

# Addressing Intermittent Food Insecurity Among Patrons of a Cincinnati Soup Kitchen

**Learning Community 10**

*In partnership with Our Daily Bread*

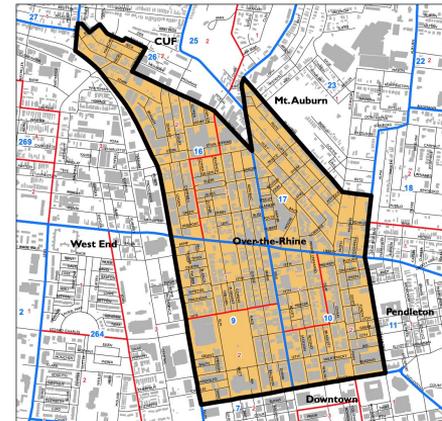
**Abigail Groskiewicz, Adithya Kumar, Andrew Angel, Andrew Snider,  
Dorothy Chan, Isabella Ramicone, John F. Kennedy, Kathleen Smith,  
Kelson Pike, Michael Zappa, Tate Reuter, Zohabe Bakali**

## ***Community Partner and Target Population:***

- Our Daily Bread (ODB) is one of the largest soup kitchens in Cincinnati serving over 500 meals a day for a total of close to 150,000 meals a year.
- Their work is very important to the Over the Rhine (OTR) community they work in, which is a community that has 73% of residents living under the federal poverty line<sup>1</sup>.
- It is well known that living under the poverty line affects one's ability to access resources, such as nutritional food, and as a result 14.1% of OTR residents live with food insecurity<sup>2</sup>.
- Further exacerbating this issue is the recent loss of 70% of affordable housing units in OTR, which places greater strain on already tight budgets to accommodate higher rent, and the fact that 26% of OTR residents do not own a vehicle, which makes access to grocery stores difficult<sup>3,4</sup>.



**Over-the-Rhine**  
Statistical Neighborhood Approximation



## ***Service Objective:***

- ODB is able to help the OTR population greatly during the week, but they are closed during the weekends. While this used to not be a problem as their guests would visit other food pantries on those days, when the COVID-19 pandemic forced those organizations to close the guests were left with no food source two days of the week.
- To combat this, ODB gave out weekend bags full of non-perishable food items, but the guests quickly grew tired of the staple items and the ODB staff were concerned about the bag's nutritional value.
- Our group sought to address both of these problems by providing can-openers to the ODB guests. Doing so gives them access to regular canned foods, rather than just pop-top canned foods, which we believe will open up weekend food options of increased variety and nutritional status.

## ***Learning Objective:***

Through this project our group hopes to increase our awareness and understanding of homeless and food insecure populations and the unique challenges they face. We also hope to better appreciate how social determinants of health, particularly nutrition, impact one's overall health.

- Last semester our learning community identified weekend food insecurity within vulnerable populations as a result of the Coronavirus as the ideal focal point for our project.
- After communicating extensively with our onsite contact, it was determined that the best approach to combat this issue would be through administering can-openers to expand canned food options over the weekend for those individuals dealing with food insecurity
- Our learning community also concluded that conducting a survey to ascertain non identifiable demographic information may also be useful in understanding broader community trends that could be used to ultimately help further diminish food insecurities.

- In order to have effectively and safely distributed the can openers our learning community needed to devise a plan that would enable us to maintain social-distancing whilst interacting with numerous patrons of Our Daily Bread. The plan we devised is as follows.

## Step 1:

Formulate a survey that allows our LC to ascertain pertinent information while respecting participant anonymity. The following survey questions were decided upon:

- Age
- Gender
- Race
- Where do you currently live?
- Have you had difficulty finding a place to stay in the last 12 months
- Do you believe you get enough food throughout the week? (Monday-Friday)
- Do you believe you get enough food during the weekend?
- If applicable, how long have you been experiencing hunger or a lack of food?
- Do you believe that a can-opener and/or canned food will help you over the weekend?

