SUMMARY
Residents of Scott County IA suffer from a lack of access to environments where nutritious foods are promoted. Approximately 1 in 3 people living here are overweight and/or obese and lack the confidence to know how to shop and cook healthy meals on a fixed income. By gaining invested members on our Community Partnerships for Healthy Mothers and Children (CPHMC) team our community has developed strategies to overcome the barriers we currently face. Strong partnerships with members of the community will assist our efforts toward a healthier county.

CHALLENGE
Due to a lack of knowledge and opportunity our community reports that 80% of the adult population is considered to have inadequate fruit and vegetable consumption. This problem stems from three major issues first, a lack of nutrition education, second, not having enough income in order to buy quality food items, and lastly, not having the acquired skill set to know how to cook and prepare meals. A large majority of the people that live in Scott County Iowa struggle to put well-balanced (healthy) meals on their table. Within our community 22,150 people earn $11,770 or less, annually. This gap causes our children to grow up in homes where healthy habits are not being modeled and without being taught the important skill of how to prepare healthy meals. Our children will grow into adults and with our adult obesity rates higher than the national and state average at 31%, it is time to take action and move towards a healthier

"You'll never know how helpful receiving this produce is for our family. I just lost my job and right now putting food on the table is a struggle, never mind trying to put a well-balanced healthy meal on the table. Thank you so much!"

–Anonymous WIC client after receiving one of our donated produce boxes.”

- Courtney Connor
SOLUTION
Community members from all different sectors have come together in agreement to help create a healthier Scott County environment. Our goal is to help make the healthy choice the easy choice. We will accomplish this by implementing in-store promotion techniques to encourage healthy choices at the grocery stores. Some of these techniques include a "WIC Hot Picks" section of the produce aisle that highlights a certain fruit or vegetable, offering taste tests and demos of fresh produce, and recipe cards so customers will know how to prepare the food. Also, by equipping our WIC clients with the knowledge and skillset to grocery shop and prepare meals smarter and healthier with grocery store tours lead by Dietitians.

RESULTS
Currently our coalition has grown to more than a dozen dedicated community members that are vital to the success of this project. Together we have held our first WIC Produce Stand, in which we gave away 45 pre-packaged boxes of fresh produce to our clients at no cost. We have established relationships with four of the local grocery store managers in the area that have agreed to implement in-store promotion strategies to encourage shoppers, but especially WIC families, to buy more produce. We have also had success with leading Cooking Matters grocery store tours in five local grocery stores and at our WIC clinic, with anticipation to reach over 250 WIC clients.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS
We plan to train two more tour leaders in order to meet the demand of the grocery store tours. There will be regularly scheduled "pop-up style" tours held at our WIC clinics for anyone who would like to participate. There is a need to continue the work with the fresh produce boxes, and we are planning to organize and fund this program so it can reach more people on a more systematic basis. Our hope for this project is that we can keep the conversation surrounding food and health equity going strong. We know there are many people in our community working towards a similar goal, and continuing this work is important. Scott County will be improved by the work this project has begun.

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