



National Center for Public Research



P R E S S R E L E A S E

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NATIONAL CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS FOOD ACCESS AND INSECURITY ISSUES IN LOS ANGELES

National Center for Public Research Names September Food Desert Awareness Month

LOS ANGELES, CA, September 17, 2009 – The National Center for Public Research (NCforPR) has declared September National Food Desert Awareness Month in response to the urgent issue of food imbalance and its impact on health outcomes in communities across the United States. A food desert is a large geographic area with no or distant grocery stores. Often, food deserts have an imbalance of food choice, meaning an abundance of nearby fringe food such as fast food, convenience stores, and liquor stores rather than healthy and nutritious fresh fruit and vegetables.

Working with partners in three cities, Boston, Chicago, and Los Angeles, the NCforPR is raising awareness about food access, insecurity and the impact on health outcomes. Research shows that residents living in food deserts suffer worse diet-related health outcomes, including diabetes, cancer, obesity, heart disease, and premature death.

In Los Angeles, the NCforPR is co-sponsoring a poster contest for young people represent healthy foods and healthy neighborhoods. Various prizes donated by Walgreens will be awarded in three separate age categories. Winners will also be profiled at www.fooddesertmonth.org. NCforPR's partner and co-sponsor is Women Organizing Resources, Knowledge, and Services (W.O.R.K.S.), a not-for-profit in Los Angeles that works to ensure low-income communities have access to affordable, organic, and locally grown food. W.O.R.K.S. is an example of a community responding to food imbalance issue by connecting healthy food with housing communities.

All types of communities are impacted by food access issues. Areas as diverse as Chicago, Louisville, Detroit, and New York City, all have research documenting food imbalance areas, and the corresponding negative health outcomes. In June of 2009, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) conducted the first national study of the prevalence of food deserts nationally, finding that 23.5 million people live in food desert areas.

Mari Gallagher, President of the National Center for Public Research and the researcher responsible for the first measure for food imbalance, said, "Communities cannot make some of the most basic choices – such as a nutritious apple instead of French fries – if they simply do not exist. National Food Desert Awareness Month is about highlighting access issues and

the steps communities around the country are taking to restore food balance in their neighborhoods.”

To learn more about National Food Desert Awareness Month, events, and partners visit www.fooddesertmonth.org and www.twitter.com/FoodDesert.

W.O.R.K.S.

W.O.R.K.S. passionately delivers quality affordable housing and innovative enriched services. Through our support and stewardship, we build equitable, heart-based sustainable communities and encourage resident self determination. We envision community in a way that honors our collective cultures.

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