## Step 2:

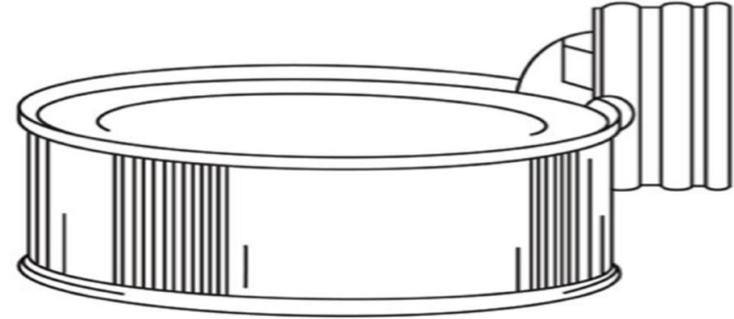
IRB approval was obtained to take surveys and compile data from the patrons of ODB regarding.

### IRB In Person Statement

*“On behalf of LC #10 I am requesting the administration grant our LC the ability to conduct in-person data collection at Our Daily Bread, located at 1730 Race St, Cincinnati, OH 45202. In order to ensure the safety of both the students and “Our Daily Bread’s” at-risk community members we have established a protocol which ensures no unreasonable risk will be taken whilst administering the surveys. Tentatively, we hope to be afforded the ability to conduct the survey on February 4th, 5th, 11th, and 12th from approximately (8:30am-12:00pm). During the distribution of the surveys all students involved will wear face masks and face shields while remaining approximately six feet away from all community members that choose to complete the survey. We plan to ensure this social-distancing by placing a six-foot table in between ourselves and the community members. The community members will approach the table to collect non perishables and canned goods along with a can opener (in the hope to help combat food insecurity brought on by the corona virus resulting in the closure of soup-kitchens that operate on the weekend) and it would be at this time that we would ask the individuals who have approached the table if they would be willing to participate in a strictly voluntary and anonymous survey that is a series of (yes/no) questions and non identifiable demographic information; if the individual agrees to partake in the survey we would then conduct the verbal survey that would last no longer than 20 seconds per individual. This entire process will be done outside to ensure adequate airflow so to further diminish the risk associated with in-person data collection. The students involved and the tentative dates they will be in attendance at Our Daily Bread are as follows: February 4th (Zohabe Bakali, Drew Angel), February 5th (John Kennedy, Andrew Snider), February 11th (Katie Smith, Abbey Groszkiewicz, Adithya Kumar), February 12th (Kelson Pike, Dorothy Chan, Tate Reuter).”*

## Step 3:

Our learning community opted to purchase (300) P51 can-openers to be distributed in tandem with healthy canned food options and can-opener instructions.



1. Place can opener as shown in diagram with rim of can inside the can opener slot.
2. Keep can rim in slot to provide leverage and twist **FORWARD** to puncture can.
3. Keeping rim in slot, pull opener **TOWARDS** you and repeat stroke to open can.

## Step 4:

During distribution, safety was our top priority. We set up the dissemination station outside, which afforded us the ability to spread out to maintain the CDC's recommended social distancing guidelines, it also ensured that we would have adequate airflow to further combat the spread of the COVID-19. Additionally, Our Daily Bread distributed masks to all guests to ensure our guests were equally protected.



6'



6'



## Step 5:

While distributing the can-openers, we asked those interested in the patrons if they would be willing to take our voluntary and anonymous survey to help us better understand demographic trends that could potentially further our efforts in diminishing the population of individuals dealing with food insecurity.



