



Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: February 22nd, 2016

Present: Misse Axelrod (NOFA-VT), Beth Boots (Vermont Law School), Trudi Brock (Sharon Food Shelf), Amanda Charland (Coop Food Stores), Kristen Coats (Upper Valley Haven), Natalie Colao (Vermont Law School), Chris Damiani (Two Rivers Ottaquechee Regional Commission), Sarah Danly (Center for Agriculture and Food Systems, Vermont Law School), Jan Eberly (Vermont Department of Health), Alice Ely (Public Health Council of the Upper Valley / Mascoma Valley Health Initiative), Jennifer Fontaine (Upper Valley Haven), Kelly French (The Family Place Parent Child Center), Cathy Hazlett (Health Connections of the Upper Valley), Birgit Humpert (Willing Hands), Deborah Kennedy (Build Healthy Kids), Filomena Kersey (Children’s Hospital at Dartmouth Hitchcock), Lauren Moore (Vermont Law School), Eli Morse (Coop Food Stores), Melissa Shapiro (Vermont Law School), Carey Underwood (King Arthur Flour), Wendy Walsh (Vermont Department of Health, White River Junction District Office), Becka Warren (Vital Communities), Susan Wnuk (CAP Belknap-Merrimack)

Co-Chairs: Margaret Brown (Dartmouth-Hitchcock Community Health) and Gabe Zoerheide (Willing Hands)

Hunger Free Vermont Staff: Faye Conte and Jenna Banning

<u>Welcome and Introductions</u>	<u>Action Steps & Handouts:</u>
<p><i>Attendees shared updates on anti-hunger initiatives taking place at their organization and in their communities.</i></p> <p><i>Faye Conte</i> - – Families with children who receive the Vermont Earned Income Tax Credit VT EITC) are eligible to apply for 3SquaresVT benefits, even if their income is above the normal income limit for 3SquaresVT. If they apply and receive 3SquaresVT benefits, their children are also directly certified for free school meals. Many Vermonters don’t know about this connect with VT EITC. Please help share informational materials (attached) during tax season.</p> <p><i>Sarah Danly</i> – Sarah brought four students from Vermont Law School who are working on a project involving SNAP and EBT use at farmers markets: Beth Boots, Natalie Colao, Melissa Shapiro, and Lauren Moore.</p> <p><i>Alice Ely</i> – The Public Health Council and many other regional organizations are helping to sponsor “Climate Change Impacts to Health,” a community forum taking place on Wednesday, March 30th. Registration is free – see attached flyer for more information, including how to RSVP.</p> <p><i>Kelly French</i> – The Family Place has a kitchen worksite for families, specifically single mothers and their children, to learn how to cook together.</p> <p><i>Carey Underwood</i> – This is Carey’s first Hunger Council meeting. Reducing hunger is an important cause for King Arthur Flour.</p> <p><i>Wendy Walsh</i> – Wendy is part of the Hartford Community Coalition. The Coalition is working to develop a closed summer meal site, as well as an open site at the high school that ideally will also be able to serve lunch to adults.</p>	<p><i>Handouts:</i> EITC flyers (attached)</p> <p><i>Handout:</i> “Climate Change Impacts to Health” flyer (attached)</p>

WIC Update

Council members heard an update on the new WIC system rollout, which was the focus of our December 2015 meeting and has since been rolled out at the Vermont Department of Health's White River Junction office.

Wendy Walsh (Vermont Department of Health, White River Junction office) – The last time the Council met, we talked about the transition to the eWIC system, which is being rolled out sequentially across Vermont. The White River Junction office rolled out eWIC in January, and it's going very well. Since the rollout has already happened in other parts of Vermont, many of the problems predicted for this region had already been figured out, although the White River Junction office did have some clients who attempted to use their WIC benefits at stores that didn't accept them. The number of stores who accept WIC benefits in the region is limited; once the Barre and St. Johnsbury offices roll out eWIC, there will be more selection. [St. Johnsbury rolled out in January, and Barre will roll out in April.]

The Council discussed the requirements stores must meet in order to be able to accept WIC benefits, specifically the type and quantity of products stores must carry. The Council also reviewed the information that WIC benefits cover amounts of certain foods, and are not tied to prices.

