

San Francisco Food Alliance Meeting
June 15, 2004
Mission Police Station, Community Room

Introductions

Beth Altshuler (SF-CRUE), Christine Garvin (Vanguard Foundation), Vicky Gomez (San Francisco Food Systems), Karen Heisler, Susana Hennessey-Lavery (SFDPH Tobacco Free Project), Paula Jones (San Francisco Food Systems), Lynn Lampky, Tracy Lerman (Public Citizen), Sharon Lutz (CUESA), Cheryl Magid (Children's Council), Sraddha Mehta (SF Department of the Environment), Bu Nygrens (Veritable Vegetable), Gail Priestley (St. Anthony Foundation), Leah Rimkus (San Francisco Food Systems), Zoë Rossing (San Francisco Food Bank)

Update on California Community Food Security Summit

- The second California Community Food Security summit, organized by the California Food and Justice Coalition, was held in Los Angeles June 10th and 11th (the first was in Oakland in 2002).
- The focus was around statewide organizing and included several break-out sessions on specific topics such as farm-to-school, food policy councils, land access and ownership, etc.
- The second day of the summit was a work day, developing specific recommendations and actions for the Coalition to work on throughout the year.
- Beth talked about the field trip on the last day of the summit to the Food Forestry project at Crenshaw High School and to an urban agriculture site across from the local food bank.
- Paula reported that the California Food and Justice Coalition is currently accepting nominations for several spots on its Steering Committee. This is a great way to learn about projects happening around California and to get a statewide perspective on food, hunger, and agriculture. The position would require about four in-person meetings per year and some conference calls – ask Paula for more information.

Update on Biotech World Café

- Karen distributed a handout and summarized the Biotech World Café, which happened at California College of the Arts on the evening of June 7th.
- The purpose of the event was to offer a public dialogue around the prospect of the bioscience industry making San Francisco its home. It was planned to coincide with the international meeting of the Biotechnology Industry Organization at Moscone Center and Reclaim the Commons' weeklong series of events promoting public goods rather than private profit.
- Cosponsors included San Francisco Department of Public Health, Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture, Veritable Vegetable, and Reclaim the Commons.
- Although the theme of the public discussion was about the biotechnology industry, the event was just as much about democracy and was an example of stimulated citizen participation.

- The event brought in a diversity of perspectives and expectations, and illustrated that there are a significant number of people in the city who don't feel they have an opportunity to speak on some issues unless they are technical experts. It emphasized the need for more transparent information sharing, for public dialogue, and for citizen participation in decision making.
- Leah commented that the Department of Public Health is planning to have a similar event in the fall based on the success of Biotech World Café. The public forum will most likely be on food and agriculture and be held in City Hall.

Planning for local assessment and policy recommendations

- Paula talked about pulling together data and information around the San Francisco food system in a comprehensive report or "report card" including info about food assistance programs and usage, hunger, urban gardening, waste reduction, etc.
- This could possibly be a collaborative project with other agencies giving staff time. If you would like to play a role in this report card design or data gathering and assembly process, contact Paula.
- Good sources of info include California Food Policy Advocates' Hunger Profiles and statistics from the San Francisco Food Bank.
- Sraddha suggested using the SF Sustainability Plan as a baseline for some of the measures and mentioned that the Department of the Environment started a report card process to assess how the city had progressed toward each of the goals written in 1997.
- The "report card" could be a jump-off point to say where we are as a city and where we need to go, developing policy recommendations.
- Gail stated that a desired outcome would be to increase San Francisco's ability to access the public safety net.

Update on legislative issues and food assistance programs

- Gail read from the U.S. Conference of Mayors Report on Hunger and Homelessness
 - San Francisco had a 12% increase in the requests for emergency food in 2003
 - 25% of these needs were not met
- Gail gave an update on the progress regarding key statewide legislation around hunger
 - AB231, which extends 5 months of transitional food stamps to families leaving CalWORKS and also increases the value of a car that a participant can own, was signed by Governor Davis and repealed by Schwarzenegger.
 - AB1796, which allows former drug felons to receive food stamps, passed the Assembly on May 24th and is going to the Senate.

