

Assessing Barriers to Access of Upper Valley Haven Food Market to Byrne House Family Shelter Guests

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BACKGROUND



- The Haven's **Byrne House Family Shelter** provides a temporary home for families
- 46 beds accommodate up to eight families
- Two family "pods" with shared kitchens and common space
- Emphasis on safety, responsibility, community, work and financial stability, and family development



Objective

Identify barriers to family shelter guests' ability to use the Haven Food Market and comfortably feed their families through a mixed-method needs assessment study including surveys, interviews, and focus groups.



- The Haven's **Food Market** provides reliable, healthy groceries to anyone in need, regardless of income
- Monthly or Daily Food Order
- Volunteers assist users in choosing items

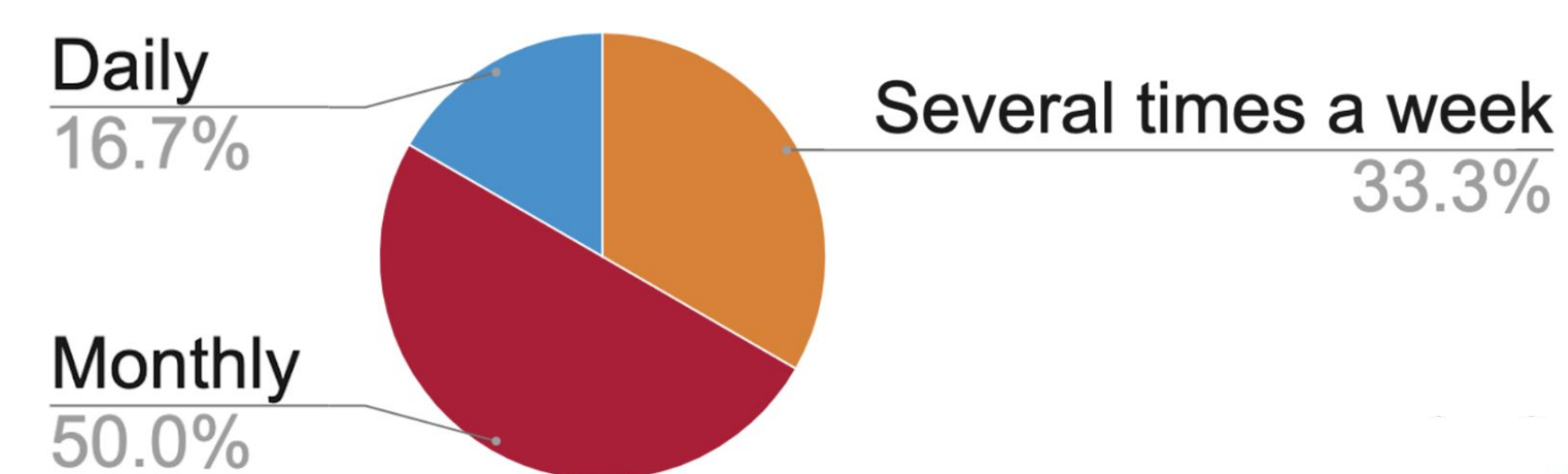


METHODS

1. **Identify issue:** family shelter guests don't utilize the Food Market to its fullest potential
2. **Design survey:** Assess food insecurity, Food Market use, barriers to use, interest in interventions
3. **Administer survey**
 - a. Guests participated in a focus group at the end of which they took a paper survey
 - b. Staff completed a paper survey
4. **Analyze data and assess next steps**

