

# IMPACTS

IN FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES



## IGNITING YOUNG MINDS: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THROUGH HANDS-ON LEARNING WITH JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS VIEW.



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Food deserts and food insecurity can negatively affect human health and well-being. Thus, having healthy, affordable food and sustainable resources is important for the community and its families to live better lives.

Through a USDA grant, Dr. Karleah Harris, Associate Professor, University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff, developed a program to help students, teachers, administrators, staff, and stakeholders grow, maintain, harvest, and cook fresh fruits and vegetables. The ongoing program working with 10 schools, PreK-12, involves students learning where food comes from by actually growing vegetables in raised gardens at their schools.

As a result of this program, students have shown an appreciation for healthy foods and by preparing foods they grow, are willing to eat more fruits and vegetables. By delivering evidence-based, hands-on learning, Dr. Harris and her undergraduate students have been able to provide greater awareness and expanded access to affordable, nutritious food, while helping combat food deserts in a rural area of Arkansas. This program can be replicated in other areas of the state and country combat knowledge and accessibility.