

**The Community Restaurant:
A Sustainable Model of Community**

An Independent Learning Project Presented by

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to

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Abstract

This Independent Learning Project addresses the issues that continue to create and facilitate food insecurity in Boston, Massachusetts. It reflects the current approach to fighting hunger and illustrates the need for an alternative model.

The goal of this project is to provide a model for an alternative soup kitchen that responds to food insecurity by encouraging and empowering all community members to create a healthier neighborhood where hunger no longer exists. This model is based on the research of organizations and people working to create sustainable communities.

The project concludes with a grant proposal for the development of a Community Restaurant – a not-for-profit, donation-based restaurant that responds to hunger in the Greater Boston community by providing free vegan meals to all in an open and respectful environment. The economic and social structures of the Community Restaurant will provide opportunities for citizens to reclaim their ability to create positive, social change within the community, and put an end to hunger.

Chapter One

Research Methods

Rationale

Millions of Americans, almost half of whom are children, go hungry every day. In Massachusetts, the prevalence of hunger has consistently risen over the past decade. According to Massachusetts' leading anti-hunger organization Project Bread (2005):

425,000 people in Massachusetts lack access to adequate food. In low-income communities in Massachusetts, 20 percent of households cannot afford to buy enough food to meet the basic nutritional needs of household members. The prevalence of hunger is highest among families with children, so today in low-income communities, one child in three lives in a household that struggles to put food on the table. (¶ 3)

Hunger discriminates by affecting those most vulnerable in our society – children, the elderly, and the working and non-working poor. Thousands of low-income families and individuals in Massachusetts must now regularly choose between paying increasing rent, obtaining medical care, covering the costs of higher fuel prices, or purchasing food. An endemic state of poverty has resulted in thousands of Massachusetts residents living in hunger. According to Project Bread (2005), “In low-income communities in Massachusetts, 43 percent of households with an annual income below \$20,000 are unable to afford adequate food” (p.1). Their 2005 “Status Report on Hunger in Massachusetts” revealed the following:

600,000 people live below the poverty level in Massachusetts.
240,000 children live in poverty in Massachusetts.

A single parent who has two children and works full-time at the minimum wage (\$6.75 per hour) lives in poverty (Project Bread, p. 1).

While there are state and national organizations working to improve public policies to eradicate hunger and undernutrition, these do little to curb the mentality that those left hungry are the government's responsibility, and the problem is not ours to solve. As Johnson (2001) stated, "In a community there is no such thing as being neutral or uninvolved; at every moment, social life involves each of us. What counts isn't just what we do, but even more what we *don't* do" (p. 114). By doing "nothing" we allow food to remain a privilege to those that can afford it and a struggle for those that cannot. Remaining apathetic may make it easier to disassociate from the problem of hunger and starvation, but in doing so we compromise the foundation of a community and the essence of our humanity. The health and sustenance of a community and its citizens depends on its ability to provide all members their basic rights; no member should go hungry, nor should any be afforded the right to hold privilege to food.

The prevalence of hunger abounds in the homes and on the streets of Boston. For the overworked, underpaid parent, or the citizen who has no place to call home, soup kitchens become the source of sustenance. Soup kitchens, like many other charitable organizations, work with the problem rather than fighting against it. Essential as they are, their function is not to eradicate the source of the problem; a soup kitchen can feed hundreds of individuals and families, but the injustice will remain. As long as food continues to be a privilege to some and a struggle for others, the soup kitchen will remain a necessity. But if we create a new model of community that promotes life-affirming

values, relationships and connections, and that does not rely on charities to nourish and sustain its members, a community free from hunger can become a reality.

Goal

My goal is to develop and implement a proposal for an alternative means of combating hunger that encourages and depends upon community involvement rather than solely on the generosity of a few people or organizations. A healthy community is one that can provide all its members equal access to food. A soup kitchen provides this service at the cost of isolating members of the community. As long as these organizations remain in place, the citizens of a community that do not depend upon them can remain indifferent to the needs of others. The alternative to this is a community that is rooted in nurturing life and committed to life-affirming values. I propose the development and implementation of a community restaurant to facilitate this alternative model of community.

Three distinguishing characteristics separate the community restaurant from a soup kitchen. First, unlike the soup kitchen, which caters solely to the poor, the community restaurant encourages patronage from all members of the community, providing free food to whomever wants it in an open and respectful environment. The economic and social structure of the community restaurant will create opportunities for citizens to regain their power and recognize their ability to contribute to the health and sustainability of the community. Patrons will decide the role they desire to play in creating a healthier, more sustainable community.

