

2-8-2023

## Early Nutritional Education: The Key to Success

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### Recommended Citation

Gerbereux, Riley A., "Early Nutritional Education: The Key to Success" (2023). *CAFE Symposium 2023*. 3. <https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/cafe2023/3>

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## Early Nutritional Education: The Key to Success

### Abstract

For my project I researched and interviewed countless sources about the importance of nutritional education and how it can be included in the Gettysburg community. I then created a plan that works to implement a nutrition program once a month in El Centro that educates kids about proper healthy habits and provides a nutritious snack.

### Keywords

Nutritional Education, El Centro, Action Plan

### Disciplines

Health and Physical Education | International and Community Nutrition

### Comments

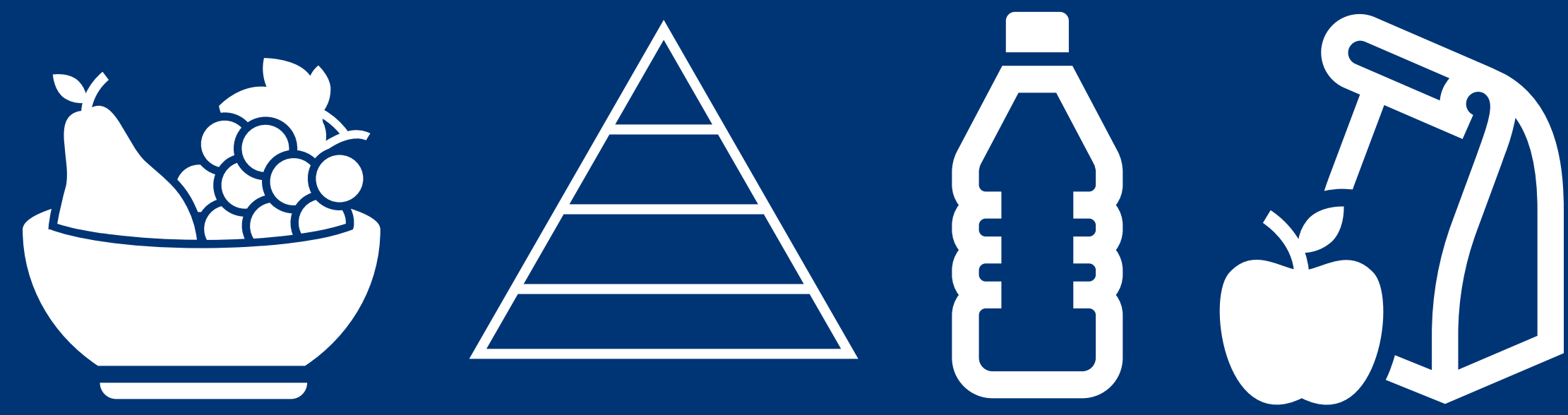
This poster was created based on work completed for FYS 108: Change, Agency, and Activism; and presented as a part of the eighth annual CAFE Symposium on February 8, 2023.

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# Early Nutritional Education: The Key to Success

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## Nature of the Problem

- Nutrition plays a key role in the development of adolescent children as poor nutrition leads to chronic health-related issues including diabetes and obesity
- Adults in the home primarily influence a child's eating habit so it is crucial for schools to step in and teach children about nutrition
- Elementary aged children in the United States receive less than 8 hours of nutrition education a year when in reality 40 to 50 hours of yearly nutritional education are needed to implement lifelong behavioral changes
- 40% of calories consumed by children daily are "empty calories" and are lacking in nutrients
- 1 in 3 adolescents are overweight or obese due to poor nutrition

## Background

- El Centro is an after-school program at Gettysburg College brings elementary aged kids from the local elementary school to the college to be tutored
- Decided to implement a nutrition program once a month in El Centro that educates kids about proper nutrition and provides them with a nutritious snack
- This small addition to the El Centro program will give the kids the early necessary education to implement healthy eating habits in the future

## Current Efforts

- Currently, in El Centro, children receive a small snack after they have completed their work which includes apples, granola bars and fruit snacks that they receive from the Gleaning Project and SCAAP
- 4H program in Gettysburg where elementary aged children learned how to make different snacks as well as do a variety of activities involving nutrition
- Healthy Futures worked with adolescent children to participate in variety of environmental and nutritional lessons to enhance their understanding and appreciation

## My Proposal

- I have combined the previous achievements, successes, and failures of the current efforts being done to create my own plan on how to implement a prosperous nutritional education program in the Gettysburg community
- My proposal is to implement a nutrition program once a month in El Centro that educates kids about proper healthy habits and provides them with a nutritious snack
- My current plan is for each month to introduce a new topic revolving around nutrition including food pyramids, healthy snacks how to read a food label and food plate
- Pamphlets will be sent home with the kids outlining what they learned and how parents can implement different nutritional habits at home

