

2018-2019

FINAL REPORT

UniverCity Year

Better • Places • Together

A community-powered kitchen in Monroe

CIVIL SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY STUDIES 460: CIVIL SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

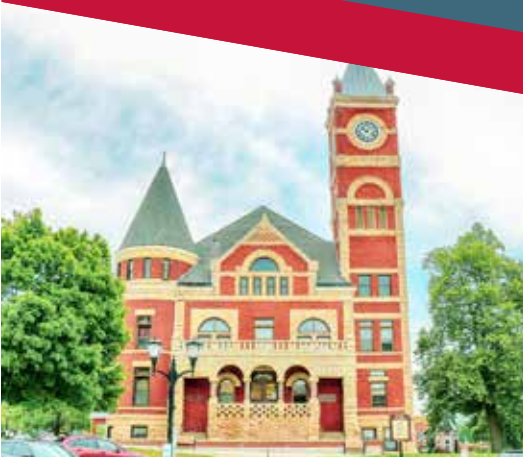


Table of Contents

Grant Proposal	2
Theory of Change	6
What does local produce bring to a community?	7
Health outcomes and proximity of fast food industry	9
Health outcomes around locally sourced diets	11
Partnerships within Green County	13
Successes and Benefits of Community Kitchens	15
How does local food sales improve small farming?	17
How can a Community Kitchen impact the environment?	19

Grant Proposal

Overview

Emerald Heart Center, a 501 (C) 3 based in Adams Township, Argyle, Green County, Wisconsin is a whole health focused organization that was formed in 2003 by president and founder Carolyn Carter, BS RN. Monroe native; Emerald Heart Center's mission statement is as follows:

“To unite mind, body, and spirit through education and agriculture”

In conjunction with the support of the UniverCity Alliance Project platform, Emerald Heart Center Inc. and Monroe, Green County, Wisconsin based farmer FL Morris of Grassroots Farm, LLC seek to develop a program titled “Community Powered Kitchen” or “CPK”, with the following simple, but powerful, subtext:

Food as Foundation.

Through the lease of a downtown or centrally located Monroe, Wisconsin commercial kitchen and dining room space, the primary function of Community Powered Kitchen is to measurably improve, if not completely transform, our Green County community wide physical and mental health; alongside stabilizing and growing our local, chemical-free, family agriculture economy. We believe this can be achieved by providing a local ingredient sourced, nutrient dense, professionally prepared fresh meal membership program with various program features designed to create affordability, universal access to health, and wellness education. We believe upward mobility and health equity begin with nourishing, nutritious local Food as Foundation, powered by our very own community.

Goals

1. To measure the impact of healthy, local ingredient comprised meals on eater-member's emotional and physical well being - through restaurant style eat-in, take home, and partner delivered meals
2. To support and bolster Green County chemical-free food farmer profitability through purchasing and providing the transport of high quality, fresh foods directly from farmer-members to the CPK.
3. To reduce farm production waste and increase utilization of 2nds quality and excess produce available from Green County farmer-members through CPK fresh meal use and the flexibility of in-house food preservation techniques
4. To increase ease of access and affordability of locally sourced food through sliding scale meal membership fees, to-go meals, and work-to-eat trade programs
5. To provide an opportunity for whole community engagement through group educational programing and presentations during designated sit-down meal times
6. To minimize overall waste and eradicate non-renewable consumables within meal distribution system, to prioritize a low carbon footprint
7. To raise supporting funds through periodic “Farm to Table” dinners at Emerald Heart Center, as well as through sliding scale sponsorship level meal membership fees.

Specifications

Physical and Mental Health Measurement

Design and/or utilize existing measurement tools to track the impact of CPK programing.