The second separating factor is the means by which the community restaurant would acquire financial support. Many soup kitchens depend upon government

assistance for sustenance, affirming our apathy and dependence upon the decisions and opinions of a few men and women, and failing to inspire a vision of a sustainable community. In contrast, the community restaurant depends solely on community support, encouraging donations from local businesses as well as patrons. Local businesses offering financial support will receive a “Community Restaurant Supporter” sign to place in their storefront and positive coverage throughout the restaurant - businesses will be apt to want to support a program that supports the community, their customers. Although there will be no price on the food, patrons will be encouraged to pay what they can. Signs throughout the restaurant shall read: “Pay what you think is appropriate for healthy, organic, cruelty-free food that supports you and your community”; and, “Your financial support will provide a meal for those less fortunate.” Those that can and choose to give a donation will be providing a meal for those unable to afford one. Those that do not will have the opportunity to create positive social change by volunteering some service within the community – a community board will be displayed with postings of volunteer services needed and volunteer services offered. Community involvement will be encouraged to develop organically with patrons deciding the role they wish to play.

Lastly, the community restaurant would serve only those meals that are an expression of our compassion for all life and our commitment to life-affirming values. The food served is a statement against privilege, oppression and injustice that is exerted on all sentient beings. The exploitation and cruelty exerted on the animals we eat are products of a cultural tradition that devalues the beauty and essence of life. According to the National Agricultural Statistics Service (2004), every year more than 10 billion farmed animals are raised, transported and slaughtered in the United States (¶ 1).

According to John Robbins (2001) “Increasingly, in the last few decades, the animals raised for meat, dairy products and eggs in the United States have been subjected to ever more deplorable conditions” and treatments (p. 174) These deplorable treatments include, debeaking, dehorning, force-molting, tail docking, branding, and teeth removal to name but a few. By limiting our compassion to the human race, we compromise our humanity. Choosing to serve vegan meals exemplifies our celebration of life and our commitment to social justice. As Robbins (2001) explained, “nearly 40 percent of the world’s grain is fed to livestock.... In the United States, livestock now eat twice as much grain as is consumed by the country’s entire human population. The more grain that is fed to livestock, the less is left to feed people” (pp. 284-285). Besides representing our values and goals, the community restaurant would also serve an under-represented vegan market in the Boston-Metro area. The community restaurant seeks to challenge the community to reevaluate societal structures and cultural traditions; the food served is another means of facilitating this challenge.

Problem Statement

The problem addressed in this project is a general information gap. Students, teachers, and community members need to learn more about the alternative means of creating a healthy, ethical, democratic, sustainable community that provides all its citizens equal access to food. The current model of community does not facilitate this. Thousands of Massachusetts residents lack access to adequate food. State and national programs address the issue of hunger within the framework of the current model of community and consumption. They are designed to work with the problem rather than change the structures that create it. Soup kitchens and food stamps provide a temporary

cure to hunger but do not address the causes that facilitate it. They fail to encourage and empower citizens to participate in the creation of an alternative model of community that is rooted in life-affirming values and committed to social justice. The community restaurant is an alternative to these programs, designed to awaken citizens to their perpetuation of hunger through apathy and challenge them to participate in its eradication. It is a statement against the acceptance of hunger and the inability of society to provide this basic right. The community restaurant will not be the definitive example of community sustainability, but will act as a model for citizens, local businesses and other communities to strive for in providing basic rights and services to all members of a community; e.g., food, clothes, shelter, education, medical assistance, etc.

As long as there is hunger, food will remain a privilege. The community restaurant works to eradicate hunger through the recognition of this privilege. It is a community-scale approach that redistributes the accessibility of food. Rather than providing free food to only those that cannot afford it, the community restaurant seeks the patronage from all members of the community, with this philosophy: patrons that can and are willing to pay for a meal will be providing one for someone who cannot. But more than just a source for food, the community restaurant will be a model and outlet for a new form of community sustainability; it will be an arena for the experimentation of sustainable alternatives in the community. Operations and services will be designed to heighten awareness to the importance of sustainable practices and educate members to the alternatives of over-consumption and wastefulness. Every service and practice will be approached in terms of maximizing the health of the community, and work to promote the implementation of further sustainable programs throughout the area.

The following are some examples of sustainable practices and programs that the community restaurant could facilitate to create a healthier, new model of community:

Environmentally efficient methods of obtaining and curing food will work to use the least amount of electricity, gas and fuel, and generate the least amount of waste; a community-recycling program in which personal items are offered and exchanged amongst members of the community would combat the excesses of consumption and materialism; composting and food recycling/recovery initiatives could generate a community-scale response on the same level as state recycling programs; glass designed walls and ceilings would save on electricity, providing light throughout the daytime hours; schools would be encouraged to participate in tending to community gardens, empowering youth and affirming their importance to the health and sustainability of the community; the restaurant would be a center for learning, offering free workshops and programs that encourage sustainable development and promote life-affirming values.

