

# COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY *news*

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## **FARM TO CAFETERIA LEGISLATION PASSED, BUT NOT FUNDED: CFSC Looks to Ahead to Future Funding and Next Farm Bill**

Over the past two years, the Community Food Security Coalition has worked to enact legislation to support Farm to Cafeteria projects. Based on the successful Community Food Projects grants, the “Farm to Cafeteria Projects” Act was designed to provide schools and non-profits with seed grants to cover the initial costs of preparing locally-grown food for school meals. These costs include equipment such as extra refrigerators and sinks, staff time to set up the project, and experiential nutrition education projects.

The final Child Nutrition Act, passed last June, included Farm to Cafeteria legislation, based on the Farm to Cafeteria Projects Act and includes additional language about school gardens due to a last-minute merge with another section. The legislation authorizes a seed grant fund to cover the initial costs of Farm to Cafeteria projects.

While passed into law, Farm to Cafeteria was not funded as part of this year’s Congressional appropriations

(See *FARM TO CAFETERIA* on pg. 11)

## **Food Banking for Self-reliance: An Introduction to this Special Issue**

*By Andy Fisher*



*A farmstand associated with the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank.*

It is clear that food banks play a vital role in meeting the immediate food needs of millions of hungry people. Yet their role in addressing longer-term food security issues is less clear and sometimes a focus of controversy. Some argue that food relief is a crucial part of moving people toward greater food security, and that any food is better than none for a hungry person. Others contend that food banks foster dependence on food industry cast-offs, many of which have little nutritional value, and that they fail to create lasting solutions to hunger

and food insecurity. Even many food bank supporters view a permanent “emergency” food system as an unsustainable approach to feeding the hungry.

Addressing the immediate needs of the hungry while also developing longer-term solutions is a very tall order, especially in a context of growing needs and declining government support for the poor. Yet innovative food banks are stepping up to the plate and finding ways to address both goals simultaneously. Many food banks are at the vanguard of

(See *FOOD BANKING* on pg. 11)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Winter 2005

*CFS News* is a quarterly publication of the Community Food Security Coalition. The CFS Coalition's mission is to promote comprehensive systems-oriented solutions to the nation's food and farming problems. It conducts policy advocacy; provides technical assistance to organizations implementing food security related programs; organizes regional coalitions; maintains a clearinghouse and database; conducts research and publishes reports; and educates the public and professionals through the media, conferences, and newsletters.

Community food security (CFS) is defined as "all persons obtaining at all times a culturally acceptable nutritionally adequate diet through local non-emergency sources." A CFS approach emphasizes the need to build community institutions to ensure access and availability for community residents. Thus, food security must be seen as a question of community development and empowerment which complements and extends the traditional view of addressing hunger issues at the individual level.

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## Letter from the President



Sharon Thornberry

I was born to a hilltop farm in central Iowa just south of the small town of Maxwell. Life was seemingly simple and to an outsider our family would have appeared a model of self-sufficiency. Our pantry and kitchen were stocked with home canned goods, fresh milk and cream, homegrown meats and fresh eggs. Our water came from hand pumps in the kitchen and the yard; dried corncobs fueled the furnace in the basement; and the manure spreader enriched the fields with the leavings of our livestock. Yet, my strongest memories come from the occasions when the community came together to help each other. My favorite time of the whole year was harvest, especially the days when it was "our turn". I would sit on the front porch to watch and listen as the community came up our hill. Early in the morning the combines, tractors, trailers, and trucks would stream up our long drive or enter our fields from the road. More cars and trucks bearing the women of our community and the amazing array of food that they had made to feed the harvesters would soon follow this procession. Drinks and snacks were relayed to field for

morning and evening breaks, but the noon meal was served on long tables in the yard. Those meals displayed the best of our community's food skills and the bounty of our gardens, barns and fields. The work started long before light and continued often long after dusk. Our farm buzzed with energy, both audible and human, the energy and strength of a farming community coming together to feed themselves and others.

I have come to realize that spending my first five years in that large white house atop the highest point in the area gave me an interesting perspective on the interdependence and synergy of our rural farming community. I believe the same kind of interdependence and synergy is possible today in our communities and communities around the world. I see the Community Food Security Coalition in much the same way I saw our farming community. We represent a broad diversity of cultures, ethnicity, races, skills, needs, abilities, assets, talents and expertise. The Coalition gives us the means to share all that we have and build stronger community food systems. The members of the Coalition are keys to restoring a healthy, just and equitable food system to communities and to individuals. We are a force for change in our communities as we share our knowledge and put our values into action. We are the voice of that food system in the halls of government and the public marketplace.

The days of community harvest have long passed for my home community, but I believe they are only beginning for the Coalition, its members and the communities they serve.

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# 2004 Recipients

## OF THE COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY LEADERSHIP AWARDS

*Excerpted from presentations at the 2004 Annual CFSC Conference*

### **Heifer International**

Heifer International has been a long-term supporter of work toward sustainable food systems in the U.S. and all over the world. Every year at the CFSC conference I get to see eight or ten of my friends who staff one of their seven regional offices around the U.S. But this year those folks are not here in force because they are preparing for Heifer's 60th Anniversary celebration. In that time they have made a difference in the lives of over seven million limited resource farmers and their families. Our immigrant farming project in Lewiston, Maine is funded by Heifer. But the support they provide goes well beyond grant money. They provide training and technical assistance in so many aspects of farming and participatory community development. Our relationship with Heifer is a true partnership.