- Vital Sign Measurement - height, weight, blood pressure, pulse, and respiration
- Happiness Scale

Farmer Profitability

Design flexible purchasing and on-farm product pick up service to support chemical-free food farming in Green County

- Farmer Membership Program - collaborative pricing agreements, pre-season crop production planning, farmer-member production standards and requirements
- Produce pick up service provided by CPK
- CPK commitment to purchasing of 2nds quality and excess produce at a fair rate

Universal Access

Design eater-membership structure with primary goal of eliminating financial and physical barriers to local, fresh food access in the form of prepared meals

- Eater Membership Program - Sliding scale fee format, choice in number of meals/week, meal quality/content feedback collection
- Work to Eat “work trade” option - kitchen, community outreach, administrative, dining room, farm product transport and possibly farmer-member work trade positions
- Partner with existing meal delivery service and/or home care professionals for customized meal delivery to the home
- Proposing two meal options per eat in session, two meal choices per take home meal. Example: An Omnivore/all food diet and Vegan/Gluten-free “allergy” meal choice

Zero Waste packaging commitment and Low-waste Program Goals

Utilize meal packaging and serving equipment that has long term viability and low environmental impact

- Stainless steel “tiffins” for stackable custom portion distribution of take-home meals
- Ceramic, stainless steel, cloth and re-usable food serving equipment and cutlery for restaurant style eat in meal times
- Partner with area farmers to develop kitchen scraps compost reclamation program.
- Partner with area farmers to develop table scraps reclamation program (table scraps can be cooked on-farm to specific temperature for safe feeding to livestock)
- Produce/farm product pick up service - streamline transport of farm products through multiple weekly on farm pick-ups for direct delivery to CPK

Community Education and Services

Provide resources about personal health and mental/spiritual well being, farmer-food connections, and environmental impacts of individual lifestyles during meal times and meal pick ups/deliveries

- Guest speakers, presentations, and frequent farmer-member appearances
- Additional health and wellness resource materials and periodic community resource officers/professionals on-hand
- Education on local agriculture through farmer presence and possible scheduled group tours/visits of farmer members' farmsite

Community Fundraising

Generating funds to support the broad impact of CPK's mission, while providing meals to donors

- Sliding scale Eater-memberships "sponsorship level" - designed to share excess wealth directly to community families in need while also providing high quality local meals to self and family
- Farm to Table fundraising dinners at Emerald Heart Center's Green County retreat/event location. Periodic high-quality meal events designed to raise funds and share in the community-wide effects of healthy, local eating, with access to natural open spaces

Program Sequence

I. Start-up

- Write, apply for, secure grants to fund Community Powered Kitchen Program
- Locate and lease downtown Monroe, Wisconsin commercial kitchen with dining room
- Identify interested farmer-partners, hold off season production planning sessions
- Introduce Green County community to Program and the benefits of CPK memberships. Gather Eater-members, Work-to-Eat members, and sponsorship level eater-members
- Identify and hire highly qualified paid staff: Lead Chef, chef's assistant, Program coordinator
- Begin with two sit-down meal time windows per week with option to take home up to two pre-prepared meals for X number of family members. (Example: Monday and Thursdays sit-down/pick-up meal windows of 3pm-9pm, eat one meal in house, take two home)
- Identify meal home delivery partners- Meals on Wheels, Home health care professionals, low carbon emission options
- Identify existing community health partners - create resources and educational presentations, explore partnership and collaboration opportunities

