

**2018 Spotlight Challenge**  
**Winning Speech by Ellie Wilkins, 6th grade**

“NO MOMMY, no broccoli!”

That is what basically everybody said about broccoli and vegetables as a two year old. But skip forward a couple years to 2nd grade, and we still are saying, “Ewwwww, I don’t want my green beans.” Come on, no one is IN looove with veggies at 8 years old, and that’s perfectly fine. I know I’d still rather have a big bowl of chocolate ice cream than spinach. But as we grow up, foods like spinach and broccoli are more important to actually put in our mouths, not in the trash. When we get older our bodies get more health problems. Eating healthy foods helps your body overcome illnesses and any other issues your body may have.

But for some people, like the homeless, getting healthy food is hard. And if they can’t get healthy food, then their health problems don’t improve as well. Now, you may be wondering “Why is it hard to get fruits and veggies?” The reason is, they are very expensive and hard to get to.

Healthier foods are not cheap. For example, a combination of a soda, a burger, and fries at McDonald’s is only two dollars while a salad from Chopt can be 24. So homeless people just don’t have enough money to get healthier foods.

But why are healthy foods hard to get to? It’s because of a little thing called a food desert. Food deserts are basically what they sound like... a place where there’s not a lot of grocery stores. Many homeless people live in a part of town where there are no grocery stores or restaurants containing fresh and healthy foods. In addition, many don’t have cars so they have to rely on public transportation such as buses, or their own 2 feet. So the people who live in these places mostly get their meals from places like gas stations or quick markets. For instance, there are Circle Ks everywhere in Charlotte, there is like one at every bus stop. But on the other hand, there are very few Fresh Markets in Charlotte.

Over all, gas stations and fast food restaurants are more convenient and they are cheaper. So, now we’re back to the original problem, homeless people aren’t getting healthy foods. It just seems unfair to me that some people don’t have equal access to healthy foods and so they can’t live an equally healthy and therefore happy life. And we need to fix that NOW. So let me tell you how we are gonna fix this problem.

Our school can put its beautiful garden and snazzy new greenhouse to good use. How? Well, we can grow anything from strawberries to kale here at our school. We can then harvest and put these freshly grown foods to a great use. Country Day can give the fruits and veggies we grow to our less fortunate neighbors. But wait, how on earth am I gonna get the vegetables and fruits from our school out to so many people? Well I have an answer: my church Saint Peters, along with many other churches, hosts a program called Room in the Inn during the winter months from December 1st to March 31st. During this time churches in Charlotte host members of the

homeless community. They provide three meals, a shower, a bed, and a roof over their head that protects them from the cold. Our school can deliver the fresh foods we grow to my church or other participating churches, with some help from my mom's minivan. Then the guests who come to stay the night can eat the lettuce, carrots, tomatoes, strawberries or any other foods that our school has grown and delivered. Country Day could really benefit from doing something that doesn't just help our school, but helps the whole city of Charlotte. If we do this then our school can say that we really have made a small part of the word, a better place. Also we would fully be using up all the space we have to grow things in our garden and greenhouse.

But I also have something that I want all of you guys to do! Go to Lowe's, buy seeds, plant them, harvest them, and bring them to me. Just kidding! All I want you guys to do is come out and help me plant and harvest the fruits and veggies here at school. I spoke with Mr. Keilty and Mrs. Joyner about using the greenhouse and garden and they both said that it was a great idea. Mrs. Joyner even said that she would help me create a garden club with anyone who's interested in hanging with friends, gardening, and doing good for the people around us. We can do our gardening during lunch, recess, or even after school. This Gardening Club would be a great way for us to work as a team, talk with new people, and do work for someone else's happiness. Because when we do something for others, it makes us feel happy too. Oh, and when Granny says "eat yo spinach" just do it, because it may save your life one day...

Thank you!