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Second Harvest Food Bank

School Food Pantry Program

* + How the school pantry got started:
    - In a school close to food bank, a child was seen eating food of the floor
    - A grant was written for school pantries by Second Harvest Food Bank – $200,000 from a local healthcare company
      * Restricted to Davidson county schools –a high need area
      * Meant to feed students, families of students, or staff – not community based (have referrals handy for community inquiries)
    - Katy Kendall and RDs put together a “model box” that was nutritionally balanced
    - Distribute non-perishable food
  + When recruiting schools and stakeholders, call the right person!
  + It is not logistically feasible to have pantry in every schools
    - High need schools are priority
    - Majority of pantries are run by staff – find the staff that care about helping families and kids
  + Hours are meant to operate like a pantry, not backpack programs
    - Send consumer-sized packages instead of single-serve
  + Don’t encourage schools to pre-identify families
    - Offer more of an open option so anyone in need can access the pantry
  + Substitute items based on cultural needs!
    - Know needs so foods can be effectively distributed
  + Rural schools were found to be easier to start and maintain pantries
  + Logistics
    - Cloth reusable bags (plain)– kids don’t want bags with logo
    - Customized flyer sent home to families for awareness of school pantry resource
    - Newsletters
    - Notes on report cards
  + Best Advice: Find the passionate person at the school to run a successful pantry!
* Aoife Dowd – Community Food Bank of Central Alabama on School Pantry Pilot Program:
  + Pilot process of school pantries at 8 schools
  + Rural counties in Central Al
    - Blount and St Clair
  + Boxed model – Just-in-time deliveries to provide produce
    - Project Preserve affiliated
    - 25 pounds each box
    - Nutritionally diverse
    - 10-15 pounds of produce per month
  + Criteria
    - Not a USDA program, to ensure all families to participate
      * Some families are just above the income bubble for eligibility
    - Food Bank provides school with resources to refer families
    - One day per month has limitations, so the Food Banks is thinking through ways to overcome barriers
      * Parent might be sick that day or need to work and can’t make it to pick-up