II. Future Phases, Goals

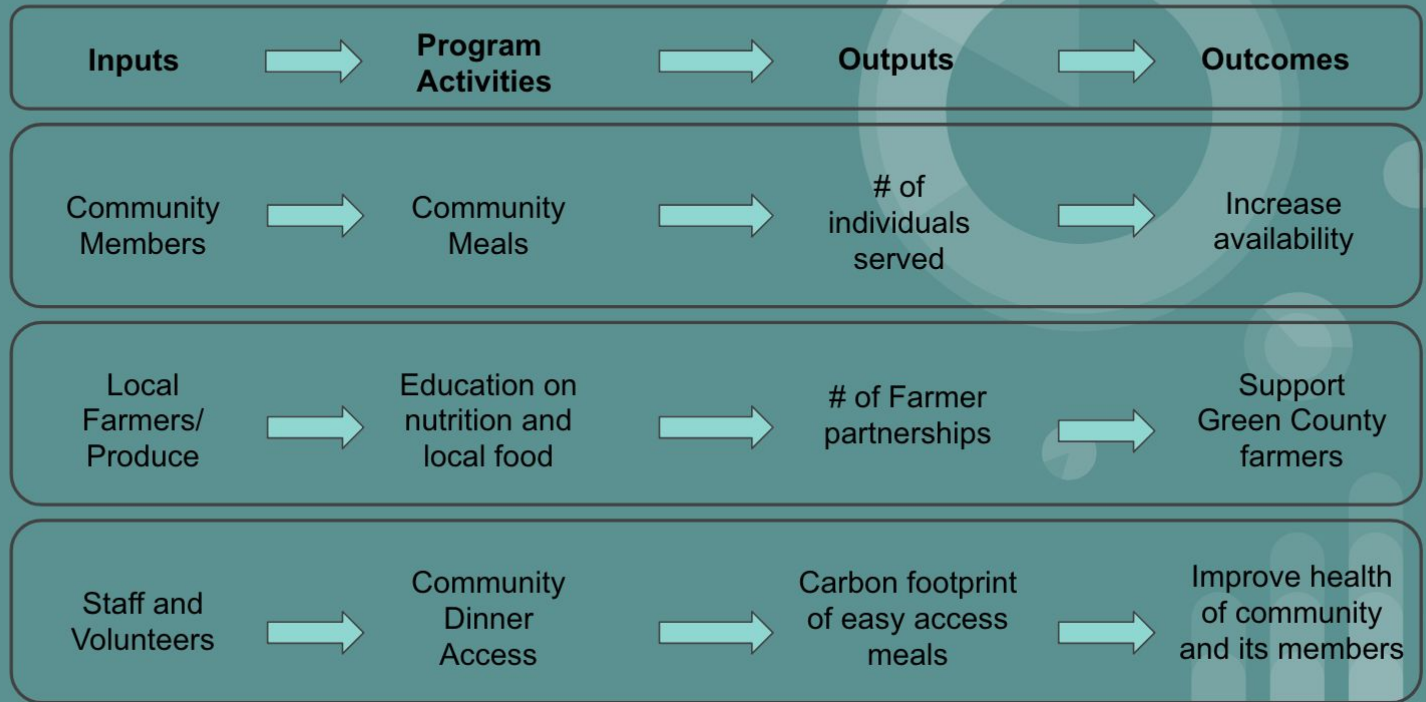
Beginning with the Community Powered Kitchen, Emerald Heart Center would like to continue to design program components to build health and wellness right here in our Green County area community. Although our work is here locally, we hope to create systems that can be reproduced in other Wisconsin counties with similar agriculture profiles and community health needs, and beyond.

Additional Program ideas include a larger “food center” facility to address greater issues of human health, food and health related education, as well as making environmental impact through the economic development of family run chemical free food production. Grocery Cooperative, educational hands on learning and fitness spaces, spa facilities with classes and workshops, farm/natural space access programming, a food pantry, farmer support services including farmland matching and farmer training, as well as raw local food preservation, processing, storage, and distribution. (Medicinal herb collection, preservation, and distribution)

Theory of Change

Community-Powered Kitchen:

Theory of Change



What does local produce bring to a community?

GETTING A JUMP-START: Local Sourcing Puts Quality Products on the Table." *FoodService Director*, vol. 15, no. 6, June 2002, p. 8. *EBSCOhost*,
search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=aqh&AN=6902394
&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

This article talks about how effective people look to local produce and how it can affect the environment. There has been a huge decline in local produce because people are looking to non-local farming. When local people look to nearby farms, it can help the community and allow better tasting food that has fewer chemicals. 5 University schools are buying local produce to better the relationship between the education system to the agricultural system. I found this helpful because it can allow local people to grow their industry and have fresher ingredients in local schools and universities. If local students look to local produce it can allow betterment of the environment and locals can seek gratitude for their homes.

Mushinski, David, and Donald Nichols. "Identifying the Export Component of Industries that Produce Partly for Local Consumption." *Annals of Regional Science* 46.2 (2011): 313-29. *ProQuest*. Web. 11 Dec. 2018.

