the time I spent at the YMCA was contributing to the person I am today. Feeling passionately

about exercise, the outdoors, volunteerism, and nutrition is something I feel goes back to the years I spent at the YMCA.

When I began to volunteer with the YMCA during the Spring of 2014 I worked exclusively with the Youth Services nutrition program. This program has now grown into a full department while I have been volunteering under the direction of Nicole Coston. When I started Spring of 2014 I taught nutrition and lifestyle classes after school to twenty-five students from four to eleven years of age.

During our afternoon classes together the students initially had difficulty naming simple fruits and vegetables, identifying where produce was grown, and even what animal produced what ingredients. From this point on I understood the severe lack of knowledge students receive about the produce agricultural system surrounding them. This elementary school was next to farm fields and many of the students were the children of farmers or those who grew their own food. This made my experience that much more important to carry through until the end of the school year. From week one I learned all twenty-five names and started to talk about the multiple areas of seasonal ingredients of our environment. I taught these students about vegetables, fruits, and the farm animals of our surrounding environment. In addition to learning about food it was imperative to teach the students the right proportions in which to eat them. Using the MyPlate guidelines I spent the first didactic hour of my program teaching the students about what is food, where does it grow, what is a carb, sugar, protein, etc. The second hour was reserved for a crafts I decided to make with them for that afternoon. Time permitting I would play basketball with the children. I had established a game similar to HORSE where each student would answer a question I had given them about that days lesson, and if they were wrong they took a shot from the free-throw line, if they were correct I would put that student on my shoulders and let them dunk the basketball in front of their classmates. After a while every student gradually paid more attention to the class and answered questions correctly so by the end every student had the satisfaction of dunking a basketball in front of their friends. The YMCA served this school because over 65% of the student population took part in free and reduced lunch activity on an annual basis which was higher than the >50% statistic that qualifies a school for YMCA involvement. With perfect clarity it made sense why the YMCA served this impoverished elementary school in rural Western North Carolina. Over the course of the semester I understood what the YMCA was aiming to promote through after-school programs. Not only was there to be an hour of tutoring and an hour of enrichment programs but also these lessons were to be done using the arts in the areas of wellness and service. These students were to be given a chance to have fun while learning. My own students expressed to me during my after school program that having fun while learning was something that was not always done with their regular classroom teacher(s).

Methods and Work Undertaken

For my service project with the YMCA I built upon this devotion to the arts, wellness, and service. With the leadership from Nicole Coston she explained that there were three primary needs of the YMCA. Firstly, there was no official way the YMCA could log the recorded hours of each registered intern and volunteer. Secondly there was not a way of alerting all volunteers to

what events would be taking place during any given month. This issue also contained the need for registered interns and volunteers to somehow see a informational write up of what each event would require (i.e. number of needed volunteers, the hours each event would last, where each event would take place, and what kind of event would it be, such as a produce distribution mobile market or cooking demo etc.). In addition to this area of need the YMCA also expressed that there was also a needed rewriting of the procedural manual. There was currently no manual written of the Nutrition Department, and this manual was to be a tool of instruction for each varying event type the YMCA Nutrition Department could host using their mobile market and mobile kitchen. When initially speaking with Nicole Coston, the Director of the YMCA's youth Nutrition Department, she expressed that this manual would not only be used by registered volunteers and interns but also this manual should be accessible for employees to reference during specific off-site events. Nicole Coston also explained to me that if this manual were to be made it would be vital to collect information from a handful of employees that specifically work with the mobile kitchen and mobile market on a weekly basis.

Nicole Coston felt that to first become familiar with this new service project I was to begin I should participate in a YMCA awareness event. This event showcased the Mobile Kitchen on the campus of UNC-Asheville for the Culture of Health Event. This event was my first look into what the YMCA was trying to market themselves as to the general public. The YMCA used this event to explain how their mobile kitchen and mobile market are mass distribution sites for produce and nutrition workshops for the surrounding area of Western North Carolina. For a organization that primarily works with after-school programs there was a new initiative into the distribution of food around Western North Carolina. Food for the YMCA's mobile market and mobile kitchen is supplied weekly by Manna Food Bank and Trader Joe's. This mobile kitchen was a full-service kitchen capable of producing a full array of meals for any number of individuals. One of the duties I performed during the UNC-Asheville Culture of Health Event was to walk around the campus and provide information about not only the mobile kitchen but also the mobile market and possible interests with volunteering with the YMCA. While attending the UNC-Asheville Culture of Health Event I was able to take part in the setup and breakdown of the mobile kitchen. Watching the process of assembly and disassembly allowed me to feel more familiar with the typical routine that the YMCA has set for events such as these. As an organization the YMCA wanted their registered interns and volunteers to be given the most clear and accurate information as possible so that their message of selfless distribution could be well received by all of Western North Carolina.

