**Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support**
**Healthy Food Shelves Initiative – Kick Off Meeting**
**March 8, 2012**
**9:00am - 11:00am**

## Meeting Notes

**Welcome and Introductions:** Representatives from 20 Minneapolis food shelves and 7 hunger relief organizations gathered to discuss challenges, opportunities, and current efforts related to increasing the amount of healthy food items available in Minneapolis food shelves. Thank you for those who were able to join us! A complete contact list for Kick Off meeting participants will be sent to everyone as a separate document. If you would like to be added to or removed from the contact list, please email Kristen Klingler (Kristen.Klingler@minneapolismn.gov).

**Small Group Discussion, Part 1:** Participants discussed current efforts at their food shelves to procure and distribute healthy food items to their clients as well as the main barriers encountered in offering these healthy options. A list of the current efforts and barriers generated is included below (similar items have been grouped together where possible). If you would like to clarify or add any current efforts or barriers to these lists, please email Kristen Klingler (Kristen.Klingler@minneapolismn.gov).

### CURRENT EFFORTS TO PURCHASE AND DISTRIBUTE HEALTHY FOODS

- Rescue healthy foods from retailers (get more sweets, but can also secure fresh produce)
    - Whole Foods donations – Lunds/Byerlys
    - Direct from smaller grocers that Second Harvest doesn't "capture"
- Secure healthy food donations from non-retail sources
    - Identify community gardens near food shelf that are interested in donating fresh produce
    - Garden gleaning from Gardening Matters
    - Donations from CSAs
    - Donations from farmers markets
- Provide client education on how to select and prepare healthy food items
    - Include nutritional information in food bags about how to prepare healthy foods
    - Client education on how to use healthy items/products, healthy food choices
    - Offer clients tips, recipes and taste testing opportunities for foods being distributed
    - Play educational videos in waiting area
    - "Cooking made easy" classes with teenagers once a week
- Receive healthy foods from food banks
    - Signed up to receive Emergency Food Shelf Network's culturally specific food baskets
    - Recipient of fresh produce from Second Harvest Heartland
- Food shelves purchase healthy food options; those with meal programs serve healthy food items
    - Purchase low sodium, low or no sugar items
    - Do not purchase sweets
    - Purchase foods made with whole grains
    - Offer daily healthy snacks for children (80-90) – more like a light meal; teenagers help prepare – learn healthy cooking, healthy eating skills

- Provide unlimited produce and fresh vegetables (in addition to 15-20# reg. product) – large volunteer pool sorts it
- Fresh vegetable/fruit give away once a week, open to anyone – no proof of address required
- Food Bank efforts – partnering with local farmers (get left over produce from farmer's markets, ask farmers to plant extra crops to donate, collect surplus produce crops)
- Host roundtable network meeting – bi-monthly (to identify gaps, trends)
- Offer small quantities of fresh produce
- Reduce waste by composting; use excess food for other programs

**BARRIERS TO PURCHASING AND DISTRIBUTING HEALTHY FOODS (in no particular order)**

- Lack of infrastructure for fresh/healthy foods at food shelves or in clients homes
    - Transient populations do not have a lot of food storage options, so fresh items are hard to keep
    - Storage at food shelves – lack of freezer, refrigeration, cooling units, etc
    - TEFAP product comes in larger bulk – limited for space from clients and food shelf
    - Refrigeration – lack of food shelf space for it and lack of money to buy it
    - Lack of storage – cooler space
    - Lack of storage for fresh items at food shelf
    - Limited space for food
    - Limited fridge space – cost of monthly operation
    - Food storage
    - Distribution of fresh items can be difficult (getting food out to clients before it spoils)
- Quality/freshness of produce and healthy food items is not good
    - Produce is at the end of its shelf life – need to distribute quickly before it spoils
    - Clients won't take produce if it is not "fresh" (often produce donations are those that are nearing the end of their freshness/quality)
    - Food bank donations have changed overtime – the quality of donated food has diminished
    - The food that is donated is bad (not high quality, not fresh, not healthy)
    - Outdated food
    - Time-limited fresh food
    - Poor donation quality – need donor education
    - Access to QUALITY product
- Higher cost of healthy/fresh foods
    - High cost of culturally specific food items
    - Cost has gone up to purchase food at food banks
    - Cost of milk, eggs, meat is more expensive than boxed or prepared items
    - Higher cost of healthy food items
    - Getting dairy is difficult (cost-prohibitive)
    - Cost of healthy foods and consistent availability
- Fresh food isn't consistently available year round
    - Fresh produce isn't regularly available
    - Challenges with growing season – grocery rescue vs. growers
- Lack of culturally-specific foods to offer clients/lack of client education related to food preparation of unfamiliar items
    - Clients are resistant to trying new foods (i.e. cilantro)
    - Lack of culturally-specific foods to offer clients