Susan Wnuk (CAP Belknap-Merrimack) – Susan reminded Council members that the New Hampshire WIC system is different, and WIC clients use vouchers at stores. In addition, each state determines what can be offered for their WIC clients' food packages based on dietary guidelines. All states will need to transition to eWIC by 2020; in New Hampshire, the schedule for the transition keeps getting delayed, but is currently predicted to take place in the spring of 2017.

EBT Use at Farmers' Markets and the Crop Cash Program

NOFA-VT is focusing on the use of 3SquaresVT (SNAP) benefits at farmers' markets as a way to increase use of the Crop Cash program and access to fresh local food. Misse Axelrod presented an overview of the program, describe NOFA-VT's goal of increasing local food access, and share program outreach materials.

Misse Axelrod (NOFA-VT) – Misse is the Farm to Community Mentor for Washington and Orange Counties in Vermont. NOFA prioritizes increasing food access for everyone, particularly through direct markets (such as farmers' markets and farm stands). Misse and the other Farm-to-Community Mentors are doing a lot of outreach at many different sites to remind people that they can use their SNAP benefits (EBT) at most farmers' market. They are also working to break down some of the barriers people face when going or thinking about going to markets.

To use their EBT and Crop Cash benefits, people go to the market manager booth and tell the manager how much money from their benefits they are planning to spend that day at the market. The manager swipes their EBT card to deduct that amount, and in exchange, gives the client tokens or coins that are market specific. [This is the same process that people using their debit or credit cards go through at markets.] Since some seniors 65 or older and people

Handout: Crop Cash flyer (attached)

Action: Educate SNAP recipients on how to use their EBT benefits at farmers' markets and that they can double their money through the Crop Cash / Veggie Bucks program.

<p>with disabilities do not have EBT cards (their benefits are loaded directly to their bank account), they tell the manager they're using their 3SquaresVT funds, and this is accepted on the honor system. The client then receives a matching amount of coupons up to \$10 through the Crop Cash program – this money can be used to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at the market. CSAs and farm stands may also be able to take part in this program – they must be able to accept EBT benefits and have a phone line.</p> <p><i>Becka Warren and Faye Conte</i> – In New Hampshire, the process works similarly. The funding for this program comes from a USDA grant, and is administered through Wholesome Wave; in New Hampshire, this is called “Double Up Veggie Bucks.”</p> <p><i>The Council discussed how to educate clients on how to best use this program: Since the Crop Cash / Veggie Bucks are only able to be used to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, clients should use their EBT benefits for the items that are not covered (i.e. processed foods, meat, eggs) and then use the Crop Cash for the fresh produce.</i></p> <p><i>The Council discussed the importance of signage at markets, making it clear that EBT benefits are accepted. Misse also noted how the lack of pricing signs at many markets can present a challenge for clients. This issue and others will be addressed at an upcoming Farmers’ Market Managers Conference.</i></p> <p><i>The Council recommended that Misse reach out to schools, daycare centers, food shelves, and senior centers.</i></p>	<p>Action: Contact Misse at dmiss@hotmai.com if interested in more information or with suggestions for outreach sites.</p>
<p><u>Nutrition Education Resources</u></p> <p><i>Nutrition education is a powerful tool against malnutrition for individuals and families. Council members heard from local nutrition education providers, and explored the variety of resources available for different populations in the region.</i></p> <p><i>Margaret Brown</i> – While nutrition education is important, it is hard to know what exists in this area. Today’s discussion will take two parts: first, we’ll hear from local providers, and then we’ll discuss a tool to look at these programs side-by-side.</p> <p><u>Local Nutrition Education Services:</u></p> <p><i>Kristen Coats (Upper Valley Haven)</i> – Kristen has recently left her position at Upper Valley HEAL to work at the Haven; and presented an overview of both organizations’ offerings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Early Sprouts: Early Sprouts is a curriculum used by Children’s Hospital at Dartmouth (CHaD) and Upper Valley HEAL, and is being used at a lot of different childcare centers in the Upper Valley. Childcare centers fill out a self-assessment too to know their strengths and weaknesses, then use the curriculum to help children become more comfortable with trying and eating foods. The curriculum has 4 components: organic gardening, sensory exploration, cooking and recipe development, and family involvement. It focuses on 6 “target vegetables” that have a wide range of flavors, are generally liked by children, and can be easily prepared by families at home. <p>The Haven is working on incorporating Early Sprouts at its afterschool program. Kristen sees this as a great opportunity to easily wrap together the Haven’s services and connect more deeply with clients.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 5210 Foundation for Change: This is based on the national model built at the Maine Medical Center called “Let’s Go,” and refers to 5 or more servings of fruits and 	<p>Handout: “NutritionEdPresentation_KCoats” powerpoint – covers Early Sprouts, 5210, and Healthy Eating (attached)</p> <p>Action: Visit the 5210 Let’s Go website for more information and</p>

