

Community Food Project Grant October 2015 Update- Year 2 Complete!

In the second year of the grant, which wrapped up in August 2015, **SLO Public Health** created handouts on Cottage Food Law and food safety. Over 70 handouts were provided to Central Coast families in this past grant year. Public Health also continued to host workshops on food safety and new food laws regarding sales of food produced in home kitchens, which were attended by 32 people this last year, bringing the total workshop attendance to 142 Central Coast residents, which far exceeds the three-year grant goal of 120 people!

Glean SLO exceeded their harvest goals by over 3,000 pounds in this last grant year- their volunteers harvested 203,152 lbs of produce for the Central Coast families! Since the start of the grant, they have gleaned 412,782 lbs. of produce from Central Coast farms. Their primary means of distributing the gleaned produce is through the Children's Farmers' Market. Glean SLO is experiencing a boost in enthusiasm from producers as they learn about need in the County, and distribution through the special market.

Glean SLO continues to express concern over the changing climate, and its impact on local producers and the organization, reporting that local fruit tree production is 15-20% of normal. They continue to be surprised at the generosity of the community, volunteers and farmers even in the face of drought and uncertainty. The organization continues to diversify their partner base in order to create a more sustainable donor base. These efforts have resulted not only in more pounds from new partners, but an increase in the diversity of the crops as well.

Central Coast Grown continues to work to increase local food procurement in the County, and to this end have continued their work with two school districts - Paso Robles Unified School District- and San Luis Obispo Unified School District- to expand their farm-to-school options, where they are working with eight local producers. Unfortunately, after months of research, CCG could still not find a baseline measurement of local procurement in the County. They have redirected their energy towards planning a County-wide farm-to-school meeting. A steering committee for this effort is meeting for the first time in November, and they hope to have the larger meeting in January.

CCG has been challenged by the staff turnover in the organization. They have been looking for new staff and interns to take on some of these responsibilities. In addition to building their capacity for these projects internally, they have reached out to new sources of support, like SCORE and Santa Barbara Harvest.

The Food Hub Working Group has continued to meet regularly. They continue to research strengthening existing distribution networks, and using the internet as a tool to connect producers and consumers. With this goal in mind, the group has started writing a business plan.

In this last quarter, **UC Cooperative Extension** worked with Shandon and Nipomo elementary schools to schedule Harvest of the Month tastings for the 2015-16 school year. They also coordinated with agricultural producers for tasting donations and farm tours for the students. The PhotoVoice project continued this last grant year, and will continue for 2nd graders at Oceano Elementary this school year.

The Salvation Army food distribution tastings continue to be a success, with 19 participants attending workshops in the last quarter. Future dates for these tastings have been scheduled; UCCE has increased the number of tastings to twice a month in order to reach more residents. So far, UCCE has taught 336 low-income residents to preserve food, exceeded their goal of reaching 200 people - with more workshops to come!