Population

The health of a community depends upon the health of each member and his or her access to the basic rights of healthy living. The Independent Learning Project I am proposing seeks to create an alternative model of community that can meet these needs. On an immediate level, the community restaurant benefits those unable to afford food by providing free, vegan meals in an open, respectful environment. For those able to afford a meal, the restaurant is an opportunity for patrons to reclaim their ability to create positive, social change. The sustainable, democratic and ethical practices of the restaurant will be a model for other businesses and individuals to follow, creating a healthier, cleaner community for all. Community gardens will allow young and old to

feel integral to the health and sustainability of the community. Free workshops and programs will provide community members the educational tools needed to build a more sustainable neighborhood. The community service board will create a sense of personal value independent of monetary worth. Other populations to be served by this ILP include activists, educators and concerned citizens who could emulate this program elsewhere and participate in its development. Parents and teachers hoping to provide their children and students with an example of compassion and opportunity for community involvement will also be served. And of course, a vegan menu means no animals will be harmed in the creation of this restaurant.

Methodology

The idea of providing free vegan food to anyone in the community is not a new one. With over one hundred chapters throughout the United States, the organization Food Not Bombs has been working to end hunger and develop positive personal, political, and economic alternatives for over two decades. Each chapter recovers food that would otherwise be thrown out, making fresh hot vegetarian meals that are served in city parks to anyone without restriction. Food Not Bombs (2004) is “an example of how a small group of people with limited economic resources can make a big difference in the quality of life for many people” (¶ 2). It is from this model that I have chosen to pursue my Independent Learning Project.

The community restaurant represents a verging of the stability of the soup kitchen with the self-reliance of Food Not Bombs programs. This amalgamation creates an alternative model to meet the needs of the community that is a recognizable presence for all to see. However, the stability of the restaurant does come with a disadvantage. While

the building will provide a physical resource for community involvement and sustainability, the initial and subsequent costs of maintaining a restaurant will pose a challenge to remaining self-reliant; a challenge that could prevent the idea from becoming a reality. In response to this challenge, I will research examples of sustainable communities and businesses and the positive effects they have had upon the health of their communities and its members. In an effort to strengthen my appeal for community support, I will conduct a thorough search of national and state programs that currently deal with the issue of hunger. I will incorporate the strengths of these programs into my design while also documenting the benefits that a community restaurant would provide. A study of cooperative communities and alternative forms of currency will be analyzed in terms of what will be most effective and adaptable in an urban environment. The logistics and research of community gardens in the area will give me a better sense of what proportion of local food grown can be served in the restaurant. Each area of the restaurant, from the structural design (solar paneling) to the programs and collaborations (workshops, composting, community gardens) will be evaluated and researched in terms of logistics, feasibility and the benefits to the health of the community. When the research is complete, a blueprint of the community restaurant will be finalized.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Introduction

In a sustainable, healthy community, each member is guaranteed equal access to food. According to Butler and McHenry (2000), “over 30 million people are going hungry on a *regular* basis” (p. 2). In communities throughout Massachusetts, access to food is not guaranteed equally. The United States Department of Agriculture, as reported by the Massachusetts anti-hunger organization Project Bread, (2005) found that “425,000 people in Massachusetts lack access to adequate food. In low-income communities, 20 percent of households cannot buy enough food to meet the basic nutritional needs of household members” (¶ 3). When a community cannot guarantee each member access to food equally, food becomes a privilege. In a sustainable, healthy and just community, access to food is a right, not a privilege; economic structures need not play a role in determining the distribution of the right to food. As long as hunger exists, a community and all its members cannot be considered sustainable nor healthy.

In an unsustainable community, no member is free from hunger. Butler and McHenry (2000) noted that

the majority of people going hungry today are not the stereotyped street person as the media would have you believe. Hungry people are children and single parents (mostly women), the working poor, the unemployed, the elderly, the chronically ill, and those on a fixed income (such as veterans and people with physical and mental challenges/differences/disabilities). All of these people find themselves in

the clutches of oppressive poverty *even while trying to improve their condition.*

(pp. 2-3)

If the effort to improve hunger does not change the condition of those most affected by it, then the creation of an alternative effort must take shape. The community restaurant I am proposing is just such an alternative.

