

## Introduction

The global food system uses 69% of all fresh water and 34% of all arable land (WWF, 2019). It also produces more greenhouse gasses than any country in the world excluding the US and China (UN FAO, 2013). For these reasons and including biodiversity loss and tropical deforestation, the global food system is the greatest threat to nature (WWF, 2019). While The Bahamas is making great strides in protecting the environment, it contributes negatively to this food system. This is due to its reliance on imported food to sustain its people. The Bahamas imports 92% of its food from outside nations, making the country food insecure (Bates, 2015).

To be food secure is to have access to a consistently available source of nutritious food. Imported food is less nutritious, less dependably available, and more expensive, making it more difficult to access. A movement towards producing and consuming more local food in The Bahamas would make the nation more environmentally friendly, healthier as a whole, and more economically stable, fueling the next generation to be leaders in global advancement.

The Cape Eleuthera Island School (CEIS) is not very different from the rest of The Bahamas in that the majority of its food is imported. To both improve the state of food security within its community and begin to serve as a model for the general public, the Food Security Research Team has been working to spread awareness and educate others about the importance of food security and local eating.

## Methods



Figure 1: Food Security poster located in the dining hall



Figure 2: Deep Creek Middle School students participating in student led classes.



Figures 3 & 4: Students preparing the community dinner.

The first step for the research team was to create a pre survey regarding current food security knowledge. The next step was to develop an educational curriculum based off the results from the pre survey. This was done through posters, classes, and a community dinner. The point of the posters (figure 1) was to display information in a way that would quickly educate the reader. The posters were located in places strategically, such as the dining hall and bathrooms. These locations were chosen because the whole community lingers in both of them. The classes educated middle school to high school students, figure 2, to spread awareness and knowledge. Our community dinner, figures 3 and 4, displayed a variety of the local food that is available in Eleuthera. Finally, the food security research team created a post survey to see the change in food security knowledge amongst The CEIS community.

