



Senior Meal Share DIY Project

Civic Circle Area: Listen and Learn, Volunteer

The impact of COVID-19 continues to change our daily lives and routines, but volunteering and civic engagement are just as important as ever. This project can be modified to adhere to social distancing guidelines set by local and national authorities, to do virtually or to do at home and deliver via mail or drop off.

Seniors are often left out of the conversation about hunger, but over 5.3 million, or nearly 1 in 10, seniors in the United States were considered food insecure in 2018. You can help by preparing a healthy, home cooked meal and inviting seniors to share great food along with stories to learn about one another over a family dinner.

What You Need:

- A local organization that serve seniors
- Create or buy invitations
- A date and time
- A healthy family meal to share
- A place to share a meal
- Conversation starters
- Optional: Thank you notes/cards

Steps:

1. Conduct research to learn more about senior hunger and the effects of senior loneliness.
2. Contact local organizations that serve seniors to work together with them to host a senior meal share or family dinner. Work with the organization to decide on the best place to have the meal (such as at your home or at a senior center).
 - To ensure social distancing, consider options such as a drop-off meal with a virtual conversation.
3. Create or buy and send invitations. Through the local organization, invite one or more seniors to share a family meal.
4. Set a date and time, working with the invitee(s). (Note: Be sure to ask about dietary needs, like allergies, low-sodium, religious dietary restrictions, etc.)
5. Plan the meal, buy food and prepare a healthy, home-cooked meal for the attendees.
6. Prepare a fun bowl of questions to encourage conversation. Ask each person to pull a question out to answer. Examples of questions could include: What is, or was, your favorite subject at school, and why? What advice would you give someone younger than you?
7. Share your meal, making sure quality is key.



Optional: Thank you notes/cards. Create or buy thank you cards to send to your guests. We recommended noting a story they shared and how it affected you in a positive way to let them know you are grateful for spending time with them.

Reflection Questions:

- How important did you think quality food and quality time in our aging populations was before this project?
- What role can you play in helping community members?
- What does spending quality time look like to you, and why do you think it's important?
- How do you feel about senior hunger?