The research and information that follows illustrates the need for a new model of community and the reemergence of civil society to see that all citizens have equal access to food. “Civil society,” explained Bill Bradley (1998),

lies apart from the realms of the market and the government, and possesses a different ethic. The market is governed by the logic of economic self-interest, while government is the domain of laws with all their coercive authority. Civil society, on the other hand, is the sphere of our most basic humanity – the personal, everyday realm that is governed by values such as responsibility, trust, fraternity, solidarity, and love. (p. 108)

These three realms – government, economic and civil – represent the organization of the research. Section One will delineate how conventional government and community programs addressing the issue of hunger create dependency and do little to empower their citizens. Examples of successful alternatives will be presented, giving credence to the potential of a community restaurant. Section Two addresses the debilitating nature our current monetary system has upon our community’s health and our sense of responsibility. Alternative exchange systems that empower communities and create a more sustainable future will also be documented. Section Three will illustrate the importance of civil society in creating a more sustainable, healthier, just and democratic

community. This section will document life-affirming structures, indigenous cultures, and principles of sustainability as a means to creating a new model of community. These three sections together formulate the principles and potential of the community restaurant in providing equal access to food and transforming the concept of community.

Putting a Band-Aid on Hunger: The Conventional Approach

We do not live in isolation. When we help bring down the structures that support poverty, hunger, and violence, we create a better community for others as well as ourselves. Flinging a coin to a beggar or bringing a can to a soup kitchen does not eliminate the causes of hunger. Though these acts may make us feel better about ourselves, and help some individual people, they do not create a healthier environment for us to live in. This is the nature of the soup kitchen and many other programs that seek to combat hunger. By working with the problem, rather than against it, these programs act as a band-aid; a temporary solution that does not seek to discover and respond to the structures that supports it. James and Lahti (2004) illustrated that our present approach to fighting hunger begins by documenting trends in poverty and homelessness and projecting these into the future, assuming that hunger will continue rather than creating structures to end it. But as John McKnight (1994) explained, “No community is built with a focus on deficiencies and needs. Every community [should] be built on the capacities and gifts of the people who live there” (p. 254). Soup kitchens are a needs-based strategy to combat hunger that usually can “guarantee only survival, and can never lead to serious change or community development...[a major cause] of the sense of hopelessness that pervades discussions about the future of low income neighborhoods” (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, p. 5). These types of structures focus on the deficiencies

and dependencies of those they serve rather than developing “policies and activities based on the capacities, skills and assets” of the whole community (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, p. 5). Programs designed to serve the needs of the community can often create a one-way relationship, or as Medoff and Sklar (1994) explained,

[These programs] act on the premise that the professional has the expertise and the client has the problem. The problem solving power of the people in the neighborhoods is unimportant. That professional idea is exactly the opposite of what community organizing attempts to do. The organizer tells the people that they have problem solving abilities and they can change their communities. (p. 255)

Many soup kitchens fall into this mentality, causing those they serve to remain dependent. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) believed that this has resulted in

many lower income urban neighborhoods [becoming] environments of service where behaviors are affected because residents come to believe that their well-being depends upon being a client. They begin to see themselves as people with special needs that can only be met by outsiders. They become consumers of services, with no incentive to be producers. (p. 2)

The social stigma associated with poverty and hunger will persist as long as the people being served remain powerless. “Many policymakers, funders and human service ‘providers’ have fostered atomized communities that no longer recognize their own assets, their own vision, their own power” (Medoff & Sklar, 1994, p. 255). Soup kitchens can often be an excuse for community members to devalue their ability to solve the problem of hunger. This debilitating nature assumes that as long as there are places

where people can go to get food, there is nothing more that needs to be done. But as Butler and McHenry (2000) illustrated, “People become empowered when encouraged to participate and take more responsibility for the decisions and actions of the group. This teaches them not only how to be powerful nonviolently, but also how to seek access to power” (p. 76).

There are, however, examples of soup kitchens and other food programs that have created structures to empower their clients. For example, in Michigan a program has been designed to provide an alternative to the current methods of providing food assistance to rural families in need. According to Sutherland (1999), the H.A.V.E. program is “a community-based hunger prevention initiative that utilizes community resources to facilitate a reduction in participants’ need for emergency food assistance. Participants in the program will donate ten hours a month of their time to a community agency in exchange for \$60 a month worth of food coupons” (Program Activities section, ¶ 1). Unlike a conventional soup kitchen, H.A.V.E. empowers those it helps through three distinguishing features:

First, it is based on the notion that an equitable exchange of services between the recipient and the donor (or third party donor) is preferable to a lack of exchange.... Second, it suggests that freedom of choice, even when limited to a select set of options, is preferable to no choice. Third, it addresses the issue of social stigma attached to accepting help from community agencies, by providing an alternative means of getting assistance as well as an alternative setting for service delivery. (Sutherland, 1999, Program Activities section, ¶ 3-5)

Another example of an alternative means of fighting hunger while empowering a community is the Farm at Long Island Shelter in Boston Harbor. According to the Friends of Boston's Homeless website (2006), the Farm

provides hands-on job training, work readiness skills and education for homeless individuals as part of the Serving Ourselves Job Training Program. Participants learn all aspects of food production; soil preparation, a variety of planting techniques, tending the plants, pest control, harvesting and marketing their produce at local farmers markets....The experience gained in these programs has led to permanent, gainful employment in the restaurant, food, horticulture and landscaping industries. (§ 3-5)

Both the Farm at Long Island Shelter and the H.A.V.E. program empower those they are trying to help by providing them with the opportunity to reclaim their ability to create positive, social change. These programs give credence to the importance of creating alternative approaches to ending hunger that work to eliminate the structures that support it.

Money Is Not the Answer

Outside of soup kitchens, the only legal way of obtaining large quantities of food in our present culture is through the exchange of money. Because money is a creation by those in power, it cannot be used as a means of creating new alternatives and life-affirming structures from the ground up (Bell, 2002). For the underprivileged, empowerment will arise only from an exchange system that values their abilities and membership within the community. As Cahn (2004) explained,

If we rely exclusively or even primarily on the medium of exchange that drives market exchanges, we will have to live with the same motivation that drives market: competition, conquest, aggression, acquisition. If we want to enlist other aspects of human nature: cooperativeness, caring, and collaboration, we may need something in addition to what market and money can provide. (p. 58)

When we depend on money to solve the hunger problem, we “reinforce the tendency of people to think in terms of scarcity when what is needed is love, caring, neighboring, and involvement” (Cahn, 2004, p. 57). “How often,” Greco (2001) asked, “do we hear that child care cannot be provided, that streets cannot be repaired, that parks cannot be beautified, that schools cannot be maintained because there is not enough money?” (pp. 52-53). When we read about the hunger problem or see lines of people outside soup kitchens do we not ask this same question? Perhaps the answer is not that there is not enough money, but that money is not the answer. Once we understand the essence of money, Greco (2001) explained, “then we can begin to design exchange systems that will more equitably serve the needs of the people and avoid money’s destructive impact on the earth” (p. 23).

In our money-driven culture, paper and coins become the means to acquiring food. But without food, paper and coins would have no meaning. The existence of money is completely dependent upon people’s belief in it. As Bell (1992) explained, “Money is a complete confidence trick. That is, as long as we all believe in it, it works fine. The moment there is a mass movement of disbelief it fails to work” (p. 48). When money is equated with value, people become valueless. “Our *collective* liberation will result from a common understanding of how we are controlled by money and how we can

transcend the structures of money we have inherited from the past” (Greco, 2001, p. 19). “We have to start with what people can do, not with what they can’t do. Once one starts by valuing what people can do, other core values precipitate out” (Cahn, 2004, p. 24). Money bears no relationship to the true physical wealth of an individual. Qualities such as caring, love and compassion have no value in the market economy. Yet, these are the values that bring an end to hunger and formulate the creation of a sustainable community.

The evolution of exchange systems has not reached its pinnacle with the current legal tender in place. Many alternative forms of currency are being introduced to avoid the pitfalls that the present system creates. The following are examples of recent developments created to bypass money and bring about an exchange system that values people over products. In the early 1980s, a community exchange system called LETS (Local Employment and Trading System) was devised to facilitate “trade without the need for scarce official money” (Greco, 2001, p. 89). Michael Linton, the originator of LETS, “realized that the fundamental characteristic of money, which allows it to facilitate exchange, is the information that it carries. He envisioned another information system that would be locally controlled and operated in parallel with the official monetary system” (Greco, 2001, p. 89). The first LETS started in British Columbia, Canada, in response to the “lack” of money needed to continue the school bus service. As Bell (1992) explained, “The response of the community was to establish a system whereby community trading provided all the resources necessary to provide and maintain the bus, and pay the driver” (p. 54). Greco (2001) described a typical LETS arrangement as follows:

The two parties to the trade negotiate the price as they ordinarily would for a cash transaction, but, instead of using cash, the seller receives credits and the buyer is ‘charged’ a corresponding amount as a debit....Unlike official dollar-denominated bank credits or cash, however, which can be created only by the banking system, LETS dollars or green dollar credits are created by LETS members themselves, as needed, to execute a trade. This is the crucial element that makes LETS and other mutual credit systems so empowering. (p. 90)