The article speaks volume about reaching out to local businesses and finding the identity for the community. People have thought about bring the local produce to mainstream produce. I think this can be effective because it teaches the group about unity throughout the community. It allows people personal businesses to grow and have more money. There are times when things go out of context about how effective people can be throughout the whole process. Local produce can allow the group study allowed the community to know which crops are better to grow and how effective their crops can grow in the community. I think this article helps clarify the uncertainty about what population to focus the growth on.

"News Digests." *Nation's Restaurant News*, vol. 35, no. 38, Sept. 2001, p. 18. *EBSCOhost*,
search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=aqh&AN=5231053
&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

This article talks about how local restaurants protect investments in their local parks. Although it has nothing to do with local produce, this can teach people about how effective local vendors want to reach out about local produce. Vendors fight to have the parks in which they sell their produce can reach local people. When local vendors work alongside local produce, prices on the foods being bought can be cheaper and fresh. I think people do not think that local produce can be effective in their diets, but this is one where people want to better themselves. Most of the produce is bought local and everyone can work at supporting each other. I like the idea of small vendors buying local produce because it can support a lot of different people in the communities.

Taxel, Laura Faye. "Farm Fresh." *E: The Environmental Magazine*, vol. 14, no. 4, July 2003, p. 42. *EBSCOhost*,
search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=aph&AN=10035690&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

This article talks about how effective it is when going with local produce because it is healthier. If a person decides to go with another company, there is a threat saying that there is a possibility of the food being not home grown. There are a lot of chemicals that go with having this type of food, but local produce can teach you about what things are being used. I think this can help incorporate a proper diet because a person knows what they are putting in their body. "The traditional food distribution uses a huge amount of fossil fuels to move produce from side of the country to another". Going to a local farmers market shows great support of the community and produce will be fresh. One idea I liked was "That cycle is defined by the focus on products and practices that improve the quality of life while protecting and preserving the environment. It's being put into action around the nation at farmers' markets. "This can clarify that the environment can cause better health for all people in the local community.

Health outcomes and proximity of fast food industry

Beydoun, M. A., Powell, L. M., & Wang, Y. (2008, March 03). The association of fast food, fruit and vegetable prices with dietary intakes among US adults: Is there modification by family income? Retrieved December 10, 2018, from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953608000440>

French, S., Harnack, L., & Jeffery, R. (2000, September 27). Fast food restaurant use among women in the POUND of Prevention study: Dietary, behavioral and demographic correlates. Retrieved December 10, 2018, from <https://www.nature.com/articles/0801429>

Jeffery, R. W., Baxter, J., McGuire, M., & Linde, J. (2006, January 25). Are fast food restaurants an environmental risk factor for obesity? Retrieved December 10, 2018, from <https://ijbnpa.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1479-5868-3-2>

Morland, K. B., & Evenson, K. R. (2008, October 07). Obesity prevalence and the local food environment. Retrieved December 10, 2018, from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1353829208000981>

Swinburn, B., MD, Egger, G., PhD, & Raza, F., MA. (2002, May 25). Dissecting Obesogenic Environments: The Development and Application of a Framework for Identifying and Prioritizing Environmental Interventions for Obesity. Retrieved December 10, 2018, from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0091743599905856>

It goes without saying that having an unhealthy diet will lead to more poor health outcomes. However, we rarely think about the landscape of food that is constantly around us and what implications this alone has on our health as well. In the sources listed above are different demographics enumerated for how they shape population health and well-being. Some of these demographics from *Dissecting Obesogenic Environments* which recognized the most elements included foods that are physically available in the area, the economics and prices of these foods, the politics of food in that setting, and attitudes and beliefs around food consumption (Swinburn, B. 2002). The 2000 study published in Nature concluded, "Frequency of fast food restaurant use is associated with higher energy and fat intake and greater body weight, and could be an important risk factor for excess weight gain in the population" (French, S. 2000) A study that ties these two sources together based on fast food availability and fast food consumption. This study states that in areas with small grocery stores and fast food