    - Offering more common food, not sure how to offer "different" foods
- Clients have low food preparation knowledge – need education on healthy cooking
- Need discounted ethnic foods – Asian, Somali, Hispanic/Latino
- Trying to promote the Fare for All program (small fee), but families would prefer to receive free food
- Difficult to find contact info for community gardens near food shelf
- Transportation to food shelves could be a problem for families and individuals that don't own a car or can't access public transportation easily
- Food desert has been a generational problem
- Some food shelves aren't able to get food bank deliveries (because of budget?), so they must pick up the food themselves, which is costly
- Donations are down – both $ and product donations
- No existing network of food shelves in Minneapolis to share resources and ideas
- Limited staff capacity to do community networking, collecting donations

**Small Group Discussion, Part 2:** Participants brainstormed solutions to the common barriers to procuring and distributing healthy foods identified above. Participants were then given the opportunity to vote for their top 3-5 favorite ideas/solutions that they would like the group to explore and possibly implement together over the next 18 months. A list of the ideas generated is included below (similar items have been grouped together along with the number of votes for each idea). If you would like to add your vote to any of the ideas on this list, please email Kristen Klingler (Kristen.Klingler@minneapolismn.gov).

**IDEAS FOR INCREASING THE AMOUNT OF HEALTHY FOODS AT MINNEAPOLIS FOOD SHELVES**

- Develop a system to capture/purchase fresh produce and healthy food items from farmers markets, community gardens and local farms – *12 votes (community gardens themselves received 6 votes)*
- Client Education – *11 votes*
- Donor education and outreach – *4 votes*
- Develop a system for distribution of healthy foods (i.e. a warehouse or aggregating facility) – *3 votes*
- Tailor food options to clients (culturally specific foods) – *3 votes*
- SNAP promotion – *3 votes*
- Staff/volunteer education – *2 votes*
- Work with corporations, organizations to establish workplace gardens and donation system to food shelves – *2 votes*
- Develop a system for food shelves to exchange items with one another
- Secure lower cost produce
- Buy the healthy foods that are available from food banks and other sources
- Improve internal practices (e.g. attractive displays, use psychology to promote healthy foods)
- Availability of education materials in multiple languages
- Increasing SNAP benefits
- Storage – providing more options to store food
- Help food shelves obtain fresh produce that's not at the end of shelf life
- Neighborhood food shelf
- Facilitate bulk purchasing of healthy items

- Achievement (not sure what this option means, so if it's yours – please clarify)

**Meeting Reflection and Wrap-Up:** Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support staff will further research the top solutions/ideas and present additional information at the next partner meeting in mid-/late-April. Options for days and times to meet will be sent out to participants in mid-March. If you would be interested in hosting the next partner meeting at your food shelf (and giving a short presentation to the group on your organization's efforts related to healthy food procurement and distribution), please email Kristen Klingler (Kristen.Klingler@minneapolismn.gov).

**Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support**
**Healthy Food Shelves Initiative**
**May 1, 2012**
**9:00am - 11:00am**

**Meeting Notes**

**Welcome and Introductions:** Representatives from 17 food shelf and hunger relief organizations participated in the meeting. If you know of a Minneapolis food shelf or other agency that should be invited to future meetings, please email their contact information to Kristen Klingler (Kristen.Klingler@minneapolismn.gov).

**Spotlight on the Little Kitchen Food Shelf:** Jennifer Schultz, from the Little Kitchen Food Shelf, presented information on the organization's background and current operations. Little Kitchen participated in the Garden Gleaning pilot project in 2011 and will be part of the expanded 2012 program. In addition, they developed a partnership with A Backyard Farm to create 6 raised bed gardens and 2 trellises in their parking lot where they grow a variety of fresh produce items to distribute to their food shelf clients. The food shelf also receives donated produce from the Minnesota Project's Fruits of the City program and donations of culled produce delivered by Sisters Camelot. If you have any questions about these existing efforts to increase healthy foods in the Little Kitchen food shelf, please contact Jennifer Schultz at jennifer@necommunity.net. Thank you to Little Kitchen and to Jennifer for hosting our meeting!

**Forming a Minneapolis Food Shelf Network:** In a survey of food shelf representatives, 90% indicated that they would join a Minneapolis Food Shelf Network, if one existed, to share information, pool resources, and take collective action on nutrition and hunger issues. The group discussed key components of the network including:

What is the **purpose** of the network?

