

Cooking with Good Neighbors: A CGN Community Cookbook

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Introduction

The Center for Great Neighborhoods (CGN) is an organization that serves as a catalyst for positive growth in Covington by bringing together community members, encouraging them to work with each other, and supporting their efforts to shape the future of their community.

Covington, KY is a diverse community which faces a variety of challenges such as an elevated poverty rate, dropping property values, and both physical and social divisions between neighborhoods. CGN has projects to address many of these difficulties, a mission supported by the recent move into the Hellmann Creative Center, a larger, more central building with greater accessibility for community members.

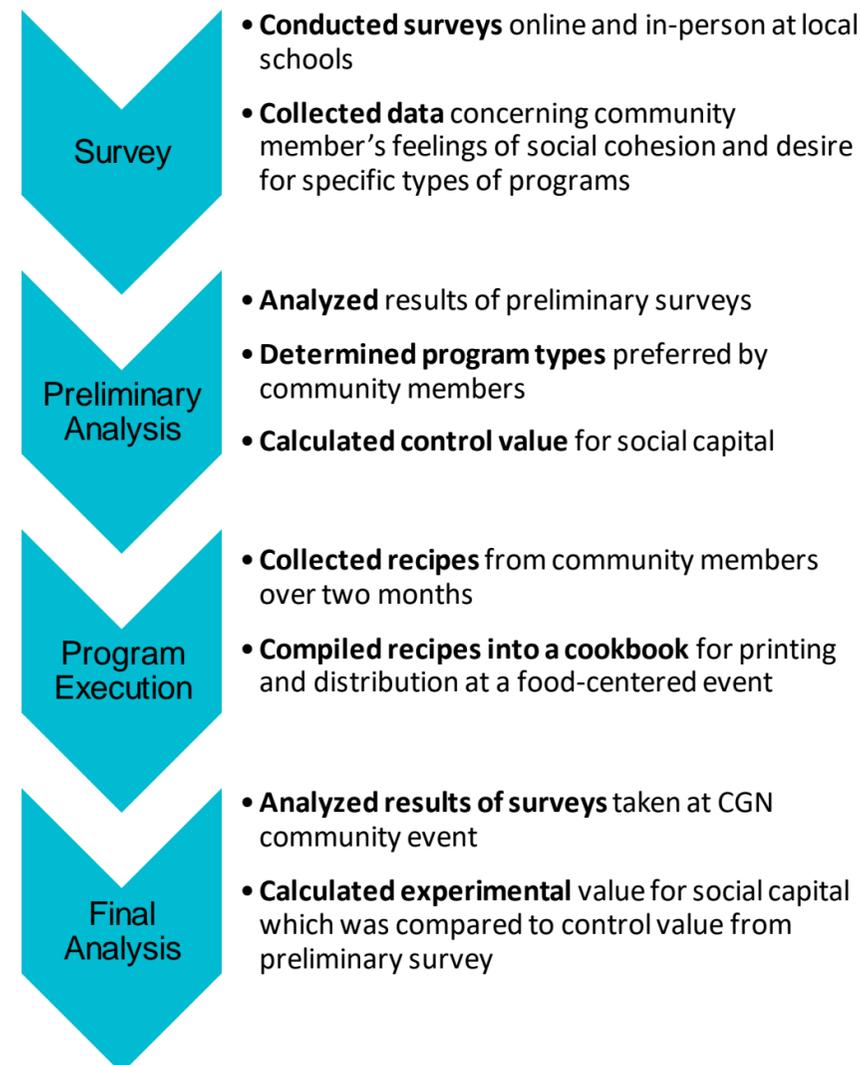


Our Service-Learning Objective was to bolster the social capital of the community in Covington, KY by offering programming and resources through CGN that correlate with the interests of the citizens and to learn how community health can be improved by improving social cohesion.

Social Capital is defined as the community networks of reciprocity that exist within a community through which members are able to share and access resources and social support.¹

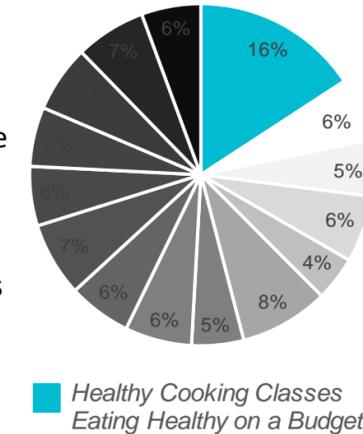
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Methods



Results

Preliminary Analysis showed that although there was a variety of interests within the community, healthy meals and cooking classes were the most popular choices (15% of responses).

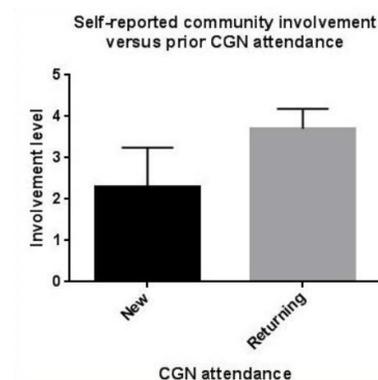


Recipe Collection resulted in 21 recipes being gathered from community members of Covington, KY and compiled into a cookbook.

21 Cookbooks were distributed by at the community event with 90 residents in attendance and CGN shared the digital version of the cookbook on their Facebook page (over 2,000 followers).

Community members, in general, seemed to value the cookbook. The responses included "This makes me want to give back more!" and "I feel more connected to Covington!"

Final Analysis showed that participants in CGN events also reported significantly higher levels of community involvement than those who did not in a Mann-Whitney test ($p < .001$).



Discussion

- Social capital was increased** through giving community members the opportunity to activate networks of reciprocity by sharing and receiving resources. Additionally, this project fostered feelings of interconnectedness and inspired individuals to engage more in the community.
- Barriers** of this project included the wide definition of social capital, geographical racial segregation in Covington, and the recent relocation of the Center.
- Opportunities** included great funding and established connections in the community through the Center.
- Future plans** for developing social capital in the context of healthy eating could include communal cooking at the Center and the initiation of a gardening club or community group for sharing recipes.

Acknowledgements

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