

A Fruitful Experience: Urban Gardening and Food Sovereignty with Philadelphia's Food Moxie

- **Student Interns:**
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 - Haley McMullen, Drexel University College of Medicine
 - Samik Patel, Drexel University College of Medicine
- **Academic Preceptor:**
 - Tariem Burroughs, MEd, MSODL, MA, Drexel University Dornsife School of Public Health
- **Community Preceptors:**
 - Kimberly Fleisher, Food Moxie
 - Dorene Reggiani, Food Moxie

COMMUNITY PARTNER

Food Moxie, located in the Mount Airy section of Philadelphia, is an urban gardening and farming organization that produces and distributes nutritious foods to individuals in northwest Philadelphia, in addition to providing agricultural education. They run three collaborative sites across Philadelphia: Stenton Family Manor, Martin Luther King High School, and Saul Agricultural High School.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

Results from Children's HealthWatch of Philadelphia found that among families where a caregiver was employed more than 20 hours a week, more than one in five reported food insecurity in 2016. Currently, according to the City of Philadelphia, ~16.3% of Philadelphians face food insecurity.

TEAM'S EXPERIENCE

The Bridging the Gaps student interns spent the summer assisting Food Moxie with creating increased food cycle efficiency and Philadelphia networking experience. From starting seedlings in greenhouses to harvesting developed herbs and vegetables, the interns ensured that food safety, nutritional education, and environmental awareness were at the root of each step. In addition, the food grown at the Food Moxie sites were provided to the kitchen at Stenton Family Manor, which houses large families experiencing housing insecurity, and other non-profit organizations around Northwest Philadelphia that address food insecurity within the community.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/ CHALLENGES/ JOYS

- Administrative data organization
- Oral & cardiovascular health posters
- Agricultural work (planting, watering, harvesting etc.)
- Food insecurity and taste exposure research

REFLECTION

Shanelle: Food Moxie's work towards food sovereignty is creating generations of people who can connect to their ancestral roots and the land in ways that will continue the fight of building communities.

Haley: The BTG CHIP program allowed me the opportunity to work with Food Moxie, and actively participate in addressing food insecurity. I learned how to take care of the land, grow beautiful fruits and vegetables, and actively engage with wonderful community members.

Samik: Working with Food Moxie has illustrated through incremental progress how increasing food accessibility and creating a safe gardening/play space for children can begin to combat systemic forms of oppression that many communities continue to face.