—Presented by Jim Hanna, Maine Farms Project

### **Michael Hamm, Mott Distinguished Professor of Sustainable Agriculture at Michigan State University**

I am greatly honored to introduce to you one of our most articulate spokespersons for the vision and the practice of community food security. In addition to his previous job as a professor and dean in the Department of Nutrition at Rutgers University, he was also a founding director of an organic farm on his campus, facilitated a cooperative gleaning network, co-directed the food stamp nutrition education network in his state, co-



*CFSC Honors Outgoing Board members Hank Herrera and Mark Winne with the "Big Cheese Award" Left to right: Sharon Thornberry, CFSC President; Hank Herrera, Mark Winne, and CFSC Executive Director, Andy Fisher*

founded an Urban Ecology Program and acted as his state's community food security liaison to the USDA. Mike is now Mott Distinguished Professor of Sustainable Agriculture at Michigan State University. In that capacity, he works to support people and communities as they develop sustainable, community-based food systems.

He has also made himself available to help provide guidance to leaders in this organization, as the Coalition was in its formative stages and later as it grew and matured into what it is today. He has been especially active in the Coalition's training and technical assistance committee, always offering insightful and thoughtful comments and creative ideas about how the organization might be even more effective.

—Presented by Gail Feenstra, University of California

### **Marie Buchanan and Bill Buchanan, USDA Risk Management Agency**

While these 2 individuals have the

same last name, are both African American and work for the same agency they are NOT related. They do, however, work as a team supporting outreach to people of color and other small farmers, and supporting the community based organizations that serve them—many of which are members of the Rural Coalition and Community Food Security Coalition.

Bill & Marie have a history of pushing the envelope. They have an expansive view of risk management, recognizing that risk management is more than crop insurance and forward sales contracts. Bill & Marie view Risk Management & Community Food Security projects as having inter-related goals. They have demonstrated this by funding food councils, marketing efforts including the Rural Coalition's on-line marketing project, the SuperMarket Coop. They have also funded training efforts and recognized the value of knowledge exchange that occurs at events like this one by providing scholarship money.

—Presented by Debra Livingston, Rural Coalition

# Report from the Outreach & Diversity Committee

By Michelle Mascarenhas, Jim Hanna, Rachel Slocum & Heather Fenney

The Community Food Security Coalition has had an Outreach and Diversity Committee (ODC) since soon after its first annual meeting in 1997 where the membership asked to open up the election of the board of directors to include more people of color and farmers. Since the beginning, the ODC has sought to ensure that the Coalition was representing the interests and needs of communities most adversely impacted by injustices in the food system, and to broaden CFSC's membership base to include representatives from these communities.

As the CFSC has worked hard to strengthen food security over the years, it has also struggled with critiques that poor people and people of color were still underrepresented at the annual meetings and that the issues of their communities were not being adequately addressed. At the 2003 conference in Boston, MA a large group attended the ODC meeting expressing anguish and dissatisfaction with how power was being shared within the CFSC. Since this meeting, an active core group, along with many supporters, has been working to advance a long-term process to address the ways that power, privilege, discrimination, and oppression\*—which have shaped our society at every level—play out within our coalition and within the movement.

ODC activities over the last year have focused on bringing attention to the role that racism plays in perpetuating injustice in the food system. The dedicated volunteer members of the Committee are working to ensure that the movement fulfills its promise of

building power among people from limited resource communities and communities of color in order to affect change in their local food systems.

The ODC's initial recommendation was that the CFSC board and staff participate in an anti-racism training as a first step toward putting the communities most impacted by the lack of democracy and justice in the food system at the center of the Coalition's work. Through 2004, ODC members researched organizations that conduct anti-racism trainings in order to identify one that was best suited for CFSC.

Throughout the year, some board and staff members questioned why the ODC was recommending that the Coalition pursue an "anti-racism" approach as opposed to a "diversity" approach in transforming the organization. Two issues that came up were that the term "racism" often makes white folks uncomfortable, and that the organization has tended to focus its work on promoting what it is working for rather than working against. As a consequence of these and other issues, the ODC's timeline of selecting a trainer to conduct the first organizational anti-racism workshop in the summer of 2004 and to carry out a workshop for member groups at the fall conference was set back.

Instead, at the 2004 CFSC conference in Milwaukee, WI the CFSC board, staff and members of the ODC participated in a meeting facilitated by an anti-racism training organization in order to learn more about how an anti-racism framework for social change might work in the Coalition and to set goals for an upcoming training. Sitting at the

same table and conversing with one another face to face was as critical as was having skilled facilitators who had led many other organizations through similar dialogues about different forms of oppression. At the meeting, board, staff, and ODC members who had up until that point had difficulty agreeing on common language agreed to embark on this critical process of dismantling racism within the institution and movement together.

Following this meeting the ODC recommended that the organization ChangeWork be selected to support the CFSC in this process. The board of directors unanimously supported this recommendation and the first training is scheduled to take place in July 2005.

In addition to advocating for beginning a process to dismantle institutional racism, the ODC carried out a great deal of work in 2004. In 2004, committee members collectively wrote a statement of purpose, developed a workplan and budget and published an annual report. At CFSC's annual conference in Milwaukee ODC members conducted a full-day short course on grassroots organizing entitled *Building Grassroots Power* and organized a panel presentation on community food security work being led by people of color.

In response to questions raised by board and staff members about the purpose of undertaking an anti-racism process within the coalition, committee member Rachel Slocum wrote a white paper *Dismantling Racism in Community Food Work* that explored how racism shapes the food system. This paper along with committee information and resources for community food organizations

OUTREACH & DIVERSITY (cont. on page 13)

# The Relationship of Food to Culture in Indigenous Communities—

## Tribes Increase Control of Assets Through Food Sovereignty Assessments

By Jackie Tiller

For Indigenous communities, food is more than sustenance—it is a significant part of their self-identity—it is who they are. Food is central to communities' existence, and is celebrated through ceremony and stories. But how can Native communities plan for the future, their very existence, without current information about local assets and their uses? Where do they start?

