



COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY *news*

A COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY COALITION PUBLICATION ■ SPRING 2004
SPECIAL ISSUE ON COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENTS

FARM TO CAFETERIA LEGISLATION:

Charting new urban rural
partnerships for
community food security

*By Thomas Forster and
Sarah Borron*

The CFSC's proposed legislation, "Assistance for Farm to Cafeteria Projects," which would establish a seed grant fund for school food services to purchase food from local farmers, is now an established section of the Child Nutrition Bill working its way through the US Congress. In the House of Representatives, we had 40 co-sponsors for the bill before it was included in the child nutrition bill, which determines how school lunch, school breakfast, WIC, and other child nutrition programs will be run for the next five years.

As we go to press, the US Senate is taking up the bill. We have twelve co-sponsors, led by Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Arlen Specter (R-PA). The Farm to Cafeteria projects, the Community Food Projects grants, and the work of the Coalition and its members demonstrate how powerful it is to bring multiple sectors of the food system together to create sustainable, healthy local food systems. There appears to be a sea change

(See [FARM TO CAFETERIA](#) on pg. 7)

Community Food Assessment: A Tool to Develop Better Food Systems

By Kai Siedenburg and Raquel Bournbonesque

All over the country, community food security advocates are striving to make good food accessible to all, and to address the interrelated problems of hunger, food insecurity, and diet-related disease. With the current widespread attention to diet-related disease and intense political pressure to generate solutions, this is a crucial moment to explore the factors that are driving and limiting individual food choices, as well as the opportunities to create food environments that support healthy choices. While there are many approaches to improving food systems, a community food assessment is one that is quickly gaining momentum because of its capacity to engage a broad range of groups in developing integrated solutions.

A community food assessment is a powerful way to tell the story of what's happening with food in a community. CFSC defines it as "a participatory and collaborative process that examines a broad range of food-related issues and assets in order to inform actions to improve the community's food system." Through such assessments, a diverse group of stakeholders work together to research their local food system, to publicize their findings, and to implement or advocate for changes based on those findings. To date, about 40 assessments have been completed in the U.S., about half of them in California.



New Leaders for Better Health advocacy training in Fresno, CA. Photo: Fresno Metro Ministry.

There are many possible reasons for organizing an assessment. They include both short- and long-term benefits, and both tangible outcomes and less obvious process-oriented changes that build capacity for future actions. Potential results include new programs and resources that increase access to healthy foods, such as food stores, farmers' markets, transit routes, or cooking classes. An assessment also can lead to improvements to or better utilization of existing programs and resources. It can increase understanding of food system issues among the public and decision-makers, which can in turn lead to new policies, resources, and commitment for addressing food-related issues. Other important benefits include increased skills and leadership in participants and new and stronger partnerships, which build capacity for future actions. This is one of the most powerful outcomes of the

(See [COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENT](#) on pg. 6)

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Spring 2004

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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Message from the President

In the U.S., most of us have lost touch with the origins of our food. It comes from hundreds or thousands of miles away, and was produced by people we will never meet. Advances in food storage and processing have made our food supply safer but not necessarily more nutritious. And while supermarkets have brought a wide variety of foods to higher-income areas, many inner-city, rural, and low-income residents have less access to nutritious food than they had decades ago. Due to market concentration, small farmers and processors no longer have a place to market their goods and many local economies have declined. The transition has happened over decades, and most of us have not questioned the effects on our health, communities, economies, agriculture, or the environment. The current food system is seen as mostly good and largely inevitable, partly because of extensive food industry advertising. It is almost as if a mass hypnosis has taken place.

I see the process of community food assessments as a way to snap our fingers and come out of that hypnosis. Assessments provide a vehicle for communities to examine what is and isn't working in the food system. They spark dialogue about what kind of food system people want, and actions to make that vision a reality. Oregon Food Bank and Oregon State University have partnered to sponsor two community food assessment workshops and have more scheduled. The process of planning and carrying out these workshops brings new partners to

the table and sparks new discussions. Players from diverse parts of the food system find common ground and ways to work together to benefit their communities.

The community food assessments that follow build awareness, catalyze community action, and produce tangible changes. Surveyors at a rural post office asking patrons about the sources of their food generate discussion at the family dinner table and questions at the local grocery. Focus groups in many parts of Oregon have informed us about the conditions of poverty and hunger, while also generating connections between participants and germinating grassroots efforts. Dot surveys at farmers markets inform managers and farmers about their customers' interests, and cause those customers to think about how shopping at the market benefits their local economy. As we know from assessments in other places, sparking these discussions builds interest and momentum for community actions to improve the food system.

We may not have the power of the mass media through advertising, but we do have the power of the grassroots. Community food assessments are tools we can use to mobilize individuals and communities, snap the public out of its food systems hypnosis, and create a food system that works for everyone.

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Fresno Fresh Access Engages Diverse Communities and Local Policymakers

By Edie Jessup

Fresno County, located in California's Central Valley, is a culturally diverse county with over 800,000 residents. It is the most productive agricultural county in the nation, yet it also has some of the highest unemployment and poverty rates in California, and childhood hunger and diet-related diseases are prevalent.

In fall of 2002, Fresno Metro Ministry started the planning process for a community food assessment, working in partnership with a wide range of organizations, including youth empowerment groups, farm organizations, schools, faith based groups, and with support from the California Nutrition Network and the Community Food Security Coalition.

