

Community Food Project Grant

Year 2, Quarter 1 Update

The Community Food Project Grant, "Access for All, from Field to Fork," began in August 2016, bringing together a number of organizations to: 1) increase the availability and consumption of fresh, local produce by low-income residents while deepening community connections to the local food system; 2) strengthen communities by increasing capacity for self-sufficiency in meeting food needs, producing and distributing food, and building relationships; and 3) work towards long-term economic stability for small food system entrepreneurs and farmers who contribute jobs and healthy food to the local community.

During this last quarter, the **Food Bank** distributed over 416,245 pounds of produce through its programs, which is an increase in nearly 80lbs from this time last year. Much of the produce is distributed through the Family Farmers' Markets and Children's Farmers' Markets. In this quarter, five Family Farmers' Markets have been held, and over 3400 children have received produce through the Children's Farmers' Market. Despite the success at the Family Farmers' Market, the Food Bank has a need for more volunteer assistance to fully transition to this style food distribution at these sites. GleanSLO harvested just short of 113,000 pounds of produce this quarter, and are well on their way to achieving their goal of 200,000 pounds for the year.

Food Bank and **Promotores** have continued to provide food demonstrations at three Family Farmers' Market sites for a total of nine nutrition activities. In addition, Promotores have been advocates in the community, helping families navigate available services, and providing feedback to the Food Bank from their recipients. Since this time last year, there has been an increase in participation from the Latino community.

SLO Public Health has been developing train-the-trainer nutrition lessons to be incorporated into the 2018 Promotores quarterly meetings. The smarter lunchroom program has continued— a dietitian has been working with the Shandon Elementary principal and food service director to increase nutrition lessons at the school. Unfortunately the Farm-to-School efforts have stalled because Lillian Larsen Elementary School has decided to no longer participate.

One Cool Earth recently hired a local farmer to work as a garden educator once a week at Shandon Elementary, and has already started partnering with the local middle school as well. She has turned the previously unused garden space into a functioning garden, including making improvements to the irrigation system, mulching, and planting seeds with students. At this site, three classes are taught each week, and the curriculum includes making healthy

choices, improving science comprehension, and the opportunity to recreate outside of the classroom. A FoodCorps member teaches once a week (typically five classes) at Winifred Pifer Elementary. This includes the Library on the Lawn events, and teaching garden-based activities every other week. One Cool Earth has already surpassed their goal to reach 1300 students! The activities have been so successful that they are experiencing an increase in teacher requests for garden-based lessons. As a result, they will offer teach trainings in April and are in discussions with school districts to increase garden-related funding.

The **SLO Food System Coalition** has been planning another farmer/buyer mixer for 2018. The ETB Working Group and their partners at UC Cooperative Extension coordinated with Department of Social Services to circulate a flyer about EBT acceptance at farmers' markets. The flyers were distributed through SLO County school newsletters to reach low-income families. The Farm to Market Working Group disbanded because they had overlapping efforts of Farmers Guild and Slow Money SLO, and instead the working group members will support the goals of the Farmers Guild.

Affordable Housing Paso Robles (AHPR) has two new individuals in the cooking and nutrition program, and eight new students working in the YouthWorks garden who receive stipends for their work. During the last quarter, the garden was prepped for the winter. YouthWorks is also preparing for a new garden space in the next quarter.