This past September, at its second Native Food Summit, First Nations Development Institute introduced its Food Sovereignty Assessment Tool (FSAT) in an unprecedented strategy for Indigenous communities to reclaim control over their food resources and choices. The FSAT is First Nations' response to Native communities' needs for a culturally appropriate community food assessment tool, one that views food security as a lifeway led by their ancestors, and sovereignty as the vehicle for Native communities to reclaim and practice their traditions. It can potentially lead to greater control of their food systems and choices through community outreach, funder education, and policy reform. For First Nations, the FSAT represents the culmination of nearly twenty-five years of work to increase tribal control of assets, and over ten years of grant-making in Indian Country. Through its Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative (NAFSI), First Nations is focusing on community food projects that cultivate local market opportunities for local producers; agriculture related business enterprises using local resources to supply agricultural products; and building community connections around culture, food, diet and health with the goal of increasing the consumption of



healthy food and encouraging healthy lifestyles in local communities.

As an integral part of NAFSI, First Nations' Native Food Summit was designed to feed the hungry minds and spirits of Native and non-Native American farmers, tribes, educators, community groups, funders, and federal government representatives with resources and sustenance relevant to their respective cultural, educational and entrepreneurial needs.

One of the first to utilize the FSAT is the Aloha 'Aina Health Center, a Native-Hawaiian controlled nonprofit organization located in the windward Ko'olaupoko district of O'ahu, and situated in the Kailua and Kane'ohe ahupua'a (mountain to sea land divisions). It is the organization's primary focus to restore lo'i kalo (irrigated-terrace taro), from which traditional foods (poi) and medicines are produced. Aloha 'Aina is working to increase food output through student and community participation in building a farm-to-cafeteria relationship with Kamakau Laboratory Public Charter School (LPCS), and a Native-Hawaiian-styled CSA program called Community Supported Ahupua'a, for Windward O'ahu families. The FSAT will be utilized in support of Aloha 'Aina's traditional and

sustainable agricultural initiatives and will prove highly significant in several regards: reinvigorating an aging farmers' cooperative; reasserting the value of Native Hawaiian farming practices; providing a model of flourishing, community supported small farm food production and learning centers; and, determining future land use on these rich and culturally potent lands.

Back on the mainland, in Santa Fe, New Mexico, the Santa Fe Indian School is adapting the FSAT for integration into its existing Agri-Science Curriculum to increase interaction between students and Pueblo farmers through student-provided, hands-on, shared labor and marketing assistance to farmers, while performing data collection about local food and technical resources. The students' participation will result in written crop plans, documentation of crop harvest, ceremonial activities and advertising and marketing of produce. The benefits to be realized include a lasting relationship between the students and their communities in an area of Pueblo life often overlooked in today's world; students make the connection between learning math, science, communication and technology its application at the grassroots level to help sustain a way of life that is centuries of years old. The FSAT will strengthen this connection and will increase student self-esteem, confidence and respect for one's culture and community, thereby creating a greater bond and responsibility to live the values of heritage and respect. Furthermore, the output from the field plots will benefit the community as members participate

*RELATIONSHIP OF FOOD (cont. on page 9)*

## Atlanta Community Food Bank, Atlanta, GA

### BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH FOOD

*A massing monopolies. Conquering the world. Vanquishing bad guys.* This is the stuff of traditional board games. *Feeding your family on a tight budget* is not, except in Atlanta, where the Atlanta Community Food Bank plays “Feast or Famine” with thousands of kids and adults every year. Started by a group of interns from the Emory University School of Public Health, *Feast or Famine* is a part of the Hunger 101 program that asks the basic question of why there is hunger in a nation as rich as ours. Food Bank staff take this “class”, to schools, community groups, and others willing to spend the 90 minutes to consider this question. Girl Scouts can earn a patch in exchange for participating in a Hunger 101 class.

In a state as conservative as Georgia, the inherent political message of Hunger 101 has the potential to alienate numerous people. Yet, Food Bank staff have become expert at sizing people up and knowing when to push and when not to. Their message is simple: the reason there is hunger is because of an unequal distribution of resources. By allowing participants to reach this conclusion on their own, they foster critical thinking and deeper learning in an era in which such discussions are woefully lacking.

Many groups have entered into Hunger 101 uncomfortable with this topic. And some have made huge leaps of consciousness in an hour and a half. Kathy Palumbo, Community Services Director, notes the benefits of Hunger 101 for the Food Bank: “It has evolved into much more than an educational session. It can be an amazing organizing opportunity. We’re creating a constituency for political change. We used to be satisfied when people offered to do food drives (after going through Hunger 101). Now we encourage them to make another

specific action-step commitment.” For example, the Food Bank has been able to mobilize some Hunger 101 participants to support state anti-poverty and anti-hunger legislation.

challenges Fred and the Food Bank face in recruiting gardeners, especially in African American neighborhoods, is the legacy of Jim Crow and unfair farm labor practices many of them have



*Atlanta participants play Feast or Famine, the Hunger 101 Board game.*

With 3,000 people attending over 100 sessions in 2003, this group could provide a significant base for grassroots organizing.

Hunger 101 is not the only way the Food Bank educates the Atlanta community. They also provide technical assistance to more than 150 community gardens in the metropolitan area, through a dedicated staff person, Fred Conrad. The Food Bank leverages volunteers to help gardens get established and keep running smoothly. With support from Heifer Project, Fred also raises earthworms, and sells their castings at farmers’ markets, donating them as well to the gardens. One of the

spent generations avoiding.