- Address the unique needs of Minneapolis food shelf clients
- Facilitate sharing of resources, best practices, and accomplishments (initially focused on increasing healthy foods in food shelves, but can be expanded in the future)
- Provide networking opportunities with other food shelves and partners
- Develop consistent and unified messaging (to the public, to donors, to funders, etc)
- Connect food shelves' interests and efforts with Homegrown Minneapolis and other health department food initiatives
- Advocate for larger systems changes
- Collaborate on funding opportunities – joint applications and sharing of resources instead of competing against each other

What are its **goals** or **guiding principles**?

- Initially, the network will address two main goals: 1) connect food shelves with regular, high quality sources of healthy foods, especially gardens, farms, and farmers markets; and 2) educate clients, donors, and staff/volunteers to increase the supply and demand of healthy food items
- Develop and issue joint communications

- Improve the quality, diversity, healthiness, and variety of foods (including offering condition-specific items for those with specific health/food needs)
- Increase the ability to serve different cultural populations
- Address transportation issues common to food shelves (how to move food from point A to B; look into postal service shipping) and teach clients how to access other healthy food sources
- Explore healthy summer meal options for children
- Promote food justice; healthy food as a right
- Keep resources local (neighborhood solutions)
- Balance broader issues (like food justice) with immediate food shelf needs (day to day provision of services)

Who are its **members**?

- Open to all food shelves, meal programs, hunger advocacy groups, food banks, educational partners (Simply Good Eating, etc), and potential funders, with a focus on those in the Minneapolis geographic area (SHIP funding and resources must be used to help increase access to healthy foods in Minneapolis food shelves only).
- Find ways to keep high participation (ask about the issues that food shelves are facing that might keep them from attending meetings; explore alternate meeting formats like web conferences or an online bulletin board where information can be shared).

What is its **structure**?

- Topic-focused meetings
- Guest experts
- Monthly 2-hour meetings at rotating locations (host site will help organize and facilitate the meeting)
- Electronic communications between in-person meetings to keep the momentum going (e-newsletter, online bulletin board or website, discussion group on Healthy Eating MN web portal, etc)

How can we set it up to be **sustainable** after SHIP funding ends?

- Rotating leadership
- Established communication forum to keep everyone connected, even when they can't attend meetings
- Identify a point person to help coordinate logistics and communications after MDHFS staffing support ends

What are the **next steps**?

- Establish a name for the group (Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network, etc)
- Solicit feedback and support from other food shelf representatives who were not able to attend the initial conversation
- Formalize ideas mentioned above and set up regular meeting schedule for 2012

## Connecting food shelves to healthy food sources (gardens, farmers markets, and local growers):

The group discussed ways to connect food shelves with existing local, healthy food resources including:

1. Community gardens: MDHFS staff can help food shelves identify nearby community garden partners and develop procedures for getting/receiving donated produce throughout the growing season. There is also potential to use some of the SHIP funding to expand the Garden Gleaning Project to include a few more food shelves.

2. Corporate giving gardens: MDHFS staff can help food shelves identify nearby corporations or organizations with land that are interested in starting an employee-run garden and delivering produce to the food shelf on a regular basis during the growing season. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota may be able to offer limited technical assistance to corporations looking to start a garden and the Local Food Resource Hubs Network offers low-cost seeds, seedlings, tools, and educational opportunities to support these types of activities.

3. Food shelf gardens: MDHFS staff can help food shelves start gardens on-site by connecting them to guidance from Gardening Matters and resources from the Local Food Resource Hubs Network.

4. Farmers markets and farmers: MDHFS staff can help food shelves identify nearby farmers markets or farmers and develop procedures for getting/receiving donated produce throughout the growing season. It was suggested that the group develop recommendations for farmers market managers/vendors on how to best partner with food shelves to donate produce. MDHFS can also connect interested food shelves to the Fruits of the City initiative to receive free fruits harvested from backyard trees and local orchards. MDHFS can also explore helping food shelves facilitate SNAP sign ups and the distribution of EBT/Market Bucks materials at food shelves so that clients have another option for purchasing fresh, healthy foods with their food support dollars.

5. Retail stores: MDHFS staff can help food shelves connect with corner stores participating in the Minneapolis Healthy Corner Store program to set up relationships to receive small amounts of unused produce. Most food shelves seem to already be connected to produce rescue efforts with other big box retailers (Target, Rainbow, Cub, etc), so the group will not pursue this avenue as a first priority.