# Demographic Results

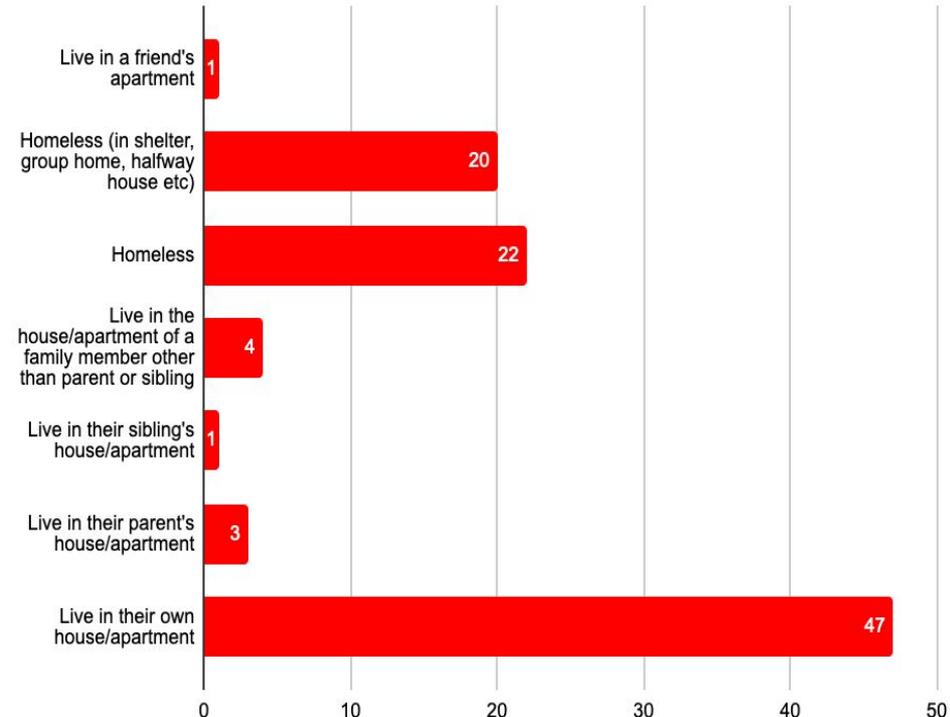
- Over 4 days of can opener distribution, survey responses were collected
  - 99 patrons participated in our survey
- 52.6% between 40-59 years old
  - All respondents between ages 8-83
- 76.4% identify as male
- 71.8% identify as black

	Number	Percentage
<b>Age Groups</b>		
8-17	1	1.0%
18-29	11	11.1%
30-39	15	15.2%
40-49	25	25.3%
50-59	27	27.3%
60-69	11	11.1%
70-79	4	4.0%
80-83	1	1.0%
<b>Gender Identity</b>		
Man	68	68.7%
Woman	21	21.2%
Prefer not to respond	10	10.1%
<b>Racial Identity</b>		
Black or African America	61	61.6%
White or Caucasian	24	24.2%
Prefer not to respond	14	14.1%

# Housing Status Results

- 42.4% of respondents currently experiencing homelessness
  - Over half indicated they did not stay in a shelter
- 47.5% do have their own place of residence
- Remaining 9% have a living situation with friends or family

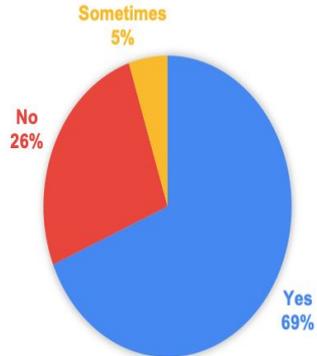
OBD Guests' Current Living Situations



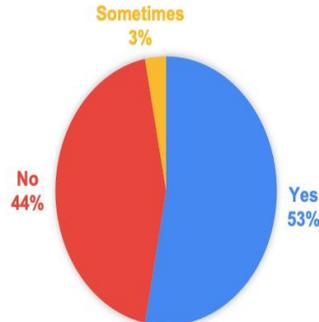
# Food Insecurity Results

- Nearly a third of guests felt they do not receive enough food during the week
- Nearly one half felt they do not get enough during weekends
- Of those experiencing a lack of food, 62% have lived with this shortage for over a year

