

University of British Columbia
Faculty of Land and Food Systems

Project Proposal: Farm2Family

Ray-Cam Co-operative Center

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Introduction

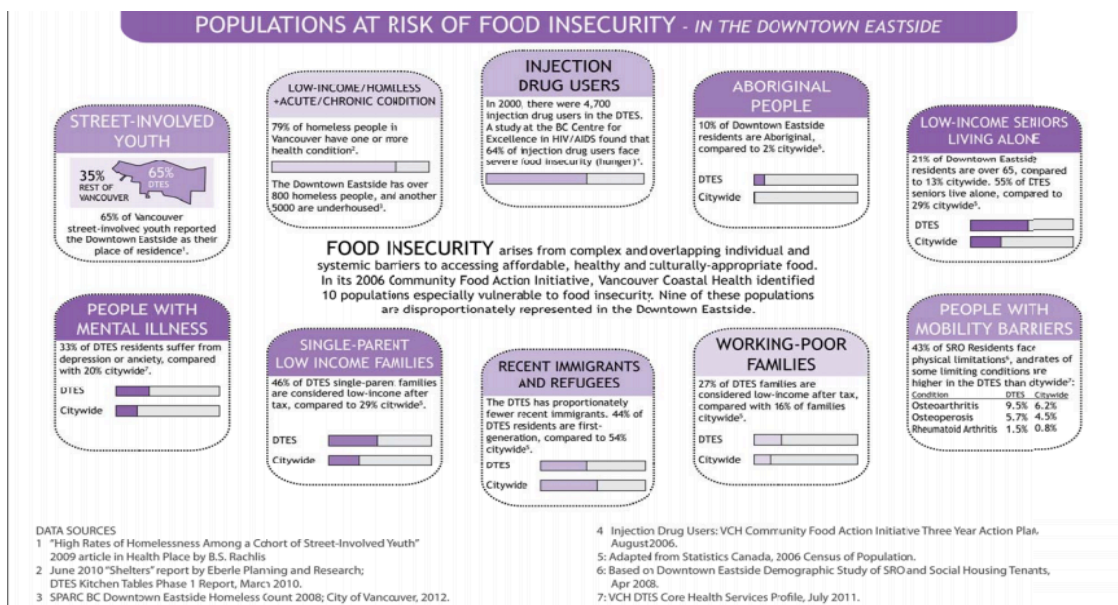
The purpose of this project is to continue Ray-Cam Co-operative Centre’s ongoing efforts to address issues of food insecurity in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) community of Vancouver by establishing a Farm2Family program. Through this project, we aim to establish positive relationships with local farmers to develop long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships between Ray-Cam and potential farms.

Ray-Cam Co-operative Center is located between the Strathcona Neighbourhood of DTES and the Hastings Corridor. The DTES, in particular, is one of the oldest neighbourhoods in Vancouver, which is made up of Chinatown, Gastown, Victory Square, Strathcona, and an industrial area. It is a culturally diverse community with 48 percent of its population representing visible minority groups including First Nations and new immigrants (City of Vancouver, 2013). The area has one of the lowest mean incomes in Canada with a significant number of single people or seniors who are unemployed (City of Vancouver, 2013). In relation to the rest of Vancouver, the DTES has a significantly lower median income of \$13,691 annually compared to approximately \$48,000 for the whole city (2012 est.) (The Canadian Press, 2012). Food insecurity is prevalent in the DTES with a significant number of residents being food insecure (see Figure 1 below) (Miewald & Ostry, 2014; City of Vancouver, 2013). Despite these problems, the DTES is known for its history of social activism and strong community resilience.

Originally established in 1976, Ray-Cam was a result of local residents desiring a safe environment for their children and healthy, affordable access to food. It is now a full-fledged community-run service with the goal to address food insecurity in their community.

By informing farmers about the BC Farmers’ Food Donation Corporate Income Tax Credit, our goal is to further encourage farmers to donate excess and surplus food to supply fresh produce to the community center.

Figure 1: (City of Vancouver, 2013)



Significance

The significance of Ray-Cam's Farm2Family initiative is that it allows access to fresh and nutritious food for low-income families. Studies have shown that majority of the DTES depends on charitable food systems due to restricted financial capacities and rising housing cost (Bocskei, & Ostry, 2010). However, food donated through charities often fail to meet nutritional needs and lacks quality and safety. This dependence on charities results in diets that are low in fresh vegetables, high in saturated fat, and often deficient in essential nutrients (Bocskei, & Ostry, 2010). Through Farm2Family, community food security can be established as "community residents [can] obtain a safe, personally acceptable, nutritious diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes healthy choices, community self-reliance and equal access for everyone" (Bellows & Hamm, 2003: 107).

Furthermore, Farm2Family directly connects local farmers with the local community. Taking an Asset-Based Community Development approach, we focus on Ray-Cam's strengths in outreach and community-building. In linking local farmers with the DTES community, we hope to improve food security by ensuring access to fresh, nutritious produce (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). By getting the community involved, Farm2Family encourages Food Justice as "the community would be exercising their right to grow, sell, and eat healthy food" (Just Food, 2018). It aims to reduce social inequities and disparities that constrain community's food choice and access to food to overcome the obstacles in addressing food security in the DTES (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010: ix).

Lastly, this project also redirects a waste stream to benefit both the local community and local farmers. Unsold produce can be put to use rather than disposing them; thus, reducing food waste. The diversion of food from the waste stream is one of Canada's priorities-- the National Zero Waste Council has announced the goal to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030 (Saltman, 2016). Food waste contributes to 4% of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions when it rots, and at least \$31 billion in lost revenue (Saltman, 2016).

Objectives

Our project objectives are:

1. To create a brochure, flyer, and email template for Ray-Cam to use when contacting farmers which explains the benefits of participating in the Farm2Family initiative and BC Farmers' Food Donation Corporate Income Tax Credit, and
2. To establish a database of local farms that includes contact information, responses, produce available, delivery and pick-up logistics for the transportation of produce, and any costs involved.

Methods

Our project will have three phases. In the first phase, we will develop contact materials to connect our community partner with local farmers. After consultation with Ray-Cam, we will create a brochure and flyer that frames the issue of food security, represents the values of Ray-Cam, and informs farmers about the benefits of Farm2Family and the BC Farmers' Food Donation Corporate Income Tax Credit. We will also develop an email template with local farmers that achieves these same objectives.

In the second phase, we will further consult with Ray-Cam about the needs of the community in terms of donations required, delivery schedule, and appropriate boundaries for donation pickup because of time and budget constraints. We will then develop a list of local farms that can be contacted and will categorize them by region in a spreadsheet. We will first focus on local farms that are participating in Farmers Markets and then branch out to other local farms in the community.

In the third phase, we will begin contacting farmers by phone, email, and in person using the materials and resources developed in previous phases to seek food donations for Ray-Cam's Farm2Family program. In the spreadsheet, farmers' responses, including reasons for unwillingness to participate, produce available for donation, and delivery or pick-up logistics will be documented.

Outcomes

The expected outcome of our project will be a toolkit that Ray-Cam can use to contact local farmers in the future. This includes a brochure, flyer, an email template, as well a Local Farm Database. In developing these materials, we hope to lay the initial groundwork toward bringing fresh and local produce to Ray-Cam and the DTES community.

Our two target dates are March 1st, 2018 for the completion of the brochure and farm contact scripts, and March 15th, 2018 for the completion of the database.

An infographic presentation will take place on March 26th, 2018 on UBC campus and a final report will be produced by March 30th, 2018. Strengths and limitations will be identified in hopes of proposing improvements for further development of this Farm2Family program.

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