## Statistics

Fig. 1 Total intake of different foods in children ages 2-18

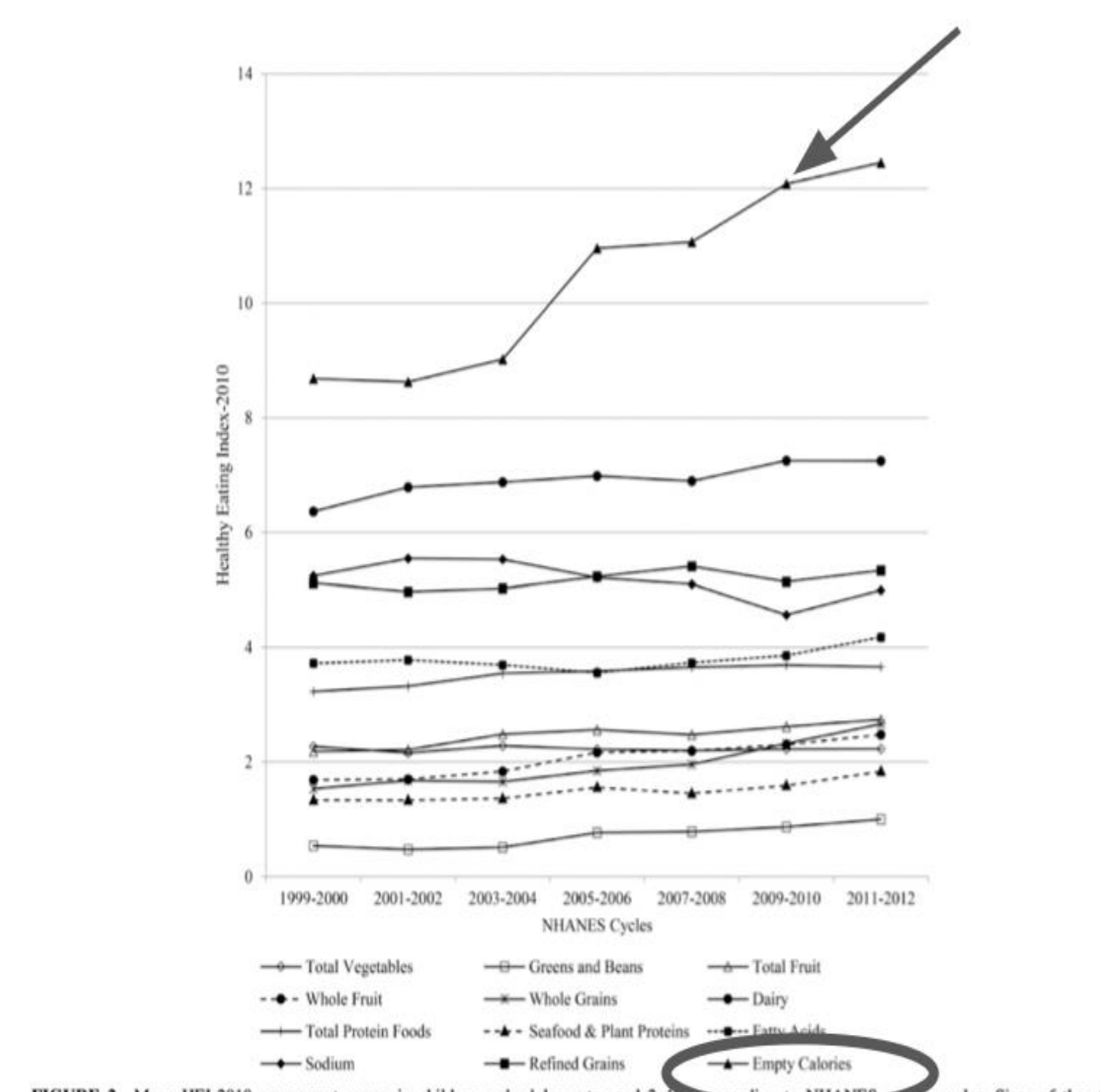
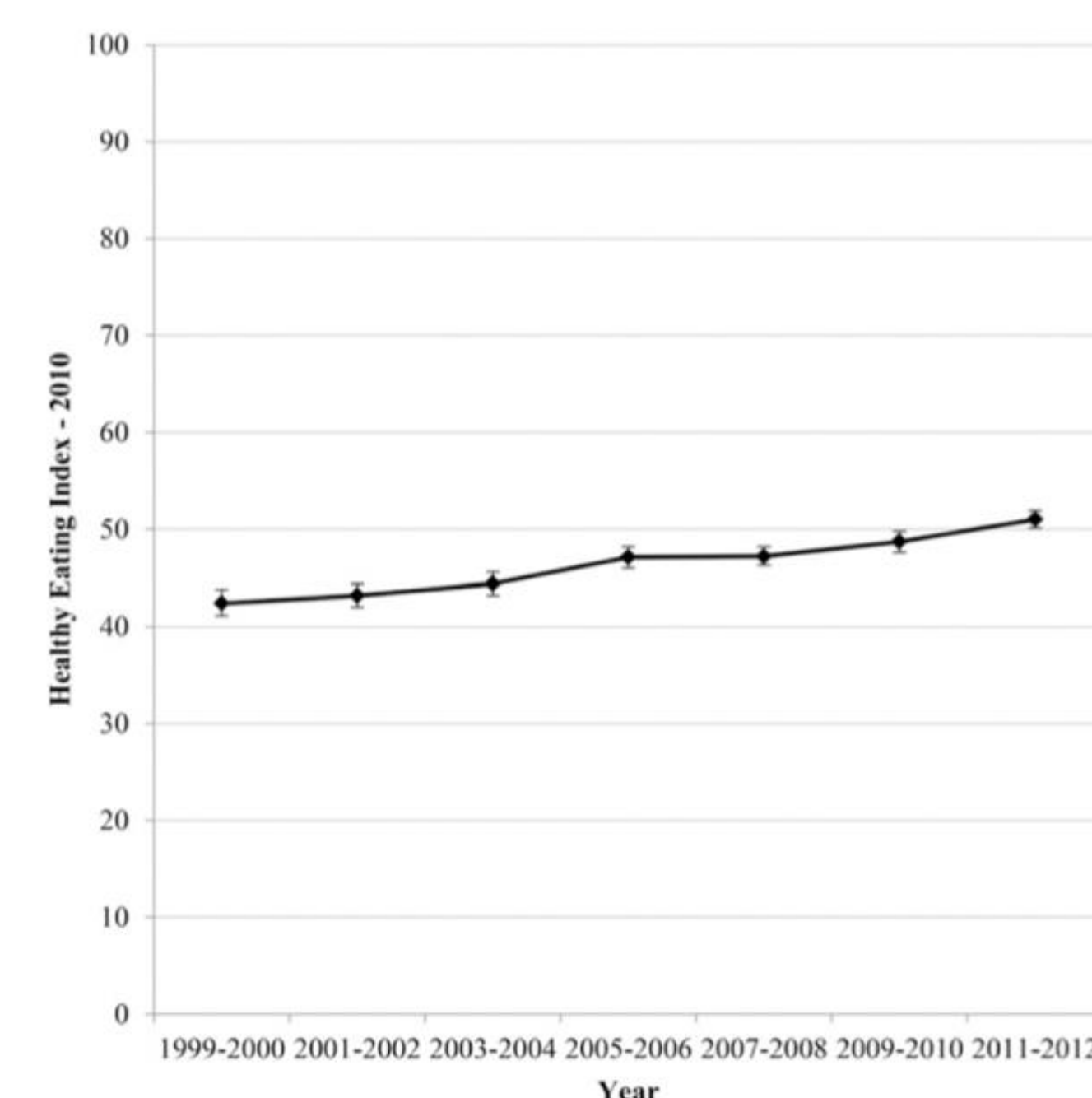


