



Connect & Grow
Northwest TN Entrepreneur Center



These are the top ideas from 80 participants who attended the “Using Food to Build Community” Forum and Dinner on Tuesday, March 14, 2017 at Tennessee Tractor, in Martin, TN. The event was hosted by the Northwest Tennessee Entrepreneur Center as part of the Local Food Network. Ideas were gathered from the following question:

If you were the Mayor of your community, what would you do to make it a healthier place?

Nutrition

- Build a local certified kitchen and provide cooking classes
- Establish a community café that sells locally grown foods that can be used in creative menus, student chefs can intern, public can pay what they can to support labor costs or provide in-kind services, volunteer hours
- Promote community education classes (i.e. canning, gardening, cooking); more nutrition education and food demonstrations at local farmers markets
- Promote healthy eating programs in public education and youth activities
- Provide nutrition education at early childcare centers
- Offer a kids cooking class to promote healthy foods; teach kids where their food comes from
- Implement Healthy Choice options in all restaurants
- Reduce amount of junk foods sold in stores
- Offer less processed food at school
- Use a character, like a Food Ninja, to drop off healthy food at school for kids to try and eat

Physical Activity

- Construct more continuous sidewalks and walking areas; use recycled rubber for sidewalks, and add speed bumps around schools
- Add Bike Lanes to roads
- Connect Martin and Dresden via a rails to trails program – walking and bike trail – use the old railroad system to connect other towns in Weakley County
- Focus on built environments: expand walking trails, build outdoor fitness stations, etc... to improve the health of the county and provide more access to fitness opportunities
- More outdoor spaces and parks for family and individual recreation
- Invest in a community recreational center (old school in Martin)

- Group Exercise – community leagues, faith-based leagues, adult intra-mural leagues for those of us who want to build more community while achieving health goals
- Promote multi-season community activities (i.e. sports, dancing, etc...)
- Encourage more Physical Education at school EVERYDAY
- Support a Local Food Network 5K
- Promote going to the gym with a reward incentive (i.e. whoever improves the most, make it a competition)
- Teach fitness classes at local community/senior centers – serving all age populations
- Planting trees would enrich the environment and inspire more imaginative play for young children

Growing Food

- Encourage housing developments to offer areas for gardening
- More community gardens are needed especially in low-income housing areas that should include classes to go along with these to teach cooking and gardening
- Change the city ordinance to allow up to 6 backyard chickens without roosters
- Educate kids about farming, beekeeping, raising livestock, keeping a flock of chickens
- Connect community Gardens & School Gardens/Greenhouses to sell produce at area Farmers Markets
- Create more community gardens at schools
- Partner senior citizens with young people (millennials) to teach gardening and share labor
- Facilitate local schools to purchase food from farmers/local gardeners
- Teach children to garden at early childcare centers
- Organize a front yard gardening competition to recognize current growing food efforts (like Martin Beautiful yard competition)
- Increase green space areas where growing food is encouraged



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