Hunger 101, like the community gardening program, has become central to the Food Bank’s mission of ending hunger through educating, engaging and empowering the community. In fact, community building seems to be the *raison d’être* of the Food Bank. Kathy Palumbo concludes, “For us, food is a principal, magical tool to build a healthier community.”

## Western Massachusetts Food Bank, Hatfield, MA

### SUPPORT LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS AND ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Among the many things it does, The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts is in the business of farming. Well, sort of. Back in the late 1980s, The Food Bank wanted to create a controllable source of fresh produce because much of what was being donated was poor quality vegetables like “yellow broccoli.” Nearby Hampshire College offered to donate their organic tomatoes from a research farm. Soon The Food Bank had more tomatoes than they could efficiently distribute to those in need so they used the tomatoes to make vegetarian chili.

By 1992, the “Chili Project” had *mushroomed*, and they found themselves leasing 60 acres of very good land—Hadley Loam—a US geological category for soil with amazing farming qualities. Fast forward 12 years, and The Food Bank owns the land free and clear, and contracts with a group of farmers to run the operation. Six hundred shareholders pay between \$420- \$560 a year to receive a weekly portion of the harvest from the farm. The shareholders fees cover 100% of the operating cost of the farm’s expenses, while 50% of the produce is donated back into The Food Bank’s distribution stream to more than 400 local food pantries, shelters, meal sites and other social service agencies. In just one week last month, more than 70,000 pounds of winter squash was harvested and brought to The Food Bank’s warehouse to be distributed to those in need.

Despite this impressive track record, The Food Bank’s Executive Director David Sharken notes that the farm has its limitations, “It builds community, but does not necessarily ensure *food security* for low-income populations. Although we have created



*Squash harvested from Western Massachusetts Food Bank's farm.*

an amazing community center where hundreds of families come together to support organic, sustainable farming, this project is not creating food self-reliance among low income families.”

The farm is an example of a program that is economically self-sufficient which adds one slice to the community food security in the region. The farm also engages shareholders into The Food Bank as a whole, creating a natural constituency. For example, when The Food Bank put out an emergency alert for the need for food drives this fall, farm shareholders brought in over 2,000 pounds of peanut butter, soup and other non-perishable meals. While shareholders often see their farm share check as their monetary donation to The Food Bank and do not necessarily contribute more, the farm does create an awareness of hunger and of the role and mission of the entire organization.

Right now, The Food Bank is

totally maxxed out in its capacity to move food, and is in the middle of a capital campaign to increase their facility in order to efficiently move more food to those in need. However, David knows that food distribution is only one method of solving the problem of hunger. David continues, “Like the Greek myth of Sisyphus, the man who rolled the boulder up the hill each day, only to have it roll back down each night, we can’t possibly get the food that is needed to feed everyone who needs food assistance.”

Does David see a contradiction between a capital campaign for a new building and the need to stop rolling that stone up the hill every day? “It’s going to be a long time before there is no hunger. We must work in collaboration with many issues to effectively *reduce* hunger, and at the same time, keep working hard to get our neighbors the nutritious food they need today.”

## Kauai Food Bank, Lihue, HI

### PUTTING OURSELVES OUT OF BUSINESS THROUGH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

“We’re just one shipping strike away from disaster,” warns Judy Lenthall, Executive Director of Kauai Food Bank. Being on a small island 2,500 miles from the mainland US presents its unique set of problems and opportunities for a food bank. To

*Kauai Fresh* now buys from 70 farmers on Kauai and 30 more on the island of Hawaii, who market their Grade A produce to the tourist hotels and donate their smaller and less cosmetically perfect items to the Food Bank. Over the past few years, their

clients, as 40% of the Food Bank’s 1.3 million lbs of distributed food is locally grown. It has also helped low income seniors eat better.

The Food Bank set up the only Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program on the island in 2001. Instead of working through the state bureaucracy, which would have been painfully slow to reimburse farmers, they set up their own programs at senior centers with food sourced from *Kauai Fresh* farmers. With a weekly distribution to 3,000 seniors, the program has been enthusiastically welcomed by the participants.

So, why is a food bank in the business of brokering local produce? What does this have to do with alleviating hunger? Judy responds very clearly, “ Since day one, we have wanted to provide a hand up as well as a handout. Our mission is to end hunger. We are doing so through community economic development and community food security. We measure our success not by an increasing number of people that we serve, like other food banks. Instead, we measure it by a declining number of people that need our services. We want to put ourselves out of business.”

Ending hunger through economic development and ensuring that the island can survive catastrophes are not the only goals of *Kauai Fresh*. It also is a health promotion strategy. Native Hawaiians, like many indigenous peoples, have proven to be very susceptible to diabetes. With an average diet comprised of 50% calories from fat, and with 90% of their food imported and very costly, increasing availability of produce through supporting local farming is a linchpin of any nutrition education strategy on the island.



*Kauai Seniors Showing Their Produce Selections*

address this basic food security concern, in 1997 the Food Bank applied for and was awarded by USDA one of the first Community Food Project grants, to establish the Anahola farm training site. Anahola was about training new farmers in growing and marketing their produce to the tourist industry. It was moderately successful, but resulted in backlash from locals, who saw the tourists getting all of the great produce, with little directed to them.

So, the Food Bank re-thought and re-tooled their project. With help from the state economic development agency, they created a new local foods brokerage, using the *Kauai Fresh* label.

sales have skyrocketed from \$7,000 to \$600,000. For an operation working out of a shipping container in the food bank’s back lot, this is a remarkable accomplishment.

