

# Building Pantry Choices Together

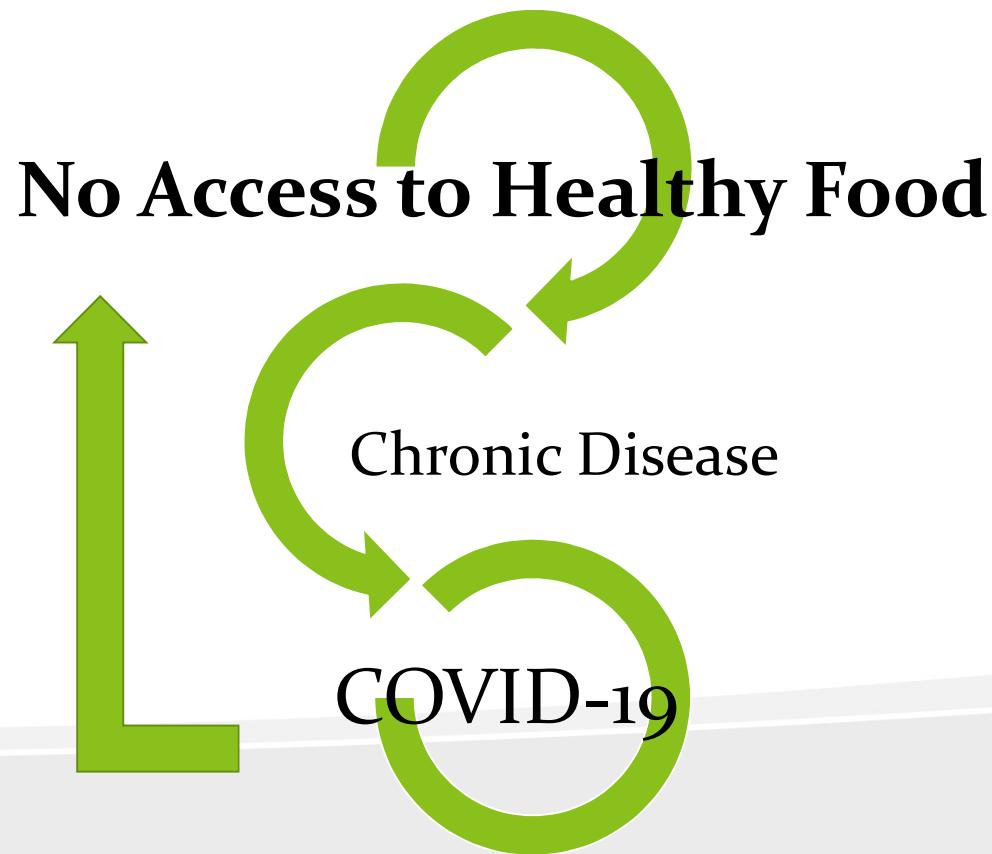
## Empowerment and Social Justice

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# Access to Healthy Food: A Public Health Crisis





# The Food Pantry System

- Provide 2-3 days of food balanced across all categories
- Deviations from Dietary Guidelines:
  - Canned not fresh
  - Processed not whole grains
  - No limits on sugar, sodium or saturated fat
  - No specific inclusion of cooking oils, monounsaturated (olive) or omega 6 oil (vegetable oil)





## In Fall 2020 St. Ambrose Teamed up with CAEI to Improve Food Security in COVID-19 Vulnerable Individuals

- >20 individuals 65+ needing home deliveries
- Boxes were personalized based on specific dietary needs
- Hypertension, Diabetes, Obesity, difficulty chewing, arthritis
- Nutrient needs: gluten free, lactose intolerant, allergies, no pork/beef, low sodium, minimally processed and organic
- Last surveys: direct ordering choosing within categories





## Key Results: Overall, food security improved

- Nutrient analysis of pantry options showed insufficient vitamin D, calcium, vitamin C
- When ordering directly, participants balanced the needs of the whole household
- Participants wanted more: fresh fruit, vegetables, meat & milk *but there was a wide range of needs related to milk (skim, 1%, 2%, whole, and lactose free).*
- Additional requests: snacks, sweets, oil, vinegar, spices, herbs and condiments





## 2021 Co-Building a Choices-Based Pantry Using the Healthy Food Pantry Model (Washington State)

- Client Choice – 10 families ordered food directly from a list
- Meet Cultural Needs – CAEI families added options to the list:
  - “Please feel free to add foods that would help your family to eat healthy”
  - “Please feel free to add items to help prepare a holiday meal”
- “No Questions Asked” Self-Service - No limits on amounts





# Co-Building a Pantry Based On The Washington State Healthy Food Pantry Model

- Incorporate Nutrition Education Programs – Providing recipes
- Emphasize Fruits and Vegetables – Fruit/vegetable boxes provided by local (urban) farmers
- Special dietary needs: Within each category to include options that meet the needs of multiple allergies, food intolerances, disease conditions, vegetarian, vegan, pork and beef free





## 2021 We Adopted a Process of Co-Building a Pantry with Collaborating Families

### 2021 Families:

- Families enjoyed the fresh fruit and vegetable boxes provided by local urban farmers (Tapestry Farms)
- Olive oil, canola oil, vinegar, herbs and spices remained
  - Herbs/spices suggested by participants: Mrs. Dash, salt substitutes, tarragon
  - Condiments added by participants: hot sauce, ketchup, mustard (yellow and Dijon) and enchilada sauce
- The whole grain snacks were popular: whole grain crackers, goldfish crackers (idea of participant) granola bars & multigrain fruit bars