Ties to Academia

Health & Wellness is not only a frame of mind, but also it is a way of promoting the multiple concepts of healthy living that establishes solid communities. This semester I had the opportunity to work with the YMCA of Western North Carolina, Youth Services department of nutrition. This organization institutes ways of teaching children healthy lifestyles among other positive life skills. The degree I am completing is Health & Wellness, and the YMCA uses a majority of the curriculum to help teach their enrolled students in more productive ways of living a healthy lifestyle. The multiple aspects of health are as diverse as those who are the very makeup of the community itself. Community involvement establishes such a reliable model for social

development in the lives of children that when the YMCA chooses to separate their time equally between tutoring and physical activities the implications are far reaching. Being involved within the community, especially when fostering the attention of children helps to establish positive relationships with those around them and those they hold dear (Edlin, Gordon).

Continuing to serve the YMCA Nutrition Department will also further my own field of study. I personally have an affinity for nutrition and whole body wellness. With a Health & Wellness degree at UNC-Asheville I will discover better ways of interconnecting this area of expertise into the daily lives of those I surround in my work and social life. Furthermore, my eventual career field is in the medical community. There, as a medical professional, I will draw upon my degree to help answer questions from a more widespread view of possibilities. The YMCA treats every student with equal respect. The families that the YMCA also deals with are given this same level of respect. For the YMCA treating the equity of each family was just as important as fulfilling the needs of the children. Moving forward I as a medical professional would like to carry the mutualistic bond that practitioners and patients have to a new level of benefit for the client. The YMCA does not give preferential treatment to any person and does a finite job of delivering aid to their targeted recipient. I would like to emulate this process and provide direct care to each patient with keeping in mind that each individual deserves and should have proper care. Often practitioners treat conditions in only one dimension without considering the impact that the clients social standing, economic freedom, family obligations, or personal matters playing into the grand diagnosis of that one individual client.

My experience with the YMCA has taught me that people in need often times shy away from the help they need due to the social stigma facing “handouts” as a cultural taboo. Likewise, patients have stigmas against speaking openly about their personal lives to medical professionals even though there are patient confidentiality agreements that practitioners heed. I would like to encourage my clients to feel free of stigma be able to explain why else an issue might arise with their body other than typical abiotic causes. Working with the YMCA has given me insight into how positive growth can lead to high yielding results. When I started with the YMCA last spring I was one of a handful of interns working for a small program of the YMCA that had yet to purchase their mobile market and take advantage of their mobile kitchen. Taking part in a mass effort to launch the importance of nutrition was important and looking back it was crucial for the continuing development of the YMCA. The experience and practical real world knowledge I gained from this project was far reaching into my own degree field. I was able to visually connect such concepts from HWP 153 and HWP 190 together such as the socioeconomic tendencies of consumers and the buying patterns of varying ethnic/religious groups. From my Health & Wellness courses, to my future career path, and ultimately my own mantra for personal wellness this project helped to further my interest with the possibility to promote health into our own communities.

Challenges Faced and Responses to those Challenges

When first addressing the multiple issues of logging hours and tracking volunteer and intern involvement I discovered that there were endless avenues in which to solve this matter. Nicole Coston originally wanted there to be a software that I could buy for the Nutrition Department