restaurants, there is a higher prevalence of obesity than in areas with supermarkets (Beydoun, M.A. 2008). This study dives in depth of the economic realities of buying healthy whole foods and purchasing fast ready-made meals at a fraction of the cost. In communities where there are predominantly small grocery stores or fast food as choices for food purchasing, the obesity rate is found to be higher. An inference from this is that since foods in small grocery stores are more expensive, the fast food at times becomes the only option. This can be directly related to Monroe and Green County where small town shops and fast food options are the basis of food resources. Inversely, making meals that are health conscious and available at the price range and convenience similar to fast food options has the potential to positively impact the health of the community. Alternatively, in the paper *Are fast food restaurants an environmental risk factor for obesity?* there is no correlation of children eating fast food and having a high fat diet and elevated BMI. Instead, there is a negative association with vegetable consumption and physical activity. In addition to this, the location and proximity of having “non-fast food” restaurants was directly associated with the frequency of eating at these locations (Jeffery, RW. 2006). This can again directly apply to Monroe and the connection between having the availability of the “non-fast food” restaurant and the likelihood that people will dine at these locations if they are close to where community members typically eat.

Health outcomes around locally sourced diets

A popular topic among researchers is trying to find out if eating locally farmed food is better for your health. According to Parker-Pope of the New York Times, there is not real evident that eating locally farmed food is better for you – however, there are many reasons to think it might be. By definition, locally farmed food is “not going to come from large commercial food companies” (Parker-Pope, 2008). Therefore, those who eat locally aren’t consuming as much processed food – which typically contains a lot of refined carbohydrates, sugar, fat and preservatives.

Other research has indicated that there is an abundance of research of the benefits of eating locally. In the article “The Benefits of Eating Locally Grown Foods, Carlson lists eight reasons to eat local foods stating:

1. **Local foods are fresher.** Fruits and vegetables lose their nutrients as soon as they are picked. Buying local produce cuts down travel time from farm to table.
2. **Local foods are seasonal.** Eating seasonally results in the most delicious and nutrient-dense produce – it avoids artificial ripening with gases or eating a bland version of a fruit or vegetable that’s been shipped thousands of miles.
3. **Local foods are better for the environment.** Many foods are shipped thousands of miles creating a carbon footprint that could easily be avoided by purchasing local and seasonal foods.
4. **Local foods preserve green space and farmland.** Buying foods grown and raised closer to where you live helps maintain farmland and green space in your area.
5. **Local foods promote food safety.** Less distance between your food’s source and your kitchen table leaves less of a chance of contamination.
6. **Local foods promote variety.** Farmers who run community-supported agriculture programs, sell at farmers markets, and provide food to local restaurants have the demand and the economic support for raising more types of produce and livestock.
7. **Local foods support your local economy.** Money spent locally stays local. Purchasing locally builds your local economy instead of handing your earnings to a corporation in another city or state.
8. **Local foods create community.** Getting to know your farmer, cheese purveyor, butcher, etc. creates a sense of community.

Bishop, writer for organic and natural blog Down to Earth, reiterates the benefits of locally grown produce. The key word in describing the health benefits of locally grown is “fresh.” Fresher means better and more nutritious. As previously mentioned, fruits and vegetables lose their nutritional value as soon as they are picked. When picked, vitamins (such as C, E, A, and some B) begin to deteriorate and decrease in nutritional value. Bishop continues and says that “other factors such as exposure to air, artificial lights, and temperature changes” can also contribute to the decrease in nutritional value.

Another study published in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry found that the levels of health-promoting anthocyanin pigments more than quadrupled as blackberries became fully ripe. In addition, locally grown produce may be safer. When they are imported and out of season, fruits like tomatoes, bananas, and pears are often picked unripe. Then, they are artificially ripened with ethylene gas. As one can see, it's beneficial to buy local food - not just for environmental reasons - but health reasons too. The Community Powered Kitchen will be a great resource in getting local produce to the community.

