

## Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network

*Facilitated by the Minneapolis Health Department*

**Thursday, October 24, 2013**

**10:00 – 11:30am**

**Location: Salvation Army Food Shelf  
(2727 Central Ave NE, Minneapolis)**



**EVERYBODY NEEDS  
HEALTHY FOOD**

### Participants

- Donna Bonicatto – Salvation Army Center City
- Lisa Boyd – Second Harvest Heartland
- Joan Bulfer – Bloomington Public Health
- Marquis Wise – North Point
- Daniel McKizzie – New Creation
- Jacob Schuster – Community Emergency Services
- Bunmi Adekunle – Good Works
- Jen Schultz – Little Kitchen
- Laura Skubic – Emergency Food Shelf Network
- Dave Johnson – Salvation Army
- Fay McLain – Simply Good Eating
- Shelley Sherman - Simply Good Eating
- Kristen Klingler – Minneapolis Health Department

### Meeting Notes

#### Spotlight on Salvation Army (Central Ave location) food shelf

Information was presented on the food shelf's current operations.

- One of eight Salvation Army food shelves; 3<sup>rd</sup> largest serving 5,118 households/year (11,378 individuals). Serve the 55413, 55414, 55418, and 55421 zip codes. Many clients have used this food shelf for years, and they see generations of families come through the doors.
- In July 2013, transitioned to a client choice model (the 3<sup>rd</sup> Salvation Army site to do so). They have about 5-9 volunteers every month who help with the client "shopping". Clients are reacting positively; also allows the organization to save money and use their limited resources more efficiently since they are providing food items that clients will choose and eat. Due to space limitations, it's difficult to do extensive reorganization or layout changes, but they have moved things around to highlight things like fresh produce.
- Utilize the United Way nutritional assessment tool to assess their food stock. Also do SNAP outreach (help clients with on-site enrollment) and partner with Second Harvest to do other seasonal activities. Recently started a garden on-site with produce returning to the food shelf.
- Receives food from EFN, Second Harvest, Lund's/Byerly's (where they hire drivers to pick up the donations on a regular basis). They have their own refrigerated truck to do pick-ups for all of the Salvation Army food shelf and meal program sites.

### Updates/Announcements

- **Plant an Extra Row campaign progress:** 111 Minneapolis gardeners have donated over 800 pounds of fresh produce to about a dozen food shelves. Gardeners are finding the program easy

to participate in and many are excited to help support their community in this way. MHD staff conducted surveys with food shelf clients in August and will do a follow up survey in October to measure how the program is impacting their access to, and awareness of, healthy food options.

- **Action Item:** MHD staff shared a letter template that food shelf managers can use to thank donors for participating in the program. Contact Kristen if your food shelf wants a list of donors who gave fresh produce to your agency (and their contact information), as well as basic stats about the number/pounds of donations.
- **Minneapolis Health Department SHIP 3 grant proposal:** The department's "Healthy Food in the Community" portfolio will include a continuation of the Healthy Food Shelf Network (including Network meetings and work on healthy food policies, procurement/donations of healthy foods, communications, and client education).

### **Client education: Partnering with University of MN Extension**

Extension staff, Shelley Sherman and Fay McLain, shared information about the Simply Good Eating and Cooking Matters programs and asked food shelves for feedback on how they can help educate clients about the importance of eating healthy foods.

- The programs are funded by the USDA Farm Bill to provide education to low-income SNAP clients. In Minneapolis, 12 Community Nutrition Educators (CNEs, some of whom are bilingual in Spanish, Somali, and Hmong) work mostly in schools, food shelves, parks, subsidized housing sites, and other community locations. They are available to visit food shelves on weekends and evenings, not just during the day.
- Although future program funding is uncertain, educators are interested in supporting food shelf clients in their efforts to eat healthy on a limited budget, prepare healthy meals, and understand the importance of good nutrition.
- Common challenges are that people don't know how to easily prepare healthy foods (especially transient or homeless populations without access to kitchen supplies or space). Also, healthy/fresh food can be expensive and not readily available at all food shelves.
- In the past, educators have worked on-site at food shelves to do food demos and taste testings, create recipe cards, offer nutrition education signage or displays, and answer questions from clients. Program funders want educators to do direct education to clients, but this is often difficult at food shelves. As a result, they are trying to think about how they can best support food shelves' efforts to assist clients in making healthy choices in other ways.

