



Early Childhood Working Group Minutes

October 25, 2018

Attendees: Melissa Lewis, Nola Martz, Jessica Moore, Taylor Brouk, Tori Humes, Tory Anderson, Rhonda Erpelding, Christi Smith, Chelsie Carter, Connie Askew, Andrea Manlove, Gayle Anderson, Melanie Brewer, Shelly Summar, Emily Meissen-Sebelius

Partner Spotlight: Beau Heyen, President and CEO of Nourish KC

Beau shared a broad overview of the food system and work of Nourish KC, including their core values of equity, dignity, community, opportunity, stability and adaptability. He talked about food as a basic human right, giving people voice and choice, bringing people together and the importance of stable, consistent access to affordable, convenient, healthy food, including removing barriers for those whom we serve.

Some examples of initiatives through Nourish KC are the Community Kitchen Network, Hunger Relief (pantries and other programming), Grocery Access, Food Systems, Life Support Initiatives, Workforce Equity, and Education Equity (culinary training, apprenticeships and others).

An example of Grocery Access is the new KCK Mobile Market, which will be the first WIC mobile grocer in the country.

Food Systems works includes the KC Food Hub and KC Food Warehouse, where they are partnering to reduce food waste and work with local farmers to be able to sell to schools and other entities for lower costs.

Nourish KC and Village Initiative will be piloting an effort to bring school snacks, through CACFP, for after school programming, such as sports programs. (Village Initiative can contract with the school and bring the food to the schools, so schools don't have to expand their food service to after school time.)

Community Kitchen Network includes those who provide hot meals. Nourish provides consulting, resources and funding to help those programs reach sustainable and healthy levels. They work on food sourcing and the values, such as the dignity and choice of those served.

The future hope is to expand this into schools, with more consulting with schools around dignity and choice in food services. An example could be snack stations in classroom or in hallways, where kids can get small meals, "healthy avenues" for kids to eat when hungry, even if it's not at a specific meal time.

Through organizations like No Kid Hungry, they can help schools leverage reimbursement for food for everyone. They've talked with Cultivate KC about enhancing school gardens so that they have real production value; where kids can learn agriculture education and make it a part of the education to be part of the school or urban farm.

Next steps for Nourish is to embark on a 3 year strategic planning process:

Year 1: Inform- telling the story of Nourish KC; mapping the system

Year 2: Consult- community input on strategic plan; focus groups, interviews, workshops; engagement of wide range of stakeholders

Year 3: Involve- 2020- ongoing; constant evaluation and feedback and discovery

KC Corner Deli

The big project that Nourish will be working on in parallel to this 3-year strategic planning is the KC Corner Deli. Right now there are more than 300 food pantries in this region tucked away in schools, churches and organizations. The idea is that people would have access to high quality food through neighborhood Corner Deli's, where you pay what you can. You can buy fresh produce or take it for free.

KC Corner Deli stores would be located in places where people naturally gather, like libraries, health care settings, schools and in the community. They would be open 15 hours per day, 7 days per week. As much as possible, they would stock local produce from local farmers. They would also have base products, like eggs, dairy, meat, frozen and fresh. They would include tiered meal boxes (blue apron type boxes with 3 levels of time/preparation involved). The meal boxes would be created by culinary skills institute students. Each store would also include a deli to purchase made-to-order, fresh meals, overseen by the community council for each site and staffed by culinary skills students.

Each KC Corner Deli would employ a manager, as well as the culinary skills students, an AmeriCorp person to be a navigator for community resources and could also employ volunteers, possibly those who volunteer currently at food pantries.

In mapping the area, they determined the need was within about every half mile, so the initial goal is 250 sites in the KC metro. They could be within existing spaces, could be containers (they have a design from KU architecture students) or ideally could be in standalone buildings. In a standalone building, they would have the ability to include affordable housing on the second level, for those working or doing apprenticeships in the stores. The second level could also be used to fill a community need, like space for entrepreneurs. The top level would include a roof top community garden and gathering space. The first pilot is being planned near the Linwood YMCA in partnership with school district.

Right now Nourish KC is asking people and organizations to pledge to get involved in the planning, efforts and to volunteer in the community. More information can be found at <https://nourishkc.org/>.

Discussion

The group has discussed the last few meetings a need that we've identified which is supporting both childcare programs and families they serve to more easily access affordable healthy food, particularly fresh produce. We are looking at what exists currently or what opportunities there might be to partner.

