

# COLLABORATION WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

How Do We Effectively Work With Others In the Community To Enhance Our  
Collective Capacity To Feed Kids

Rachelle Bonelli, Gleaners Community Food Bank

[rbonelli@gcfb.org](mailto:rbonelli@gcfb.org)

Amy Klinkoski, Kent ISD Snap Ed

[ajklinkoski@gmail.com](mailto:ajklinkoski@gmail.com)

Jen Laninga, Grand Rapids Public Schools Nutrition Services

[laningaj@grps.org](mailto:laningaj@grps.org)

Colleen Matts, MSU Center for Regional Food Systems

[matts@msu.edu](mailto:matts@msu.edu)



# Why Collaborate with Community Partners

- ▶ Gain parental support of School Meals
- ▶ Partners and agencies gain knowledge of School Meal programs
- ▶ School Meal Programs gain credibility
- ▶ Increase Participation
- ▶ Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables



# Current Partnerships

- ▶ MSU Extension
- ▶ YMCA
- ▶ Cooking Matters
- ▶ Food Pantries
- ▶ United Way
- ▶ Feeding America
- ▶ Cultivate Michigan
- ▶ Health Department
- ▶ Kent County Coordinated School Health



# Partners in Action

- ▶ Smarter Lunchroom technical assistance
- ▶ Classroom nutrition education
- ▶ Culinary class for school nutrition professionals
- ▶ Cultivate Michigan
- ▶ Local school service collaborative
- ▶ Teacher trainings
- ▶ Parent Engagement
- ▶ School Food Pantries





# Michigan Fitness Foundation Snap-Ed

- ▶ Increasing Fruit and Vegetable Consumption and Physical Activity
- ▶ [michiganfitness.org](http://michiganfitness.org)
- ▶ Checkout a few of this years partners
- ▶ Kent ISD                      Saginaw ISD
- ▶ Calhoun ISD                Eastern Upper Peninsula ISD
- ▶ Genesee                      Gratiot -Isabella RESD
- ▶ Traverse Bay Area ISD   Traverse City PS
- ▶ Tuscola ISD                Gleaners of SE MI
- ▶ Livingston Educational Service Agency
- ▶ VanBuren ISD              Marquette Alger RESA

# STRATEGIES to COLLABORATE SUCCESSFULLY

- ▶ Take time to learn about local agencies
- ▶ Attend area meetings that are available
- ▶ Create a Task Force to support a program i.e. Breakfast in the Classroom
- ▶ Identify Nutrition Education efforts in your district
- ▶ Share resources from Team Nutrition or Institute of Child Nutrition
- ▶ Offer taste testing at events
- ▶ Provide information booth at Parent Teacher Conferences or other school events

# HOW TO REACH OUT AND GAIN SUPPORT

- ▶ Present program information to local agencies—request time on their agenda
- ▶ Take time to learn about their efforts and challenges
- ▶ Be patient
- ▶ Be accountable

Share Sign in

Non GRPS Schools ▼ GRPS Schools ▼



# COMMUNITY FOOD CONNECTIONS

Colleen Matts, Farm to Institution Specialist

**MICHIGAN STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

Center for  
Regional Food Systems

# CONSIDER FOOD SUPPLIERS AS PARTNERS

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# BUILD A FARM TO SCHOOL TEAM

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# CONNECT WITH OTHER LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

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**Food Procurement**



**Workforce Development**



**Investment**

# ENGAGE IN LOCAL COUNCILS AND STATEWIDE NETWORKS

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# Community Partnerships with School Nutrition



# WHO WE ARE

- **430,000** people served
- 500 pantries, schools, & shelters
- Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Livingston, and Monroe counties
- **42,000,000** pounds of food distributed
- **4,000,000** meals provided to children over the summer when school is out
- **2,200** food drives collect **2.8 million pounds** of food
- **9,000** graduates of Cooking Matters
- **48,913** volunteer shifts = 70 FTE equivalents of volunteer help
- 9<sup>th</sup> largest charity in SE Michigan over **\$100 million** in revenue and expenses





# WHO ARE YOUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS?

Determine what are you trying to accomplish and how the potential partner can help:

- Greater food access?
- Nutrition education?
- Awareness of your programs?
- Volunteer support?
- Other resources?



Sometimes a partner can resources you had not thought of!  
Ask them what role they see for themselves



# WHAT ORGANIZATION OR PERSON CAN BE SERVED YOUR NEEDS?

- Identify what organizations or coalitions have aligned goals or areas of interest to the one(s) you are trying to achieve
- Identify unlikely partners
  - Those whose goals are related but dissimilar but might support your work
- Identify community champions





# REACH OUT TO THE RIGHT PERSON

- Do you have a relationship with someone or can steward your ask within the organization?
- Who at your organization has a relationship to the decision maker at the organization you wish to partner with?
- Does the potential partner have the capacity to take on more work?





## BE PREPARED

When engaging an organization:

- Reach out by email for initial introduction
- Schedule a follow up call or visit
- Prepare a one pager or something to leave behind
- Have a specific ask
- Close the loop
- Hold efficient and productive meetings
- Meeting agendas should be specific to the participants



# EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

- Best Food Forward
  - Work groups
  - Right people in the right seats

Best  
Food  
Forward

An icon of an open book with a yellow cover. A large orange carrot with green leaves is placed diagonally across the open pages of the book.



# Who can be your partner?

- Public Library
- Churches
- Parks
- Charter Schools
- Activity Centers
- Housing complex
- Education/Community Centers
- Food Banks

# Finding the Partners

Talking with your target

- Door to door
- Cold calling
- Word of Mouth



# Selling your Program

- Be your own Cheerleader
- Bring facts
- Explain benefits
  - To community
  - To them



# Building the Partnership

- Set the expectations
- Let them know what to expect
- Be flexible
- Remember who you are working with



# Some favorite Partnerships

Grand Rapids Public Library

MLK Park

Grand Rapids Housing Commission

Kroc Center

Boys and Girls club

Baxter Community House

The Pantry

Walnut Grove Apartments

Urban League

Abney Academy

Refugee Center



# Thank you for attending!

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