Another alternative exchange system is a service credit plan known as Co-Production, devised by Edgar Cahn. As Greco (2001) explained, Co-Production was developed to address “the inadequacy of government programs intended to deal with social problems. [Cahn] set out to create ‘a new kind of money,’ independent of government and central banks, which could be created by people themselves in the process of helping one another” (p. 98). Greco (2001) described the basic concept of Co-Production as follows:

A person can get credit for helping someone else now and use those credits later to get similar services for him- or herself or a family member. The object is to empower people by allowing them to create purchasing power for themselves in the process of helping others....The unit of credit in Cahn’s service scheme is the Time Dollar, equivalent to one hour of service. The intention is to exchange services on the basis of an hour for an hour. (p. 98)

Time Dollars and LETS are not unique examples of exchange systems that have been developed to challenge the dominant mode of exchange. Barter predates money, and is still a viable form of exchange. Other alternatives continue to be developed throughout

the world. The examples above illustrate that money need not be the only means to acquiring a basic right such as food.

A Sustainable Model of Community

In *The Natural Step for Communities* James and Lahti (2004) explained that “Swedish homebuilders in times past would plant trees so that their children would have enough wood to build their houses when they were ready to start families” (p. 94). In a sustainable community, members maintain a system in which all citizens can thrive, both in the present and the future. Access to food should be guaranteed equally in a sustainable community. While soup kitchens and other governmental organizations can provide the needed food, they have not provided the social capital to eliminate hunger. As Cahn (2004) explained,

We have to create it ourselves. It exists and grows in communities where people are willing to intervene on behalf of children, where bullies are stopped, where graffiti is prevented or cleaned up, where drug dealers are not welcome, where kids feel safe, and where seniors feel supported and valued. That does not happen behind closed doors. That happens in the space that we all share, in social settings that we create. (p. 190)

“Each time a person uses his or her capacity,” explained Kretzmann and McKnight (1993),

the community is stronger and the person more powerful...strong communities are basically places where the capacities of local residents are identified, valued and used. Weak communities are places that fail, for whatever reason, to mobilize the skills, capacities and talents of their residents or members.” (p. 13)

An empowered citizen “contributes much more to the future of the community than an isolated individual trapped in welfare dependency whose potential has not been developed or properly connected” (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, p. 89). Disempowered citizens will not have the opportunity to teach, learn, care or bond with other members in the community. In older cultures, however, this was not the case. In *The Last Hours of Ancient Sunlight*, Hartmann explained that, “In Older Cultures, the goal of the entire community is to get every person in the community to the ‘enough point’.... One person eating near another who is hungry is an obscene act” (1999, p. 245). Tribal people believed that a community “sustains itself and works [by making] the primary job of the community to provide safety and security for all of its citizens” (Hartmann, 1999 p. 256). In older cultures, “traditions consistently reinforced an individual’s interrelationship with their environment and their responsibility both to and for their community” (Hartmann, 1999, p. 272). Too often today, we claim responsibility only for ourselves, an act that leaves us wanting more. Sustainability works to bridge the gap between “us” and “them” and empower citizens to move from being dependent consumers to becoming responsible and productive members of a community. As James and Lahti (2004) explained, sustainability asks,

what is important in life. What do we really need for our well-being as individuals and households? What basic needs in our community are not being met? When the larger community begins to ask this type of question, it is possible to hold serious community visioning events where the end result is a more pleasant, interesting, and sustainable society than exists today. (p. 216)

In the United States, programs and structures are currently being implemented to facilitate the creation of more sustainable communities. Two of these steps have brought the connection between people and the sources of their food closer together. Community-supported agriculture (CSAs) and community gardens are sustainable practices that eliminate the travel of food to mouth. In the United States, “a piece of food travels an average 1,300 miles to get onto our plate” (James & Lahti, 2004, p. 128). The further food travels from one place to another, the higher the cost can be imposed. Thus, the amount of energy used to produce, package and transfer food necessitates the monetary values placed on food, and consequently maintains a structure of privilege. As James and Lahti (2004) explained, Community-supported agriculture works to eliminate this high cost of produce by selling

shares to household members [at a certain percentage] per year, which entitles member households to several months of fresh organic produce, locally produced and provided weekly. The share payments [also work to] provide the farmers with a secure annual income, against which they can borrow to purchase equipment and seeds. (p. 139)