## Data and Results

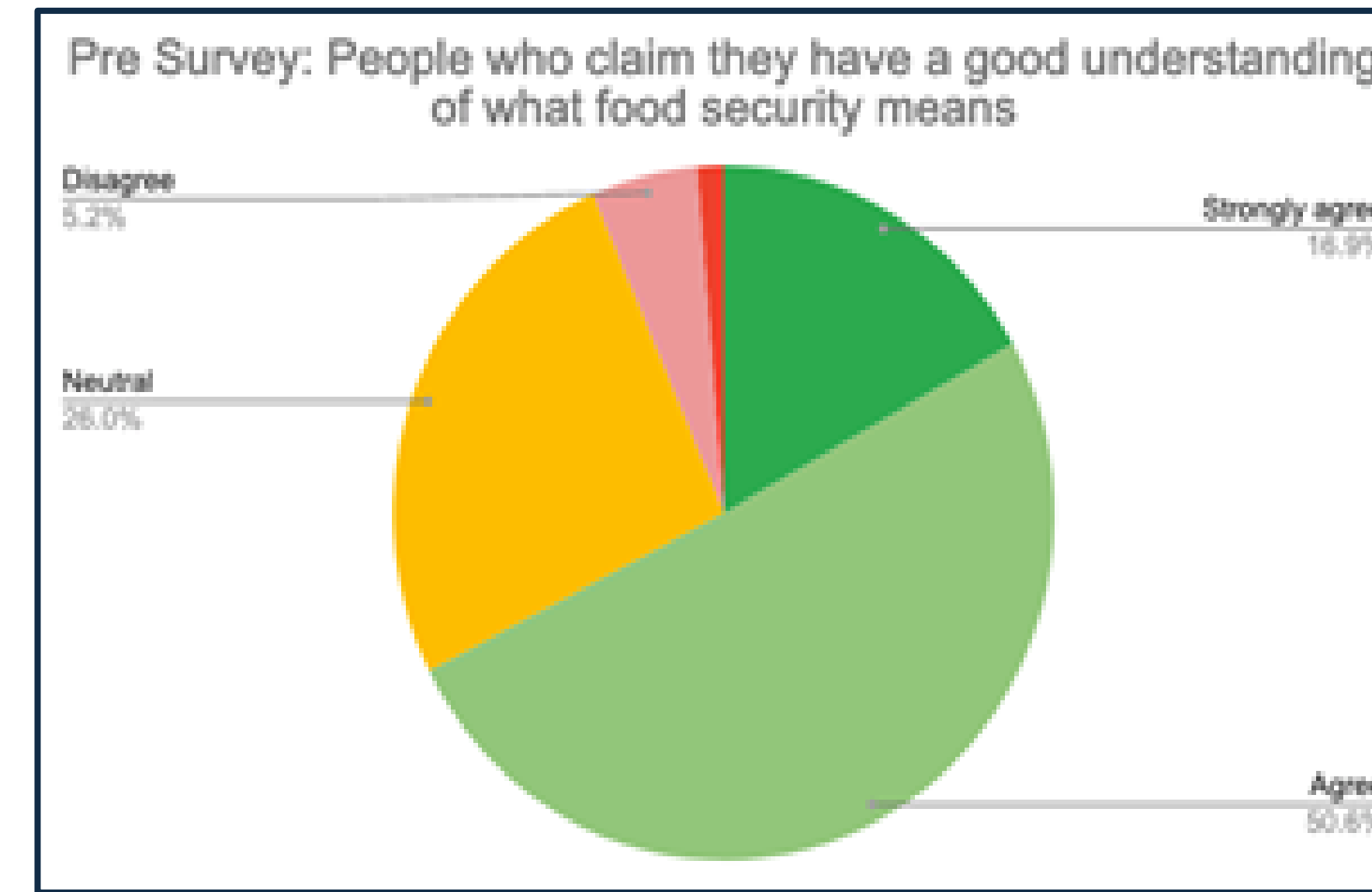


Figure 5

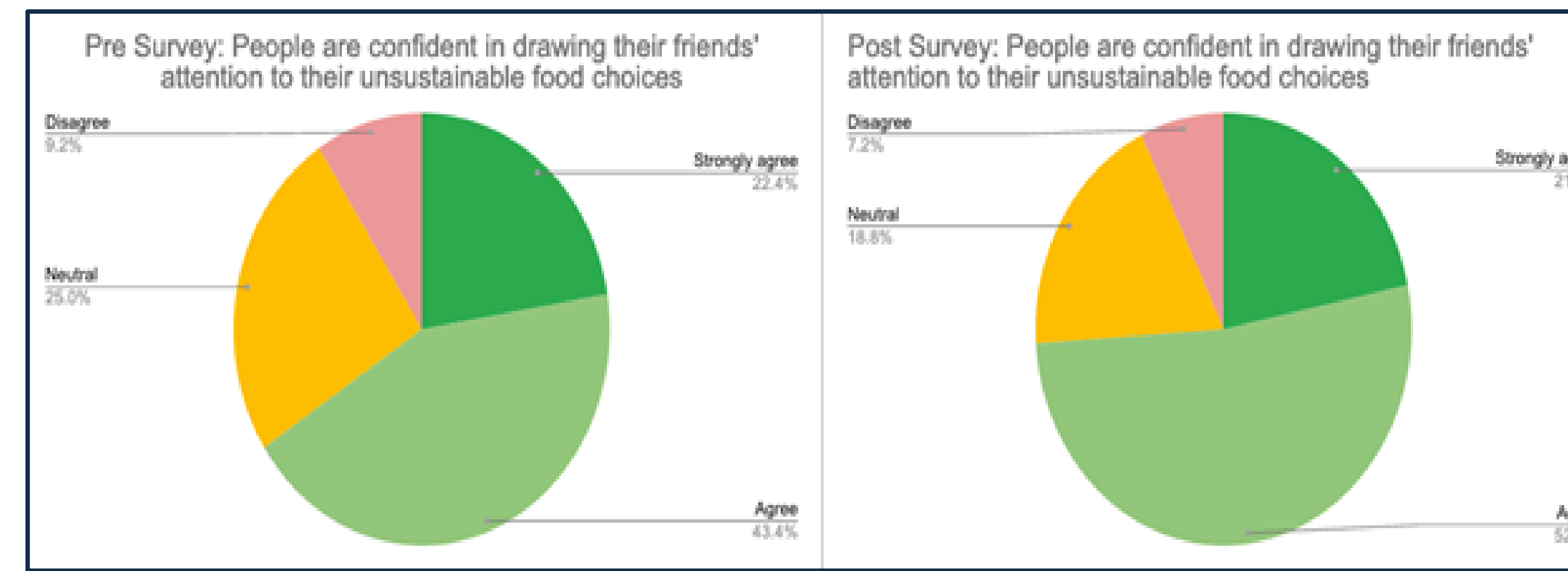


Figure 6

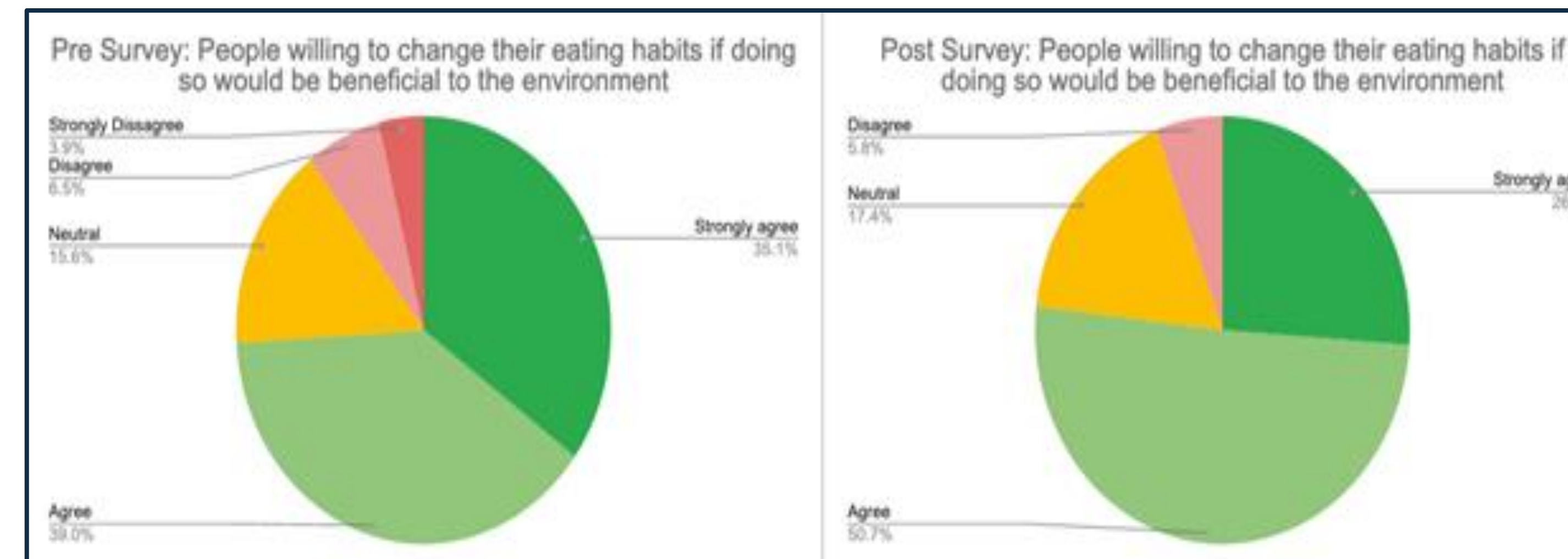


Figure 7

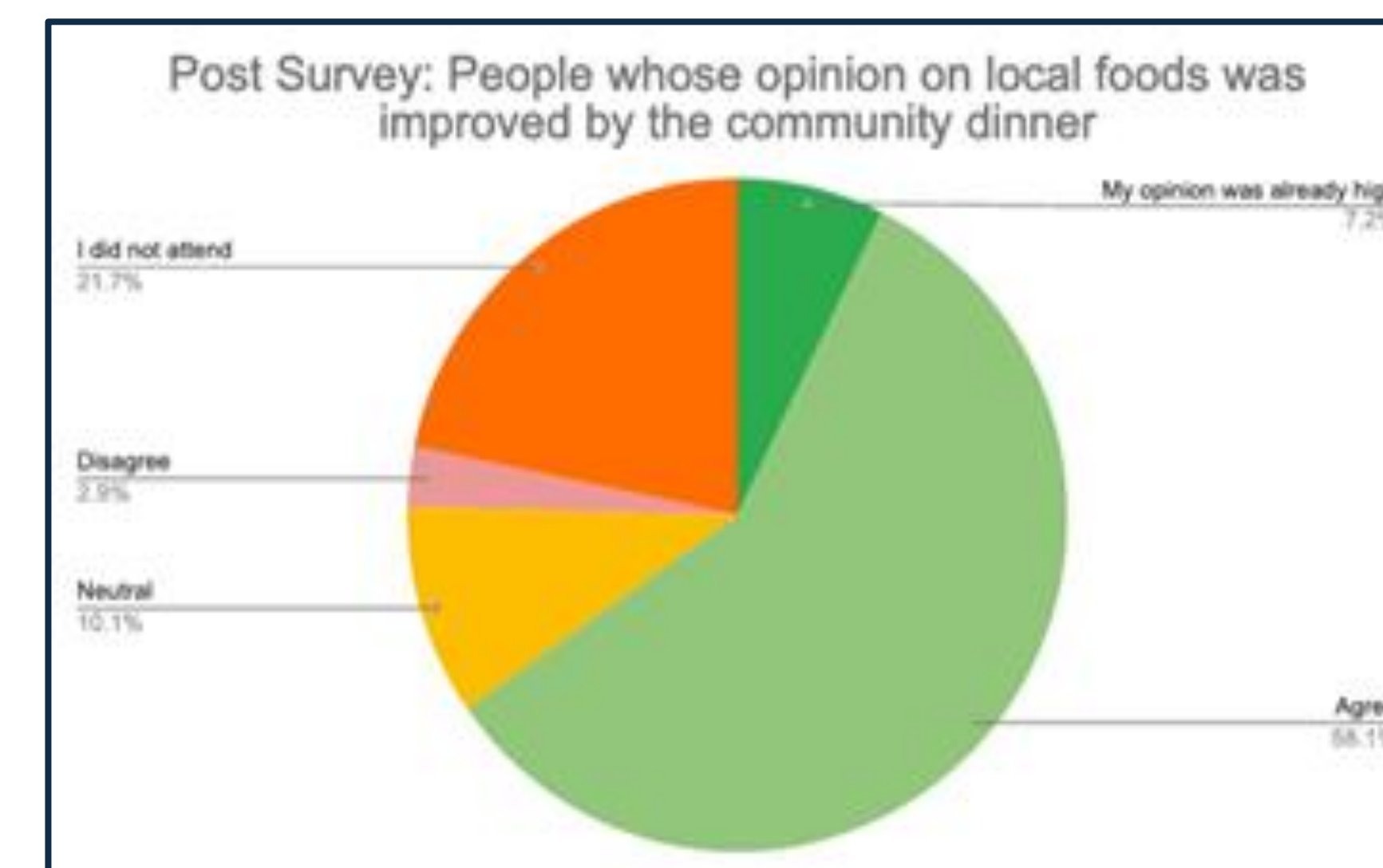


Figure 8

The pre-survey results indicated that although people claimed to have an understanding of food security they were often misinformed or inaccurate (Figure 5). This was observed through other survey questions. For example, 92% of people were not aware of where their imported food was coming from. The differences between the pre and post survey were noticeable through people's willingness to change their eating habits (Figure 6). It was also observed that the percentage of strongly agree and agree moved from 63% to 75% when addressing the confidence in drawing a friend's attention to their unsustainable food choices (Figure 7). The post-survey identified that 58% of the respondents did see their opinion on local food improve due to the community dinner (Figure 8). These results proved to the research team that their efforts and education were effective in their community.

