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Food insecurity runs rampant through the streets of my home: The Bronx. Often portrayed negatively in the media, the perception of the Bronx does not align with my experience. My neighbors are hard-working people, yet 40% of the Bronx population is food insecure. Almost the whole of the Bronx is a food desert, forcing people to travel miles to a supermarket, just to arrive and not be able to afford fruits and vegetables. The lack of accessible, healthy foods is something I've witnessed first hand and have made my mission to help alleviate.

Community gardens are an important resource in battling the issue of food insecurity. My commitment to helping eradicate food insecurity, led me to propose a community garden on our campus. Along with my peers, I worked for days cultivating and planting the garden, staying after school and coming in on weekends to ensure that the garden was watered and weeded. As we worked, I educated my friends on why this resource is essential in our community. I watched the eyes of people who were "scared of bugs" or "didn't really like being outside that much" light up as we harvested our first crop. I knew that I was truly making a difference. This ritual continued with each harvest: carrots, tomatoes, radishes, all pulled up with love and meaning.

The produce was then washed and delivered to local soup kitchens, such as POTS, an organization aimed to help those in need move from survival to sufficiency. The target here is not to simply just get by, but to thrive. People should not have to jump through hoops to be able to access healthy foods, and through my garden I aim to help close this accessibility gap. I feel fulfilled in my mission by not only aiding those in need, but also spreading awareness on this issue that is so commonly overlooked.