Sources:

Carlson, K. (2016, April 29). The Benefits of Eating Locally Grown Foods. Retrieved December 14, 2018, from <https://www.washington.edu/wholeu/2016/04/29/the-benefits-of-eating-locally-grown-foods/>

Parker-Pope, T. (2008, June 06). Boosting Health With Local Food. Retrieved December 14, 2018, from <https://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/06/06/boosting-health-with-local-food/>

White, A. (2018, March 09). Health Benefits of Eating Local Produce. Retrieved from <https://www.downtoearth.org/environment/localhawaii/health-benefits-eating-local-produce>

Why Buy Local Food? It's Healthier for You and Better for the Environment. (2017, December 22). Retrieved from <https://foodrevolution.org/blog/why-buy-local-food/>

Partnerships within Green County

In order for the Community Powered Kitchen (CPK) to be successful, it must have some community partners. In conducting initial research, we determined that an established New Glarus restaurant, Cow & Quince, would be a great model for the Community Powered Kitchen to emulate. Cow & Quince was established on the same preface of “farm to table” in which they purchase and make meals from locally sourced foods and products. While Cow & Quince will be helpful in making connections for CPK, there will be very clear differences to keep in mind. For one, CPK will hope to be a 501(c)(3), whereas, Cow & Quince is an established business designed for profit. In another note, Cow & Quince is willing to provide space for CPK each week for a reasonable cost to use their facilities and resources. This would be convenient for CPK to begin operations and establish themselves within the county.

While Cow & Quince is graciously offering there space, another good place to consider renting would be from Pleasant View Nursing Home located in Monroe, WI. They have kitchen and dining facilities that would benefit being used. This space would be ideal because it is not often used and would be available for the hours that CPK would be needed. This would also be a good partnership to bring healthy eating in to the community and possible more partnerships that stem from connections within the nursing home. Another critical area that CPK will need to consider is a space available to cook and host the meals of their own. Within 3 years, it would be best for CPK to establish a location that they can specifically call their own. In our conversations, there was talk about eventually creating a permanent place to call home. Also, there is a possibility of developing the abandoned Brennan’s building. This is a great location for CPK to eventually grow into, however, it is a goal for the future because the feasibility of obtaining the building and funding required to move into the available space.

Lastly, another key partnership that is critical to CPK’s success is someone with a culinary background that will craft the menu for each week. This is something that is essential to ensure that the foods potentially being used are available and nutritional concerns such as gluten free, or vegetarian, are taken into consideration. A potential connection that CPK could use would be Tyler Salisbery from The Black Sheep in Whitewater, WI. Also, a good connection could be talking to Madison Area Technical College culinary arts students. This gives the students good menu creation experience that will benefit them in their future careers and will benefit CPK by potentially limiting the cost factor involved with creating the meals through a class partnership.

Contact Information:

Cow & Quince

Lori Stern

<https://www.cowandquince.com>

608.527.2900

info@cowandquince.com

Pleasant View Nursing Home

(608) 325-2171

<https://www.pleasantviewnursinghome.org/>

Madison Area Technical College - Culinary Arts Program

<https://madisoncollege.edu/program/culinary-arts>

(608) 246-6003 ext. 8

The Black Sheep, Whitewater, WI

<http://www.eatatblacksheep.com/>

262-458-4751

Events@eatatblacksheep.com

Successes and Benefits of Community Kitchens

By brief description, community kitchens are spaces where community members share knowledge, resources, and labor to prepare, cook, and consume food. For those experiencing possible food insecurity, community kitchens are useful tools for focusing on nutrition education and food skills. Evidence from a recent study even suggests that community kitchens improve social interactions, and nutritional intake of participants and their families. Therefore, expected beneficial outcomes of these kitchens would include not only improved social skills, but increased food security, and healthy food consumption.

A unique aspect of community kitchens are that they can be hosted by a variety of groups like faith organizations, schools, community and senior centers, businesses and nonprofits. Every kitchen is different, as each community kitchen has the ability to create their own based off of the needs of their particular community.

It can be fairly difficult to make a living through commodity crops. Wisconsin farmers in particular, are also in the ideal position to reap the benefits from value added food processing. With a majority of people living in large urban centers nearby, individuals are willing to pay more for unique and sustainably grown products. Stated by CIAS researcher Kaelyn Stiles, “Community kitchens have been built to boost local job creation, diversify the economy, and transfer ideas and technology from universities or companies.”