The Marriott Hotel in Lihue has been one of the primary purchasers of *Kauai Fresh* produce. According to its website, the resort purchases about 25% of its produce from the *Kauai Food Bank*’s training program, which “provides a livelihood for individuals in a depressed local economy with few job opportunities.”

Apart from supporting local farmers, *Kauai Fresh* has helped the nutritional status of the Food Bank’s

# Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, Pittsburgh, PA

## HEALTHY HARVEST FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

“What amazes me is the generosity of local farmers,” states Lisa Scales, Chief Program Officer for the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. The Food Bank’s Healthy Harvest program, which Lisa used to manage, is a model food system project linking local farms and low income communities in need of access to healthy food. Central to this project is an impressive web of relationships with numerous farms in Southwestern Pennsylvania that the Food Bank has established.

The Food Bank initiated their connection to local farms through farmers’ offers to donate gleaned produce. For the past eleven years, they have been bringing volunteers to the fields to pick kale, collards, tomatoes, green beans, corn, apples, and zucchini.

Then four years ago, a local woman approached the Food Bank with an offer to buy a farm and pay for the entire food production, if the Food Bank would supply volunteers and

take the produce. They jumped at the opportunity, and in the past three years have integrated 100,000 pounds of organic fresh produce into their donation stream.

But what really makes the Food Bank unique is that they have created a successful network of farm stands that have improved access to fresh produce in low income neighborhoods. Pittsburgh is built on several hills, which creates isolated communities, many of which don’t have adequate food stores, much less farmers’ markets where Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) coupons could be redeemed. To address this food access problem, the Food Bank has partnered with community groups to run neighborhood farm stands for the past eleven years. The food comes from local growers and from a local farmer cooperative, who sell to the Food Bank at prices between wholesale and retail. The Food Bank passes the food on to

the farm stands at cost, and urges them not to mark up their prices more than 10%. The farm stands employ community residents, who gain numerous business skills that prepare them for the workforce. Many of these individuals have gone on to get jobs in supermarkets and other retail outlets. Last year these ten farm stands served almost 10,000 customers.

Lisa sees the farm stands as an avenue to promoting self-reliance and better health for their clients. She notes that the quality of the produce from local farmers is far better than anything else they receive. For an institution very concerned about health and obesity—they have seven nutrition educators on staff — the health benefits of the produce are very important. But of equal or greater importance are the relationships they have built between local farmers and consumers. Lisa continues: “These benefits from our community building strategy are invaluable.”

### RELATIONSHIP OF FOOD (cont. from page 5)

in farmers markets and other distribution streams to elders and families in need of food assistance.

First Nations continues to promote the FSAT through its NativeAg-Food listserv and plans to conduct two regional food sovereignty assessment workshops in 2005. As part of its long-time collaborative relationship, CFSC played an active role in development of the FSAT by providing rural models of community food assessments, as well as reviewing and providing comments toward the published work. The CFSC continues to partner with First Nations to plan and conduct at least one food sovereignty assessment workshop.



First Nations Development Institute is a national nonprofit organization based in Fredericksburg, Virginia, whose mission is to assist Indigenous peoples to control and develop their assets and, through that control, build the capacity to direct their economic futures in ways that fit their cultures. Order copies of the FSAT by contacting [abellsheeter@firstnations.org](mailto:abellsheeter@firstnations.org).

*Jackie Tiller*  
Associate Director  
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First Nations Development Institute

# Alameda County Community Food Bank, Oakland, CA

## ORGANIZING THROUGH NUTRITION

“Food is a secondary focus for our organization,” states Jessica Bartholow, Nutrition Programs and Policy Coordinator, in a matter of fact tone. While the Alameda County Community Food Bank (ACCFB) distributed an impressive 10 million pounds of food last year, their emphasis is shifting to incorporate more nutrition education and community organizing. The Food Bank has developed an integrated set of programs that creates opportunities for learning, advocacy, and the development of alternative food systems. In 2003, the Food Bank reframed their nutrition education programs

to include a policy focus. According to Jessica, they “wanted to present a clear message to the community that diet related diseases were not the result of personal responsibility alone, but that there existed real structural causes to nutrition related public health crises affecting low income communities.”

Their Kids can Cook classes are a great example of how ACCFB uses food and nutrition education as a vehicle for broader education. Jessica Bartholow continues, “We’re talking with 300 kids and their parents every month. We decided to get them involved in a postcard writing campaign on federal food policy issues. We adjusted their curriculum to include a discussion about the lack of access to healthy food in their communities. We work with these kids and other groups to engage them in a dialogue about the larger societal issues that affect their nutrition, such as advertising.”

Their partnership with Full Belly



Farm, a flagship organic farm two hours northeast of Oakland is another example of how ACCFB programs do much more than just feed hungry people. With funding from the Goldman Foundation and the City of Oakland, ACCFB arranged for Full Belly Farm to deliver produce to low income senior centers as well as to domestic violence shelters, transitional housing facilities and to shelters for men coming out of jail. Until then, the Food Bank had only provided canned and dried food to these institutions, never fresh food. Many of the seniors have limited mobility in their hands because of their arthritis, and find chopping, flipping, and stirring problematic. They also typically have only microwaves and stoves, but not blenders or ovens. Yet despite these limitations, the seniors have been wildly excited about the program, according to Judith Redmond, co-owner of Full Belly Farm.

“At the East Oakland Senior Center,

they are lined up waiting for us and literally swarm the truck as it arrives. We have had to ask them not to jump up on the truck to help us unload, for fear that they may trip in the pallet spaces and hurt themselves.... The directors of the seniors programs have called us up and said that they want to order directly from the farm if the contract runs out and that they will raise the money to do so. The seniors grew up with farm fresh vegetables, they know how to cook them and they know the health benefits of eating them.”

