



CHESTER COUNTY

FOOD BANK

No one should go Hungry!

A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

The Chester County Food Bank
presents

**“Improving Our Service: Bettering the Ways We Provide
Sound Nutrition to Those in Need in Chester County”**

November 16, 2011

at

**The Chester County Food Bank
Guthriesville, Pennsylvania**



Community Conversation facilitated and report provided by:

Chester County 2020

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Topic: Improving Our Service: Bettering the Ways We Provide
Sound Nutrition to Those in Need in Chester County

Sponsors: The Chester County Food Bank

Facilitator: Chester County 2020

Attendance: 33

Groups represented:

West Chester Food Cupboard

Transformation Initiative

Catholic Social Services

Agriculture

Chester County Department of
Community Development

United Way of Chester County

Interfaith Housing Assistance Corp.

Maysie's Farm Community Supported

Needs identified in group discussion:

General ways to improve service:

Education for clients, providers, and groups currently not engaged in the Food Bank Mission

Uniform policies among food providers

Recognition of clients' broader needs (transportation; special diet; limited ability to prepare food, etc.)

Specific ways to improve service and Follow-up Leaders:

Client Education – Sylvia Brady

Holistic Systems to Meet Needs Beyond Nutrition – Casey Jones

Untapped Resources – Yolanda Beethe

Collaboration Between Providers – Dana Strode-Tritle

Providing *Healthy Foods* – Dan Orr

Follow-up:

Follow-up Meetings:

Follow-up meetings will be convened by the Chester County Food Bank and facilitated by CC2020. Prior to the first follow-up meeting, follow-up Leaders will develop one action-oriented objective for the specific ways to improve service. Objectives should be expressed in measurable terms. Leaders should draft an action plan for each objective. All Leaders should attend all follow-up meetings; any November 16 *Community Conversation* participant is also welcome to attend.

The first follow-up meeting will review and refine the objectives.

The second follow-up meetings will review progress in meeting the objectives and assess the need for future follow-up meetings and progress reporting.

Quality assessment:

The Food Bank will provide CC2020 with a written assessment of this program, including suggestions for improvement, after the second follow up meeting.

II. IDENTIFYING AND RANKING THE ISSUES

The final roster of identified issues with their ranking is shown below. Ranking is determined by the number of votes each issue earned. Five issues emerged as top-ranked. Participants were reminded that issue/work group assignments were for the purposes of the evening's work session, and that any participant could volunteer to work on follow-up for any issue. In order to consolidate similar ideas, the facilitators and the sponsor organized the general topics expressed in open discussion into the specific issues shown below. The topics expressed in open discussion are shown in Appendix 1, for comparison.

THE ISSUES, RATED

<u>Rating</u>	<u>Issue</u>
18	Client education – food preparation, access to nutrition, life skills
14	Holistic systems to meet needs beyond nutrition
10	Untapped Resources – faith groups, senior centers, local government, civic groups
9	Collaboration between suppliers
8	Providing <i>healthy</i> food
6	Small scale local food production
6	Senior citizens' needs
5	Transportation
5	Gleaning & farms & gardens
4	Eligibility standards
4	Cultural / language issues
4	Donor education (special foods)
3	Off-hours availability
2	Uniformity among cupboards
2	Emergency food delivery
1	Seasonal supply issues
1	Double-dipping
1	Weekend food (backpacks)
1	Lack of utilities

III. GROUP DISCUSSION

Working the Issues and Follow-up:

The following work group findings are taken directly from the work group reports and individual worksheets; findings are listed for each of the five top-ranked issues.