that answered the issues of logged hours while maintaining a focus on volunteer and intern tracking. To resolve this matter I poured over the internet's resources for software that would give us the needed resolutions. However, the YMCA expressed that I was to solve this issue with a software that was of minimal cost and relative ease to operate. Under one hundred dollars was ideal for the YMCA to spend for this type of convenience. After researching multiple software programs it was starkly apparent that not only did I face an uphill struggle with the purchase price but the actual functionality of the high dollar program could not deliver all the resolutions on my and Nicole Coston's checklist. After meeting with Nicole Coston for a third time she asked if it could be possible to code a software program instead. This new goal was equally challenging and I promptly scheduled an impromptu meeting with the Dean of Computer Sciences, Dr. Dean Brock at UNC-Asheville. After explaining the needs of the YMCA and the wish list of features needed from the functionality of any program it was determined that personally coding a program would be outside the realm of possibilities unless more time could be allotted (preferably one to two years for coding this software myself). After explaining the stalemate to which we had found ourselves in Nicole Coston allowed me to reevaluate what we truly needed from a software program. After much deliberation our primary goals were synthesized into a manageable solution. Between Nicole Coston and myself we felt that preparing a google document and excel workbook would be the most advantageous way of solving our program dilemma. From this point on, I quickly learned how to use google docs and excel to meet our desired needs. The google document that I was making would be sent to registered volunteers and interns through an online calendar system the YMCA uses on a daily basis. From this google document I created a template that was able to provide spaces explaining the event name, the date to which it would be held, the hours of operation for that event, the location, and which program this event was specific for. Also included on this google doc was a description of the intended outcomes each event would accomplish. On this google document there were spaces provided that allowed only registered volunteers and interns to input their name into a volunteer signup list that distinguished how many volunteers would be needed for any given event. For privacy matters and document editing only registered volunteers and interns would be given access to this documents information and link.

Next, I was to solve the issue of using excel to track registered volunteer and intern hours. Using an excel spreadsheet I created a template that would use each tab along the bottom of the page to represent the name of any registered participant whether that would be a volunteer or intern. The primary functionality of this spreadsheet was to record and calculate the individual volunteer hours spent at an event along with a calculated total hours of registered non-employee (volunteers and intern) working (volunteering) hours which would be submitted to a state agency for tax and expense purposes. This excel spreadsheet included the date of events, the program in which the event was run under, and the hours spent at each event. I linked an auto-sum formula to automatically tabulate the total spent hours of each individual. This individual formula was then collected by a master formula as a total by a separate tab that only the Nutrition Department of the YMCA could alter and discuss during their time of data collection. I also added branding to the excel workbook which helped only to aesthetically remind individuals of the YMCA Nutrition Department.

The last area for improvement the YMCA wanted me to attend to was the matter of a revised training manual for registered volunteers and interns. This procedural manual would serve to be a tool of instruction for each varying event type the YMCA Nutrition Department hosts. There are two vehicles by which the YMCA uses for varying events. They have the mobile market and mobile kitchen, both of which are used on a monthly if not weekly basis as an extension of the YMCA's food pantry. This manual would be a tool of instruction for each varying event type done with either the mobile market or mobile kitchen. While making this updated manual I first interviewed employees of the YMCA who regularly were involved on the operations of each event type for the mobile market and mobile kitchen. First I interviewed Kasey Telfer, a YMCA nutrition employee who is responsible for the mobile market and mobile kitchen. From her hour and a half long interview I assimilated the skeletal structure for what should be done during a typical produce distribution. The basic structure of a produce distribution for both the mobile market and mobile kitchen would be to: load items into boxes, load cold items into coolers, bring a broom from the pantry, wipe down stainless steel surfaces-with stainless steel cleaner, sweep floor and seats, hang baskets on hooks, fill the baskets with produce, take food from coolers and place into refrigerator on the bus, take the two foldable tables outside and take two checkered table clothes outside and place them on to foldable tables. On the tables, they would place flyers (both pantry & mobile kitchen), distribution forms, volunteer sign-up sheet, and volunteer packets. Then there was the closing of the produce distribution which would be to: take flyers off table and into designated folder, fold table clothes and put back into cabinet, fold tables and put back between the cafe seat and stainless steel countertops, put leftover food into appreciate boxes and/or coolers, take baskets off hooks and place them neatly back in between of the black cabinet and stainless steel countertops, in the black cabinet use disinfectant to clean cafe seats, wipe stainless steel countertops with only the stainless steel cleaner, sweep floors, take out trash-bin from behind the drivers seat, unload boxes from bus into the pantry, and break down empty boxes and place into dumpster. This was a shortened and condensed list of procedures for registered interns, employees, and volunteers to refer to when running a typical produce distribution event. While Interviewing Kasey Telfer I was also taking notes on what changes should be made when the mobile market or mobile kitchen held an event different than a produce distribution, such as a "Taste Test Event" and "Cooking Demo Event" for the Mobile Kitchen. When transcribing this new event information it was crucial to not duplicate instructions or be redundant. The manual slightly changed when including these events, however the majority of how to run the buses was still the following same basic process. There were small discrepancies among events which related to the loading of only certain ingredients for a cooking demo or making sure to bring taster cups and silverware for taste test events and lastly bulk produce distribution which consisted of a traditional set of instructions without variance.