Community gardens, on the other hand, are an ancient sustainable practice that give us an immediate and direct connection to our food source. When our food is grown in faraway land, transported long distances, and sold to us wrapped in plastic in a grocery store, eating itself becomes an experience that alienates us from nature. Growing our own food removes these barriers and restores a sense of connectedness to the vital essence of the land, while at the same time helping us to develop a sense of place within our own bioregion. (Pivnick, 2001, p. 13)

In Boston, Massachusetts, the Dudley Square Neighborhood Initiative has “turned vacant urban lots into productive, attractive farm lots where neighborhood residents, who often struggle to make ends meet, can grow their own food” (James & Lahti, 2004, p. 140). A community restaurant that acquires much of its produce from CSAs and local community gardens will serve to minimize the number of miles food travels from field to table, and act as a restoration of the connection between people and the sources of their food.

The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, mentioned above, is a notable example of a community in dire straits empowering its citizens through ground-up, sustainable initiatives that incorporate all citizens in the process. Medoff and Sklar (1994) explained that, “Instead of struggling to influence a process driven by city government, Dudley residents and agencies became visionaries, created their own bottom-up ‘urban village’ redevelopment plan and built an unprecedented partnership with the city to implement it” (p. 4). The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative “challenges those who see inner city residents as people who have only problems, not solutions. It shows how effective community development begins by recognizing and reinforcing the resources within the community” (Medoff & Sklar, 1994, p. 4).

Summary

The problem of hunger does not stem from a lack of awareness. When we pass a homeless person, we are not ignorant to his or her situation; averting our eyes does not make the reality of homelessness any less real. Our sense of helplessness is not rooted in ignorance; rather, we have created and inherited a community that does not value or provide the opportunities to create connections and structures that do not support homelessness. In her article “Sowing a School Garden: Reaping an Environmental

Ethic,” Pivnick explained that to “create a long-lasting, deeply held environmental ethic, environmental education must address our alienation from the natural world. It must provide opportunities to develop a love for the land and a bond with nature” (2001, p. 12). Just as gardening can help develop a love for the land and a bond with nature, so too can a sustainable, healthy and just community awaken us to the joy of civil society – “the personal, everyday realm that is governed by values such as responsibility, trust, fraternity, solidarity, and love” (Bradley, 1998, p. 108).

Hunger persists despite the resources and efforts that exist today. “In this country, every day in every city, far more edible food is discarded than is needed to feed those who do not have enough to eat” (Butler & McHenry, 2000, p. 1). Neither the government nor the economy has been able to ensure equal access to food and an end to hunger, yet we still look to them for answers. In a sustainable community the answers we seek are in the connections we experience and discover within civil society. “People become empowered when encouraged to participate and take more responsibility for the decisions and actions of the community” (Butler & McHenry, 2000, p. 76). The community restaurant will be the stage upon which people can come together and help create a more sustainable, healthy and just community. It will be a resource that encourages “neighborhood residents to take stock of their varied individual and community assets and think boldly as they envision the future together” (Medoff & Sklar, 1994, p. 4). James and Lahti (2004) wrote that “community engagement and motivation for changing to sustainable practices will occur only if people come to understand the nature of the unsustainable problems with which we all wrestle, and have access to a mental model for more sustainable behavior” (p. 229). The community restaurant is the

mental and physical model to a more sustainable community; a place for the engagement and motivation for changing the structures that support hunger and creating a healthier, more just community.

Chapter Three

Independent Learning Project

Mission Statement

The Community Restaurant is a not-for-profit, donation-based restaurant that responds to hunger in the Greater Boston community by providing free vegan meals to all in an open and respectful environment.

Project Summary

The Community Restaurant is a community-scale response to hunger that redistributes the accessibility of food. Rather than providing free food to only those in need, the Community Restaurant seeks the patronage from all members of the community, believing that the health and sustenance of the community depends upon the health of each member and his or her access to food. On an immediate level, the Community Restaurant benefits those struggling or unable to afford food by providing free vegan meals in an open and respectful environment. For those able and willing to afford a meal, the restaurant is an opportunity for patrons to reclaim their ability to create positive, social change within the community.