CLIENT EDUCATION – Food Preparation, Access to Nutrition, Life Skills

Specific Goals:

- Provide recipe cards for seasonal nutritious food at distribution sites
- Safe food handling & cooking instruction at distribution sites
- Use Women, Infants, and Children Program offices, schools, Public Service Announcements at gas stations [convenience stores] referencing nearest pantry & budgeting help – post near lottery sales.
- Provide safe food handling & cooking instruction to senior centers, churches, other locations accessible to clients

Individuals & groups who can best assist in achieving the goals:

- Scouts & Venturing Posts, Senior Centers, Churches
- Weight Watchers, Health Clinics
- Family & Consumer Science Teachers
- Convenience stores & other places selling lottery tickets
- Major food processing companies

Resources for achieving the goals:

- Grants
- Corporations & ministries
- Grocery stores
- Community marquees – fire stations, borough halls
- Volunteers

Barriers to achieving the goals:

- Lack of transportation
- Lack of interest – there are no “nutrition police” at food store checkout
- Language & cultural [differences]
- Difficulty of engaging people who don’t live in Chester County

Other thoughts the work group would like the sponsor to know:

- These goals can lead to self-sufficiency
- ‘If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.’

Follow-up Leader: Sylvia Brady

HOLISTIC SYSTEMS TO MEET NEEDS BEYOND NUTRITION

Specific Goals:

- Establish mini- Intake & Referral at food distribution sites (train existing volunteers)
- Develop a standard intake form
- Create continual holistic focus as measuring tool against which programs are developed
- Partner with other agencies; share resource lists
- Develop system starting with pre-natal care to build solid nutritional, emotional, developmental base
- Identify components of holistic system
- Provide training for providers and the community
- Create & maintain awareness graphically
- Undertake planning process to flesh out system components

Holistic Systems, cont.

Individuals & groups who can best assist in achieving the goals:

- Churches, nursing & health groups
- Educational institutions – public schools, private schools, colleges, universities, etc.
- Senior centers, youth groups, sports groups, civic groups
- Public utilities, local & county government,
- By Fresh / Buy Local, restaurants

Resources for achieving the goals:

- People of like mind

Barriers to achieving the goals:

- Lack of true collaboration & common vision
- Reactive vs. proactive practices
- Considering people as projects, programs, or events

Other thoughts the work group would like the sponsor to know:

Follow-up Leader: Casey Jones

UNTAPPED RESOURCES

Specific Goals:

- Increase by 10% the number of new organizations partnering with local food banks providing volunteers, food donations, cash donations
- Create an advocacy group to network with untapped resources
- Provide education [to prospect groups] about hunger and homelessness using clear statistics, personal stories, highlighting geographical differences

Individuals & groups who can best assist in achieving the goals:

- American Legion, Masons, Eastern Star, Rotary, Lions, other service groups
- Ministries
- Local government (township supervisors & boro councils)
- Spanish-speaking community via organizations like La Comunidad

Resources for achieving the goals:

- 'Curves' & other businesses
- Foundations for fundraising
- Develop a brochure
- Internet (page on CC Food Bank site)

Barriers to achieving the goals:

- Uninformed communities
- Lack of volunteers
- 'Closed doors' – unwillingness to engage in dialogue about hunger
- Access to key leaders

Other thoughts the work group would like the sponsor to know:

Follow-up Leader: Yolanda Beethe

COLLABORATION BETWEEN PROVIDERS

Specific Goals:

- Identify the key providers from multiple sectors who are best able to help – start with 1 each from the 'Individuals & groups' identified below
- Convene a cross-section of providers to address how they might collaborate to improve distribution of healthy food
- Develop a common strategy for collaboration & obtain commitment from each provider
- Establish uniform data collection, using a [computer] system that all can access

Collaboration, cont.

Individuals & groups who can best assist in achieving the goals:

- Information & referral agencies
- Faith-based organizations
- Schools – K through 12
- Food banks / cupboards
- Grocery stores / food outlets
- Providers with access to families & expertise in health & life skills education
- Agencies providing government entitlements

Resources for achieving the goals:

- Funding (not yet determined)
- Planning facilitators
- IT expertise & equipment
- A common PR plan & 'brand' (logo, etc.)