Suggestions and comments from group members:

- A train-the-trainer model with staff and volunteers might be helpful (SGE is thinking about this already). For example, Little Kitchen has groups of youth who regularly volunteer at the food shelf and could be trained on how to do nutrition education activities. At the recent Feeding American conference, a similar train-the-trainer approach was mentioned (utilizing food shelf clients instead of staff/volunteers). They have a new resource available to promote healthy choices at food shelves: <http://healthyfoodbankhub.feedingamerica.org/>
- It's hard for food shelves to know what food they will have available on a scheduled demo day. SGE can set up a demo within a day or two of order delivery if that helps. Also, space for a demo is sometimes an issue in small food shelves as is having access to running water. Despite the difficulties, food shelves agreed that taste tests and demos are an important way to help clients choose unfamiliar healthy foods. SGE would like to know hours/days that food shelves want demos.

- SGE is doing a nutrition series at the new Catholic Charities Higher Ground site
- Food shelves need ideas for healthy foods/meals for transient and homeless clients
- CNEs need to focus on a particular site or group of sites on a regular basis and serve as the connector between them and program resources. This would help develop relationships and continuity of services offered at each food shelf.
- If a food shelf is interested in working with SGE staff, please call them at 612-625-7070.

## Healthy Food Policies

The focus of the health department's SHIP 3 Healthy Food Shelf work will be on helping Network partners create and adopt healthy food policies for their organization. In general, healthy food policies are flexible and modifiable depending on where a food shelf or organization wants to start. They do not have to begin by banning all unhealthy items; the policy can be used to outline the agency's commitment to increasing the amount of healthy options and limiting purchases of less nutritious foods such as soda or candy, for example. For more information on Healthy Food Policies, please see the "Introduction to Healthy Food Policies" power point in the Resources (Trainings, Toolkits, and More) section of the website.

Many food shelves are interested in developing a healthy food policy, but there is a lot of work that needs to be done to educate donors, staff/volunteers, clients, and the general public about what a healthy food policy is and how it can be used to strengthen an organization's commitment to offering healthy options. Messages could focus on:

- Reiterating that food shelf clients in many neighborhoods don't have access to healthy food options in grocery stores; they have to rely on food shelves
- Food shelves are part of a bigger food system that is determining what types of food choices low-income people have. Food shelves are working hard to increase access to healthy food options and have an important role to play in serving as a healthy food source for their community.
- Many low-income people are suffering from obesity, diabetes, and other health problems. Offering healthy food choices at the food shelf helps clients address these issues.

Group members discussed a recent article in the St Paul Pioneer Press that focused on the negative aspects of a recent food policy passed by the Eagan Resource Center. Additional media coverage was done by a few news outlets:

- St Paul Pioneer Press article: [http://www.twincities.com/localnews/ci\\_24350780/some-food-rejected-east-metro-food-shelves-focus](http://www.twincities.com/localnews/ci_24350780/some-food-rejected-east-metro-food-shelves-focus)
- WCCO coverage: <http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2013/10/21/food-shelves-new-challenge-what-to-do-with-junk-food/>
- KSTP coverage: <http://kstp.com/article/stories/S3197560.shtml?cat=0>

Network partners will have a chance to express their interest in working with MHD staff on the development of healthy food policies and review sample policies at the January 2014 meeting. Additional trainings, resources, and opportunities will be offered to assist in this work throughout 2014 and 2015.