When asked how this focus on nutrition relates to the food bank’s core message

of alleviating hunger, Jessica notes that in the Bay Area, it is getting harder to talk about hunger without mentioning obesity prevention, especially among funders. “We’re trying to make nutrition a part of our hunger education. We’re trying to change the way we talk about hunger to reference access to healthy foods.” In the immediate future, the Food Bank has ambitious plans to build on its successes, through greater involvement in local and state policy coalitions, by linking the frutero cooperative (Latino street vendors who sell cut fruit) to after school snack programs, and through connecting senior brown bag programs with farmers. The Food Bank’s commitment to using its core resources of access to food and connections to tens of thousands of people to address the structural issues that lead to poor nutrition and poverty is notable for a sector that has been criticized for using a band-aid approach to hunger.

**FOOD BANKING** (continued from page 1)

food security work in their communities, and using food distributions as “a principal, magical tool to build a healthier community,” as Kathy Palumbo from the Atlanta Community Food Bank so eloquently stated.

In my decade at the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC), I have had the opportunity to become acquainted with many pioneering food banks. In 1999, CFSC profiled some of these efforts in a mini resource guide. In the last year, a number of circumstances converged to lead CFSC to develop another publication highlighting the leadership role of select food banks. This spring, leaders from a prominent anti-hunger funder invited me to meet with them. They had been receiving proposals from various community food security groups, and weren't sure how to analyze them. They wanted to know more about the relationship between community food security projects and fighting hunger.

This interest dovetailed with a focus on linking community food security and anti-hunger work in CFSC's on-going partnership with World Hunger Year (WHY), in particular through their USDA-funded Food Security Learning Center. Since the 1970s, WHY has been a leader in promoting greater sustainability and self-reliance among the anti-hunger community. Their Reinvesting in America program and replication manuals and workshops, like this newsletter, highlight innovative model programs.

These newsletter articles are part of a new recently released joint document published by CFSC and WHY, entitled Building the Bridge. Its broader aim is to foster greater understanding among food banks of the community food security approach, as well as greater understanding among the community food security movement of the leadership role that numerous food banks are playing to build a healthy and just food system.

The second purpose of Building the Bridge is to encourage other food

banks to promote greater sustainability and self-reliance, while gaining more support for these types of initiatives. In that sense, Building the Bridge also targets secular, religious and government funders, for as Lynn Brantley from the Capital Area Food Bank stated, “Passions go where the money flows.”

In highlighting these model projects, CFSC is aware that a much broader approach is needed to create long-term solutions, and that food banks should not bear this responsibility alone. In her well-researched and passionately written Sweet Charity, Jan Poppendieck advocates for food banks to put more emphasis on policy advocacy to bolster government anti-poverty and anti-hunger programs. Similarly, many of the food bankers interviewed here talk about the need to work with many other partners to develop lasting solutions to hunger and poverty.

I welcome your feedback on this document, especially from food bankers undertaking similar projects.

**FARM TO CAFETERIA** (continued from page 1)

cycle. The Child Nutrition Act was passed in the middle of the appropriations process, when it was harder for legislators to add new items to their priority lists. This timing plus the tight budget situation made new initiatives such as Farm to Cafeteria particularly difficult to fund.

The Coalition is looking ahead to gain Congressional supporters for the next round of appropriations, and we will be counting on your support in the coming year. Alerts with information on appropriations of Farm to Cafeteria will be posted on the COMFOOD listserve and on our policy program pages found at [www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org). Please email our policy office directly if you need more information

([sarah@foodsecurity.org](mailto:sarah@foodsecurity.org)), or call Sarah Borron at 202-543-8602.

While still two years away, the Coalition and other organizations are looking yet further ahead to legislative priorities leading to the 2007 Farm Bill. The Coalition recently submitted a multi-million dollar proposal to the Kellogg Foundation to create a “Community Food and Nutrition Partnership” that will create an unprecedented dialogue between different groups engaged in food and farm policy. The Coalition's cluster focuses on bridging the gaps between anti-hunger, nutrition, sustainable agriculture, family farm, and farmworker organizations to help create win-win policies for farmers and

consumers. The Coalition's proposal is also part of a larger collaboration with the American Farmland Trust, Environmental Defense, and the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. We look forward to the opportunity to work from mutual understanding and common purpose across sectors of the food system, towards the goal of creating a sustainable and just food system for all.

## New Board Members



**Jackie Tiller**

**As Grants Manager, Jackie's** primary role is to assure that the institution's grant-making aligns with its mission to assist Indigenous Peoples to control and develop their assets and, through that control, build the capacity to direct their economic futures in ways that fit their cultures. Her shared responsibility as program officer includes capacity assessments of Native American organizations and tribal community projects to identify areas of organizational development where an infusion of technical assistance could propel the project to a level of sustainability. Jackie coordinates the organization's funding requests through the Eagle Staff Fund, Native American Hunger Program, Native Youth and Culture Fund, Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative, Nonprofit Capacity Building Initiative, and Sustainable Forestry Fund. Her career spans twenty-six years working in government, private and nonprofit sectors. After taking time from education to raise her family, she is currently a Certified Small Business Manager in pursuit of an Associate of Arts Degree in Business Administration. She will also be taking on the role of Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator for First Nations, after ten years designing, implementing and establishing First Nations' Grantmaking program.