Barriers to achieving the goals:

- Competition for limited funds
- Insufficient resources – staff, training, time, food
- Competing agendas of providers
- The challenge of sustaining a leadership effort, being one organization that holds the others accountable

Other thoughts the work group would like the sponsor to know:

- This is a long-term goal, so measuring success will be critical and a challenge
- Maintaining group motivation & providers' commitment will be difficult

Follow-up Leader: Dana Strode-Tritle

PROVIDING HEALTHY FOODS

Specific Goals:

- Educate (in a non-judgmental way) clients and donors on making healthy choices
- Encourage/enable local farmers to produce greater quantities of healthy food through grants, subsidies, etc.
- Localize providers & distributors i.e. community gardens and small farms
- Can & preserve when possible

Individuals & groups who can best assist in achieving the goals:

- Translators
- Staff to train & educate schools, churches, residents, scouts, etc. on how to grow/preserve healthy food
- Local governments to support policies that help achieve our goals
- Penn State Extension

Resources for achieving the goals:

- Volunteers
- Oversight to identify gaps, overlap, etc. within the network
- A group dedicated to fundraising, training, creating connections between those in need and available resources

Barriers to achieving the goals:

- Lack of volunteers
- Funding
- Loss of income to donating farmers
- Difficulty of communication

Healthy Foods, cont.

Other thoughts the work group would like the sponsor to know:

- Before small motivated groups can produce food, they need to learn how
- We need to educate clients on handling & preparation of foods that may be unfamiliar – bok choy, chard, etc.

Follow-up Leader: Dan Orr

IV. Chester County 2020 Recommendations

1. Follow-up Leaders should state at least one objective expressed in clear, measurable terms, with an accompanying action plan. They should ask other *Community Conversation* participants for help in developing their objectives and action plans.
2. “Who, what, when, and where,” stated specifically, are needed to measure progress. Objectives should be expressed in terms that are active, not passive. Don’t use words like “stimulate,” “foster,” “encourage.” Words like “convene,” “deliver,” “install,” describe measurable achievement.
3. Action plans should list anticipated barriers and specific plans for overcoming them.
4. Action plans should be specific about resources. Example: when listing an organization as a resource, also identify the specific person to be involved, with their contact information.
5. The more specific and detailed the action plan, the better a “road map” it will be for Follow-up Leaders and those who work with them.
6. Follow-up Leaders should use past *Community Conversations* as a resource. The *Community Conversation* page at www.cc2020.org includes a roster of past work sessions; reports are available on request. New CC2020 *Let’s Talk* and *Community Conversation* work sessions are available as follow-up tools.

V. The Community Conversation Process

Chester County 2020 (CC2020) convenes *Community Conversations* on behalf of client groups, to help assess the present and chart the future. The client sets the scope of the *Conversation* and invites the participants; CC2020 facilitates the program. CC2020 provides an experienced facilitation team for *Conversations*, including members of the CC2020 Board of Directors.

Community Conversations use a standard agenda, shown below. Participants receive a copy of the agenda with their invitations.

Typical Community Conversation Agenda

Welcome – the Sponsor

Introduction to the Community Conversation – CC2020 facilitators review the process

Reviewing the Present - participants identify and describe issues within the scope of the Conversation. The issues are printed in large format, and posted on easels.

Rating the Issues –participants vote for the issues they feel are most important. CC2020 tallies the votes, and displays the results.

Working the Issues - work groups select from the top-ranked issues, and begin the process of assessing the present and charting the future. Groups choose reporters to compile initial group reports and deliver them at the end of the *Community Conversation* program.

Follow-up Leader Commitment – At least one follow-up Leader volunteers from each work group. Follow-up includes at least two meetings convened by the client and attended by C2020 The first meeting reviews Leaders’ action plans; the second meeting assesses follow-up progress.

Conversation Agenda, cont.