For produce, Beau said much of the cost is in the transportation. It is difficult for farmers' to make an investment in selling the fruits and vegetables over other crops without a commitment and assurance that they will be able to sell the product. If ECE programs could commit in advance to purchase, perhaps

pre-ordering for a year that might give farmer's enough stability/assurance to commit to filling that need.

One example of a collaboration that is happening now is with Cultivate, MARC, KC Food Hub and New Roots for Refugees. They are doing a pilot senior CSA program. It is attached to Meals on Wheels, where the CSA is delivered with meal. The key for the model is not having an extra delivery because it's too expensive. Perhaps there's a model where a parent volunteer could pick up the CSA baskets once/week and bring them to the ECE program?

Other potential ideas could be purchasing from the KC warehouse, where programs could buy gleaned products at a lower rate. Michael Foust (local chef) is leading that effort, but it's on hold now.

In the future, the culinary students could work with ECE programs to have the kitchens producing and sending out meals or boxes for cooking.

Deidra Anderson and others looking some of these issues within ECE.

In the past, we've discussed that beyond the need to access to affordable produce, is also the need for the skills and support for those preparing the food. For examples, a training or apprenticeship program that also helped to develop a network of those with culinary skills. It is needed in both center based and family home programs. (Similar to Lisa Farmer's presentation at the last meeting).

Mobile Market could also be an option to increase accessibility for WIC recipients at childcare centers. They will include recipe highlighting fruits and veggies and the hope of the pilot project to an increase in the WIC benefits. Centers could also get produce from the Mobile Market for their menus.

Additional Discussion and Partner Updates:

At the YCMA HeadStart programs, they get food donations from Harvesters available for families every Friday. Families like the program, but it is not always healthy food (what is available at Harvesters).

Johnson County WIC does some outreach and certifications for preschool age children at center based ECE programs. With E-WIC now, it easier because families can do the education pieces remotely.

Johnson County WIC Garden harvested and distributed about 4,000 pounds of food this year. In addition the WIC program will be using Fit-Tastic! moving forward.

KC Healthy Kids/Healthy Kids Bright Futures has hired two community navigators who will be meeting with families, doing a screening and referral process to connect families with community resources. In addition, the project will be establishing family community networks to help connecting different community groups and parents groups. More information can be found at <https://www.kchealthykids.org/program/healthy-kids-bright-futures/>

Wyandotte County Childcare Licensing just held a food allergy training for providers. The county has recently lost childcare programs, both centers and in home providers. Licensing is actively recruiting for childcare providers to open a center or in-home program. If you know anyone who would be a quality provider, they hold an orientation, **every 2nd Tuesday from 9:30-12:30**. There are not enough childcare slots for the children in the county.

Family Conservancy received a grant recently to increase quality of infant and toddler services in Wyandotte, but it is at the very beginning stages. The project, called Start Young is aiming to increase wages for childcare providers, which is a barrier to having enough quality providers, as well as help more families to access childcare subsidy dollars. Despite the very low wages made by providers, families are still struggling to afford childcare. You can learn more about the program at <https://www.thefamilyconservancy.org/start-young-project/>

ChildCare Aware of Kansas just release the updated Child Care Workforce Study and State Profile. One of the things the report highlights is the workforce crisis for childcare. There is an aging population in the workforce currently, with fewer entering at the younger age groups. The full report can be found [here](#). ChildCare Aware of Kansas continues to also work on Links to Quality, the initiative around quality indicators and rating for childcare programs in the state.

[Weighing In/Healthy Lifestyles Initiative Updates](#)

New Fit-Tastic! website: Check out the new redesign at www.fittastic.org You can now search materials by the Fit-Tastic! behavior, by target audience or by material type (poster, handout, etc.)

Note that you will now be prompted to sign in with your email address. You can use your existing password, but if you have forgotten it or need to reset, there is password reset function available.

Please check out your organization's information and make sure it is up-to-date. All partners are listed on the partner directory (new function) and also still on the Google map. To update your profile, click "My Profile" at the top right. Then click on the gear icon to the right of your name. You will see a drop down list with the option "Edit Profile".

Next Weighing In Quarterly Meeting is December 6th at 9:00-11:00 a.m. at the Kauffman Conference Center. You can register now at <https://cmhredcap.cmh.edu/surveys/?s=NLAEJ97WHE>.

[Early Childhood Working Group – next meeting](#)

We will not meet in November. In December, please plan to attend the Weighing In Quarterly meeting on December 6th. We will email out a schedule for 2019 meetings, likely staying with Thursdays and meeting most months that there is not a Weighing In Quarterly meeting. We welcome suggestions for meeting days, times and locations! Please email Emily at esebelius@cmh.edu.