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Food insecurity programs in Broome County schools

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Introduction

Children throughout Broome County face food insecurity daily, and programs within schools aim to mitigate its effects. **Through my research I aimed to find whether these programs have had a positive effect on the lives of students.**

Methods

- To gauge the food insecurity programs, I contacted the administrators within these programs to gather their perspective. These school officials include:
 - Linda Salomons, the Assistant Director of Parent and Family Programs and Food Pantry operations at the Binghamton University Food Pantry
 - Annie Hudock, the Food Service Director for Broome Tioga Boces.
- I assessed various pieces of literature, news articles, and statistics provided by schools to see both the student perspective and the quantifiable data linked to food insecurity.



References can be found by following the **QR code**

Figure 1: Binghamton University Food Pantry Orders in Fall 2020

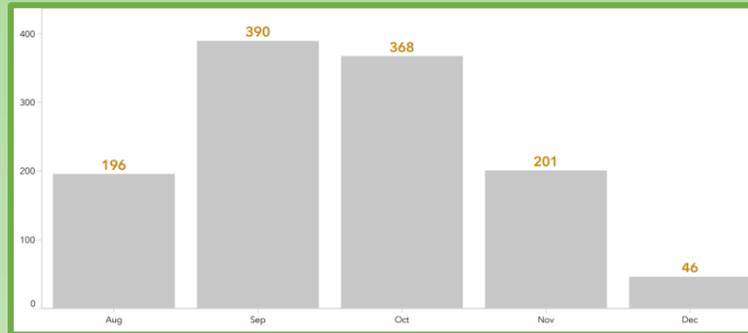


Figure 2: Child Food Insecurity in Broome County in 2018



Background

- Food insecurity can lead to a significant decrease in academic performances and health issues like diabetes; therefore, it is essential to combat these effects with school programs.
- A study found that school breakfast programs have helped students by reducing food insecurity rates among the student population. Another study found that school breakfast programs in Australian primary schools also helped build support networks.

Results

- The Binghamton University Food Pantry had **1,201 orders during the Fall 2020 semester**, as seen in Figure 1, and offers well-balanced foods to students in need.
 - According to Ms. Salomons and an article from BingUNews, **the program receives positive feedback and has helped students through difficult times.**
 - One student said, “The food pantry has been literary a lifesaver for me.”
- The Binghamton City School District provides healthy foods to students for free, as well as a pickup system for additional meals to be taken home.
 - Ms. Hudock attests this has improved the academic performance of students.
- Broome County had a **child food insecurity rate of 21.3%** as of 2018, according to Figure 2 from Feeding America.
 - This high percentage demonstrates the need of these programs and the prevalence of child hunger in Broome County.

Conclusions

The feedback from students shows there is a positive impact of these programs, and the increasing number of participating students shows families have found them to be beneficial.

