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Three Square

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Three Square

Beteleahme Tegaye

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY & PURPOSE

Three Square Food Bank and Feeding America, is the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization. Three Square sources food, raises funds, and relies on volunteers to help supply their program partners with the food and services they need to provide wholesome food directly to hungry people in hundreds of neighborhood locations in all four counties. Three Square has a service network of community partners including nonprofits, schools, shelters, meal programs, SNAP outreach sites, etc. (the specific location I volunteered at, Gospel Lighthouse Church, is one of their partners). Working with bulk food providers, Feeding America and local retail and grocery stores, Three Square sources and provides perishable and non-perishable food to non-profit and faith-based partners

COMMUNITY SERVICE PARADIGM

The community service paradigm that Three Square best fits is "project". As defined in "Morton - The Irony of Service" project models, focus on defining problems and their solutions and implementing well-conceived plans for achieving those solutions (Morton, 21). Three square perfectly fits this description because they are focusing on the main "problem" which would be hunger due to poverty, and they are coming up with great programs and plans to solve this specific issue.



SOCIAL ISSUE RESEARCH

SOCIAL ISSUE ADDRESSED

Three square addresses the social issue of hunger due to poverty. According to the several articles I've read, hunger as well as poverty is a rising issue in Las Vegas. "There is a growing problem of hunger in Las Vegas. The good news is we have an effective organization like Three Square. The bad news is that a quarter of million people experience food insecurity ("Hunger in Las Vegas," 2017). Nevada has the fifth-highest rate of childhood food insecurity in the country, with some staggering numbers coming from Clark County—305,430 food-insecure people, nearly 16 percent of the population, and one in every four children ("Scratching the surface: Hunger is a bigger problem in Las Vegas than you think," 2015).

CURRENT STATE

The economy in Las Vegas is terrible right now, unemployment rates are rising and some are having to work two jobs just to make ends meet. What's surprising is poverty is rising even in suburban neighborhoods. Elizabeth Kneebone, a fellow at the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution, said to the KNPR's State of Nevada "In the 2000s in particular, we saw a really rapid rise in suburban poverty that I think caught a lot more attention and rose to the national consciousness more than it had in the past," she said. "In fact, as a nation we passed a tipping point in the 2000s, where there were actually more poor people living in suburbs than in the big cities of our major metro areas" ("Poverty Is Rising In The Las Vegas Suburbs," n.d.). According to Kneebone, the growth of suburban poverty in Las Vegas was faster than what was going on nationwide. Between 2000 and 2014, the nationwide poverty rate in suburbs grew by 65 percent in Southern Nevada it grew 123 percent ("Poverty Is Rising In The Las Vegas Suburbs," n.d.). With circumstances like this, it's not surprising that Las Vegas has such a high food insecurity rate.

IDEAL STATE

The ideal state of the world, if hunger was no longer alive, people would no longer be malnourished and dying due to the lack of food they're receiving. And in order to do this, we would need better agriculture and food distribution systems. As stated earlier, three square addresses and helps this social issue by partnering with other programs and collecting food then giving it to those in need. I feel that it's important for everyone to volunteer and give a helping hand, with everyone helping, hopefully we can end hunger one step at a time.

EXPERIENCE & MAKING A DIFFERENCE

SERVICE TO COMMUNITY

Both times, I went on a Friday at 11am, when I arrived there were carts of food but there was also more food coming in until about 11:30. After all the food arrived, we had to check all the food and make sure it was good (wasn't expired, breads weren't squished, everything's packaged). After that we had to set the tables and carts up and organize all the food in the order they told us to. There was a specific order they wanted, for example, I remember it was hot dog buns first, then hamburger buns, then regular sandwich bread, etc. Basically, we just had to check and organize all the foods then pile and set it up presentably. I loved serving at the same site, I felt comfortable and I was also used to the rotation by the second time. Also, It's always better working with familiar faces. The only thing that wasn't so enjoyable for me was the long drive I had to take to get there. My expectations going in were very simple, I went to help people and get my hours done, which I was able to do all three times. I was hoping whatever I did wasn't too hard, which it wasn't, thankfully!

DIFFERENCE IN THE WAY I VIEW

My service at this site has made a difference in the way I view service learning, for the main fact that I feel as though people see volunteering as dreadful, which I get because it may seem like alot, or some people just may feel as though they don't have enough time, or their help won't make that big of an impact, but this isn't true. Everyone needs to help, so we can progress as a society together.

DIFFERENCE I MADE FOR THIS SITE

I definitely feel as though my service made a difference at this site, they didn't have that many volunteers at this specific location, so I know me being there made a difference and just went faster than it would've been if I wasn't there. Also, I'm the one who organized and set up all the bread, and helped break down the boxes that the food came in, so I know that was a big help. I definitely think not only my service but anyone who volunteers service makes a difference, not only at this site but at any site. People helping shows they care and that alone makes a difference. We do the best we can by volunteering and one step at a time we can make it less of a problem, and hopefully end hunger altogether.

PERSONAL IMPACT

Personally, it has impacted me. I truly care about world hunger and poverty, I really do, and sometimes I feel like I alone can't make the change we need. So I end up just thinking about how sad it is and never really doing anything about it. But volunteering has shown me I can make a change. Even though I haven't helped a whole bunch of people, I did help a few people by volunteering here, and that is better than nothing.