Starting a community garden in Passaic, NJ

Presenter: Patsy Herrera
Why start a community garden?

There are benefits to a Community Garden:

- In Passaic County, New Jersey almost 50,000 people — 1 in 6 children — struggle with food insecurity (CUMAC).
- Poor nutrition can lead to lasting deficits in cognitive, social, and emotional development. Studies show that food insecure children are twice as likely to develop health problems overall (FRAC).
- Neighborhoods with many poor or low-income residents often have fewer resources that promote health (e.g., full-service grocery stores offering affordable and nutritious foods, parks and recreational facilities that encourage physical activity. Instead have more access to fast food restaurants. (Hilmers et al, Sallis, and Glanz).
- Make the space feel like it is their own and part of the community, builds social capital (Ohmer, et al).
Passaic, NJ

Stats(source datausa):

- Poverty Rate: 33.1%
- Population: 71,057
- Median Age: 29.8
- Median Household Income: $34,920
- Median Property Value: $309,700
- Borders Clifton, Garfield, Wallington, and Rutherford
Data

Median Household Income

- $21.8k - $35.1k
- $35.1k - $50.1k
- $50.1k - $69.4k
- $69.4k - $105k
- $105k - $113k

2013 2014 2015 2016 2017

Food Insecurity

- 6.4% - 7.6%
- 7.6% - 9.3%
- 9.3% - 11%
- 11% - 12.9%
- 12.9% - 14.8%
- 14.8% - 17.4%
- 17.4% - 19.6%

2014 2015 2016 2017 2018
Where

We were considering

- Park
- Library
- Church
- Empty lots

We wanted a place that was closest to people, where having a car would not be necessary because parking can be a huge hassle, along with other things.
Figuring it out...

- Not something I could have started on my own
  - Went out with my dad and talked about the parks and history
- Had help from friends, family, professors
  - Spoke with people in PSEG ISS and MSUCCG
- Decided to start with communicating with the people in city hall
- Sent email, and thinking about other logistics
Concerns

- Insurance
- Limiting spending for resources
- Need more volunteers/people
- To rent or have used for the public
Where do we go from here?

- Some weird timing, given the current situation, we took a step back
- Taking this time to make sure that we can figure out the logistics and find more people to get involved
- Understand that this may not be possible right now, but are hopeful to have it ready by next year
Feedback or Questions
Sources

- https://datausa.io/profile/geo/passaic-nj
- https://www.cumac.org/hunger-in-nj
Thank you!