Over the course of the next year, the group continued to meet as they developed project goals and survey materials with an eye to the cultural diversity in Fresno. In June 2003, Fresno Metro Ministry was awarded a USDA Community Food Projects grant, which is enabling them to expand the food assessment from the originally planned two city council and county supervisorial districts to the entire county, making it one of the largest assessments conducted to date.

The goals of the Fresno Fresh Access Community Food Assessment are to develop a Fresno County Food Policy Council; raise awareness of hunger and food issues in the county; improve access to nutritious, quality, and affordable food; increase utilization of federal nutrition programs; and expand the programs' use of fresh, local produce. The scope of the project is ambitious, and noteworthy for its use of a neighborhood-based survey conducted by diverse community residents, and for evaluating data

by political district to provide a foundation for shaping local policy.

Recruiting and training residents to conduct surveys in their neighborhoods is a major component of the project, and an important strategy for empowering the community. Over 30 local organizations are committed to surveying. They receive training in how to conduct the survey and discuss the purpose of the survey and how results will be collated and analyzed. The trainings also lead to lively discussion of their concepts of neighborhood and barriers to food access. Surveyors receive a packet of materials with a survey for consumers and a survey of local food sources.

Metro staff and trainers are in phone contact with the surveyors over the two weeks they are in the field to answer questions and provide support. The surveyors are reconvened after the two-week period to do a short focus group and a qualitative analysis of the information they collected. This sharing of experiences has proven very valuable for integrating learning and empowering the surveyors. Many of them get excited about being engaged in this community process and volunteer to do more.

The high level of cultural diversity has been a wonderful and challenging aspect of the project. Over 100 languages are spoken in Fresno County. Cultural groups involved in the project include Latino/a, Hmong, Cambodian, Punjabi, and Native American. Working with interpreters, immigrant organizations, and ethnic farming groups has been key to allow the project to effectively engage members of a low-income, multicultural community in creating a rich picture of food access in their community.

The focus on developing

relationships with local policy makers and assessing neighborhoods within specific supervisory districts in order to shape local policies also are key elements of the Fresno project. Effective media and communications techniques, including monthly community forums and a press conference, helped influence policymakers and garner public support. A public forum in December 2003 engaged local policy and decision makers in discussing four preliminary neighborhood assessments conducted by students in a geomapping class. The project is fortunate to have assistance from California State University students with surveying, data analysis, and geomapping, and from professors with statistical analysis.

The project will present another interim report to policymakers at a public forum in winter of 2004, and a final report in fall of 2005. The food policy recommendations are still to be defined. The assessment has compiled extensive qualitative data, which will inform development of an action plan.

If successful, Fresno Fresh Access will promote a strategy for reducing high hunger and obesity rates by improving access to good, local produce, particularly in low-income areas of Fresno city and in smaller communities in the county. Best of all, the widespread community engagement will have a long-lasting impact on improving food security in Fresno County.

For more information, see <http://www.fresnometmin.org> or contact Edie Jessup at (559) 485-1416 or edie@fresnometmin.org.

San Francisco Health Department Takes Lead in Supporting Community Food Assessments

In early 2001, the San Francisco Department of Public Health's (SFDPH) Occupational and Environmental Health Section initiated a unique community food assessment project in partnership with two community-based organizations. Seventeen youth from a low-resource neighborhood of Southeast San Francisco were trained to develop and conduct a survey on residents' food purchasing practices, and to disseminate their results. This project, called Youth Envision, surveyed 280 residents and found that key barriers to purchasing healthy foods included an unsafe neighborhood and poor quality food. Respondents indicated that a farmers market and a new or improved grocery store would be the most valuable community resources for purchasing healthy food. (A case study of this assessment is available at <http://www.foodsecurity.org/pubs.html>, under "What's Cooking.")

Inspired by the results from the Youth Envision project, SFDPH initiated a project called San Francisco Food Systems (SFFS) in late 2001. The project's charge is to address food systems issues within the City and County of San Francisco through research, policy planning, and recommendations. In 2002, SFFS developed and distributed a guidebook to assist communities in understanding their local food system and in advocating for their food needs. This resource contains examples of past community food assessments, data sources and collection methods, and possible funding sources. It is available at <http://www.sffoodsystems.org> (see the "Community Research and CFAs" page).

SFFS also has provided training and technical assistance around community food assessments to residents and community-based organizations. For example, SFFS worked with a resident of Hunter's View, a public housing development, to research food management strategies under constrained resources. After receiving training in public health research methods, the resident developed, administered, and evaluated a survey to understand the food issues affecting his community. Additionally, SFFS helped an organization develop a survey that identified barriers to providing healthy foods among home child care providers subsidized by the Child Care Food Program. The survey results have helped the organization to develop programming to improve the skills and knowledge of child care providers around nutrition and purchasing locally grown food.

SFFS also has incorporated the use of food assessments in its work with San Francisco City and County agencies. SFFS partnered with the local school district to develop and implement a survey that captured information from principals on their school's food service facilities, competitive food sales, nutrition education practices, and opinions about the district's meal programs. This information has helped in the design of a pilot farm-to-school program. SFFS also helped design an assessment of the food environment at a long-term care facility managed by SFDPH. Findings revealed that changes

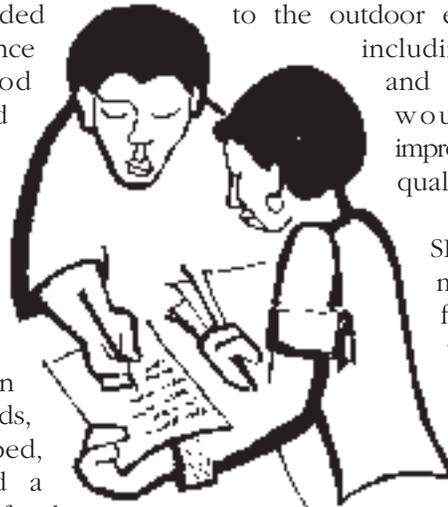


Illustration: Rini Templeton

to the outdoor environment, including gardens and an orchard, would help improve residents' quality of life.

