

PODCAST TITLE HEALTHIER FOOD LEADERSHIP PODCAST AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

- Greg Donaldson: [00:08](#) Our daily food choices, between convenience, packaged or fresh, snacking, family meals, eating out, or cooking at home are adding up for Americans. One study estimated that nearly half of U.S. deaths caused by heart disease, stroke, and Type 2 diabetes were due to poor dietary habits. I'm your host, Greg Donaldson and today I'm speaking with American Heart Association CEO, Nancy Brown, about the Association's efforts and plans to improve our food supply through purposeful collaboration with leaders that influence it and, as a result, have a direct impact on our overall health and wellbeing. Hey, Nancy. Thanks for being with us.
- Nancy Brown: [00:45](#) Thank you, Greg.
- Greg Donaldson: [00:46](#) Poor dietary habits are adding up to dire consequences. Can you help us better understand the public health nutrition landscape in the United States?
- Nancy Brown: [00:53](#) Sure. I would be happy to. You know, perhaps one way to illustrate the nutrition landscape is to think back to the year 2010 when the American Heart Association created a definition of ideal cardiovascular health, those components that would need to be in a person's life for them to have ideal cardiovascular health. One of the biggest components is healthy diet. We recognize that, today, that fewer than 10 percent of all Americans have ideal cardiovascular health as we define it, and one of the biggest reasons that that percentage is so low is because of the diet that people are consuming. We know, as an example, that this is not just in adults, that it starts in young people, as well. As a matter of fact, on any given day, about one in four young kids at the ages of two or three do not eat a vegetable and, among those that do eat vegetables, French fries are being counted, and I don't think that any of us would think that that's the kind of healthful diet that we would like to start our young people off on.
- Greg Donaldson: [02:00](#) Summit level change was a key theme at the 2018 Healthier Food Leadership Summit that you hosted earlier this year which, for the third year in a row, brought together leaders from across the food supply to address some of the biggest challenges in nutrition. At that summit, we heard Dr. Sonia

delight consumers and that, ultimately, a consumer should decide how much salt they want to eat and how much added sugar they want because people can add salt and add sugar to their food products but when they have no choice because companies don't give them a choice, that's when we really have a problem.

Greg Donaldson: [05:13](#)

In fact, there is a business case for creating healthy products, is there not?

Nancy Brown: [05:17](#)

Absolutely. You know, there's many cases, and food companies proudly showcase these where they have created more healthful foods, and they see for () 10.6 (s)-4.3 (h)-0.7 (o)-9.6.28 -6 ('s)-4.k8

and buy a food product or go to a restaurant and select a healthful food product but, for many people in this country, that is not a reality. We know that zip code is as important as a person's genetic code in determining their health outcomes. A lot of that has to do with access to all kinds of things, healthful food products, safe places to be physically active, access to healthcare, access to equal opportunities for education and income, and all of these social determinants of health really make a difference when it comes to a person's health outcome. We know that communities of concentrated poverty have limited access to nutritious choices and, often, are the target of marketing by food companies or fast and casual food locations or others to purchase the less healthful option. When you look at pricing as one component, it shouldn't be more inexpensive to purchase an unhealthy item than a healthy item, and we need to see more leadership in this area from food companies and from fast and casual restaurants so that we can truly turn the tide and give all people access to healthier foods and beverages.

Greg Donaldson: [08:30](#)

That's the question I was going to ask. I'm sure that ... Well, I know that you've had a long history of talking to the industry about reformulation as an example. Do you find industry to be receptive when you talk to them about health equity and access, as well?

Nancy Brown: [08:44](#)

I think that corporations want to be good citizens, and I think

solve food insecurity was actually awarded the top financial grant from the American Heart Association. We've got a clip from the founder of that company, Leah Lizarondo. ~~Link~~ Listen to Leah.

Leah Lizarondo: [10:19](#)

412 Food Rescue is a direct response to the fact that we waste almost half our food supply while one in seven are food insecure. Our mission is to redirect perfectly good food from entering the waste stream and donating it to agencies that serve vulnerable populations. We ~~design~~ design our distribution network so that we take advantage of surplus food and actually be able to get to where people live, work, learn, and gather. That way, we provide food access to everyone who needs it, considering their limitations of mobility and ~~time~~ access. All of us have the power to change something, have the power to impact something, and we all contribute little by little.

Greg Donaldson: [11:13](#)

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the power of the American Heart Association's ability to bring people from many sectors together, and we intend to continue to do that in many areas, including in the area of healthier food.

Greg Donaldson: [15:38](#)

Thank you, Nancy. You've been listening to a conversation with American Heart Association Chief Executive Officer, Nancy Brown, about collaboration and innovation to improve our food system to make a collective impact on the overall health and wellbeing of all people.

You can visit us at heart.org/healthierfood, and feel free to reach out to Nancy or the American Heart Association and its staff at any time. I'm today's host, Greg Donaldson. Thank you for listening.