

San Francisco Food Alliance Meeting
June 1, 2006
New College of California

Introductions

Larry Bain (Nextcourse), David Bellar (CFPA/UC Berkeley), Michael Dimock (Roots of Change Fund), Tifani Fuentes (Mission High School/Pie Ranch), Alex Grastest (Mission High School/Pie Ranch), Megan Hanson (Nextcourse), Karen Heisler (Pie Ranch), Susana Hennessey-Lavery (SFDPH Tobacco Free Project), Paula Jones (San Francisco Food Systems), Stefan Lynch (SFDPH), Cheryl Magid (Congregation Emanu-El), Stacey McCarthy (Earl's Organics), Bu Nygrens (Veritable Vegetable), Stacey Parker (Garden for the Environment), Leah Rimkus (San Francisco Food Systems), Gwendolyn Smith (Literacy for Environmental Justice)

Pie Ranch, Nextcourse and Mission High School

- *Karen Heisler, Megan Hanson, and Alex Grastest presented on this collaborative project.* -

- Pie Ranch is a small new educational farm located near the San Mateo Coast. The Pie Ranch team seeks to work with schools/students to bridge dense/urban areas with rural agricultural areas and cultivate new food activists.
- Nextcourse is a community food and nutrition initiative that was founded in 2003 by a group of Bay Area chefs, restaurateurs, farmers, and food justice activists. Nextcourse offers food and nutrition education to individual and institutional child care providers and works with youth to grow community leaders who will drive changes in food policy.
- Pie Ranch developed a relationship with teachers at Mission High School in San Francisco, planning a program that would teach students about food and sustainable agriculture and integrate with the educational standards. They recruited 12 students to work with the program at Pie Ranch, with the idea that half would continue on as peer educators. The program is intended to give students employability and life skills for after high school.
- Students visit the farm once per month, taking note of all the natural changes that have happened since the last visit, planting, harvesting, and doing other educational activities like journaling. They also visited Swanton (u-pick) Berry Farm and Rainbow Grocery in San Francisco.
- Alex reported on how the students involved have become more of a family and have more to talk about when they are together. Some students were a little hesitant to dive into activities due to concerns of mud, insects, taste of “health” food, etc., but overall the experience has been very positive. Megan commented that several kids have said they will no longer let their parents shop for groceries alone. Family members have also visited and gotten involved at Pie Ranch.
- Future plans include an overnight trip to Pie Ranch for these students.

Roots of Change Fund

- Michael gave an overview of the Roots of Change (ROC) fund, a foundation collaborative supporting the transition to a healthier food system and a healthier environment in California. -

- One of the first projects funded by the ROC fund was the Vivid Picture Project, designed to generate a blueprint for a sustainable food system, and a change agenda to achieve the vision of a sustainable food system in California by 2030. (See <http://www.vividpicture.net/> for more information and a number of reports.)
- Following the Vivid Picture Project, the ROC fund will focus on implementation and working towards the vision that has been created. The fund is planning a series of round tables up and down the state, organizing local- and regional- level policies to support sustainable food systems. Michael described a vision of an army of local organizations in the Bay Area as well as in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. This organizing would focus on building bridges and relationships between urban and rural areas, on local sustainable food, and on creating jobs for young people (especially careers in agriculture).
- In addition to the local- and regional-level organizing, several State level groups are meeting every six weeks, including the Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Food and Agriculture.
- For more information, see <http://www.rocfund.org/>

Current city-sponsored food policy actions and other food activities

- Stefan and Susana gave an overview and update of the proposed policy around healthy and sustainable food within the Department of Public Health. -

- A proposed Healthy and Sustainable Foods Policy for the Department of Public Health (DPH) has been working its way through a variety of approval committees and agencies, including the joint committees of the health commission and the nutrition services department of Laguna Honda Hospital and San Francisco General Hospital (SFGH).
- This policy would encourage DPH employees to provide healthy and sustainable foods at events, meeting, trainings and conferences. It would also require DPH institutions (like Laguna Honda and SFGH) and contractors to come up with purchasing plans that would increasingly include the provision of sustainable foods in programs and services.
- Sustainable foods, as defined in the policy, would include foods grown locally, organic foods, fair trade foods, foods certified humanely raised and foods from vendors that are green certified and minority/women/local business enterprises.
- The policy will be presented to the health commission in July.

- Gwen gave an overview of the Good Neighbor Program at Literacy for Environmental Justice (LEJ). -

- The neighborhoods of Bayview Hunters Point have approximately 33,000 residents, one grocery store, and over 40 liquor stores.
- LEJ is an urban environmental education and youth empowerment organization created to address the ecological and social concerns of Bayview Hunters Point and the surrounding communities of Mission, Potrero Hill, Visitacion Valley, and Excelsior.
- LEJ was awarded a three-year grant from the California Endowment around the goal of increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables in this neighborhood.
- LEJ works with local merchants in the neighborhood to increase understanding of the need in this neighborhood for fresh, healthy food and that selling / marketing liquor and tobacco is contributing to problems like obesity, diabetes, malnutrition and depression.
- Good Neighbor stores agree to stop marketing alcohol and tobacco at the stores and agree to carry fresh fruits and vegetables in the store. They are provided with refrigerated storage for produce (donated by SFDPH), as well as training and technical assistance in marketing this product to the community. LEJ also conducts food tastings and recipe demonstrations monthly, and is coming out with a nutrition awareness cookbook for the community there.
- As of right now, there are four Good Neighbor stores in the neighborhood. The owner of Surfside Liquors, in Hunters Point, was recently awarded a Community Heroes Award from the Crissy Field Center for his commitment to transforming his store to healthier options for the community.