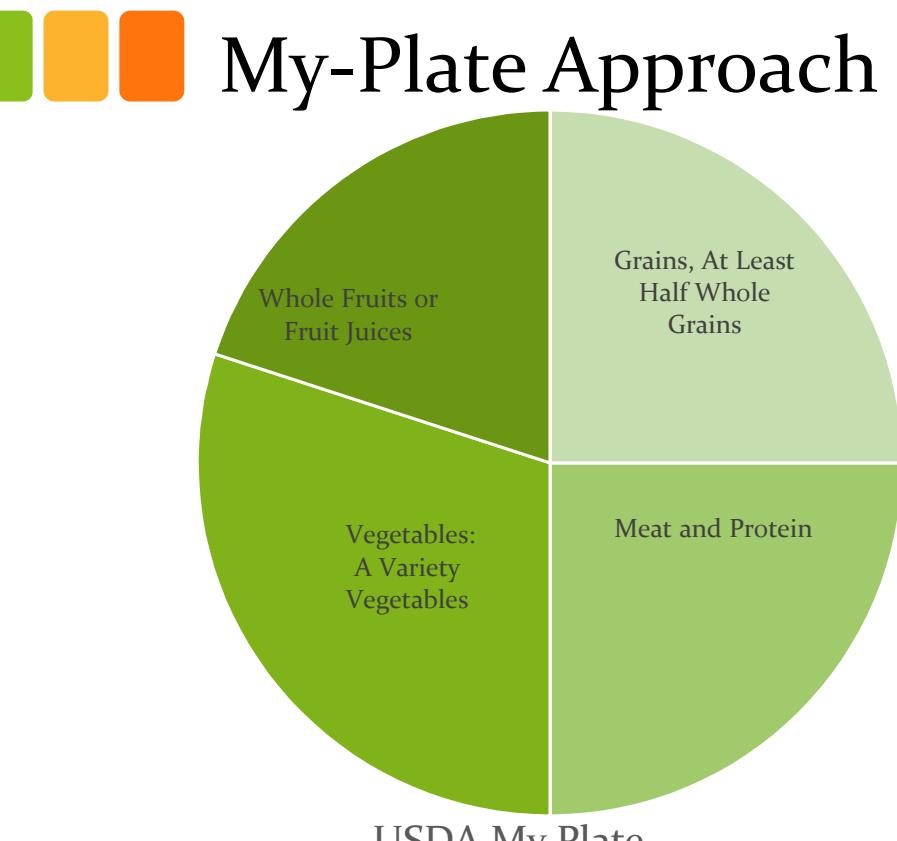
## 2021 We Adopted a Process of Co-Building a Pantry with Collaborating Families

### Letting families choose: A ‘no limits’ experiment

- The orders were large in the first and last weeks
- Eventually families had enough food and skipped weeks or even months
- Families requested less from the standard pantry items than they would have received based on the standard packing “system”
- Families requested items that may not meet the guidelines but they remain important in families with children: sugar sweetened cereal, cake mixes, muffin mixes, hot chocolate, sugar, marshmallows
- Some family requested items that demonstrate they are baking and cooking: cornmeal, baking powder, evaporated milk and baking soda



# Recommendations for a CAEI Pantry Using A My-Plate Approach



<https://www.hungertaskforce.org/what-we-do/myplate/>

- **Fruits/Vegetables** fruits and vegetables should form the core of a healthy pantry
- **Grains:** Popular whole grain options are boil in bag brown rice, wild rice, cornmeal, multi-grain crackers and popcorn.
- **Meat/Protein:** Frozen chicken should be added to a health pantry options. Frozen Turkey is of cultural significance and should be offered in November/December.





## Milk to Meet Calcium and Vitamin D Needs

- USDA category of milk is challenging to include
- Families have strong preferences about the fat content of milk
- 1% lactose free milk would meet the needs of most
- Calcium fortified soy milk would meet protein and calcium needs for those who are allergic to milk and nuts
- Dried milk, evaporated milk and almond milk were all popular items when added to the order list





## Oil, Vinegar, Herbs, Spices and Condiments

- Olive oil was a very popular item and fits the USDA recommendations
- Canola oil was selected because vegetable oil may include allergens, e.g. made in a factory with peanut oil
- Herbs and spices were popular, Mrs. Dash/Salt substitutes suggested by participants.
- Apple cider vinegar (not imitation or flavored)
- Ketchup, mustard (yellow and Dijon) and hot sauce were suggested by participants, were popular and should be included
- Mayonnaise was requested and may be an important ingredient for recipes to make use of other pantry foods (e.g. tuna)





# Recommendations for CAEI Pantry to Increase Access to Healthy Food

- A healthy pantry is one which increases access to healthy food
- A human rights model respects autonomy of choice
- Families may not choose foods proportionately in the USDA categories
- High cost items that families prefer and that contribute most to healthy eating are:
  - fresh/frozen fruits and vegetables
  - olive oil
  - apple cider vinegar
  - herbs/spices
  - salt substitutes