**Keecha Harris**

**Keecha Harris** is Principal of Harris and Associates, a consulting firm based in Birmingham, Alabama. Her clientele reflects a diversity of outreach venues including community based organizations, non-governmental advocacy groups, state and federal government, the academe and philanthropy. She has communicated issues on nutrition, sustainable agriculture and cultural competence through outlets such as the Atlanta Journal Constitution, National Public Radio, the Journal of the American Dietetic Association, Kegan and Gellis's Current Pediatric Therapy and the World Congress on Child and Youth Health. She is an alumna of the inaugural class of Food and Society Policy Fellowship supported by the WK Kellogg Foundation in which professionals communicate messages on food systems to inform consumers, media and decision makers. Dr. Harris is an alumna of Iowa State University and the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

## WHY's Online Food Security Learning Center

Are you looking for information on community food security, rural poverty, family farms, domestic hunger and federal food programs, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, and more? Then check out World Hunger Year (WHY)'s Food Security Learning Center. The site provides articles, program profiles, links and resources, policy information, and ways to get active.

CFSC is a proud partner in this initiative and provided most of the content for the Community Food Security topic, which includes sections on Farm to Cafeteria, Community Supported Agriculture, Community Gardens, Farmers' Markets, Local and Regional Food Systems, Food Policy Councils, and Community Food Assessment.

Check it out and let us know what you think!

[www.worldhungeryear.org/fslc](http://www.worldhungeryear.org/fslc)

If you have comments or questions, contact Maureen Kelly at [fslc@worldhungeryear.org](mailto:fslc@worldhungeryear.org) or Kai Siedenburtg at [kai@foodsecurity.org](mailto:kai@foodsecurity.org).

**OUTREACH & DIVERSITY** (cont. from page 4)

working to dismantle racism is available on the ODC's new web page.

Along with participating in the anti-racism training and activities that come out of this process, in the future the ODC will be working to develop language-appropriate outreach and educational materials in order to better reach working-class communities. The ODC will also work to promote presenters and workshops for upcoming CFSC conferences that are relevant to, and reflect the experiences of, working class community members and youth. All CFSC members are invited to join the committee and become part of the important work of transforming the Coalition and the movement.

*\*One definition of oppression, used by Anti-Racism for Global Justice/Challenging White Supremacy, is "illegitimate institutionalized power, built and perpetuated throughout the course of history. Allows certain 'groups' to confer illegitimate dominance over other 'groups', and this dominance is maintained and perpetuated at an institutional level." So, for example, because white folks in America have been granted access to land, housing, education, and other resources that people of color, especially African-American and Native people, have been denied or robbed of, white folks tend to land in positions of power in organizations, especially those that they have founded.*

*Committee co-chairs for 2004: Michelle Mascarenhas and Meredith Taylor. Committee co-chairs for 2005: Meredith Taylor and Jim Hanna. To learn more about the ODC visit: [www.foodsecurity.com/outreach](http://www.foodsecurity.com/outreach). To join the ODC contact Heather Fenney at 310-822-5410 or [heather@foodsecurity.org](mailto:heather@foodsecurity.org).*

## Now available from CFSC

**Community Food Project Evaluation Handbook and Toolkit**

The CFP Evaluation Handbook provides a comprehensive guide to developing and implementing outcome-based program evaluation, tailored for community food security projects (184 pages, hard copy).

The CFP Evaluation Toolkit includes evaluation protocols and template surveys for farm to school projects, community gardens, farmers' markets, community supported agriculture projects, and general program satisfaction (150 pages on CD). Also included with these documents is a 42-page guide, Excel for Data Analysis.

To order, go to CFSC website at [www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org)



## Have you visited the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) website lately?

**Recent additions include:**

- Downloadable handouts, including examples of CFS projects (see publications page).
- A member committee page that outlines opportunities to help shape CFSC's activities.
- More event listings, including an Evaluation Workshop in February and a Farm to School Conference in June (see events page).

**The website also includes:**

- An extensive publications page, including free, downloadable reports and newsletter archives.
- A comprehensive collection of information on Community Food Assessments (see programs page).
- Information about Community Food Projects grants and free assistance available to applicants (see funding page).
- Detailed information on CFSC's programs and services (see programs page).
- An annotated resource list (see programs page).

[www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org)

# Regional Organizing Initiatives for Community Food Security

By Thomas Forster

**M**any of the goals of community food security advocates, such as improving access to fresh food in communities and schools require complex programs which involve projects, policies and partnerships. They also face very real barriers, such as in developing new production, marketing and distribution channels. Or there may be barriers in local city, county, state or federal policy or programs. The barriers may be real or perceived, material or policy related. In any case, overcoming these kinds of barriers often requires new partnerships, with actors from a diversity of sectors in the food system. These partnerships can take the form of new state and regional coalitions, or the more institutionalized food policy councils at the city, county or state level. An additional and complementary approach is found in new regional organizing initiatives supported by the CFS Coalition.

Since 2001, the CFSC has sponsored the California Food and Justice Coalition (CFJC) which has become a statewide alliance of food system activists engaged in policy reform. CFJC was a pilot for the national Coalition's "regional organizing initiative".

Building from this experience, proposals for regional organizing initiatives were called for by the CFS Coalition in early 2004. In August, four projects were selected for the next phase of support for regional organizing. The four projects are at four different scales: municipal, multiple county, state and multi-state. They are respectively Baltimore,



*Representatives of grassroots organizations working in communities of color participated in a panel at the 2004 CFSC conference to discuss how they are working to establish projects that are locally valued, culturally appropriate and address their communities' needs. From left: Anan Lololi, Afri-Can FoodBasket; Hank Herrera, C-Prep; Tami Tootsie-Trottier, Natwani Coalition; Michael Harris, Black Farmers' and Agriculturalists Association; Kanoe Burgess, Ma'O.*

New York State, and the Puget Sound in Washington, and the four southwest states of New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and Utah.