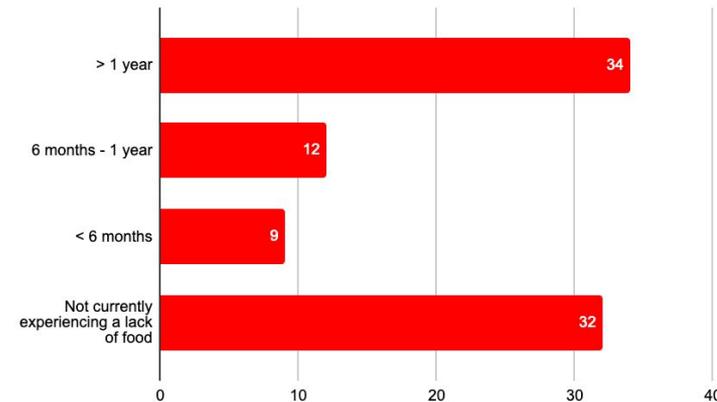
**DO YOU BELIEVE YOU GET ENOUGH FOOD ON WEEKDAYS?**



**DO YOU BELIEVE YOU GET ENOUGH FOOD DURING THE WEEKENDS?**

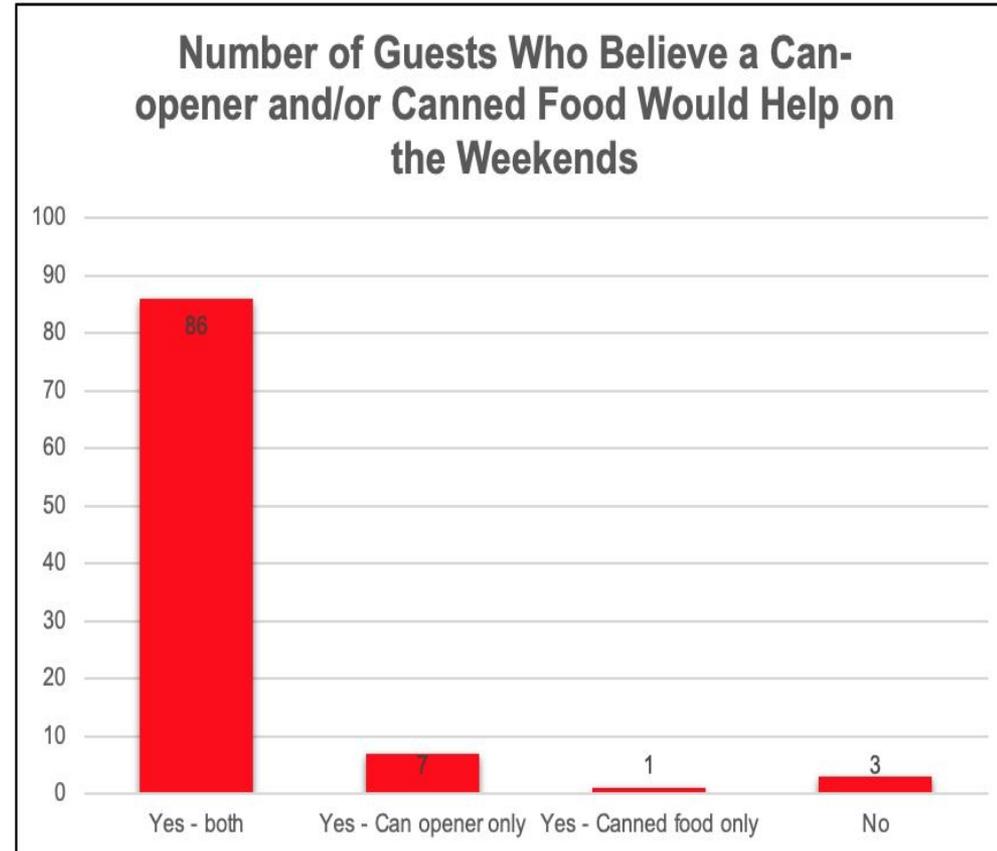


**Guests' Duration of Time Experiencing a Lack of Food**



# Potential Impact Results

- Approximately 140 can openers were distributed by the LC
  - ODB has been distributing the remaining one's as needed
- 97% of respondents believe a can opener, paired with an increased focused on weekend canned food bags from ODB, would be helpful



## Learning Outcomes

- The difficulties COVID poses to those with food insecurity due to the closure of food distributing services.
- Food insecurity is only one aspect of health but is deeply intertwined with other social determinants such as inconsistent housing and difficulty with transportation as demonstrated by the guests we served.