vegetables, 2 hours or less of screen time, 1 hour or more of physical activity, and 0 sugary drinks. This program is targeted at families, and aims to be incorporated across the community in order to provide a wide range of health encouragement. In the Upper Valley, all CHaD practices are trained in 5210, and are trained in motivational interviewing to support positive steps. Health clinics help with outreach, as do flyers sent home with children on a monthly basis.

- The Haven’s Healthy Eating Program: Volunteers come in to the Haven five days per week to develop and prepare recipes using what’s available at the Haven’s food shelf. Clients can then try the food and learn more about how to eat healthy and inexpensive foods using the resources available to them. If a client is interested in trying to make the recipe themselves, the Haven has a recipe bag with all of the ingredients – the food doesn’t count against how much food a client can take home, and makes it easy and affordable to try the food.

Kristen is working on signage for the food shelf that will highlight the foods being served with visuals and recipes.

Amanda Charland and Eli Morse (Coop Food Stores) – The Coop Food Stores are a community-owned business that aims, in part, on providing healthy food and making the community healthier. One way they do this is by having a registered dietician on staff – the Coop’s last dietician just left, and they hope to hire another within the next month. This position helps teach people the basics of cooking in settings across the community, including classes with pregnant and nursing mothers and talks in the community. The Coop is hoping to expand their connections in the community.

The Coop has a Culinary Learning Center (CLC) at their Lebanon store. The CLC is roughly 2 years old, and offers a diverse schedule of classes, including classes on techniques, seasonal or cultural cooking, and connections with farmers and their crops. The CLC has worked with organizations like Headrest and 4-H clubs, and tries to meet their financial and physical constraints. The CLC is hoping to get more involved with different nonprofits.

Many of the classes currently offered are hands-on, and serve a wide range of population ages. Some of the classes focus specifically on nutrition, and more will be available when the dietician is hired.

Scholarships for many classes are available from the Coop and other organizations. One will be coming up in April for teens.

Birgit Humpert (Willing Hands) – Birgit volunteers with Willing Hands and is a dietician. Birgit helps lead lessons where Willing Hands delivers its food (i.e. subsidized senior housing, teen centers), and adapts her approach to meet the diverse needs of the recipients. Birgit’s ultimate goal is to help people try (and eat) food so that there is no waste from the food being delivered by Willing Hands.

Deborah Kennedy (Dartmouth Hitchcock) – Deborah developed “Build Healthy Kids,” a community-based nutrition and activity program being used across the country and reaches over 160,000 children. The curriculum uses the Dietary Guidelines recommendations, and places them into monthly themes, following a modular approach that cumulatively builds upon lessons. Nine of the 12 themes are nutrition related. Deborah also tried to match the themes with the National Health Themes set by the National Institute of Health.

The program is “turn-key,” meaning that it places no extra burden on teachers and schools to implement it. A pilot study of the curriculum’s impacts has shown decreased BMI, less intake

strategies to incorporate this program:
<http://www.letsgo.org/>

Handouts: “Coop Culinary Learning Center press release,” “CLC Presentation” powerpoint, and the CLC Scholarship form (attached)

Action: Read the attached press release, visit <http://coopfoodstore.coop/?q=classes>, or contact Eli at emorse@coopfoodstore.com for more information.

of salt, and increased “likeability” levels of healthy foods. Deborah shared examples of different places have implemented the curriculum, including at hospitals, schools, and food shelves. In Claremont, the curriculum has been adapted to meet that town’s high poverty level, and is being used in the community center and middle school.

