



Fresh Harvest CSA Project

A collaboration between the Franciscan Center, United Way of Central MD, Molly Shattuck Vibrant Living, One Straw Farm, the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future and the University of Maryland Extension - Food Supplement Nutrition Education Program (FSNE)

Fresh Harvest CSA Project

Goals of Project:

- To connect our clients with healthy, fresh food through weekly Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares.
- To support clients with culinary tools and education to help them use their CSA shares effectively.
- To measure the effectiveness of providing clients with CSA shares by:
 - Evaluating their knowledge (before and after the project) of how to prepare fresh vegetables.
 - Surveying their preferences of vegetables to determine most and least palatable.
 - Tracking their participation in the project each week including the extent of value clients place on receiving fresh produce.
 - Collecting personal stories and photographs that illustrate and document their experience with fresh foods and changing lifestyles.
 - Providing education and assistance to help them prepare fresh vegetables.



Timeline & Duration:

- The Fresh Harvest project is expected to run from March 2013 to December 2013. CSA shares will be distributed June through November.
- Timeline:
 - In March & April, screen and identify likely candidates for participation.
 - In April & May, interview participants and get baseline measurements, stories, photographs, etc.
 - In May, conduct orientation.
 - In June, begin distribution of CSA shares.
 - CSA distribution begins in June and is expected to run weekly through November (weather permitting).
 - The Project Director will compile data and present findings in December.



Partners:

- United Way of Central Maryland: financial support and assistance with strategic planning.
- Molly Shattuck Vibrant Living: assistance with strategic planning; educational materials and volunteer support.
- Johns Hopkins University Center for a Livable Future: oversight; educational materials and participation by nutritionist and volunteers.

- One Straw Farm: CSA farm to provide shares
- University of Maryland Extension Service – FSNE: help with guidance, educational classes, participant recruitment, developing the surveys, educational collateral, volunteers and recipes.



Unique Features of the Study:

- Connect individuals and families with CSA shares June through November.
- Collect client stories
- Provide participants access to education and tools they need to succeed including:
 - Cutting boards, veggie peelers and disposable cameras.
 - Olive oil, sea salt, pepper grinders, garlic and other staples for making fresh food taste great.
 - Seasonally appropriate recipes that integrate new produce.
 - Weekly cooking and educational tips.
 - Access to the Center’s kitchen for weekly chopping and prepping sessions.
 - Field trip to One Straw Farm for the entire family: learn about where their food comes from, how it is grown, and why it is go great. Meet the farmers and have lunch in the country.
 - A dietitian, nutritionist and guest chef(s) to work with participants.
- Monitor the health and lifestyle of participants through weekly questionnaires and interviews
- Act as pick-up site for clients to receive their CSA shares.
- Provide off-hour pick-up times for clients who work during the day.
- Provide a reusable grocery bag for easier transporting of the shares.
- Provide utility assistance to people that may not be current with BGE or facing cut-off.
- Provide transportation tokens to clients who may have difficulty traveling to pick up their shares.



Target Measurements:

- Total number of participants who complete the study.
- Number of family members impacted.
- Total pounds of produce given away.
- Preliminary assessment and final evaluation to measure how much knowledge clients gained during the project; which vegetables they preferred.
- Photo documentary.
- Video interviews.
- Personal stories; anecdotal information.

The Fresh Harvest Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Project is funded by United Way of Central Maryland’s Access to Healthy Food Initiative, a multi-faceted program that is making healthy food more easily accessible for food insecure central Marylanders through collaborations to grow more locally, improve distribution, and increase access, affordability and education.