**Meeting Reflection and Wrap-Up:**

- Notes from today's meeting will be compiled and sent out to the group. Additional suggestions and comments will be incorporated as appropriate.
- Please make sure that MDHFS has your contact information on file if you wish to be included in the network directory (have print out of most recent version available).
- MDHFS intern will be setting up a time to visit each food shelf to conduct a baseline assessment of the amount of healthy food items available in your food shelf as well as current status of policies or practices that support healthy food purchasing and distribution.
- A third meeting will be held in mid-July to discuss follow up items for solution #1 as well as look at solution #2 (client/donor/staff education opportunities)

**Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support**

**Healthy Food Shelves Initiative**

**June 21, 2012**

**10:00am - 12:00pm**

**Meeting Notes**

**Welcome and Introductions:** 15 representatives from Minneapolis food shelves and hunger relief organizations participated in the meeting.

**Spotlight on the Waite House Food Shelf:** Rachel Henderson, from the Waite House Food Shelf presented information on the organization's background and current operations, then led a brief tour of their new facility within the Phillips Community Center. Waite House participated in the Garden Gleaning pilot project in 2011 and will be part of the expanded 2012 program. In addition, they had an on-site garden at their former location which was used to supplement food shelf offerings. The food shelf receives donated produce from businesses like Target and via volunteers who pick up and deliver items throughout the week. If you have any questions about these or other efforts to increase healthy foods in the Waite House food shelf, please contact Rachel Henderson at HendersonR@puc-mn.org. Thank you to Waite House and to Rachel for hosting our meeting!

**Communications Messaging for the Minneapolis Food Shelf Network:**

The group discussed the idea of developing standard communications messages for different donor audiences in order to encourage the donation of healthy food items. The group brainstormed ideas related to the main components of a communications campaign as outlined below:

What is our objective for working on communications as a group?

- Develop standard message for all Mpls. Food shelves
- Educate Mpls. Residents – there is a need for donations (esp. healthy)
    - Compelling message, obligation to care for neighbors, connect

What is our target audience for communications messages?

- Individual or collections of individuals
- Food banks

- Organizations that sponsor food drives (schools, faith-based entities, businesses, etc)
- Corporations (large corporations as well as smaller organizations and local businesses)
- Farmers market customers
- People who already know about food shelves/already donate to food shelves
- New donors who value nutrition issues
- Wholesale distributors

<u>What are the key messages we want to promote? (red items were high priority)</u>

- Donate healthy food items
    - Would need to think about definition of "healthy"?
    - Donate high quality, desirable food items
- Nutrition is something everyone deserves
    - Tie this into broader ideas of health, caring for neighbors
    - Be part of a solution
    - Focus on how nutrition impacts all of us (when someone is unhealthy or has poor nutrition, it's not just an individual issue; it's a community issue)
- Food shelves need more than canned goods
    - Here's what we have/what we need
    - How food shelves get their food
    - Difference b/w food banks & food shelves
    - Who donates
    - Why food shelves have/don't have certain foods
    - There are more food shelves in your area than you think
    - *Note: may want to think about how to address this separate from a toolkit or campaign since it is important, but not the highest priority topic*
- Cash donations (equates to x amount of food)
    - Encourage more cash donations
- Donations are needed!
    - Clients esp. need the healthy items – disease, health disparities, etc.

<u>What are the key outcomes we want to achieve?</u>

- Toolkit – materials that each food shelf can use to raise awareness among their various audiences

- Promotions campaign – could include paid media ads, depending on the budget
- Standard/consistent message coming from all food shelves

How can we accomplish these communications goals?

- Use food drives to communicate information and messages (EFN has already developed a Healthy Food Drive packet that could be modified)
- EFN already talks to large corporations/large scale donations; maybe the Network could focus on smaller organizations and businesses instead of duplicating efforts
- Little Kitchen sends out a monthly e-newsletter to "partners" (organizations, volunteers, individual donors that they've worked with)
- Salvation Army South has a relationship w/Minnehaha Academy to do a food drive
- Branch I has direct conversations w/individual donors
- MN Foodshare does a big March campaign
- Hunger Solutions does a summer campaign (re: cash donations?)
- For most food shelves, they have limited fundraising efforts currently
- The best times to get messages out might be in the fall before the holidays or in the summer during the growing season
- The best ways to get messages out to donors might be through email, Facebook, word of mouth
    - Social media may be cost effective & reach target audience
- The group is interested in learning what City connections we can leverage?
    - Post office, Community Ed, utility bills, etc.