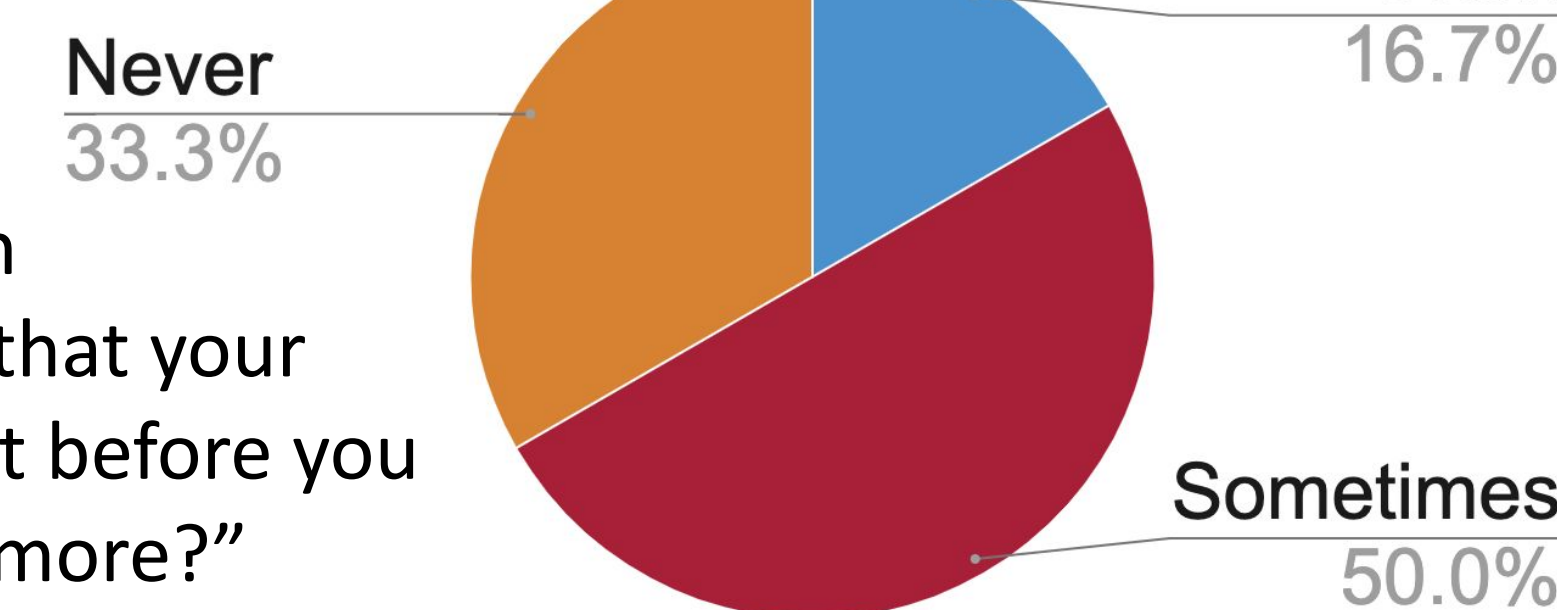
RESULTS

"How often do you use the Food Market?"

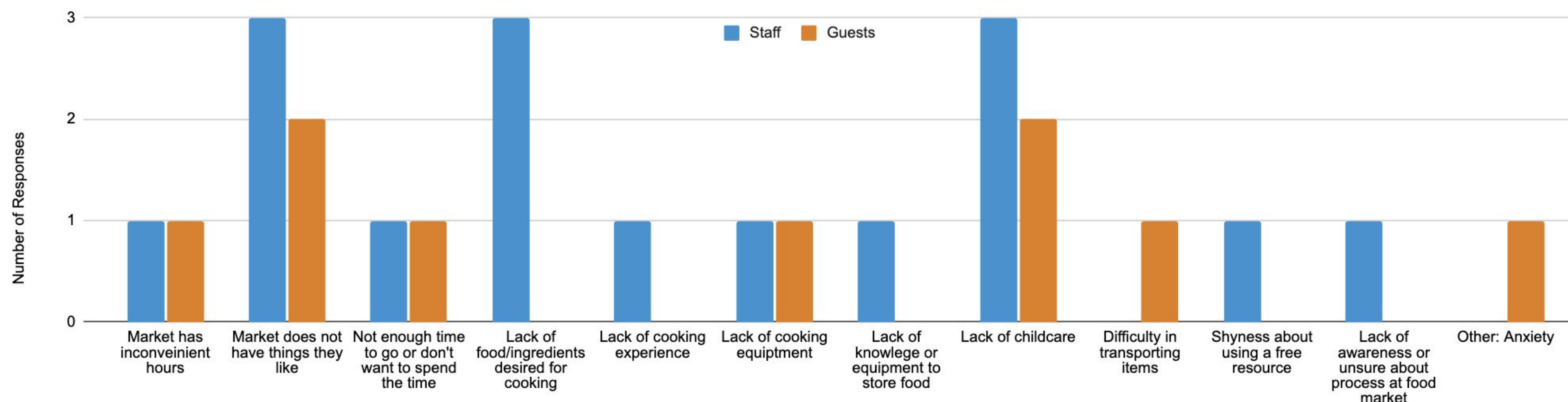


Survey Responses	
Guests	6 Responses
Staff	4 Responses

"Within the past 6 months, how often were you worried that your food would run out before you got money to buy more?"



BARRIERS TO ACCESSING THE FOOD MARKET



DISCUSSION

Main Themes

1. Lack of knowledge about cooking and managing specific dietary needs leads to families finding it hard to utilize the Food Market given its smaller variety and focus on ingredients.
2. Lack of community support (namely childcare) poses a barrier for food market usage, and social stigma hinders families from asking for help. *"You're a mom, You should have a full fridge"*
3. Healthy cooking and eating is often deprioritized given challenges of time, organizational effort necessary and other social determinants.

Project Limitations

- Limited number of responses lead to the results being subject to sampling bias as well as recall bias
- Parents are not always honest in surveys having to do with the care and feeding of their children due to social stigma or even fear of legal repercussions

Future Directions

- Dietary Guidelines for Health Conditions
 - Diabetes, obesity, heart failure, hypertension
- Cooking classes and demonstrations on meal prepping and food storage safety
- Childcare during market hours
- Curbside pick up program

CONCLUSIONS

Families at Byrne House face not one major barrier but many small challenges that add up to reduced use of the Food Shelf and contribute to food insecurity. Medical students can help address these obstacles by sharing accessible nutrition and cooking information, and by supporting efforts like childcare and curbside pickup to make food access easier.

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