Currently, SFFS is creating maps of the food system using GIS software for SFDPH and the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency. This information will help focus the city's resources on attracting food establishments in areas targeted for redevelopment. Given its goal of connecting residents to their local food system, San Francisco Food Systems remains committed to encouraging the use of community food assessments as a tool for examining local food concerns and advocating for change. While the leadership in and promotion of food assessments by San Francisco's Department of Public Health may seem unusual, many city and county health departments can play an important role in such community-based assessments, and should be considered a potential resource.

This article was written by the SFFS staff: Paula Jones, Fernando Ona, Leah Rimkus and Dyeschia Sampson. They can be reached at (415) 252-3937; info@sffoodsystems.org.

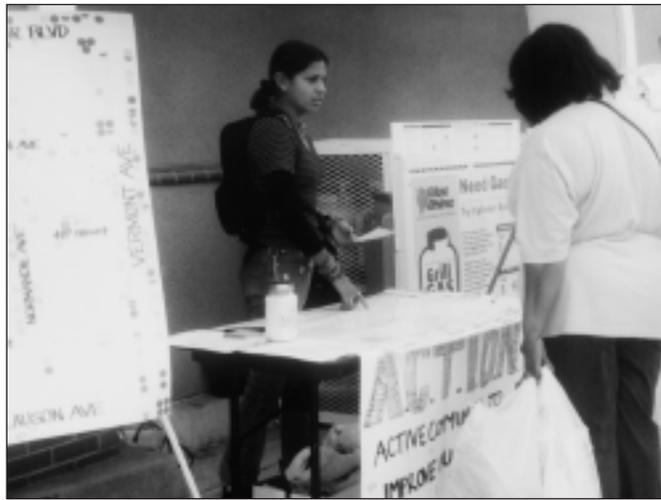
Taking ACTION in South Central L.A.

By Neelam Sharma

Active Community To Improve Our Nutrition (ACTION) is a project launched by Community Services Unlimited, Inc. to make positive changes around food and nutrition issues in our community. Our service area, South Central Los Angeles, is flooded with stores that offer mostly high-fat, highly processed foods. In the ACTION survey area alone, there are 50 fast food restaurants and 39 liquor stores/mini-markets, but only eight restaurants and four supermarkets.

CSU and our partners decided to conduct a food assessment because we are committed to building the health of our community, and we understand that food is an important link to the many problems we face. We began by receiving training donated by CFSC in Participatory Appraisal methods, and combined this learning with approaches we were already using to facilitate learning using an existing knowledge base (informed by the work of Paulo Freire). Our aim was to do several things simultaneously: collect qualitative data from community members in an inclusive and interesting way; educate them about food and justice issues; and engage them in making long-term changes to improve the health of the community.

We worked with the following local organizations as project collaborators: Atlachinolli Front, Blazers Safe Haven, Healthy School Food Coalition, and New Panther Vanguard Movement. A planning committee was established with representatives from these organizations and individuals who live and/or work in the community. Collectively we figured out our vision,



ACTION member gathers assessment data outside a local supermarket. Photo: Neelam Sharma, CSU Inc

and then defined the assessment boundaries. We decided to thoroughly survey a small ten by fifteen block area.

ACTION spent two months carrying out intensive community outreach, targeting schools, churches, community organizations, local 'mom and pop' stores, and individuals. Meanwhile, the planning committee continued to meet and designed the survey tools for the assessment. We developed tools for the various sectors of the community we had decided to target: elementary, middle, and high school students; adults in group settings such as churches or community groups; and individual community members, such as shoppers outside the local Food 4 Less. The final stage of preparation was piloting the tools—we tested each one with the intended audience, and then engaged participants in dialogue to learn their thoughts. Through this process, each tool was refined and improved and one was abandoned.

The assessment was carried out from May 2003 to January 2004. ACTION engaged 750 community members at 18 sites, fueled solely by volunteer power and in-kind donations. Each survey activity included

a corresponding education component.

We gathered valuable data from local people about how they perceive access to healthy food; we educated folks about alternative food choices; and most importantly, we developed partnerships with enthusiastic community members who want to build this community by confronting nutrition and food availability issues.

Since January, we have been busy analyzing the data collected, writing reports, and implementing projects that have come about as a result

of the ACTION assessment:

- An Urban Farmer Training program for people who want to do community gardening.
- The Growing Healthy program, designed to increase youth involvement in community gardens and integrate nutrition education.
- Transformation of a local liquor store from typical convenience store fare of soda and junk food to fresh produce, fresh bread, and juice.

In the future, we hope to implement a class that will teach participants how to cook quick, healthy meals utilizing local produce, while providing nutrition education about the health promotion and disease prevention effects of specific foods. Changing our food system is a long-term endeavor, and we are here for the long haul.

To receive a copy of the full assessment report, please send us your email and address.

Neelam Sharma can be reached at Neelam@globalpanther.com or (310) 780-0426.