All the new regional projects will be organizing new food policy councils or networks and starting community food assessments. They plan to promote institutional purchasing from local farmers. They are eager to develop food supply chains that provide market and economic support for small and family farmers, and high quality food for food insecure communities. They will be creating community-based strategies to reduce hunger and improve the nutrition of low income communities.

Thanks to support from the United Parcel Service Foundation, the CFSC has been able to assist

these initiatives with cash grants and technical assistance. In addition, the Coalition is helping develop a unified approach to evaluation measures for the outcomes of each initiative.

Future issues of this newsletter will include profiles of each regional initiative supported by the Coalition, including their challenges, opportunities and lessons learned for other regional organizing efforts. In coming years, other regional community food security initiatives will certainly develop, and build upon the foundation of success and best practices, forging new partnerships among urban and rural food and agriculture system interests.

**WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY COALITION?**

The CFSC is a national network of organizations forging new ground in developing innovative approaches to food and farm needs for communities across America. Started in 1994, it is at the forefront of building a national movement around community food security.

**WHY SHOULD I BECOME A MEMBER?**

Becoming a member is a way to strengthen your connection to the Coalition and other related organizations and individuals across the country. Your membership helps build a dynamic national movement, and provides important support for innovative CFS initiatives. Membership also comes with certain benefits: a subscription to the quarterly CFS News newsletter, voting privileges (for organizations), and discounts on Coalition publications.

**MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES:**

Please join at the organization member level. By doing so, it demonstrates your organization’s commitment and lends us greater political strength.

- \$35 Individuals
- \$50 Small organizations, with less than \$100,000 budget
- \$100 Large organizations, with more than \$100,000 budget
- \$500 Individual life time membership
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ Low income individuals, students, or seniors (sliding scale—\$1-\$25)

**PUBLICATIONS AND OTHER MERCHANDISE:**

- \$12 Healthy Farms, Healthy Kids: Evaluating the Barriers and Opportunities, for Farm to School Programs. 2001.
- \$15 Full Color, original artwork, T-shirts. (100% organic cotton shirt) – Circle one: S, M, L, XL
- \$10 Getting Food on the Table: An Action Guide to Local Food Policy. 1999.
- \$10 Hot Peppers and Parking Lot Peaches: Evaluating Farmers’ Markets in Low Income Communities. 1999.
- \$30 Seeds of Change: Strategies for Food Security for the Inner City. 1993.
- \$18 What’s Cooking: A Guide to Community Food Assessments. 2002.
- \$22 Evaluation Toolkit and Handbook. 2004.
- \$10 Linking Farms with Schools. 2004.

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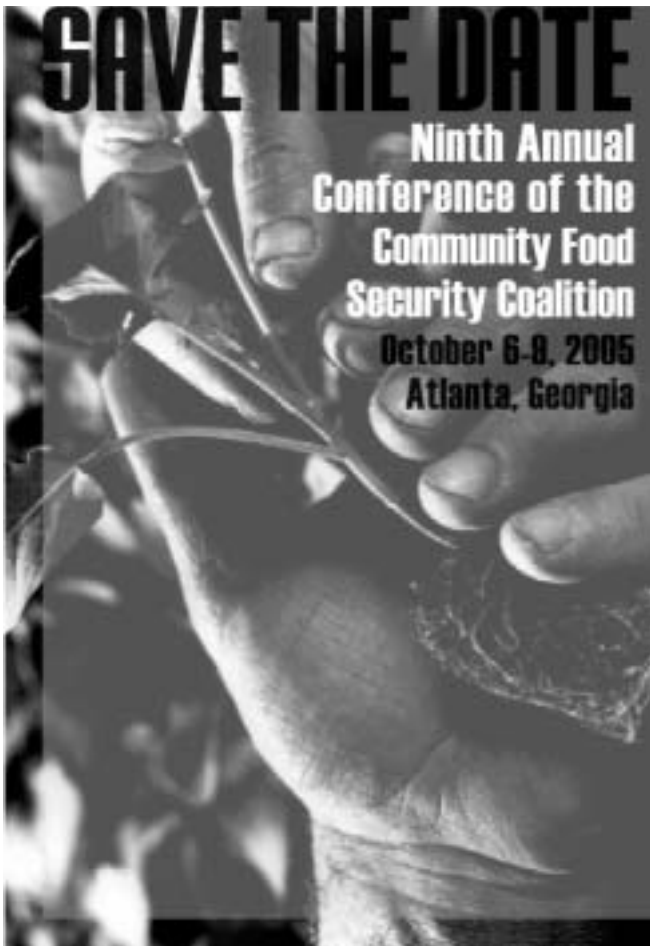
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## SAVE THE DATE

THE 2ND NATIONAL FARM TO CAFETERIA CONFERENCE

### Putting Local Food on the Table: Farms and Food Service in Partnership

Join with farm to cafeteria enthusiasts from around the country for the second National Farm to Cafeteria Conference. The Conference will be held June 16th—18th at Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio (60 minutes from Columbus). Keynote speakers include Marion Nestle, author of *Food Politics*, and David Kline, author of *Great Possessions: an Amish Farmer's Journal*. Also scheduled are field trips, topical films, sessions for food service management and great local food. Workshop topics include: Policy Issues: From Local Schools to Congress; Digging Deeper into Farm to Institution; Farm to School 101; Food & Farm Education; and Food, Farming and Rural Communities. The conference is sponsored by the Community Food Security Coalition, Farm Aid, Kenyon College, the Center for Food & Justice, Food Routes and the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association. For more information, log on to [www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org).