Initial Reports – in a case where more than one work group has chosen the same top-ranked issue, those groups deliver their reports in sequence. Work group reporters name the follow-up Leaders from their groups, and the Leaders' names are displayed.

Conclusion – the Client reminds participants of the schedule for follow-up. All participants recognize the follow-up Leaders; typical elapsed time is 4 hours.

VI. About Chester County 2020

Chester County 2020 is an innovative, energetic, non-profit change agent. CC2020's *Community Conversation* program connects the county's residents, businesses, service groups and political leaders to engage in cooperative efforts that address common issues; dispel misguided rumors that develop in any community discussion; and produce action on critical issues.

Community Conversations, convening stakeholders around critical issues, are one of CC2020's three core programs. CC2020 also provides *Keep Farming First*, to preserve and promote our region's agriculture, and the *Master Planner Program*: training for wise land use. Information about all CC2020's programs can be found at www.cc2020.org.

VII. Appendices

1. Initial issues roster
2. Additional comments from participants' work sheets

1. INITIAL ISSUES ROSTER

The roster below shows the initial issues suggested in open group discussion. The facilitators and Food Bank staff condensed these suggestions into the issues shown on page 3 for the rating exercise.

- BALANCED DISTRIBUTION – ALL FOOD CUPBOARDS THE SAME
- ENCOURAGE HEALTHY FOOD CONTRIBUTIONS – RESPECT DIETARY RESTRICTIONS
- CLIENTS 'DOUBLE-DIPPING' IS A PROBLEM REVIEW ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS – MANY FALL THRU THE CRACKS
- EVENING/WEEKEND DISTRIBUTION HOURS FOR WORKING POOR
- SUPPORT FOR GLEANING PROGRAMS-MORE FARMS ON LINE TO PROVIDE QUALITY FOOD
- EDUCATION RE: FOOD DISTRIBUTION LOCATIONS, OPPORTUNITIES TO GET FOOD
- TRANSPORTATION FOR CLIENTS; CLIENT-FRIENDLY PACKAGING – A FOOD-MOBILE?
- PARTNERING WITH SCHOOLS – FOOD PREP TRAINING-INCLUDE PREP INSTRUCTIONS WITH FOOD
- NON-TRADITIONAL OUTREACH – [WEEKEND] BACKPACKS
- CLIENTS MAY NOT BE ABLE TO PREP FOOD – NO UTILITIES
- FOOD DISTRIBUTION AN OPPORTUNITY TO EDUCATE RE: HEALTHY FOOD, FOOD PREP, OTHER PRO
- DEVELOP HOLISTIC SYSTEMS TO MEET NEEDS BEYOND NUTRITION
- CULTURAL / LANGUAGE BARRIERS TO DELIVERING NUTRITION
- NEED FOR EMERGENCY FOOD SYSTEM – HOTLINE, SUPPLY MECHANISM
- SENIOR CENTERS – DISTRIBUTION OPPORTUNITY?
- EDUCATION FOR, PARTNERSHIP WITH FAITH GROUPS; ENGAGE WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT
- ENCOURAGEMENT FOR SMALL-SCALE LOCAL PRODUCTION
- HOW TO HANDLE SEASONAL AVAILABILITY?
- NEED FOR EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION BETWEEN SERVICE GROUPS
- EDUCATION AIMED AT SELF-SUFFICIENCY-THE NEED FOR LIFE SKILL EDUCATION

2. Additional Comments from Participants' Work Sheets

'Sometimes you have to stop worrying about what people will think of you and learn.'

'There are still people in Chester County who are so ashamed of needing help that they suffer instead.'

'Sometimes clients discard good food because they do not understand how to prepare it.'

'If you can't afford to buy food, you may not be able to keep a car running, or even have a car. Getting to the food can be a problem, especially for seniors.'

'Lottery sales are a huge draw – we need information about nutrition everywhere tickets are sold.'