Cathy Hazlett (Health Connections of the Upper Valley) - Cathy shared how her organization’s approach to nutrition education has evolved over the past years, and is now working with Deborah to implement Build Healthy Kids in schools in the area. Initially, Health Connections of the Upper Valley (HCUV) received some funding from Children’s Trust Foundation to conduct nutrition education in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade classes, since there were no health classes being offered at the elementary schools. HCUV created a curriculum for teachers to use, but realized that there was still a lot of education being offered. HCUV learned about Build Healthy Kids through ReThink Health, and is now planning to implement Build Healthy Kids at two schools in this coming school year, if they receive funding. HCUV will be focusing on the teachers as the “agents of change,” and will conduct a pre- and post-study to see if the teachers’ knowledge and behavior changes. HCUV and Deborah are currently targeting South Royalton and Bethel; if all goes well, they’re planning to expand to the other 6 schools in the Windsor Northwest Supervisory Union.

Cathy praised Build Healthy Kids’ focus on repeated messages through tools like posters throughout the school, recipes in the cafeteria, and books in the library. The curriculum aims to get into the entire community so that children are constantly being exposed to the healthy messaging and encouragement.

HCUV will continue to offer their afterschool cooking classes. Cathy shared HCUV’s feedback tool used after class that has been designed to work like a BINGO card. Cathy also praised Upper Valley HEAL’s newsletters for their layout, simple information, and simple messages.

The Council discussed the role of Farm to School in encouraging healthy eating. Neither school being targeted to use the Build Healthy Kids curriculum has a Farm to School program currently. Wendy Walsh shared that most of the schools in her purview (half of Windsor County and half of Orange County) have robust Farm to School programs and offer a lot of nutrition education for their students. Wendy also offered to connect Eli Morse with a successful example of an elementary school that has successfully figured out how to maintain their garden over the summer. Becka Warren informed the Council that while schools in Vermont that self-identify as having Farm-to-School programs are listed on the Vermont Farm to School Network’s website, she is not sure if Farm to School programs are tracked in New Hampshire. Misse Axelrod shared that in Vermont, the Farm to Plate Network has set a goal that by 2025, 75% of schools in Vermont will be serving 50% local foods.

Margaret Brown then shared the spreadsheet created to help list all of the programs being offered in the area. (See attached) In addition to learning what currently exists, Council members are interested in identifying gaps in services, and identifying new collaborations or best practices where multiple organizations are offering services. Council members agreed to fill in and/or share information, and the tool would be revisited at the next Council meeting, where the group would decide how to move this project forward.

Handout:
Inventory
spreadsheet tool

Action: fill in
missing programs
and/or information



Addressing Homelessness – Early Steps

A number of towns in the Upper Valley are expecting to see unusually high numbers of homeless youth in the coming months. Regional organizations have begun planning how to address this issue. Council members heard preliminary reports and plans for the next meeting.

Margaret Brown - The city of Claremont is predicting that 300 children in that area will be homeless at the end of the school year. This is very alarming, particularly since there is not a regular place to pick up food or a meal.

A group of local and regional organizations have been meeting to try to create a congregate meal site and to increase the amount of food that will be available, including the Hartford Community Coalition and Friends of Mascoma Valley. Margaret encouraged anyone interested in this issue to contact her.

The Council agreed to discuss this issue at the next Council meeting, and shared a number of suggestions for organizations that should be involved, such as the New Hampshire Food Bank, the United Valley Interfaith group, Hannaford and Shaw’s supermarkets, Black River Produce, Upper Valley Produce, and the New Hampshire Foundation. Gabe Zoerheide shared the challenges currently facing the community in accessing healthy foods.

Wrap Up & Adjourn

Gabe and Margaret thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The next meeting will be held on Monday, April 18th, from 3:00 - 5:00 at the Kilton Library.

Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting: April 18, 2016, 3:00 – 5:00 at the Kilton Library in West Lebanon, NH