## Discussion

Food security is an issue that is impacting people both globally and individually. The food system is a worldwide, international structure, but there is also the potential for change through individual actions. In this sense, it is a unique factor that we can all play a part in in our collective battle against climate change, and cannot avoid, as we all eat everyday. With this in mind, and in an attempt to increase awareness of the importance of eating sustainably here at The Island School, we came to the conclusion that an interactive education curriculum was the most effective way to bring about change. We designed and implemented this curriculum and saw a substantial change in this community's awareness of, and concern about, food security.

Our final step in this process was ensuring the progress we made will be sustained past this semester; CEIS is an ever-changing place, and there is no use in making progress if it will not be sustained. The main way we have ensured the longevity of our work was by creating the grant proposal and job description for a Local Food Coordinator position at The Island School. We hope this will help bridge the gap between farmers and consumers and make eating locally the default option in our Dining Hall. In this way, we are leaving a legacy that will extend long beyond our semester, both here at The Island School and Eleuthera-wide.

## What Can You Do?

1. Shop locally! The easiest way to increase food security and support your community is shopping from local farms
2. Decrease your food waste! Take what you can eat and not what you want! It is easy to take too much of a food but it is important that you take only the amount you can finish.
3. Grow! Find ways that you can grow your own food in your back yard or around your neighborhood.
4. Think before you eat! Understand where your food comes from and why that is important.
5. Compost! If there is any leftover food on your plate after eating, compost so that food isn't wasted.
6. Spread awareness! Talk about food security with your friends and families so we can work together to decrease the lack of knowledge around the world.

## Literature Cited

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