Miscellaneous Ideas:

- What are the best practices from Food Councils or other cities?
- Explore MN Foodshare's Garden Share idea and the Hope for the City program

## Action Plan for Connecting Food Shelves to Local Healthy Food Sources:

Three resources have been developed to help food shelves connect with farmers markets and community gardens:

- **Google map of food shelves, community gardens, farmers markets, and CSA (**http://batchgeo.com/map/143aac462b438b60515cc80f96c6bb84)

  Siri Simons presented a map displaying food shelves (red), community gardens (green), and farmers markets (blue). The map is ideally used as an online resource. To view details about each point on

the map including level of interest in the food shelf network, existing relationships, days and hours of business, and food resources or needs, hold your cursor over the object of interest and right click. This map is intended for food shelves to use to identity nearby food sources and establish connections with them. If you are interested in reaching out to a nearby food source, please consider connecting with MDHFS staff or with the nearby food shelves to make a "coordinated ask" from these donors. Do note that more information is available for some of the locations than others. Please email siri.simons@minneapolismn.gov if you find any incorrect information or have questions about this resource.

- **What to Grow and Where to Donate document (see pdf attached to email)**
  The "What to Donate and Where" document is a summary of information collected through a google form sent out to Minneapolis food shelves. The document outlines food shelves interested in receiving produce, contact information, drop off dates, times, and locations, preferred vegetables and fruits, and food to avoid. This document was created for both MDHFS staff and food shelves to share with potential donors, however, food shelves without the capacity to accept donations at a particular time may find this useful for directing donors to an alternate location to avoid waste. If you would like your organization's information to be added to the list, please contact Siri.Simons@minneapolismn.gov.
- **Potential Farmers Market Partnerships document (see pdf attached to email)**
  The "Potential Farmers Market Partnerships" document lists Minneapolis farmers markets interested in partnering with food shelves, existing relationships, size, and contact information. In addition to potential partnerships with farmers markets, Gardening Matters is an additional resource the food shelves can use to connect with local gardens. Some partners were interested in utilizing the map, potential partnerships, and Gardening Matters resources, however, contacting markets and gardens on behalf of several food shelves, rather than individual food shelves, is preferred.
  - **"Cool- Bot" and how to use SHIP funding**

    The "Cool-Bot" is a refrigerated trailer that Collin Motschke with the Minnesota Food Project is building this summer. The Cool-Bot is made by installing a low-cost refrigeration adapter to the air conditioning system in a Stealth trailer. It costs approximately $4000. A Cool-Bot would benefit food shelves by addressing collection, transportation, refrigeration, and space barriers. Partners had several questions about the Cool-Bot including who would drive it and where would it be stored? Partners voiced concern about produce spoiling regardless of additional refrigeration from the Cool-Bot and did not find it the best use of funding. The group gravitated toward funding marketing and communication efforts.

Miscellaneous Ideas:

- Food shelves interested in wholesale purchasing should check out these resources:
    - EFN relationships with wholesalers (they can help arrange purchases and delivery for food shelves)
    - MN Grown wholesale database: http://www3.mda.state.mn.us/whlsale/
    - Twin Cities Local Food Company: http://www.localfoodmarketplace.com/twincities/Default.aspx
- The group was interested in exploring the idea of shared wholesale purchases and shared transportation to pick up and deliver healthy food items from various donation sites
- Maybe think about sponsoring a "Farmer Fair" or joint meeting to help farmers connect face-to-face with food shelf managers
- Think about helping food shelves in the same geographic area coordinate their "ask" to farmers markets and community gardens or other entities
- Reiteration of main issues with donations from farmers markets and community gardens:
    - Pick up/delivery issues – need a good base of volunteers
    - Weekend storage was an issue for donations
- MDHFS staff will work on comparing the hours of farmers markets to those of food shelves

## Meeting reflection and wrap up

- Siri Simons will be recruiting approximately 12 food shelves to participate in a baseline and follow up assessment to measure changes in the amount and quality of healthy food items (mainly fresh produce, dairy, and grains). Please email Siri.Simons@minneapolismn.gov for more information if you are interested in participating.
- Our next meeting will be held in mid-July to continue conversations about communications/messaging and connecting to local food sources.

**Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support**

**Healthy Food Shelves Initiative**

**August 16, 2012**

**9:00am – 11:00am**

**Meeting Notes**

**Welcome and Introductions:** 12 representatives from Minneapolis food shelves and hunger relief organizations participated in the meeting, along with two staff from the Minneapolis health department, and 2 staff from the communications group, Mod & Co.