After recording the skeletal structure of the manual I then interviewed another employee Wally Moneyhun, who like Kasey works directly with the mobile market and mobile kitchen. Wally is responsible for driving the vehicles and maintaining the mechanical and electrical components on board. When I interviewed Wally I wanted to learn more about the safety and maintenance related issues with both vehicles. From his one hour long interview I collected information regarding the mobile market and mobile kitchen. For the mobile market and mobile kitchen Wally expressed that checking tire inflation of all six tires was essential, along with kicking them to test for soft spots or leaks. On the mobile kitchen in particular, there is a generator that powers

the entire bus and it is of the utmost importance to check that the bolts are restraining the generator on board before take off. Someone should briefly shake the generator to ensure safety and security of the unit while making sure the generator rack is locked onto the trailer hitch before take off from each off site-event. Wally also expressed that the generator was only capable of running either the hot water pump or fridge, but not both due to the excessive power demand. It was also noted that when stopped at an event the surrounding area of the generator would always be taped off with a 5'x 5' caution area. Lastly, I formulated a contact list that separated varying emergencies into which YMCA employee should handle each type of issue dependent on their severity. For example, Kasey Telfer should only be contacted with issues related to the event specifically, while Nicole Coston should be contacted in regards to overall,final event decisions and Wally should be contacted in the event something mechanical or electrical arises with the bus.

While these documents were being evaluated by Nicole Coston she requested that I take part in another produce distribution. This would help to evaluate that what I had included in my manual was most accurate and efficient for the timeliness of each event. The produce distribution I was apart of took place at Erwin High School, Asheville, NC. From five to seven o'clock that evening I loaded items into boxes for the event. I loaded cold items into coolers, hung baskets on hooks for produce, filled the baskets with produce, took two foldable tables outside, and placed two checkered tablecloths on them for the event. On each table I placed flyers (both for the pantry & mobile kitchen), distribution forms, volunteer sign-up sheet, and informational volunteer packets. At seven we closed the produce distribution, and I removed the flyers from each table and placed each of them back into their designated folder, folded the table clothes and put back into bus, folded the tables and put them back onto the bus where they were securely fastened, put leftover food into appreciate boxes and coolers, took the baskets off the hook neatly stacked each one on the bus. Once at the the YMCA Beavertown location the regular employees unloaded the empty boxes from the bus into the pantry and broke down the empty boxes and place into the dumpster. This produce distribution helped to solidify the process by which these events are handled. While at the event I continually referenced my initial draft of the manual and checked for similarities or areas to be improved while Nicole Coston was reviewing that same document that very same week. I felt that my manual was not in need of additional directions but instead the reduction of certain elements of redundancy. solidify

When I received Nicole's corrections with my Google doc, excel workbook, and training manual I changed the glaring errors in my wording and formatting depending on the document. In the case of my manual, the wording was altered to be more direct and less generalized when regarding a certain task. Also, when referring to an item that is placed in a certain container or shelf it was crucial for me to reword where specifically that item would be on the mobile market or mobile kitchen. In the case of the excel workbook I was to go back and manually enter the names of different interns at the present time so I could have a mock template to show Nicole Coston. My google document did not need correction; however the need for the YMCA's logo was required, which was placed on the template. Lastly, when I finished making the corrections to all three document types I changed the ownership of the documents to Kelsey Telfer and Nicole Coston so they could alter any small alterations as need be with the software. However as this manual was not produced to instruct personnel on how to communicate with those of a

different language it is up to the discretion of the YMCA to hire bilingual employees and volunteers. This was a shortcoming of the manual however, the manual was only produced to provide information on what procedural details should be observed during any given event.

Results

After working with the YMCA Nutrition Department for this semester my goals were successfully attained. When the YMCA faced the issue of there being no official way to log the recorded hours of each intern and volunteer I established online resources that interns and volunteers would be able to access in order to solve these issues. Creating an excel workbook with active cells that were ready to calculate any input of hours, the YMCA would have their need for record keeping resolved. Also, the YMCA expressed the need to alert all volunteers and interns of what events would be taking place during each month on the live calendar online. This issue also contained the need for registered interns and volunteers to some how see an informational write up of what each event would require (i.e. number of needed volunteers, the hours each event would last, where each event would take place, and what kind of event would it be, such as a produce distribution mobile market or cooking demo etc.). This issue was resolved with the addition of a google document that was editable in select places where interns and volunteers could register for their volunteer time slot for any given event during any month. In addition to this area of need the YMCA also expressed that there was also a needed rewriting of the procedural manual.

