

## Rural Health Day Essay

In order to understand the health issues of your community, you must first focus on and address the underlying causes of poor health. There are many conditions that can contribute to this, such as where people are born, grow, work, and live. I believe as a health professional student that we can contribute to educating the community. Most often people with lower income tend to live and work in worse off environments and have a higher risk of disease. This is largely because these community members cannot control these factors. As students we are more likely to have an influence on the younger generation, by providing supportive and educational information regarding easy healthy choices. We can promote healthier eating habits along with more active lifestyles.

To provide our community with healthier food choices, I would build a community garden that is publicly accessible. It can be promoted on campus with educational flyers and social media, as well as promotion at the local schools and grocery stores. Visiting local schools and providing the children and their families access to this garden will make a positive impact at a young age. Incentives can be offered to students for healthier habits. I believe that knowledge is power. If we can educate more people about the effects that their lifestyle and eating habits have on their health and future, then we can help people have the opportunity to make the right choices. Not only will this be rewarding for our university students struggling to eat healthy and having the income to do so, but it will be a positive effect on members of the area struggling with these issues as well.

It is also important to provide support to the local families for current and future barriers they may encounter when it comes to their health care. Along with access to healthier food choices, I believe they will need continuous support for other resources available. Lower income families may have issues with transportation to and from appointments or even to the local garden. If they know there are resources and support available for problems or barriers they may encounter, they will be more likely to follow through with their appointments for themselves and their children. We can promote other means of transportation that engage in a healthier lifestyle, such as bike riding. Also, we can provide ride sharing to the local garden and a team of university students can volunteer on their free time to assist with transportation as well.

In short, as a university health student, I can become a positive impact on my community through education and access to healthier living.