

Healthy Food Access as an Issue of Equity

Washington, D.C. Cesar Chavez Prep Middle School
6th Grade Cultural Geography



ISSUE

Although SNAP cards are widely accepted at farmers markets across Washington D.C., they are largely underutilized. Sixth grade Cultural Geography students at Cesar Chavez Prep Middle School worked with local farmers markets in North West Washington, DC, to assess barriers and opportunities to increase access and patronage of low-income residents to healthy, fresh foods at local farmers markets. Students examined healthy food access from an equity lens within the context of an Environmental Justice unit. To understand local context and needs of the community, students used Census Data to map income levels in the surrounding community (NW Washington, DC), and then layered the data with the location of farmers markets to understand the way income level corresponds to availability and access to fresh food.

“Students feel empowered because they’re asked to solve a real community problem that has not yet been solved. It is this empowerment that motivates the kids to think critically and creatively.”

– Peter Marsden, 6th Grade Cultural Geography Teacher

QUESTION

Why are SNAP cards underutilized at farmers markets in NW Washington D.C., and what can be done to ensure SNAP recipients take advantage of their local farmers markets?

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: Y-PLAN TEAM

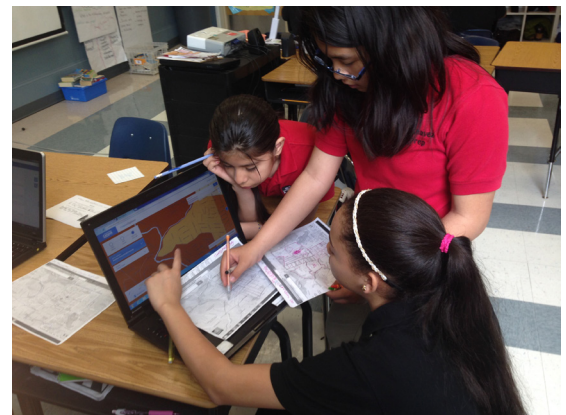
Y-PLAN Instructor: Peter Marsden

Students: 6th grade Cultural Geography

Client: Columbia Heights, U Street, and Mt. Pleasant Farmers Markets

YOUTH DRIVEN DATA AND INSIGHTS

- Farmers markets tend to be located in high-income areas
- Underutilized SNAP use at farmers markets may be due to barriers related to convenience, affordability, and lack of marketing and awareness.



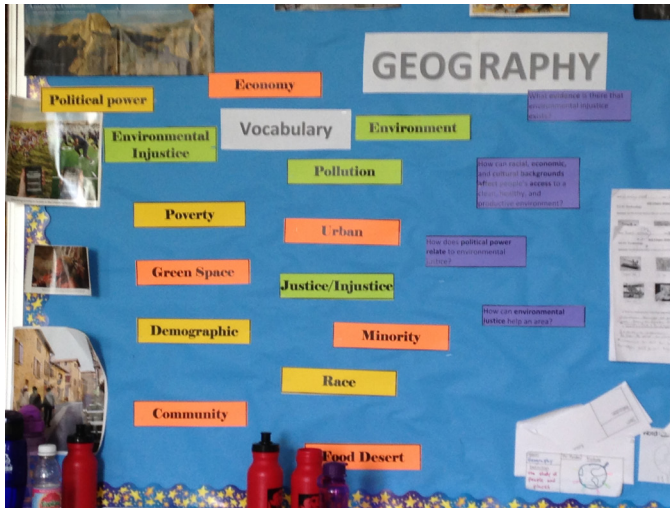
EMERGING POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Locate farmers markets close to transit hubs to increase accessibility
- Increase marketing about the ability to use SNAP cards at farmers markets
- Increase subsidies to farmers markets that will give more credits to SNAP recipients



NEXT STEPS

Students are still working on research and final recommendations. Students will present their findings and proposals to elected representatives at City Council in June, 2014.



For more information on Y-PLAN, contact Jessie Stewart, Y-PLAN National Coordinator: jessie.stewart@berkeley.edu