Conducting a Community Food Assessment: Four Key Steps

Organize

- Identify key stakeholders
- Organize initial meeting(s)
- Determine the group's interest in conducting an assessment
- Identify and recruit other participants, representing diverse interests and skills
- Continue to organize and engage constituents throughout project

Plan

- Review other assessments
- Determine assessment purposes and goals
- Develop an overall plan and decision-making process; clarify roles

- Define geographic and population boundaries
- Identify and secure grants, in-kind resources, and/or project sponsor
- Recruit and train staff and volunteers

Research

- Develop questions and indicators
- Identify existing data and information needed
- Develop research tools and methods
- Collect and analyze data
- Compile and summarize findings

Advocate

- Discuss findings with community and develop recommendations
- Create action plan to implement priority recommendations
- Clarify roles and determine whether additional partners should be recruited
- Develop media strategy (build relationships, frame message, create news)
- Disseminate findings to the public, policymakers and journalists
- Advocate for policymakers and others to take action based on recommendations
- Evaluate assessment project

For much more information about how to organize an assessment, see CFSC's *What's Cooking in Your Food System? A Guide to Community Food Assessment*. See Page 7 for more information on how to order *What's Cooking?*

COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENTS (cont. from page 1)

assessment process, and an important reason for taking a participatory approach.

A community food assessment is a very flexible tool, and each one is unique. Assessments vary widely in their scale and scope, participants, issue focus, methods used, and outcomes, among other factors. Assessments may address a wide variety of issues, including hunger and food insecurity, diet-related diseases, barriers to food access, existing food stores and resources, local food production and distribution, economic development potential, and food-related policies. Some assessments are targeted to very specific issues and outcomes, while others take a much broader approach and generate more comprehensive research or a vision for the local food system. Whatever their scope, it is important that assessments balance the breadth of a food systems perspective with a focus on gathering information that is relevant to the assessment goals.

Most assessments involve a broad range of partners. These may include non-profit and community-based organizations, service providers, colleges and universities, civic and cultural groups, faith organizations, youth groups, local government, and local businesses, among others. It's important to have a variety of skills represented in the group, including organizing, planning, research, outreach, and facilitation. Many assessments are organized with several tiers of participation, for example a core group that does much of the daily work, a broader advisory group, and an even larger group of community members that provide input.

The participatory nature of assessments is key to their effectiveness. While in many cases it might be faster for one or several people to conduct the research, most assessments take a participatory approach because it builds broader involvement in and commitment to improving the food system and the

community. This participatory quality exists both at an organizational level, with diverse groups involved in planning and implementing the assessment, and at a broader community level, with residents involved in the project at various levels. In some cases, residents simply provide input through surveys and/or focus groups. In others, they are more actively involved in helping plan and implement the assessment and deciding how to use the results.

Community food assessments use a range of approaches and methods to conduct their research. Most use a combination of primary research (original data-gathering) and secondary research (compiling data from existing sources), and collect both qualitative and quantitative data. Assessment projects typically conduct at least two surveys, often in person. While the surveys vary greatly in size and type, they are typically relatively short and focus on particular aspects of the food system, such as access to healthful

COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENTS (cont. from page 6)

foods or food assistance. Many projects have found that mapping is a powerful tool to document disparities in food access and relate them to rates of poverty, diet-related disease, or other factors. Some use focus groups or community meetings to gather more qualitative input and/or to discuss initial research results. It is important that at least some of the research methods reflect the participatory, community-based nature of the assessment process so as to build community engagement and capacity.

Community food assessment research is different from traditional research in many ways. It is of, by, and for the community members who are actors in the process, not conducted by outsiders who see the community as research subjects. Instead of trying to isolate one issue or variable, it reflects the complexity of multiple factors in the food system and how they interact. It also is explicitly action-oriented and does not pretend to be neutral, although it is still important that assessment research be rigorous, honest, and strive to minimize sources of bias. While community groups may not be

research experts, they have valuable knowledge and relationships with other community members that can generate a valid and robust picture of what is happening in the community in a way that a standard survey conducted by outsiders could not.

The picture created by an assessment builds awareness and highlights problems and opportunities in the food system. The assessment findings can be used to leverage support for proposed programs, policies, and other food-related improvements. While the research results are important, the process of generating those results is at least as important for engaging people, developing their skills, and cultivating creative solutions. The participatory and empowering nature of assessments builds capacity for ongoing involvement and long-term change in the community and its food system.

For more information, contact Raquel Bournbonesque at (310) 822-5410 or raquel@foodsecurity.org.

FARM TO CAFETERIA (continued from page 1)

developing to create solutions to a very broken system. Bridges between urban and rural groups, between anti-hunger, health and nutrition, family farm and urban food movements are being expanded where they have begun, and started where they do not exist. The Coalition is currently working with its partners to support building of new bridges at the national policy level.

Advocates representing different aspects of the food system—anti-hunger programs, family farm, nutrition, conservation—often focus on what's particularly relevant to themselves, with only sporadic collaboration. Food and farm policy itself is not written in a way that

acknowledges the link between agriculture and eating. The Coalition and many partnering organizations have proposed a three year "policy partnership" to examine those connections and find, as one Congressperson has asked for, "policies that farmers and consumers like."

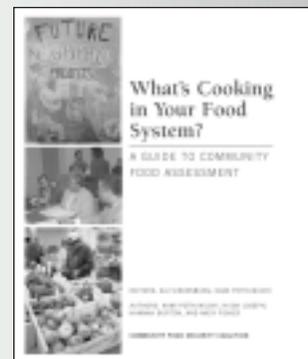
This cluster will engage researchers, media, youth, and grassroots organizations in developing cross-cutting legislative priorities to build strong regional food systems that promote healthy food choices, address social justice and community development, and provide sustainable markets for family farms.