**Spotlight on the North Point Food Shelf:** Tarik Fisher, from the North Point Food Shelf presented information on the organization's background and current operations, including their "client choice" model which helps reduce food waste and increases the likelihood that clients will eat what they receive. At the end of the meeting, Tarik led the group on a brief tour of the food shelf facility. North Point hosts produce drops every other Friday and has a relationship with the Camden mini farmers market. They also received produce donations from Second Harvest Heartland, Emergency Food Shelf Network, and Cub Foods on Broadway. If you have any questions about these or other efforts to increase healthy foods in the North Point Food Shelf, please contact Tarik Fisher at tfisher@northpointinc.org. Thank you to North Point and to Tarik for hosting our meeting!

**Communications Messaging for the Minneapolis Food Shelf Network:**

Luke Soiseth and Sean McDonnell , representing Mod & Co, led the group in an exploratory discussion about healthy food donations in order to gather ideas for developing standard communications messages. The group discussed how food shelves and organizations were currently connecting with potential donors including farmers markets and community gardeners, as well as some of the main messages that they would like to promote. Mod & Co will use this information to start developing sample messages and materials which will be presented back to the group for further feedback and refinement. A communications plan (including recommendations for disseminating the messages to various donor audiences using a unified voice) will be provided in the near future.

**Small Group Discussions: - Connecting Food Shelves to Each Other and to Healthy Foods:**

Food shelf partners broke up into small groups for to give food shelves in close proximity to one another the chance to connect and consider how to share resources and/or make "coordinated asks" to farmers markets, community gardens, and other donor groups. 5 clusters were created by geographic location: North, Downtown, Franklin/Lake, South of Lake, and Northeast. Each cluster was provided a resource guide with food shelves, farmers markets, and gardens along with any relevant information (also available on the Food Shelf Network website: http://www.minneapolismn.gov/health/ship/WCMS1P-096221). Each group was asked to select a farmers market, garden, or other food source from the resource guide and develop an action plan for procuring produce from their desired location. Groups were encouraged to brainstorm additional resource sharing opportunities. The small group conversation method was well-received and will be integrated into future meetings.

## Meeting reflection and wrap up

- A summary of the baseline food shelf assessment results were shared. Food shelves' had anywhere from 0 to 722 lbs of fresh fruit at the time of the assessment and between 0-1766 lbs of fresh vegetables. Healthy food made up 2-57% of food shelves' total food. Results were later distributed to those who participated in the assessment and will be used on the future to 1) set goals for the network and 2) apply for additional funding.
- Future Minneapolis Food Shelf Network meetings will be held every other month (the next meeting will be in October – if you are interested in hosting the group, please contact Kristen.Klingler@minneapolismn.gov).

**Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support**

**Healthy Food Shelves Initiative**

**October 12, 2012**

**8:30 – 10:30am**

**Meeting Notes**

**Welcome and Introductions:** 8 representatives from Minneapolis food shelves and hunger relief organizations participated in the meeting, along with two staff from the Minneapolis health department and two staff from the communications/marketing firm, Mod and Co.

**Spotlight on the Catholic Charities Food Shelf:** Jacob Schuster, from the Catholic Charities Branch II Food Shelf presented information on the organization's background and current operations. If you have any questions about their efforts to increase healthy foods, please contact Jacob Schuster at Jacob.Schuster@cctwincities.org. Thank you to Jacob for hosting our meeting!

**Communications Messaging for the Minneapolis Food Shelf Network:**

- Mod and Co presented communications ideas to help brand the Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network and encourage donors to give healthy items, including fresh produce. The group liked the colors, design, and material presented, so Mod will move ahead with finalizing everything. **Please view the power point document attached to the email for more details.**
- The Minneapolis Food Shelf Network will have a **logo** that we can use to brand any communications or activities we decide to do as a group, **a value statement** to let people know what we believe (i.e. Everyone Deserves Healthy Food), and a number of **key messages** that can be tailored to different audiences such as "Did you know you can donate fresh produce to your local food shelf?"
- Mod will also create **brochures** to distribute at events and public spaces in your community, a simple **website** with critical information for donors, and various materials like **magnets** with the nearest food shelf donation days and times, **tote bags**, **window clings**, **garden signs,** and **retail signs**. The group also expressed interest in bus ads, but these are cost prohibitive given our small budget.
- The group liked the idea of working with retail stores as a winter strategy, especially focusing on co-ops and health food stores. Brochures and **gift cards in small denominations** ($5) will be

available for people to pick up (gift cards are then added on to their store purchase at checkout and donated to a designated food shelf). It will be important to explain to donors why their cash donation is important and how it will be used (to buy healthy items that are often expensive for food shelves to purchase on their own).

