New Brunswick
Community Food Assessment
and Food Planning:
Community University Partnership

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Partners

Johnson & Johnson

Rutgers
Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy

Rutgers
New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

The Community

Working Together for a Food Secure New Brunswick
NBCFA

• Goal is to make New Brunswick a place where food is affordable, healthy, easy to access, and culturally appropriate for all residents

• Recommend ways to improve the local food system in New Brunswick so that it is more equitable and sustainable

• Take action in the community to build food security

Workgroups

• Advocacy & Policy
• Agriculture
• Community Engagement
• Food Economic Development
• Healthy Food Access

Partners

• Feeding New Brunswick Network
• New Brunswick Community Garden Coalition
Project Overview

Fall 2015-Spring 2016

Community Food Assessment

Summer 2016

NBCFA Food Planning

Fall 2016

Community Food Security Round Table

Winter 2017

Community Food Plan
Project Overview

- Fall 2015-Spring 2016: Community Food Assessment
- Summer 2016: NBCFA Food Planning
- Fall 2016: Community Food Security Round Table
- Winter 2017: Community Food Plan

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Winter 2017
Community Food Plan

Working Together for a Food Secure New Brunswick
Planning Team

• Peter Gillies, Director of Institute for Food, Nutrition and Health
• Bob Goodman, Dean of SEBS
• Bill Hallman, Chair, Human Ecology, SEBS
• Keith Jones, NBCFA and City of New Brunswick
• Larry Katz, NJAES/ Director, Cooperative Extension
• Laura Lawson, Dean of Agriculture and Urban Programs
• Shaun Mickus, Johnson & Johnson
• Jim Zullo, Elijah’s Promise
Community Food Assessment Advisory Committee

- Dave Blevins, NB Public Schools
- Martha Cambridge, AmeriCorps Service, Elijah’s Promise
- Anthony Capece, Elijah’s Promise
- Manuel Casteneda, New Brunswick Tomorrow
- Amanda Gallear, Unity Square
- Sean Hewitt, Civic League of Greater New Brunswick
- Keith Jones, City of New Brunswick
- Michelle Kennedy, Center for State Health Policy, RU
- Amy Michael, The Collaborative, Rutgers
- Shaun Mickus, J&J
- Yvette Molina, Elijah’s Promise
- Maria Pellerano, Rutgers Medical School
- Jason Rowe, Unity Square
- Jaymie Santiago, New Brunswick Tomorrow
- Ethan Schoolman, Rutgers University
- Jen Shukaitis, Rutgers Cooperative Extension
- Sue Stephenson-Martin, SNAP-Ed
Food Assessment Research Team

Faculty and Staff
- Cara Cuire, SEBS
- Deborah Plotnik, EJB
- Kathe Newman, EJB

Ralph W. Voorhees Center Students
- Aretousa Bloom, EJB doctoral student
- Dan Burton, MCRP
- Ryan Cote, MCRP
- Luis Gonzalez, MCRP
- Vineela Pentyala, MCRP
- Vanessa Raymond, RU Undergraduate
- Thalya Reyes, MPP/MCRP & FoodCorps
- Erin Royals, Geography doctoral student
- David Rodriguez, MCRP
- Jakob Schneider, MCRP (graduated)
- Nick Shatan, MCRP
- Joni Webster, MPH

Lazos America Unida
- Maria Vivar
- Teresa Vivar

Elijah’s Promise
- Yvette Molina
- Melissa George

Advanced Qualitative Methods Course Module Option
- Katherine Nelson, EJB doctoral candidate
- Amy Rosenthal, EJB doctoral candidate
- Aashish Vikash Chhajer, MPP

Community Development Studio Spring 2016
- 7 planning graduate students

Public Health Internship
- Saba Rehman, RU undergraduate student

Sociology Independent Study
- Reshma Parikh, RU undergraduate student

Human Ecology Independent Study
- Chioma Nwankwo, RU undergraduate student

Rutgers Collaborative: Advancing Community Development
- 15 undergraduate students

Voorhees Fellows 2015-2016
- Ana Bonilla-Martinez, Public Health and Chemistry
- Daniela Ortega, Public Health and Biological Sciences
- Reshma Parikh, Cell Biology and Neuroscience and Sociology
- Katarina Piasevoli, Environmental Policy and Spanish
- Abigail Thompson, Planning and Public Policy/Communications
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Food Assessment Research Approach