- Paula and other attendees gave a brief update on recent city-sponsored food policy actions, events and organizing. -

- On April 26th, Mayor Newsom launched a new initiative called The Mayor's Challenge: Shape-Up San Francisco during a summit held at City Hall.
 - This event was organized by the citywide Chronic Disease Prevention Consortium in order to promote healthy environments in San Francisco and to challenge City departments, businesses, community organizations and individuals to work together to create these healthy environments in order to help people make healthy choices.
 - This event was modeled after the Governor's Summit on Health, Nutrition and Obesity, held in Sacramento on September 15, 2005.
 - The main mayoral announcements, recommendations and round table topics at the event were selected from the recommendations of the Board of Supervisors Child Nutrition and Physical Activity Task Force, recommendations of the Strategic Alliance, and of the San Francisco Food Alliance.
 - One round table focused specifically on food access in Bayview Hunters Point and had a huge showing of people. This will be a continuing initiative with direct access to the Mayor's Office. Representatives from the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development and the Mayor's Office of Community

Development participated in this round table and discussed their work with redevelopment on putting a full-service market in the Bayview. They will be hosting a community meeting in the Bayview on this topic within the next couple months.

- The Chronic Disease Prevention Consortium will continue on as “Shape Up San Francisco” and will continue convening and following through with these actions and recommendations, with direct connection to the Mayor’s Office.
- The Department of the Environment has concluded its public sessions on implementation of the precautionary principle/green purchasing in San Francisco city purchasing. Their recommendations on how best to maximize the purchase of fair trade and organic products (following the passage of these ordinances) were presented to the Commission on the Environment and the Board of Supervisors in May 2006. Public purchasing of food/beverages is still part of the conversation and consultants are continuing to work on this issue.
- The Board of Supervisors Food Security Task Force continues to meet monthly to develop a strategic plan for increasing San Francisco’s use of federal food assistance programs.
 - The task force has formed three subcommittees, which will focus on: (1) the Food Stamp Program, (2) programs for children and seniors, and (3) coordinating of food policy in San Francisco government via an official council, food policy specialist, and/or other entity.
 - At the June meeting, subcommittees will present their preliminary recommendations and plan to the task force. At the July meeting, subcommittees should have their full recommendations and plans ready. The complete strategic plan will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors for consideration of adoption into legislation and thereafter the task force will report back to the board on progress and implementation.
 - Up until now, the task force has been developing its recommendations, including the proposed membership and purview of a more permanent food policy entity/council, with a primary focus on anti-hunger issues, not necessarily looking at “local non-emergency sources” as is part of the definition of community food security.
 - The task force includes representatives from city agencies, the San Francisco Unified School District, four community based organizations (including St. Anthony Foundation and the Coalition on Homelessness) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Western Regional Office.
 - Task force meetings are held on the first Wednesdays of each month from 1:30pm-3:30pm at City Hall, Room 278, and are open to the public.
 - *Meeting attendees discussed the scope and vision of this task force and talked about how to get “food miles” into the picture. One attendee commented that we need bigger system-wide education on what is the food system and why it is important so that the next time there is a food security task force, this is acknowledged and part of the process.*

Announcements

- (Paula) The Bayview Farmers' Market re-opened two weeks ago and has not seen great participation or sales for farmers. Market organizers have decided to take a break (one month) and consider restarting the market later in the summer.
- (Leah) Announced for Gail Priestley - June 6th is National Hunger Awareness Day. The San Francisco Food Bank, St. Anthony Foundation & Project Open Hand are organizing a noon-time rally at Civic Center Plaza in raising awareness about hunger in our community. Volunteers are needed for a rally - if you are interested in volunteering, please contact Marie O'Connor at 592-2726.
- (Leah) Announced for Gail Priestley – There are several state bills right now that relate to food security nutrition right now – it is a good time to call your representative and support. Below is a brief summary of three bills that are on the legislative agenda for California Food Policy Advocates and the California Hunger Action Coalition. For more information, see <http://www.cfpa.net/2006LegSession/2006legis.htm>.
 - AB 2384 (Leno) will help increase access to fruits and vegetables in low-income communities and will make produce more affordable to food stamp recipients by piloting rebates for fruit and vegetable purchases.
 - AB 2205 (Evans) will make it easier for families receiving MediCAL to be enrolled in food stamps and their children into free meals at school.
 - AB 3029 (Laird) will make it easier for families to get nutrition assistance from food stamps by removing unnecessary paperwork in the program as 45 other states have already done.
- (Stacey) Garden for the Environment will be hosting a Summer Solstice party and potluck in the garden on Saturday, June 24th from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. For more information, see www.gardenfortheenvironment.org
- (Chris) Diet for a Dead Planet is now available in paperback. If anyone knows of public speaking engagements and/or other events around sustainable food systems that would be good venues for his book (or if anyone is interested in organizing them), please contact Chris.