- Partners also recommended that we could ask stores to sponsor a "round up to the nearest dollar" program on all purchases, with the money raised going towards food shelves. Signs at the register would be helpful for promoting this. The group suggested that tote bags could be sold at the stores, with proceeds going towards food shelves.
- In the spring, community gardeners might appreciate a "growing guide" to tell them what's in season at different times so they can plan ahead when planting fruits and veggies to donate.
- Mod and Co will help develop a timeline and strategy so that we can **collectively distribute materials to various audiences to raise their awareness** about our food shelves and the need for healthy food items. The group agreed that good target audiences for these messages would be **retail stores, food drive organizers, farmers markets, and community gardeners.**
- Where appropriate, we'll consider translating the materials into other languages.
- Food Day is coming up on October 24th but given the timing, it would be difficult to pull something together to launch the Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network messages at that time. Instead, the group will plan to launch a bit later, perhaps by doing a press event and a letter writing campaign to potential donors (MDHFS staff will coordinate).
- March is food drive month – consider this when planning timing and communications channels.

**Garden Gleaning Project:**

- Jared Walhowe from the Minnesota Project described the Garden Gleaning Project and gathered feedback from the group on how they had, or would like to, work with gardeners and farmers markets to get fresh produce donations.
- The Garden Gleaning Project (GGP) connects food shelves and community gardeners using a neighborhood coordinator to help build relationships and coordinate logistics until a sustainable system is developed. Currently, they work with CAPI, STEEP, Little Kitchen, and Waite House food shelves. They also have relationships with Kingfield, Northeast, and Brooklyn Park farmers markets.
- GGP does outreach to community gardeners to encourage them to "plant an extra row to donate". They also help coordinate deliveries and organize harvesting of school/church gardens.

- Jared and his team are coming up with a toolkit of best practices and recommendations for food shelves and community gardeners. It will likely include tips for recreating the neighborhood coordinator model, information on produce food safety and handling, donor liability, and guidelines for harvesting/preparing/delivering food to food shelves.
- Jacob (Catholic Charities) has worked with Dream of Wild Health to get produce (they are co-located in the same building). CAPI is working with 3 of their community gardens (in return for free gardening space, gardeners must donate to the CAPI food shelf).
- Common challenges include coordinating pick up/delivery of produce, getting too much of an unfamiliar item or low-quality deliveries that spoil before they can be given out, and lack of client demand for certain healthy items.
- Food shelves would like to see a list of places that they can give their wasted produce to (i.e. meal programs in churches, Compostadores, etc); transportation is often an issue.

**Review of Food Shelf Network Goals, Progress, and Future Activities:**

- The group reviewed a handout that recapped the Minneapolis Food Shelf Network's original goals, barriers, and priority areas of action, as well as a summary of progress made during the first 6 months of the initiative. Please see the attached handout for details. Partners talked about things they would like to see in the future and activities they would like to work on collectively.
- Simply Good Eating staff would be willing to have satellite office space within a food shelf if it's available – this would benefit the food shelf by having a nutrition expert on-site on a regular basis and allow the nutrition educators to become more closely involved in the community.
- The group agreed that they find the every-other-month- partner meetings helpful for networking, learning about and touring other food shelf facilities, and addressing common issues to increasing healthy foods.
- Partners would like more time to meet with other food shelves in their immediate vicinity. Future meetings will include time for small group discussion and problem-solving.

**Meeting reflection and wrap up**

- The group briefly discussed interest in splitting produce pallets from Second Harvest with one question about who will split them (food shelves vs. Second Harvest). If your food shelf is interested in sharing a free produce pallet with another food shelf in your area, please let us know so we can help coordinate!

**Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network meeting**

***Facilitated by the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support***

**December 19, 2012**

**9:00 – 11:00am**

## Meeting Notes

**Welcome and Introductions:** 9 representatives from Minneapolis food shelves and hunger relief organizations participated in the meeting, along with one staff from the Minneapolis health department.

**Spotlight on the Brian Coyle Center Food Shelf:** Amano Dube presented information on the organization's background and current operations. The Brian Coyle Center food shelf serves a very diverse population from the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood and the surrounding 7-county metro area. The food shelf offers a client choice model where customers can visit up to once per week and receive a monthly total of 25 lb/person + an additional 20lb/person for each family member. The food shelf is open regular hours during the week but also has produce distributions twice a month and offers an "African Pack" distribution once a month. Brian Coyle Center food shelf serves about 2200-2300 unduplicated individuals a year. They are currently working on developing a healthy food policy that will impact the types of healthy food and services provided to their customers. They also work with Seward Co-op to benefit from the store's Round Up program (customers at the co-op can choose to round up their purchase to the nearest whole dollar and the extra money is donated to the food shelf) as well as offering food demonstrations in partnership with Simply Good Eating. If you have any questions about their efforts to increase healthy foods, please contact Amano Dube at dubea@puc-mn.org. Thank you to Amano for hosting our meeting!