Looking for More Information About Community Food Assessments?

Try the CFSC Website!

The Community Food Assessment Program webpage provides extensive information from and about assessment projects. It includes lists of assessments, reports from completed projects, sample survey tools, resources and contacts, and brief handouts. More information on assessments underway outside of California will be added this summer.

Point your browser to <http://www.foodsecurity.org/cfahome.html>



What's Cookin'?

Now available from the CFSC: "What's Cooking in Your Food System: A Guide to Community Food Assessment", a 130 page practical guidebook to every phase of assessments. This Guide includes case studies of nine Community Food Assessments; tips for planning and organizing an assessment; guidance on research methods and strategies for promoting community participation; and ideas for translating an assessment into action for change. \$18 + shipping. Order through the CFSC website at www.foodsecurity.org or with the publications order form on page 15 of this newsletter.

The California Community Food Assessment Program

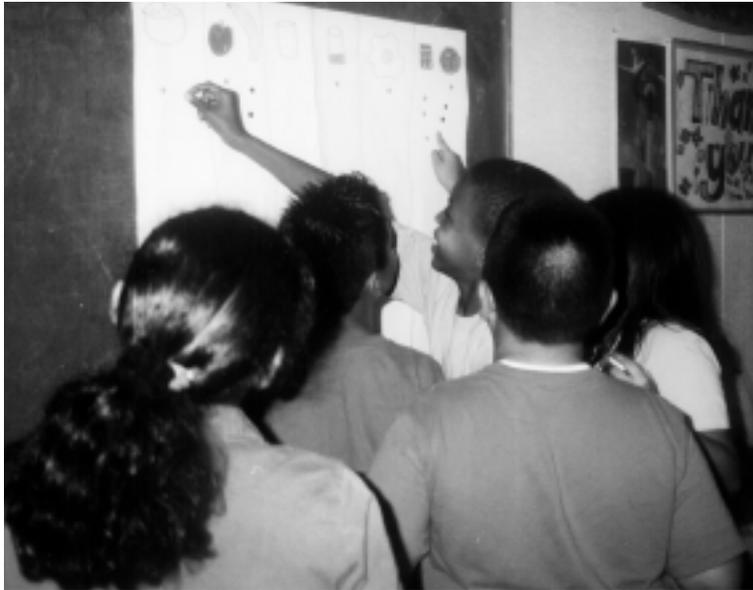
By Raquel Bournbonesque

In 2001, the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) created a new program to promote community food assessments as a tool to improve food security and build better food systems. The Community Food Assessment (CFA) Program provides a wide range of resources and support to groups working in low-income communities in California to help them organize effective, action-oriented assessments. It is the first and only program in the country dedicated to supporting groups with conducting Community Food Assessments.

The program focuses on three key areas: outreach to build interest in assessments; training and technical assistance to support assessment projects; and linking assessments with opportunities to shape local and state policy (in collaboration with the California Food and Justice Coalition). The CFA program provides extensive support to assessment projects, including mentoring and assistance throughout the assessment process. Program staff and consultants help projects to develop realistic and strategic goals, identify effective strategies, and create appropriate research methods and tools, depending on the interests and needs of local groups and at no cost to those groups.

Over the last two and half years, CFSC's program has greatly increased awareness of and interest in assessments in California, and

catalyzed the development of new projects. Since the program started, seven new assessments have been launched in California with support from CFSC, and several other ongoing projects also have received significant assistance. Assessments are currently



Elementary students in Los Angeles participate in ACTION breakfast survey. Photo: Neelam Sharma, CSU Inc.

underway in Shasta County, Fresno County, Hollywood, Duarte, Los Angeles and San Diego. The CFA Program has helped assessments move forward effectively and avoid 're-inventing the wheel,' and provided opportunities for assessment organizers to network and share information with each other. It also has encouraged a shift toward a more participatory, community-based approach to assessment, one that engages a broad range of stakeholders and empowers community members to work together to create local, sustainable changes.

New and emerging CFA program directions include:

- An outreach program focused on raising interest and initiating food assessments in African-American faith-based communities in Los Angeles County.
- Promotion of and support for school food assessments.
- Stronger linkages between assessments and local and state policy advocacy efforts.
- More emphasis on helping assessment organizers to communicate results, develop action plans, and integrate policy issues.

CFSC is very grateful to the California Nutrition Network for funding this program, particularly Sue Foerster and Frank Buck for their leadership in developing the CFA program. CFSC also has additional funding to provide limited assistance to groups in other states, and is seeking funds

to expand this support. Most CFA program materials are relevant for people throughout the country, including an extensive guidebook, an orientation packet, and a program webpage featuring reports, survey tools, and summaries of projects.

For more information, contact Raquel Bournbonesque at (310) 822-5410 or raquel@foodsecurity.org, or see the CFA Program webpage at http://www.foodsecurity.org/cfa_home.html

Request for Partnerships for Regional Organizing Projects

The Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) is seeking to establish food system organizing-related partnerships with local, state and regional organizations across the US and Canada, as part of our newly expanded Regional Organizing Initiative.