One example of a thriving and successful community kitchen is *Kitchen Commons*. They support the development of community kitchens and collaborate with leaders to organize, grow, connect, and sustain a diverse network of kitchens. They work to meet the needs of community members and help achieve their specific goals. Kitchen Commons also is partnered with 3 other community kitchens including Kitchen “Hob Knob”, Cully Kitchen, and North Poland Kitchen. They also work together to build food justice. “By bringing people out of isolation and into shared power and abundance we are shifting our local food system to one of connection and empowerment. We are activating communities through cooking and conversations, and as more people join together at the table our experiences, ideas, and power grow!”

By bridging the gap between community members, the Renfrew-Collingwood Food Security Initiative came up with their own “8 Benefits of Community Kitchens” that sums up the pros of Community Kitchens perfectly. They are as follows:

- 1) Eat Delicious Food Together.**
- 2) Meet New People and Make New Friends.**

- 3) Learn More About Nutrition and How to Make Healthy Food.**
- 4) Practice Cooking Skills or Learn New Ones.**
- 5) Find Recipes and Foods You've Never Tried Before.**
- 6) Work Together as Part of a Team.**
- 7) Share Knowledge of Food, Cooking, and More!**
- 8) Have Fun!**

Sources

Iacovou, M., Pattieson, D., Truby, H., & Palermo, C. (2013). Social health and nutrition impacts of community kitchens: A systematic review. *Public Health Nutrition*, 16(3), 535-543.
doi:10.1017/S1368980012002753

Ortega, J. (2015, February). Kitchen Commons.

U. (2001, January). Community kitchens: Key elements of success (Research Brief #54).
Retrieved from <https://www.cias.wisc.edu/community-kitchens-key-elements-of-success/>

U. (2010, May). Community Kitchens For Nutrition Education

How does local food sales improve small farming?

The sources I have found aim to answer the question of “How does local food sales improve small farming?” Although all the articles are very different, the trends remain consistent through all of them. One major benefit of buying local food is that it directly supports the local economy. By supporting your local farm you are spending money that stays local and gets reinvested into the local economy, ultimately helping it thrive. When people do not buy locally they are giving their money to corporations that do not have the interests of small farmers in mind, which is a scary direction for America to be going in. This trend is not only important with local foods and local farms, but with everyone we purchase.

Another major benefit of buying local food is that it is far safer for the consumer. It is much more likely that produce that has travelled a long way before the final destination is contaminated than if it were to be locally sourced. Not only are the odds of contamination higher, but there are often preservatives that must be used to insure the safety of the produce during transport. This is ironic because these preservatives are usually harmful to whoever will be consuming them at the end of the process. In addition to the benefits already mentioned, buying produce from your local farms helps create jobs which again helps the local economy. It is tough to directly support the creation of jobs in your local economy, but buying local produce is a good place to start. If people prove they will purchase local produce, which is sometimes more expensive than mass produced food, then the farms will end up employing more people who then in turn put their earned money back into the economy. This is a win-win situation for everyone involved and is a reason to spend the extra money to get good, local food.

The sources I have listed above all aim to get the same message across, everyone should be buying locally sourced food and produce. Not only will it help the farmers and the local economy, but it will help the buyers. This makes the decision a no brainer. It is understandable that upon first glance someone may think that it makes more sense to buy the fractionally cheaper mass produced items, but after only a little bit of research, we know this is not true. Also, it is important to try to constantly remind people of this. People often forget, or think that it is not that important, but it makes a huge difference and should be something that sticks in all of our minds whenever we are purchasing food.

Berti, Giaime, and Catherine Mulligan. "Competitiveness of Small Farms and Innovative Food Supply Chains: The Role of Food Hubs in Creating Sustainable Regional and Local Food Systems." *Sustainability*, vol. 8, no. 7, 2016, p. 616., doi:10.3390/su8070616.

Corrigan, Annie. "A Systems Approach to Local Food." *Selling Local*, 2017, pp. 139–164., doi:10.2307/j.ctt2005w4g.10.

Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. "The Economic Impact of Locally Produced Food." *St. Louis Fed*, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, 3 Dec. 2017, www.stlouisfed.org/on-the-economy/2017/december/economic-impact-locally-produced-food.

Science, Animal. "Top Benefits of Buying Locally Grown Food." *Arrowquip*, 2017, arrowquip.com/blog/animal-science/top-benefits-buying-locally-grown-food.

Vilsack, Tom. "New Markets, New Opportunities: Strengthening Local Food Systems and Organic Agriculture." *Medium.com*, Medium, 4 Apr. 2016, medium.com/usda-results/new-markets-new-opportunities-strengthening-local-food-systems-and-organic-agriculture-17b529c5ea90.

How can a Community Kitchen impact the Environment?

A community kitchen not only offers healthy, affordable meals but can have a positive impact on the environment. In Richmond, Virginia, The Sara and Steve Bayard Community Kitchen has cooked nutritious meals for thousands of neighbors across Central Virginia, but also created an environmentally friendly sustainable design. The Community Kitchen is LEED-certified Silver - a green building certification program used all over the world, that works to help building operators be [environmentally responsible](#) and use resources efficiently. This community kitchen was also designated by the US Green Building Council. The “Green Building” is a type of structure that helps to amplify environmental, economic and health benefits. This Community Kitchen addition was made with resources obtained within 500 miles and rated at low volatile organic levels. During the process of construction, 20 percent of the construction trash was recycled. All of these elements will help with lower maintenance costs, save energy, increase productivity and contribute positively to the environment in the long run.

If a community kitchen is taking the right steps to obtain food and serve it with being conscious of the environment, they can be beneficial to the environment. According to [greenhotelier.org](#), To create more of a sustainable environment, food should be found “locally” wherever possible, so minimising the energy used in production, transport and storage. If community kitchens are also supporting farmers, agriculture and local communities, this is also helping with the amount of food that comes from farmers in developing countries. Minimising food waste and the packaging of food is also important. According to a report by National Geographic, 30% of the food the US grows and farms is thrown away. This wasted food amounts to about \$162 billion annually, which is enough sustenance to feed 3 billion people. A lot of this wasted food comes from restaurants, grocery stores, the catering industry and the hospital industry. If community kitchens are more mindful about the amount of food that is wasted, this can have a positive impact on the environment.

The Sara and Steve Bayard Community Kitchen is a perfect example of a community kitchen that has contributed positively to the environment by focusing on a design that

considers the environment, using food that is locally sourced, not organically volatile, and recycling their construction trash. While trying to not waste food and find produce that is local is going to help the environment, it is not all that can be done as a restaurant or community. Finding resources that come from organic farming is also important when thinking about the environmental impact with a community kitchen. According to Futouris, an organization that works to preserve the natural and cultural heritage of our world by shaping tourism in a sustainable way, Farm workers on conventional farms are among those most affected by the use of pesticides, herbicides and other toxins. Organic farming means workers experience a healthy working environment, with the direct benefits of cleaner air, water and soil, and this is something community kitchens need to do to have a positive impact environmentally. Community kitchens can go above and beyond where their food comes from and how much of it is wasted, just like the Sara and Steve Bayard Community Kitchen does. If a community kitchen wants to impact the environment in a positive way, they need to look at the design of their kitchen, all the way to what is done with the materials that are used after being constructed.

<https://feedmore.org/about-us/community-kitchen/>

<http://www.greenhotelier.org/our-themes/community-communication-engagement/sustainability-in-the-kitchen-food-drink/>

<https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/10/141013-food-waste-national-security-environment-science-ngfood/>

<https://www.futouris.org/en/>

About UniverCity Year



UniverCity Year is a three-phase partnership between UW-Madison and one community in Wisconsin. The concept is simple. The community partner identifies projects that would benefit from UW-Madison expertise. Faculty from across the university incorporate these projects into their courses, and UniverCity Year staff provide administrative support to ensure the collaboration's success. The results are powerful. Partners receive big ideas and feasible recommendations that spark momentum towards a more sustainable, livable, and resilient future. Join us as we create **better places together**.



univercityalliance@wisc.edu
608-890-0330
univercity.wisc.edu