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Chairman and CEO

Promoting Healthy Eating and

DTE Energy

DTE Energy Gardens Project

Coalition Leadership

- DTE Energy, Gleaners Community Food Bank

Program Components

- Garnering help from schools, community groups, and religious organizations, the gardens produced more than 23,000 pounds of fresh produce, which was all turned over to Gleaners and the various food pantries it serves in the metro Detroit area.

Program Highlights

- In 2009, DTE Energy expanded the program to eight gardens on nearly two acres devoted to feeding the hungry. More than 17,000 pounds of vegetables of all shapes and sizes were grown this year.
- More than 400 volunteers worked in the gardens, tilled, planted, watered, weeded, harvested, and prepared the gardens for next year.

Key Findings

- In a state that has the second highest unemployment rate in the country, the food was welcomed by many people who only this year had to ask for assistance.

“The DTE Energy gardens project has been an inspiration for our employees and other volunteers from the communities we serve. We have been able to help feed the hungry, build community, and help people learn more about horticulture and the food cycle.”

Value Proposition

Following a healthy eating plan not only provides the nutrients needed for robust health, development, and growth, but also helps individuals achieve and maintain a healthy body weight. And yet, despite USDA Food Pyramid recommendations:

- Adults eat, on average, only 1.1 to 1.8 servings of fruits and 1.2 to 2.1 servings of vegetables per day.²⁷
- Most people consume fewer than one serving of whole grains a day.²⁷
- The average consumption of added sugars is nearly three times higher than dietary recommendations.²⁸
- Fewer than one-third of all American adults are at a healthy body weight, defined as having a BMI lower than 25.²⁹

In many cases, these deficiencies are a result of individuals simply making unwise dietary choices. In other cases, lack of knowledge about the value of good nutrition prevents people from making healthier choices. Unfortunately, many Americans still lack access to nutritious foods because they cannot afford to buy it, or it is not available to them where they work, live, or shop. In fact, 11 percent of American households are considered “food insecure” by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.³⁰

Business Case

The consequences of poor nutrition and obesity in the United States lowers not only the quality of life for individuals, but also productivity, and they increase the cost of doing business.

- The CDC estimates direct and indirect costs associated with obesity at \$117 billion per year in the United States.³¹
- Productivity losses related to obesity and overweight in American adults total \$3.9 billion, with obese workers incurring from 29 to 117 percent greater medical costs than non-obese counterparts.³¹
- Productivity losses due to heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes linked to poor nutrition are more than \$9 billion each year.³²

Fortunately, cost-effective interventions, such as screening for dietary habits and offering intensive intervention with long-term