In 2004, the CFSC would like to establish collaborations with up to two projects in different areas of the country outside of California, where initial pilot projects have taken place. We are looking for joint projects in which the presence of the CFSC, as a national organization with expertise in various areas of community food security, can add value to the work being done locally. Some potential collaborative projects include a:

- Statewide farm to school coalition
- Campaign to win passage of a municipal food policy council
- Regional food systems coalition
- Set of trainings on community food assessments or a large scale assessment
- Regional training and technical assistance program with community food security projects linked in a network

The CFSC does not currently have funding available to provide for collaborations. We would need to raise funds jointly with the local partner(s). We will make a commitment to play a substantive role in the fundraising process.

Timing:	
Deadline for submission of proposals:	August 1
Notification of decision:	September 15
Meeting with partners:	Possible on-site interviews in September. Group meeting in Milwaukee at CFSC Conference, October 17-19
Fundraising:	Fall –Winter 2004/2005
Likely project start timeframe:	Spring-Summer, 2005
Length of project collaboration:	To be determined, but most likely at least two years, with annual evaluations by all partners

For more information on this initiative, please download our Request for Partnerships from our website at www.foodsecurity.org, or if you don't have internet access, contact our office at 310-822-5410 to have a copy mailed out to you.

Community Food Assessment Resource List

RESOURCES FOCUSED ON COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENT

Community Food Security Coalition, Community Food Assessment Program webpage.

http://www.foodsecurity.org/cfa_home.html

What's Cooking in Your Food System: A Guide to Community Food Assessment, K. Pothukuchi et al, 2002.

<http://www.foodsecurity.org/pubs.html>

USDA Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit. Barbara Cohen, 2000.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/efan02013/> Phone: (800) 999-6779

OTHER INFORMATION RELEVANT TO COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENT

Community Organizing and Community Building for Health. Meredith Minkler, 1997. London, UK: Routledge.

Community Tool Box. <http://ctb.ku.edu/>

The Organizing for Social Change Manual. Midwest Academy, 2001.

<http://www.midwestacademy.com/Book/page3.html>

Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding & Mobilizing a City's Assets. J. Kretzmann and J.

McKnight, 1993. <http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/publications/community/buildingblurb.html>

The Capacity Inventory, The Asset-Based Community Development Institute.

<http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcd/abcdtools.html>

Reaching the Parts. Sustain - The Alliance for Better Food and Farming, 2000. http://www.sustainweb.org/pub_

Food Research and Action Center. <http://www.frac.org>

News for a Change: An Advocates Guide to Working with the Media. L. Wallack et al., 1999. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

SPIN Project. <http://www.spinproject.org>

CFSC Awards Outstanding Leaders

Every year the Community Food Security Coalition awards a few outstanding leaders in the non-profit and public sector. In 2003 at the annual conference in Boston, the following individuals received the annual Community Food Security Leadership award.



Pat Gray, Executive Director of The Food Project, has worked with The Food Project since its founding in 1991. She has played a lead role in building The Food Project into a leading voice nationally for youth in food systems work.



Kathy Lawrence: I first met Kathy around the Earth Summit in 1992. She was one of those who showed me the connections between growing food, seeking justice, and protecting the environment. The most time I spent with Kathy was when she founded Just Food in New York City.

Kathy Lawrence has great gifts—we know about her spirit, her grasp of issues, her intelligence, and organizing abilities. But some of you at this

conference may have noticed a unique gift of hers—she can make sense at any speed! She can talk slowly and make sense. She can talk fast and make perfect sense. She can go into overdrive and we still understand everything. And on special occasions, when time is really running out, she will go into hyperdrive, stop taking breaths and still be perfectly articulate! She has so much to say, so little time!

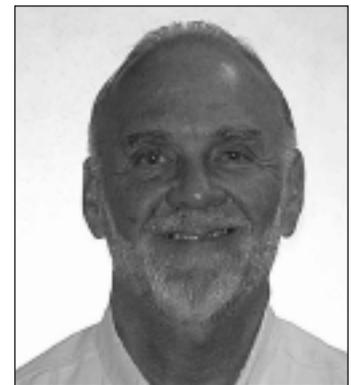
Kathy moved on to a position of national leadership at the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture, and Just Food's loss is all our gain. We saw the brilliant work the Campaign did in the last Farm Bill. Kathy, we wish you many more years of inspiring leadership!

— Peter Mann, World Hunger Year



Mark Winne took over the reins of the newly formed Hartford Food System (HFS) in 1979 and as Executive Director for almost a quarter century, made HFS the leading organization working on food and hunger issues for Hartford, Connecticut's low income and elderly residents. In that capacity, he pioneered and finessed many innovative agriculture, food and nutrition programs, and spun some into national models. HFS projects included a commercial hydroponic greenhouse, the Connecticut Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, several farmers' markets, a community supported agriculture farm with a focus on low-income members, and promoting neighborhood supermarkets.

Mark also realized the importance of policy changes to support food security objectives. He was co-founder and past chair of the City of Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy, and led the development of the Connecticut Farmland Trust that is now actively preserving farms and farmland across the state. Many CFSC members know Mark best for his national leadership on initiatives that built off his experience with HFS. This includes being a co-founder and active player in the National Association of Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs, the Northeast Food System, and the Community Food Security Coalition.



Frank Buck has been a tireless advocate for food security causes within the State of California's Department of Health Services, where he has worked for the past five years. He has helped to build and is responsible for the food security channel, which currently provides over \$1 million in grants for the support of 16 food security projects in California. Because of his initiative, the Nutrition Network has played a lead role in ensuring that all farmers' markets in the state continue to accept food stamps through electronic benefits transfer (EBT). Frank has also played an important role in funding and guiding the start-up of the California Food and Justice Coalition, and is currently seeking support for food access-related programs through the state Treasurer's Economic Redevelopment bond funds.

