

## **SFPC Quarterly Meeting on October 11 at noon**

25 people

### **Working Group Updates:**

#### **Education and Communication Working Group**

If the public better understands the food system, that increases the support and success of all the SFPC initiatives.

1.) The Eat Local Southcoast Challenge was the first campaign to challenge people to eat local food within 200 miles of their homes. 199 people registered to receive weekly emails with suggested ways to eat locally and resources to learn more about the food system, such as books to read, videos to watch, and podcasts to listen to. We also included links to our website, where we have a [Food System 101](#), and suggested actions to take locally in the food system. We surveyed people after the challenge and received a 4.6-star rating out of 5. Some responses we received in the survey: "I loved the many aspects of food that you brought to play. Education about the processes, needs, local knowledge of farms to shop and recipes." We will have the Eat Local Southcoast Challenge again next summer.

2.) Hunger Action Month- We highlighted the current food crisis, similar to during the pandemic, but now no extraordinary funding is going into Food Pantries. We asked people to donate food, money, and time to food pantries. We asked people to take action through federal legislative advocacy on the Farm Bill and to learn more by registering for the Food Summit and reading more about the Food System on our website.

3.) 2023 Virtual Food Summit: Food Recovery and Food Waste and Its Impact on Climate Change, on October 25, 6:30-8 pm, hosted by the Office of Senator Mark Montigny and the Marion Institute. The keynote speaker is Lana Suarez from the EPA, and the Emcee is Christine Beling from the EPA. We will have a panel of speakers representing the EPA Food Recovery Hierarchy from the Center of Eco-Technology, RecycleWorks, Round the Bend Farm, MOLIFE Food Pantry, Black Earth Compost, and the Greater New Bedford Regional Refuse Management District.

#### **Food Policy Working Group**

The goal is to advocate for food system priorities. Listed are our advocacy areas for 2023: Healthy Incentive Program (HIP), Food Literacy, Farm-to-School Grant, Equity in Agriculture, Protecting Soil from PFAS. An Act Encouraging the Donation of Food to Persons in Need, Establishing basic needs assistance for Massachusetts immigrant residents, Food System Budget items such as SEMAP, Mass in Motion, FSIG, MEAP, UMass Extension, FPCs, Project Bread Hotline, Universal School Meals, Farm Bill issues. Since July, we have met many of our goals.

1.) We wanted to create relationships with legislators in our area. We met with Senators Mark Montigny, and Marc Pacheco and Representatives Susan Gifford, Bill Straus, and Paul Schmid.

2.) We submitted testimony for several Committee Hearings: An Act Encouraging People to Donate to People in Need, An Act Establishing Farm-to-School Grants, An Act to Promote Food Literacy Testimony for An Act relative to agricultural health incentives program, and An Act establishing basic needs assistance for MA immigrant residents.

3.) The Marion Institute's Nate Sander (Grow Education program manager) gave oral testimony for the Farm-to-School Grant.

4.) We worked with two of our Food Equity Advisors (people experiencing food insecurity) to submit written testimony for the Healthy Incentive Program.

#### **Capacity Building Working Group**

Priorities developed by the SFPC CAB using the 2021 Southeastern Massachusetts Food System Assessment: Build a regional food innovation district- priority action step, increase refrigerated and storage spaces, Build networks that make local food accessible to everyone, and Identify partners and solutions for food waste in Southeastern MA. We paused and now regrouped after deciding not to proceed with the Food Innovation District at the Old Sunbeam building site. We are back at the drawing board to see how to do this with more stakeholder input and at a smaller level.

#### **Food Access Working Group**

The priorities and activities came from the SFPC Community Advisory Board strategic planning using the 2021 Southeastern Massachusetts Food System Assessment. Key Activities: Establish a Farm-to-Food relief program and a Gleaning program, as research showed that Gleaning is nascent in our region.

### Frogfoot Farm

Frogfoot is its program of the Marion Institute, which has been incubated by the Southcoast Food Policy Council's Food Access Working Group. AD Makepeace is providing the land to the MI in a lease agreement. The program will remain within the MI and not fledge out as a program. Frogfoot Farm will allow us to do three things:

- a.) Allows us to farm 6 acres on the Wareham-Plymouth town lines that will go to food relief.
- b.) Allows us to have a location to launch the regional Gleaning Program. Gleaning is when you train volunteers to harvest a crop that would otherwise go to waste in the field. There is currently no official gleaning program in Southeastern MA. This will allow us to work with farmers with extra product but either no labor to harvest it or a market to sell it to.
- c.) These programs also fill another gap identified in The Food System Assessment and elevated during the pandemic – a lack of healthy, prepared meals going into the food relief system.

Frogfoot Farm Bio-Blitz on September 16. We wanted to establish a baseline of the ecological surroundings on the farm and track the environmental impacts over time. We plan to have several more Bio-Blitzes over the year to recruit volunteers and understand how our agroecological practices are improving the biodiversity and soil on the farm.

Boogie at the Bog was a fundraiser for Frogfoot Farm so The Marion Institute could buy farm machinery, build a greenhouse, put a fence in, hire a farmer, and eventually, a gleaning coordinator. We hope people will donate to Frogfoot Farm, become volunteers, and help the people in the community and food relief system to have culturally appropriate, healthy produce.

Crock Pot Initiative: This initiative was born from the Southcoast Food Policy Council Food Access and Friday Emergency meetings. On August 24, 2023, 8 families from Fall River and 6 from New Bedford spent the evening at the Keith School learning how to make healthy meals in a crock-pot. [Many partners here](#) came together to give each family a crock pot, food, cooking supplies, and lessons on how to make specific recipes using the crock pots.

Emergency Food Coordination meetings began in July at the urging of food pantries in our area. Out of these conversations was the understanding that there was increased need, less money from funders and grants, and less food from the Greater Boston Food Bank, resulting in a crisis. Join us Fridays at 11 am <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84025596278>.

### **Food Equity Advisors**

Food Equity Advisors are people living in food insecurity and can meet with us monthly. We provide a stipend for their expertise. We are working with four people, two from Fall River and two from New Bedford. Since July, two of the FEA have provided written testimony in a hearing for HIP. Two are in Working Groups- Policy and Food Access. FEAs go to meetings in Working Groups or Community Advisor Board meetings. We also meet with them one-on-one to discuss additional or separate things they want to do. Coming Up: more testimonials, asking advice from them on the Cottage Laws, and working on food system and policy education.

### **Massachusetts Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds**

This is a grant program. The goal is to disrupt barriers to health, including structural racism, poverty, and power imbalances, through community-centered approaches that focus on policy systems and environmental change. Our grants run every other year, so we are not currently accepting complete applications, but we are accepting ideas through the fall, providing feedback on your thoughts, and giving you tips to succeed in this grant for the next cycle. Contact Emily Breen at [ebreen@hria.org](mailto:ebreen@hria.org) and go to <https://mahealthfunds.org/idea-submission>

### **Postponed Connector Series until the winter of 2024**

Other: [https://www.marioninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Appropriate\\_food\\_forpantries.pdf](https://www.marioninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Appropriate_food_forpantries.pdf)