

Hunger Prevention Forum – Mohonk Mountain House, 11/20/2009

Abby Youngblood – Fresh Food for All Program, NYC

- Connecting local Farms & Food Pantries in NYC
- 1.3 million people rely on emergency food system
- 1000 food pantries & soup kitchens in NYC
- 28% increase in need for emergency food in 2008
- JUST FOOD – initiative to increase access to fresh healthy food for all Nyers & support local, urban farms

Tip #1. Make Sure it works for the Farmers :

- Farmers paid by the pound – June-Nov deliveries
- pay a fair price – negotiated each yr with farmer – currently \$1.75/lb organic, \$1.15/lb conventional
- Trust – up front payment as early as possible
- Hub & spoke concept – pantry host sites to make delivering easier for farmers; other pantries pick up from host pantries
- 3 diff vegetable each week – green, seasonal, root/tuber
- keep it simple – volume, standardized

Tip #2. Partnerships are Key

- United Way, Just Food, NYS Dpt of Health, Just Say Yes to fruits & veg

Tip#3. Inspire people to eat fresh fruit & veg

- Cooking demonstrations
- Recipes
- Similar challenges to CSAs
- Farm Trips

Volunteer Working Group Notes

Participants:

Su Marcy, United Way

Cathy Canzian, RSVP

Rik Flynn, UlsterCorps

Beth McLendon, UlsterCorps

Len Cleveland, Ulster Boy Scouts Food Drive Chair

Nicci Cagan, From the Ground Up

Kevin Skvorak, Regeneration CSA

Boy Scout Food Drive

- Started in 1988
- Approx 50,000lbs of food in one day (November 14, 2009)
- 3000 volunteers, 1500 scouts in Ulster & Greene Counties
- 19,000 items, 120 volunteers in Kinston, sorted at UPS center
- Lots of press after the event – helpful to have more press in weeks leading up to the drive
- Need for additional drivers, transportation

United Way (www.uwuc.org)

- Local Emergency Food & Shelter Program Coordinator
- National Association of Letter Carriers Food Drive – May 2009
- 100 volunteers on loading dock at Kingston Post Office
- 7000lb of food collected – up 40% from 2008
- Would be helpful to partner with more grocery stores
- Advertising also helpful to get the word out
- Partnering w/ local businesses which could sponsor also helpful

RSVP (people.sunyulster.edu/RSVP)

- connects volunteers 55+
- 8 food related sites –
- Queens Galley, Peoples Place, Family of Woodstock, Ellenville, NP, Christ Church Food Pantry in HF, Rosendale Food Pantry, Rochester Food Pantry
- Need to track impact, outcomes – impact statement

UlsterCorps (www.ulstercorps.org)

- connects volunteers of all ages with service projects
- Local gleaning initiatives in collaboration w/ CCE Orange- Stiles Najac, RVGA Fabia Wargin
- Map of local CSAs & Food Pantries to assist w/ logistics & transportation (<http://www.ulstercorps.org/?p=2083>)
- Assist with getting the word out through website, e-news, social networking sites to find volunteers for gleanings on very short notice
- Assist with gleanings & transportation to local pantries & soup kitchens
- Publicize initiatives on website, e-news to recognize contributions & inspire others
- committed to disseminate volunteer needs identified by other three working groups

Regeneration CSA (regenerationcsa.org)

- Promote education – teach people how to grow their own food
- Generous offer to teach free permaculture workshops to local non-profits
- Could CSAs take SNAP?
- Tailgate Markets – cooperative tables – empower new growers, small growers can sell without having to make large investment in being at farmers market every week

From the Ground Up (hudsonsarotogachefs.blogspot.com/2009/05/from-ground-up_16.html)

- Gardens at every local school, food pantry, churches, soup kitchen, community, senior center
- Collaborate with Garden Clubs, CCE, local seed savers
- Encourage school chefs to use more food grown locally
- Engage students in kitchens, gardens, understand where food comes from, create a model & put it into practice

Challenges

- Getting the word out – gleanings very last minute – need active volunteer group ready to respond
- Transportation – more volunteers needed to help
- Pantry hours – limited days, every one is different
- Volunteer burnout – big job to coordinate
- Financial support
- Central storage locations
- Insurance/liability ?

Positive Volunteer Experience

- Specificity - Clear volunteer assignments,
- Regular schedule if possible so people can plan, gleaning dates set as much ahead of time as possible
- Flexibility - range of dates/times (evenings & weekends opportunities, family friendly)
- Be clear about commitment level of each assignment
- Helpful if pantries could be open day of food drives to receive donations
- More volunteers to extend to food pantry hours – evenings & weekends – more people who work still not making ends meet
- Don't overwhelm volunteers – bring in new people, share responsibilities

Education & Outreach – next steps

- More media, press, PSAs to get the word out in the weeks leading up to the drives
- Reach out to Business community for financial support – give a range of options
- Use UlsterCorps website, social networking & new listserv (uchungercoalition@yahoogroups.com) to help mobilize volunteers on very short notice
- Spread the word to local farms, make sure experience is easy & positive for them, ask their help with new gardens, education, gleanings
- Recognize farmers & supporters to encourage & inspire others to participate
- Support local initiatives to help open gardens at local schools, community centers, food pantries etc
- Empower new growers w/ tailgate markets, cooperative tables at farmers markets
- Partner with Cooking Programs at Colleges, CIA, PTAs, UCCC, BOCES
- Approach Youth Bureaus, School superintendents – could meet community service rqmts
- Familiarize Human Resource Offices with these initiatives, raise awareness
- Look realistically at how many areas we can initially commit to – start small & expand