Comments from Youth Attendees About the 2003 CFSC Conference in Boston

I saw the building blocks of success, empowerment, leadership and personal power being given with loving discipline to youth surrounded by a supportive community. I felt the power of sharing our common roots to the land.

– Tera Couchman, FoodWorks

Attending the conference and being able to interact with those close to and involved with the CFSC has given me renewed energies to grow the movement and practice through education a sustainable local living food system.

– Kaimana Pine

Ma'o Youth Organic Farm

One thing that really inspired me was one of the workshops I went to. It was called “Should we change the name” and from the very start it seemed like no one was going to agree on the same thing. But as the workshop went



Youth participants calling their Congressperson to push for the Conservation Security Program.

on and we discussed the issue more we came to a unanimous vote to change the name and only 3 people out of 20 something did not agree with the group.

– Joshua Spear, Lots to Gardens

I will, alongside our youth and community members, evaluate our work to determine what impacts we truly have. Are we creating systemic change? How so? What do we need to change in our work to get closer to our goal of creating real change in our community? How do we actively cultivate power in the hands of the youth and adults with whom we work? How do we translate our goals of true diversity and representation and shared power into all of our work and organizational structures?

– Kirsten Walter, Lots to Gardens

This conference, and entire experience, has made me really think about what direction I want to see us move in. Beyond the organization even, into my own personal life. I always wanted to live out in the country, maybe be a farmer. Finally I am involved in farming and I see that where it needs to happen is in urban areas. This conference has only increased that thought and made it much stronger. In one of the Urban Ag workshops someone asked if farming expertise was



Youth on a tour of The Food Project's farm in Lincoln.

needed. The response was ‘absolutely!!!’ Have I, through BLAST and the CFSC, finally found a place to be?

– Emily Reardon

MSU Student Organic Farm

We can make a difference...If you get enough people to call in to the Congress I believe there will be a change!

– Elizabeth Wilson

Neighborhood Nutrition Network

As ‘food security workers’ we’re like a minority and coming to his conference made me feel like I was coming home to a family I never knew I had.

– J.P. Davidson, Foodshare

I also take away a newfound sense of unity and hope, having found that I do not stand on the front lines alone, but that I am surrounded by fresh troops—spoiling for the fight. Perhaps more than what we stand to learn from each other it is this sense of not being alone that will sustain us, will sustain our programs, for years to come.

– Ira Dean Adams

Chicasaw Nation

Community Organizing as an Important Tool for Building the CFS Movement

By Michelle Mascarenhas

In the current political climate, we often forget that throughout modern history, organized groups of committed people have won victories that have moved our societies in more progressive directions. In the U.S., mass mobilizations of workers in marches and strikes won us a shorter work week. Huge campaigns involving hundreds of thousands of people in membership organizations led to many civil rights victories. And mothers and others mobilized to stop toxic pollution in their neighborhoods have successfully challenged environmental racism and injustice.

Today, we face an industrialized food system—propped up by economic and political structures—that harms family farmers, workers, ecosystems, and low-income community members. It has caused families who for generations have produced healthy food while stewarding the land to go out of business. Untold immigrant workers have lost limbs and lives to its huge processing plants. It has swallowed up topsoil and endangered species. And it has caused widespread health problems in low-income communities.

Community food security projects offer positive models of the local, community-based food systems we're striving to create. Urban agriculture, farmers' markets, farm to school programs, community supported agriculture and basket programs are examples of



Illustration: Rini Templeton

components of the food system many of us envision.

But we know that current government policies and industry practices stack the deck against us making it difficult to scale these models up. Without radical changes to federal farm policy (cheap food), environmental and health protection policy (do we have any left?), and labor policies (low wages), how can CFS projects compete with foods and beverages sold through the industrial food system?

We need models for the future but we also need to challenge the dominant system that puts that future in peril.

So, one part of the case for community organizing in building the food justice movement is because collective action is a tried-and-true method for changing government policies and industry practices. But another reason to organize in particular communities—family farmer communities and low-income communities—is that many of us also envision a future in which the groups of people who currently have very little power over the food system will have a lot more power.

To me, this is the difference between *justice* and *equity*. We don't just want African-American communities that have been deprived

of supermarkets to get supermarkets. We want organized groups in those communities involved in deciding which markets locate in their neighborhoods, what they stock, what kinds of wages they pay, and who they hire.

How do we help build the collective power of low-income people and family farmers to challenge current policies and industry practices?

To build the movement for a more just and sustainable food system, I believe we must:

Develop our collective capacity to organize in low-income communities and farming communities around the nation. This means building our skills, hiring trained community organizers, changing our organizational cultures and structures, and developing new funding streams.

Build our bases in these communities. First, identifying the groups who have an interest in changing the current system—from farm workers and family farmers to factory and cafeteria workers to parents, teachers, and youth. And then identifying community leaders, finding out what will move them to take action, and working with them to engage other community members in the struggle.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING
(continued from page 11)

Work with these community members to identify the issues that are most important to them even if they are not the ones we had set our hearts on. For instance, in the LA schools, we at the Center for Food and Justice (CFJ) began working to introduce farmers' market salad bars into the schools but learned that other issues pressed more buttons for parents, teachers, and students. We shifted our focus from promoting a particular model to organizing the Healthy School Food Coalition (HSFC). Together with other allies, CFJ and the HSFC have since won a ban on sales of sodas in schools and a ban on irradiated foods and are working on the passage of a comprehensive food policy.

