

Dominican, High School Students Focus on Hunger

In November, students held “a teach-in” featuring a screening of the documentary film *A Place at the Table*. The event also featured a presentation by the San Francisco and Marin Food Banks about their efforts to supply healthy, fresh food to food insecure families and ways to support these efforts.

“A lot of times when we think of hunger, we think about it in the context of starving people in developing countries,” says Nick Scott, a freshman nursing major at Dominican. “Hunger exists here too, and it isn’t just that people need enough to food to survive, but they need to thrive. They need to eat the right food.”

Scott is one of 20 students in Lynne LoPresto’s Bio 1550 Nutrition class.

“Hunger in the U.S. is a complex issue affecting one in six Americans” says LoPresto, a public health nutritionist in the [Dominican’s Department of Natural Sciences and Mathematics](#). “It is referred to as ‘food insecurity’ because we are surrounded by food, but many people do not know where their next meal is coming from or are not able to afford healthy foods that prevent disease.”

Food insecurity is correlated with obesity and chronic diseases like diabetes, a paradox that often masks the true extent of the problem. Outdated economic and farm policies compound both issue by subsidizing junk food, while the cost of healthy foods likes fruits and vegetables have risen beyond the budgets of many.

Dominican students also worked a shift with AVID students at the farmer’s market style food pantry at San Rafael High.

“More than 70 percent of San Rafael High students, including many of the AVID students, qualify for the free and reduced lunch program a measure of food insecurity in the U.S.,” LoPresto says. “This makes the free fruits and vegetables provided by the school pantry essential because healthy kids do better in school.”

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