



Compass Affordable Housing, Inc.

Often, our lives brush alongside people who live in poverty and although you may not know it they are the people who cut your hair, teach your children, trim the hedges, scan your purchases, play in the park with their kids and cross the street in their wheelchairs.

Statistics paint a bleak picture of poverty and hunger for the poor and low-wage earners right our own backyard, Tucson. 18.52% of the population in Pima County lives below the Federal Poverty Level with the highest rates of poverty in female-headed households at 45.2%. In 2014, one in five Arizonans said that there had been times over the past 12 months that they didn't have enough money to buy food. In 2015, Arizona was one of five states with the highest rate of food-insecure children under 18. Food insecurity and food poverty is a serious issue. It affected 145,800 Pima County residents in 2015 and has since grown. One in four Pima County adults did not eat fruit or vegetables more than once a week in the last month, and 14% of residents, live in food deserts.

In response to this, Compass Affordable Housing (CAH) has implemented a volunteer/tenant - run market called "Your Healthy Home Market". The Market is an expansion of our Tenant Services program. It addresses the effects of food poverty by helping low-income households increase food security, access nutritious food, improve diets and learn about dietary habits that affect their wellbeing. We intend to expand the market to reach about more than 200 people each month. This includes a third market and assistance to single parent households served in the CAH Community Housing program.

Food poverty is worse diet, worse access, worse health, higher percentage of income on food and less choice from a restricted range of foods. It is about less or almost no consumption of fruit & vegetables and can be defined as the inability to obtain healthy affordable food. Influencing factors include lack of the availability of healthy goods in local shops, lack of income, lack of transportation, fear of crime where they shop, lack of knowledge about healthy diets, and lack of skills to create healthy meals. Recently, drought in the U.S. has driven up the prices of meat, dairy, fruit and vegetables. Due to the mix of factors I have outlined, people on low incomes are affected the most. They have the lowest intakes of fruit and vegetables and are far more likely to suffer from diet-related diseases such as cancer, diabetes, obesity and coronary heart disease.

Three times a month we will bring 800-1500 pounds of fresh food to the community that includes protein, vegetables, grain, fruits, breads, plants and herbs. Local partners provide educational sessions that range from learning about produce, budgeting for the month, food and health, cooking techniques, etc. For example, on-site nutritionists teach people how to use

the produce, how to meal plan, make nourishing recipes, and the effects of healthy eating on the mind, body and emotions. After the mandatory class, tenants and community members “shop” for food at no cost to them.

The Market is supported by local produce, tenant volunteers, vegetables grown in the Alvord Court Community Garden and nutritionists from the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension. Immediate benefits include an on-site market that does not require transportation; nutritious food at no cost; it promotes better nutrition; it encourages volunteerism because it is a tenant run market; it provides a safe and uplifting environment to socialize with neighbors and the community; and allows CAH staff to observe people and pay attention to any other issues/needs. Long term benefits include better health; changes in eating behaviors; not going hungry; learning how to budget, cook and share; volunteerism and community engagement; and supporting gardens in food deserts.

As you can tell Your Healthy Home Market accomplishes a lot in a very holistic and uplifting way. We could use some help. We need monthly volunteers to regularly help pick-up and deliver the produce for the market and we need financial support. If you are interested in volunteering please email us at infoCAH@compassaffordablehousing.org.

To donate, please go to our website and donate on line at www.compassaffordablehousing.org. Your donation is tax deductible and we will send you a receipt.

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