## Project Outcomes

- We were able to distribute approximately 140 can openers to the guests of Our Daily Bread over a four-day distribution. We received 99 responses to the survey questions which indicated that only 48% percent of Our Daily Bread's guests live in their own home or apartment.

## Community and LC Reflections

- *“By providing a simple, easy-to-carry can opener to the guests of Our Daily Bread, LC10 allowed us more flexibility in the shelf-stable canned food we can provide our guests- a must when you are dealing with donated food. This provided our guests not only with more variety in the types of food they receive, but also in the places they can acquire food. They are now able to go to other food pantries and take food they would have had to pass over before, simply because they had no way of opening it.” - Georgine Getty (Director of Our Daily Bread)*
- *“Interacting with the guests helped us develop a better understanding of their needs and circumstances that will undoubtedly inform our ability to provide more thoughtful care as physicians. Additionally, brainstorming, troubleshooting, and implementing our project was a meaningful team-building experience that brought our learning community closer together.” - Adithya Kumar (LC 10)*
- *“Working with Our Daily Bread was a highlight of my first year in medical school. From in-person volunteering, to appreciative inquiry interviews, to can opener distribution my interactions with the employees and guests were enlightening and often inspiring. I hope to provide better care for my future patients because of the experience I have gained by working with Our Daily Bread.” - Katie Smith (LC 10)*

## Barriers and Opportunities

- Church and food pantry closure on the weekends drastically increased the demand for weekend food sources. Chef Boyardee was very popular among the guests because it tastes good and has a pop tab lid which does not require a can opener. These are also high in sodium and low in nutrition. Our can openers will aim to enable access to healthier canned alternatives.
- Another barrier was deciding what type of can opener would be best and how to manage sanitization. We decided on the Military Style P-51 can opener because they are inexpensive and very portable. We also provided alcohol wipes to clean them and print out instructions. We also purchased 3 full-sized manual can openers that Our Daily Bread can keep on-site for guests.
- We were not able to set up a can opener/ canned goods drive because many schools in the area had transitioned to remote learning.
- Inclement winter weather reduced the number of guests Our Daily Bread served from about 400 to about 150-200 per day causing a significant decrease in the number of survey participants and guests we were able to serve.

## Next Steps

We propose three future directions with the information we've collected:

- 1) Use the demographic data as evidence that a proportion of the population that Our Daily Bread serves is eligible for the vaccine and ensure complete vaccination of guests for COVID-19
- 2) Increase the numbers and variety of canned goods that Our Daily Bread can provide to guests
- 3) Create rotating nutritional meal plans that can be made with canned foods with recipes that can be distributed to guests

## Assets

- Our Daily Bread already has extensive partnerships with the Over the Rhine community and local schools allowing them to source canned goods. Going forward, we hope to expand these partnerships in order to increase the supply of canned goods now that the guests are able to open them independently to provide themselves with healthy meals on the weekends.
- Georgine and the staff knew the population they served very well and what solutions would benefit the guests the most; working with them and interviewing them was tremendously helpful because we did not have opportunities to connect with the community during COVID-19.

# Questions?



1. Department of Planning and Buildings, City of Cincinnati. Over-the-Rhine Census 2010. US Census Report 2010. April 2012.  
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4. Department of Planning and Buildings, City of Cincinnati. Over-the-Rhine Census 2010. US Census Report 2010. April 2012.  
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