Fig. 2 Healthy Eating Index for children ages 2-18



## Resources and Materials

- With my partnership with El Centro, I am able to eliminate the challenge of transportation and in addition will not have to seek outside approval or space for my program
- The Gleaning Project has agreed to deliver extra produce including apples, peaches and strawberries once a month to the college for my program with no additional cost
- To supplement the need for craft materials including paper and markers I will post a donation flyer for extra or unused craft materials on social media
- Through the use of online resources, I have generated a variety of potential lessons to share in my program

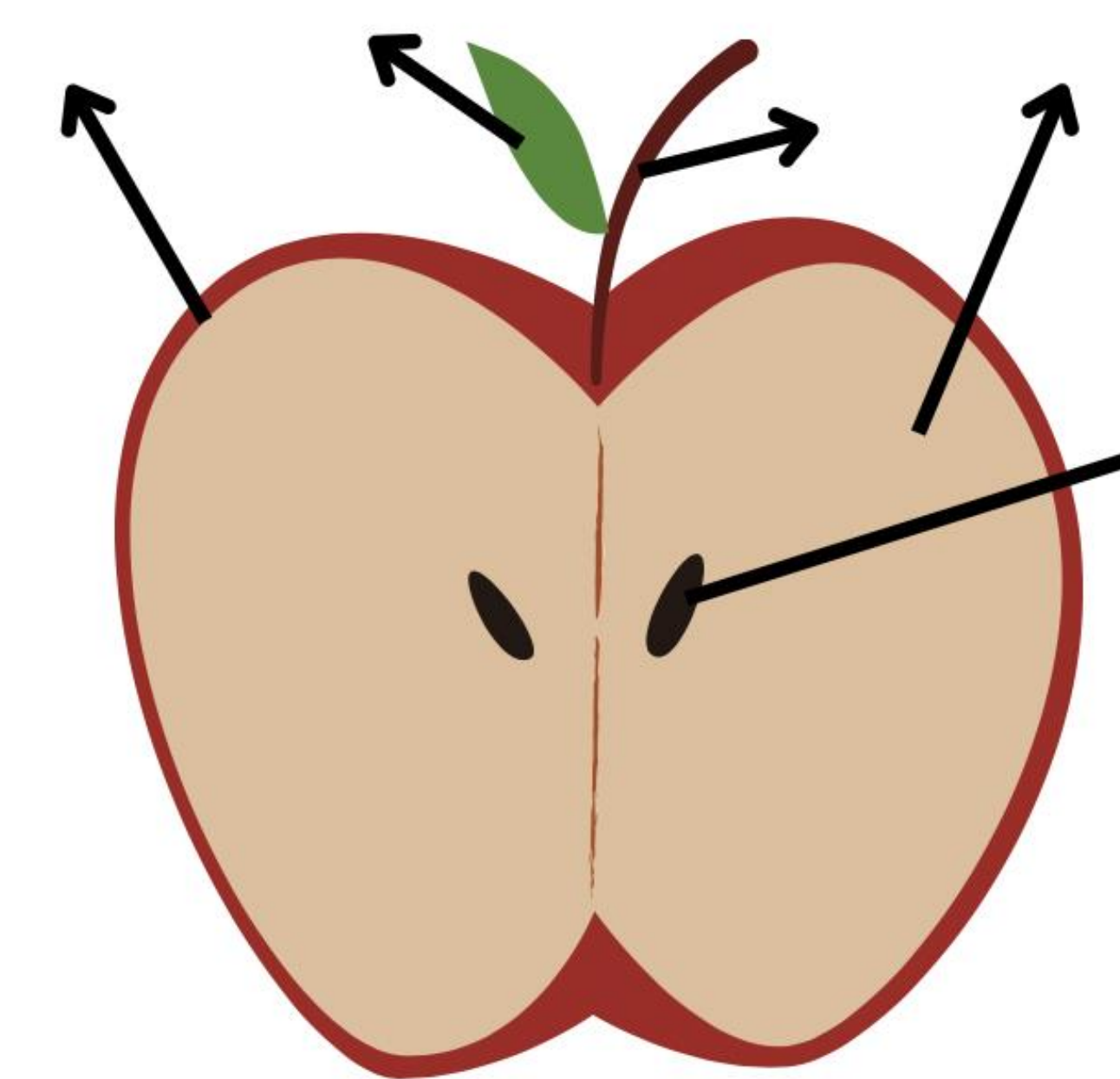
## Mock Activities

### My Plate Activity



### Labeling Activity

## Parts of an Apple



### Apple Word Bank

Stem      Seeds      Flesh  
Leaves      Skin

## Effectiveness of Proposal

- My action plan will have a direct impact on the students of El Centro and their families as they are gaining necessary knowledge about nutrition and healthy eating habits which will extend into adulthood
- The partnership between the Gleaning Project, the college and El Centro will be strengthened and additional partnerships involving the Gleaning Project can be made
- Expand El Centro from strictly a tutoring program to including a variety of informational programs which will nurture and educate the children on an extensive list of topics
- This plan aims to bring awareness and spread information surrounding the very stigmatized topic of nutrition in elementary aged children

## Anticipated Problems and Solutions

- My partnership with El Centro, an already established organization, transportation for the kids as well as volunteers are already provided
- Produce for snacks from the Gleaning Project will be dropped off directly to myself before lessons
- The issue of cost with the snacks is also eliminated as the produce is donated
- To combat this obstacle of disengagement among the children I am planning on creating short lessons followed by a fun activity kids can complete to ensure they stay interested and engages while still learning from the program

## Future Plans

- To encourage an increase in nutritional education I am planning on extending the program to once a week to have more lessons and activities and reach more topics surrounding nutrition.
- I will share my lessons with the teachers of Lincoln Elementary to hopefully incorporate nutritional education in the local school system and reach a wider audience of children
- I hope to create my own separate program dedicated solely to nutrition that can be held at the local community center, school or college and can reach a larger group of children as well as encourage an increase of nutritional education in the Gettysburg community

## Conclusion

- In my action plan I hope to bridge the gap between nutrition and education as well as get children involved and enlightened about the importance of healthy eating
- Through my partnership with El Centro and the Gleaning Project I am providing the children with healthy snacks and fun lessons about nutrition to create a better future, eliminate health problems and increase their mental and physical health