- AB2013, which eliminates finger imaging requirements for food stamps, passed the Assembly on May 20th and is going to the Senate.
- Call or write your Senator!
- Zoë gave an update on the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)
 - This program is only available in six counties throughout California.
 - CSFP was previously administered by the Economic Opportunity Council (EOC) but has recently been passed over to the San Francisco Food Bank.
 - Seniors at 130% of the poverty level and women and children (up to 6 years) can receive these boxes (but cannot participate in WIC at the same time).
 - CSFP distributes 40-lb food boxes which include cereal, canned meats, canned fruits and vegetables, and processed cheese.
 - The previous caseload was approximately 10,000 people being served through 96 sites. Currently, the program serves about 6,500 through only 10 sites. The SF Food Bank must increase the caseload by September to retain this contract.
 - CSFP requires income verification every 6 (women) or 12 months (seniors).
 - The Food Bank is partnering with Helplink for getting out eligibility info and referrals to sites and with the WIC program to reach out to families with six-year old children no longer eligible for WIC.

Activities around food assistance programs

- Vicky talked about the newsletter that San Francisco Food Systems is producing and plans to distribute in July. The first edition of this quarterly newsletter is on food assistance programs, including articles about food stamps, WIC, senior food programs, etc. and will be mailed out to various public and private providers in the city and county.
- Leah talked about an outreach campaign around the National School Lunch Program in San Francisco Unified. The goal is to increase the number of completed meal applications returned within the first month of school, when percentages of students eligible for free/reduced meals is typically tallied for reimbursement purposes. If anyone wants to play a role on this committee (outreach to parents, targeted schools, CBOs, newsletters, media, etc.) please contact Leah.

World Environment Day, June 2005

- Paula updated on the group on World Environment Day, which was established by the United Nations to stimulate awareness of the environment and enhance political attention and public action.
- Next year is the first time it is being hosted anywhere in North America. It will be hosted in San Francisco in June 2005 with the theme “Green Cities.”
- One of the outcomes planned is the development of a San Francisco Urban Environmental Accord, which will include a section on food and agriculture.

- The group talked about whether there is an opportunity to be involved in the planning process and what the SF Food Alliance could do to participate.
- There was lack of clarity about which city agencies were responsible for heading up this event, so members agreed to seek out more information and bring it back to the next meeting for discussion.
- See www.wed2005.org for more information.

SF Food Alliance Organizational Document and Membership Agreement

- Leah presented the Organizational Document drafted by the working group and the Membership Agreement drafted by Susana and suggested a few minor revisions.
- The group suggested some changes regarding guiding principles and voting protocol.
- The group agreed with the suggested changes and finalized these documents, with the understanding that they will be revisited again in six months.
- Leah will make the revisions to the documents and send them out to the listserv.
- The group talked about getting in touch with people on the listserv to find out their priorities, the activities they would like to participate in, and interest in signing on as SF Food Alliance members.
- Tracy made the point that some individuals and organizations may not want to become active members but may want to be on the listserv to stay informed of local food system issues.

Next Steps

- Leah will send out the final revised versions of the organizational document and membership agreement to the list serve.
- Zoë will schedule a Hunger 101 training at the Food Bank for SF Food Alliance members and will send an announcement to the listserv.
- Zoë will head up a survey of listserv members to ask about interests and concerns.
- Paula will get in touch with those interested in the Report Card project to start the planning.
- Vicky will send out the newsletter issue on food assistance programs in San Francisco by mail and by email to the sffoodsystems list by the end of June.
- Leah will email the list serve about the next meeting date. We agreed meet in August, on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, and most likely in the afternoon (3:30-6:00).

Announcements

- (Tracy) Lonnie Hancock's Bill on food irradiation in schools passed the Assembly with 42 votes. It is going to the Senate Education Committee and then to the Senate.