Develop local (and later state and national) campaigns based on these community-identified issues putting the community members at the center of the decision making process about who to target and what tactics will be most effective while playing to the strengths of the community members.

Use these campaigns to engage our folks in broader movements that challenge corporate power and the structures that put profit before the well-being of people and the environment.

Michelle Mascarenbas is a Food and Society Policy Fellow and Coordinator of Rooted In Community, a national network that empowers young people to take leadership in their communities. To learn more, email Michelle at mlm@sonic.net if you're interested in books and articles on community organizing and social movements.

Welcome New CFSC Staff!

Three New Staff Join CFSC's Los Angeles Office



Heather Fenney joined the Community Food Security Coalition staff in July 2003 as California Organizer. Heather came to us from the Rural Coalition in Washington, DC where for three years she had been deeply engaged in organizing minority farmers and farmworkers around equity issues in agriculture. She also played a key role in strategizing and advocating for the Rural Coalition's Farm Bill initiative. Heather works closely with CFSC's California partner, the California Food and Justice Coalition, to develop and implement media and policy campaigns. She is originally from CA and is excited to put her skills gained in DC to work in her home state.



Raquel Luz Bournhonesque came on board in November 2003 as the new Community Food Assessment Program Coordinator. Her work experience includes co-founding an organization that advocated for improvements to the school nutrition environment in Oregon, working as a community organizer to improve the leadership and civic capacity of immigrants and refugees, and researching media coverage of health issues. She comes to CFSC with a public health and policy advocacy background with a special interest in the intersections between health, food, and the environment.



Meka Webb, the newest member of the CFSC staff, joined the Community Food Assessment Program as an Organizer in March 2004. She previously worked with the Filipino community in Echo Park, a neighborhood in Los Angeles, around issues of environmental justice, immigrant rights, youth organizing, health, and arts. She is excited about joining the Community Food Assessment team and working with the African American faith based sector, especially because healthy food sources are not always in abundance in the inner city neighborhoods.



Emerson Hunger Fellow Joins CFSCs Washington DC Office

Shana McDavis-Conway, an Emerson Hunger Fellow, will be working with CFSC and the National Family Farm Coalition on urban-rural policy connections. She spent the last six months at Hartford Food System developing an urban agriculture project and two years in Sacramento, California doing outreach and advocacy with the Sacramento Hunger Commission and county welfare office. She loves talking about political theater, federal food programs and why community gardens are better than condos.

CFSC 2003 CONFERENCE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION COMMENTS

Organized by Sarah Borron

At the Coalition's annual conference, held in Boston last November, over 400 persons participated in an innovative town hall meeting. We asked participants to describe what they would like the CFSC to undertake. Following is a summary of their responses:

Organizational Process/Services

Linking/Networking Activities:
Many comments were directed at helping members know what others are doing and keep in touch with each other. A detailed directory, calendar of events, systemized information on best practices, introductory materials for new people, and encouraging conversations.

Information and Research:
These comments call for a library of existing research and policies on community food security issues, and describe the need for more research, including more evaluation and documentation of our own projects.

Diversity:
These comments encourage more diverse representation within the Coalition, and more outreach to disadvantaged groups.

Media :
These comments call for strengthening our media and communications work, both as an organization and for our members.

Regional Issues:

The comments mainly covered creation of regional networks and holding regional meetings around the country.

Organizing:

These comments call for a more radical, on-the-ground approach from CFSC as well as the development of more participatory practices.

Policy:

These comments call for a clearer, louder policy platform with more member involvement.

Issues

Rural/Farm Issues:

These comments focus on the Coalition's perceived urban focus, rural poverty, and farmers' need for fair prices.

Anti-Hunger and Poverty:

Some comments suggest that we work more with our traditional anti-hunger allies and work to improve the government food assistance programs. Others address living wage and economic issues and working directly with low-income people.

Corporate Control and Systemic Power Issues:

The comments here are mainly focused on fighting consolidation within the food system and analyzing how problems such as subsidies and obesity relate, comments also addressed our role relative to corporations.

Public Health/Nutrition/Food Access:

These comments focus on the need for healthy food for everyone, particularly in low-income communities facing hunger and obesity.

Local Food Systems:

These comments describe ways to promote and scale up local food systems.

International:

The comments generally talk about expanding our connections to international groups and understanding U.S. issues from an international perspective.

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

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**Eighth Annual
 Community Food Security
 Coalition Conference:
 Celebrating a Decade of
 Community Food Security**
 October 17-19, 2004
 Milwaukee, WI

More information and registration will be
 available on our website by July 1 at
www.foodsecurity.org

WELCOME

TO THE NEWEST MEMBER
 OF THE *CFSC FAMILY*



Orion Fisher

Born: August 14, 2003
 Likes: Going for walks, being naked,
 banging on computer keyboards,
 and chewing on paper
 Dislikes: Elmo dolls, sitting still for diaper
 changes, and crunchy veggies

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

We'd like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the Coalition's funders for the 2003-2004 fiscal year for making our work possible.

California Nutrition Network
 Columbia Foundation
 Compton Foundation
 Farm Aid
 Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation
 Merck Family Fund
 National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
 Presbyterian Hunger Program
 Solidago Foundation
 The California Wellness Foundation
 USDA Community Food Projects Program
 USDA IFAFS
 USDA Northeast SARE
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 W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Plus all of our members and individual donors