• Who lacks food security and why?
• Gather existing data
• Conduct original research
  • 59 interviews with community and non-profit organization staff
  • 15 interviews with food pantry directors/staff
  • 70 interviews with food pantry clients and other low-income NB residents
• Participant observation of food pantries
• Parcel survey in two neighborhoods
• Spatial data for pantries, SNAP and WIC vendors, community gardens, farmer’s markets, preschools, transit
Examples of Community Food Assessment Findings & Food Planning Connections
Food Economic Development
Food and Economic Development

• Food business incubators had been identified as a priority already. We knew that people need:
  • commercial kitchen space
  • food safety training
  • health certifications and regulations
  • business planning and marketing

• Community researchers spoke with many people interested in starting or expanding their own food businesses

• Community researchers collected data on
  acceptable fees, hours preferred, and other desired features for a commercial kitchen space.
1. Create a food business incubator
   • Need identified through the food assessment and interactions with residents, as well as prior work.
   • Potential partners: Elijah’s Promise, the Intersect Fund, RU Food Innovation Center and Unity Square
   • Resources needed: funding, staff, and locations
   • Costs: training, renovations, and operating costs
   • Next steps
     • Identify kitchens interested in partnering
     • Hold focus group with food makers
     • Identify resources and services needed by community food entrepreneurs
     • Develop partnerships for services (Business acceleration, marketing services, safe serve, etc.)
     • Get copy of legislation for cottage law in NJ (send letters to Trenton?)
Community Garden Coalition/
Agriculture Work Group
Gardens and Yards

- There are 12 community and 9 school gardens with more than 200 garden beds and residents grow 54 varieties of herbs, fruits, and vegetables.
Interest continues to grow.

From interviews with community members:

- Many of the residents we interviewed would like to join a community garden but do not know how.
  - Some had seen the map but were not sure who to contact.
  - Map was in English
Community Gardening Coalition/Ag: Food Plan

Create garden outreach strategy that would include branding, signage, map updates, and communication.

Year One
- Create marketing plan (3-4 months)
- Implement marketing plan
- Create portfolio of bilingual resources
- Build network, mailing list, social media, etc.
- Implement signage at community gardens

Year Two
- Continue implementation of signage
- Implement regular quarterly communication/newsletters
- Program cross-community garden events
- Build network involvement/membership lists/ etc.

Year Three
- Expand communication to interested community gardeners
- Build network involvement/membership lists
- Program more cross-garden events
Feedback from Round Table

• “I felt energized and much better informed. I felt like the work we are doing is more a part of a larger community.”

• “When Lisanne did the list of things we’ve accomplished, it was almost like therapy. You always see so many things in front of you that need to be done but we’ve done a lot.”
2017 WINTER FOOD FORUM
Help build a better food system in New Brunswick!

All are invited to New Brunswick Community Food Alliance’s annual community Food Forum! Learn about what is happening in the community and be inspired to build a better food system in our city. Get involved in what the NBCFA is doing!

Free breakfast and lunch will be provided, as well as children's activities and English-Spanish translators.

Saturday, February 25th
9am – 1pm
Lord Sterling Community School
101 Redmond St
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
Project Successes

• Working closely with *community partners* who:
  – Worked on all phases of research
  – Used the data they were collecting in their own work
  – Reached people in the community we could not otherwise have spoken with
  – Provided more channels to bring the research findings back to the community
Successes

• Connecting the food assessment to food plan, gave people a sense of confidence that their plan were addressing *real community needs*.

• Identifying *crosscutting topics* that multiple groups wanted to work on, and facilitating sharing of those findings.
Successes

• Round Table
  – Facilitated cross-group communication within food alliance
  – Invited new people into NBCFA
  – Celebrated successes of NBCFA
  • Reflections on what has been done and what they will do next.
    – Reinvigorated
Project Challenges:

Timeline

- Some things took longer than we imagined
  - Working with community members to collect data took longer than if we had done it ourselves.
- Some things were accelerated because of
  - Funder timelines
  - University timelines
Challenges

Did we fully engage the community?

Rutgers and J&J bring a lot of resources and connections to the project, however...

– Can be overwhelming at times
– Served as facilitators, not leaders

Partnerships require:

– Effort, listening, and being flexible
The challenges and the successes stem from the same source:

—Collaboration and partnership
Conclusion

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Thank you

• Johnson & Johnson
• NB Community Food Alliance
• Advisory group members
• Research participants
• Research team
• Round table attendees
• Community members
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