At the beginning of this semester there was no manual in place for the Nutrition Department and this manual was to be a tool of instruction for each varying event type the YMCA Nutrition Department. This manual would help to disclose important instructor information regarding the mobile market and mobile kitchen. When I initially spoke with Nicole Coston, the Director of the YMCA's youth Nutrition Department she expressed that this manual would not only be used by registered volunteers and interns, rather this manual would be accessible for employees to reference during specific off-site events. I have fully resolved this issue and with the collected information from various employees there is now a set protocol for interns and volunteers alike to follow when volunteering for an event that requires taking produce or other ingredients from the pantry and onto the mobile kitchen or mobile market. This manual was edited by myself, the staff, finally Nicole Coston, Director of the Nutrition Department, which has lead to a viable and now integral document that will now be stored in both vehicles, the food pantry, and the main offices of the Beaverdam location.

Sustainability

The work I have completed this semester has been something the YMCA has needed for several months and has yet to establish. Over the past summer the YMCA's nutrition program has grown into a full department. Due to this massive expansion my work should be well valued now that the Department of Nutrition is hosting large scale events with their mobile market and mobile kitchen. The projects I completed during this semester will have at least some form of longevity for the Nutrition Department until a newer, less expensive, and more all encompassing software

becomes available. Until then my online resources and manual will serve to be the backbone for all the registered volunteers and interns to reference and utilize.

Furthermore, I am not ending my volunteerism with the YMCA. In fact, I plan on helping to run the mobile kitchen and mobile market in the near future. These two vehicles are the physical backbone of the Nutrition Department, and my work with several YMCA events this year has lead me to continue wanting to serve Western North Carolina. With the continued service I will bring to the YMCA Nutrition Department I will have the advantage to observe how my training manual is working for volunteers and other interns alike. While working onsite with either the mobile kitchen or mobile market I will continue to ask not only the employees of the YMCA but the other volunteers and interns how could the volunteer process be simplified or how differently could the YMCA distribute produce in the future. Remaining current with ever-changing conditions like that of the YMCA will allow for there to be constant progress on the individual level. Since nutrition is an individual and community-driven factor of community health and personal wellness there should always remain updated and accurate information.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this semester working with the YMCA has provided me with more experience than I expected to receive. The large scale collaboration of working with the YMCA was a learning curve. When first speaking with Nicole Coston at the end of August we both felt that what was needed for the YMCA Nutrition Department was better record keeping for interns, volunteers, and possibly employees. After continual meetings with the Nutrition Department it was apparent that because the nutrition program had grown into the first new YMCA Department so quickly that there was a lack of foundational record keeping for legal and procedural details. Then Nicole and myself decided that an online resource and event manual was the best project to help complete.

Learning how to make an online document that contained the proper information was important to learn as well. I felt that being able to construct a online document and excel workbook were items that serviced the YMCA in multiple ways. The YMCA will have the opportunity to use this software for free at anytime and can adapt any non functioning piece to fit their new future expansions. Looking forward I felt that this was a vital aspect to my project's longevity. The longevity of this project was apparent because in the event the YMCA purchased more vehicles for distribution events, or whether the organization triples their number of registered volunteers and interns. My project would give the ability to promote such avenues for growth. Developing the training manual was actually the greatest struggle of this project. Each employee wanted to highlight different procedures that they felt were more apt for attention than the other more mundane common sense instructions. This inconsistency was initially challenging to work with but after major edits there was an actual manual that truly served the major complaints initially brought forth when developing this procedural document.

Moving forward my work with the YMCA will be a continuation of this semester-long project. I will continue to edit the online resources and update newer versions of the manual as the Nutrition Department acquires new vehicles or protocols for their distribution efforts. This

project has allowed me to become increasingly aware of not only our communities food insecurities but the societal stigma we establish with receiving a handout in a time of great need. We often disassociate with that which makes us question why the way we feel, act, and perceive culture around us. My ultimate take away from this project was that to make change in the lives of people who are in need we first need effective record keeping then we can systemically provide the relief to areas that statistically show, like in the case of free and reduced lunches that individuals are unable to speak for their needs. Knowing that there are barriers placed on the communication of individuals (social stigmas, lack of education, lack of outreach, etc.) and the help they need create the critical dynamics of our culture. Moving forward I would like to believe this will make me a more aware and proactive medical professional in the coming years.

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