**Healthy Food Shelf Network Priorities – Communications Update:**

- Communications materials, including the Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network logo, value statement, brochure, retail sign and donor mailer template were unveiled at the meeting. These materials will be made available to Network members who wish to promote healthy food donations to their donor audiences.
- During the winter months, our work with farmers markets and community gardeners will be put on hold while we concentrate on helping food shelves reach out to retail stores to set up convenient, sustainable systems for getting healthy food donations. If your food shelf is interested in learning how to connect to a retail store in your neighborhood, please contact Siri

Simons (Siri.Simons@minneapolismn.gov). As a pilot, we will be working with 2 stores in Minneapolis on a retail donation strategy. These stores will place a "Donate Healthy Food" sign near their produce section to encourage customers to donate to a food shelf in one of two ways – either by purchasing and dropping off healthy food items directly to the selected food shelf or by making a cash donation via a gift card that is added on to their purchase at the cash register. If the pilot is successful, we will be interested in expanding to other stores and food shelves, so please email Siri.Simons@minneapolismn.gov if you're interested in trying this strategy out with a retail store with which you have a current relationship.

- Meeting participants expressed interest in receiving similar "Donate Healthy Food" signage so that they can post it in their buildings for potential donors to see. Kristen will work on getting the materials out to food shelves in either an electronic or hard copy format. If you are interested in receiving this type of signage, please email Kristen.Klingler@minneapolismn.gov.
- Meeting participants were interested in using the mailer and brochure to reach out to donors on their own, especially during the March Campaign in 2013. If you are interested in receiving a supply of brochures, please email Kristen.Klingler@minneapolismn.gov. Kristen will be sending out an electronic version of the mailer template that food shelves can customize with their own language and logo.
- To explore in 2013: cross-promotion between Minneapolis food shelves and farmers markets that offer EBT (to help customers and clients better understand the different options that are available for food assistance).
- A suggestion was made to clarify the expectations of the food shelves and stores involved in the retail pilot strategy. Customers who choose to purchase a gift card donation may want to know which food shelf it's going to and how it will be spent. Food shelves should understand that they can only use the donations for healthy food items (fresh or frozen produce, whole grains, low-fat/low-sodium/low-sugar items).

**Healthy Food Shelf Network Priorities – Client Education Discussion:**

- One of the priority issues that food shelves identified in early 2012 was the problem of getting food shelf clients to take and use healthy foods. Even if health y items were available at a particular food shelf, clients often chose to select other foods or they chose the healthy items but later threw them away. This happens for many reasons – unfamiliarity with certain foods, lack of knowledge about how to prepare healthy foods, perceived convenience of packaged foods, etc. One solution that we can work on as a group is to identify low-cost, sustainable ways

to increase clients' knowledge of the nutritional benefits of healthy foods and improve their food preparation skills so that they feel comfortable selecting healthy items from the food shelf and using them at home.

- Meeting participants discussed what they were currently doing to promote healthy foods and increase client demand for healthy items. Thoughts included:
    - Many food shelves had tried creating recipe cards to show clients how to use fresh produce with which they might be unfamiliar. This strategy seemed to be unsuccessful when used in isolation from other strategies.
    - Other food shelves had connected with Simply Good Eating to set up cooking demonstrations or taste testing using healthy ingredients typically found in their food shelf. Some food shelves have limited space for demonstrations.
    - Clients tend to have well established food preferences and aren't willing to change to try new food items
    - Building a long-term relationship with the client and providing education on all components of decision making (meal planning, budgeting, food selection, nutritional value/label reading, meal preparation, food preservation, serving size, etc) is critical to creating behavior change.
    - We need to identify ways to market healthy items (maybe offering an unlimited amount instead of a set amount or allowing the pounds of healthy food to not count towards a client's overall limit).
    - In framing our message to clients, we want to promote healthy foods as a choice, not something that we are forcing on people. It might help to show the benefits of eating a nutritious diet and/or the consequences of eating unhealthy foods.
    - Reaching the children of food shelf clients may be the most effective way to influence the parents. Seniors in general are a difficult population to get to change behaviors.
- Health department staff will create a list of nutrition education resources and ideas to share with Network members. If you are interested in connecting with an organization that can provide nutrition education for your clients, please email Siri.Simons@minneapolismn.gov.