



What You're Doing

Organizing a senior meal share in your community. You will prepare a healthy, home cooked meal, and invite a senior (or more) to share great food along with stories to learn about one another over a family dinner.

Why It Matters

- More than 5 million senior citizens age 60 and older face hunger. (Feeding America)
- A study found that insecure seniors sometimes had enough money to purchase food but did not have the resources to access or prepare food... (Feeding America)
- Food insecure seniors are at increased risk for chronic health conditions, like 60 percent more likely to experience depression. (Feeding America)
- 18 percent of seniors live alone, while 43 percent report feeling lonely on a regular basis; a study also said that lonely seniors have a 59 percent greater risk of mental and physical decline than their social counterparts. (UCSF; AgingCare.com).

What You Need

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

Additional Resources and Suggestions:

- Facts on [Senior Hunger](#)
- How others share meals across the globe: [Meal Sharing](#)
- Focus on making healthy meals, considering the diversity of diets.
- Consider making this a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly dinner.
- Contact local food co-ops, gardens and/or farmers to see if they will donate or provide discounted fresh fruits and vegetables to make healthy meals, or even grocers.
- [Healthy recipes](#) for seniors
- Online post on “Family Dinners” and Seniors: [The Importance of Family Dinners for Seniors](#)



Item	Price
Ingredients for one healthy shared meal (max. 10 guests)	*\$50-\$100
Cooking utensils and dinner settings	\$0.00
Space	\$0.00
Materials for invitations, questions and thank you notes	\$15
Total Cost	\$65-165

Here's How You Do It!

1. Learn more about senior hunger and the effects of senior loneliness using the resources in below or by conducting your own research.
2. Contact local organizations that serve seniors to work together with them to host a senior meal share (family dinner) at your home*.
3. Create or buy and send invitations. Through the local organization, invite one or more seniors into your home* to share a family meal.
4. Set a date and time, working with the invitee(s). (Note: Ask about dietary needs, like allergies, low-sodium, kosher, and 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: Find out what everyone's favorite subject is or was in school, and why? What advice would you give someone younger than you?
7. Share your meal, making sure quality is key (from the food to the company).
8. Bonus: Thank you notes/cards. Create or buy thank you cards to send to your senior guest. 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.

*Option: If you are unsure about inviting a senior (or more) to your family dinner or senior transportation is challenging, then you could arrange bringing a healthy, home cooked meal with good company and conversation to a senior to enjoy at their home/room through the help of the local senior organization. Consider theme or decorations to transform the experience to make it fun for everyone.

Reflection

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

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