Project Narrative

1) Community to Be Served and the Needs to Be Addressed

Today, hundreds of thousands of Massachusetts residents, and millions across the United States, experience hunger because they cannot afford adequate food. Thousands of low-income families and individuals in Massachusetts must now regularly choose between obtaining medical care, paying increasing rent, heating and fuel cost, or purchasing food. In a 2005 Status Report on Hunger in Massachusetts, it was reported

that 630,000 Massachusetts residents (9.8% of the population) live below the poverty line (Project Bread, 2005, p. 1). In low-income communities, families with children suffer from hunger four times more often than the statewide average. (Project Bread, 2005, p. 1) A single parent with two children who works full-time at the Massachusetts minimum wage (\$6.75 per hour) does not earn enough to escape poverty. (Project Bread, 2005, p. 1) An endemic state of poverty has resulted in thousands of Massachusetts residents living in hunger. According to a 2004 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) report, 179,000 households (449,000 people) in Massachusetts are struggling to put food on the table (USDA, 2004, p. 20). The report also compared the 2002-2004 statistics to those of 1999-2001, and found that 18,000 more households (approximately 45,000 more people) were hungry (USDA, 2004, p. 54).

Boston, the capital city, has the highest concentration of food-insecure households in the state (Project Bread, 2005, p. 2). According to a survey conducted by the Greater Boston Food Bank, in 2005 over 321,500 people sought food assistance in eastern Massachusetts, a fourteen percent increase from 2001 (Tienken, 2005, p. 2). The study also noted that the average monthly income is \$880 and that one in three households receiving food assistance have a child under 18 years of age (Tienken, 2005, p. 4). Of those interviewed, 45% had to decide between food and heat, 39% had to decide between food and rent, and 30% had to decide between food and medical care (Tienken, 2005, p. 4).

While there are resources and programs responding to hunger, thousands of citizens still remain hungry and powerless. An estimated 32,737 pantries and 5,262 emergency kitchens operated in the United States in 2000 (statistics were not available

for later years), yet, only 20% of food-insecure households in 2004 used a food pantry at anytime during the year, and even less (3%) ate one or more meals at an emergency kitchen (USDA, 2004, pp. 28, 31). In 2004, the Food Stamp Program provided benefits to approximately 24 million people, yet only 40% of those eligible for food stamps were enrolled (USDA, 2004, p. 31). These statistics suggest that federal food assistance programs are not effectively responding to the structures that maintain hunger.

2) Project Goals and Purposes

Martin Luther King once said that “True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.” The Community Restaurant is an alternative soup kitchen that seeks to respond to this edifice by encouraging, empowering and depending upon all community members to create a healthier community where hunger no longer exists. Unlike a typical soup kitchen that responds to deficiencies and needs, the Community Restaurant works with the capacities and gifts of the community to bring an end to hunger and create a sustainable community. While a soup kitchen may provide the necessary meals to reduce food-insecurity, only a strong, healthy, sustainable community can bring an end to hunger. To facilitate the creation of a sustainable, food-secure community, the Community Restaurant will provide the following services and opportunities:

- 1) Provide Free Nutritious Meals
- 2) Accept Tax-Deductible Donations
- 3) Provide Opportunities to Contribute to the Restaurant and Community
- 4) Promote Compassion & Reduce Waste Through Veganism
- 5) Support Local Food Systems

- 6) Establish Youth Community Garden
- 7) Promote Sustainable Practices
- 8) Provide Space For Groups Working to Enrich Community
- 9) Educates Indirectly By Example

3) Activities to Achieve the Goals

The Community Restaurant will implement the following programs and services to help reduce hunger and build community within the Greater Boston area:

- 1) Although there will be no price on the food served, patrons will have the opportunity to give a tax-deductible donation. Throughout the restaurant, signs will read: “Pay what you think is appropriate for healthy, organic, locally-produced, cruelty-free food that supports you and your community.” For those that choose to give a donation, their support will provide a meal for someone who cannot afford to pay for one. A suggested price board will be displayed above the donation bin with figures illustrating the costs of food production, with a sign reading: “Pay what you can – your financial support will provide a meal for those less fortunate.”
- 2) Those unable or choosing not to provide a donation can provide support elsewhere: a community/service exchange board will be displayed with postings of volunteer services needed and volunteer services offered. This community board will create a sense of personal value independent of monetary worth. The Community Restaurant will provide the opportunity for citizens to reclaim their ability to create positive social change; patrons will decide the role they desire to play in creating a healthier, more sustainable community.

- 3) Local businesses in the Greater Boston area will be approached and presented with the opportunity to support their community through the Community Restaurant. Those businesses offering support (financial or otherwise) will receive a Community Restaurant Support sign to place in their storefront as well as space to advertise their services throughout the restaurant; businesses will be apt to want to support a place that supports the community, their customers.
- 4) The food we serve is a response to the inefficiency and waste of meat-based diets as well as an expression of our commitment to life-affirming values and compassion for all life. Veganism, a lifestyle that excludes all animal products from oral and commercial consumption, results in less suffering for animals and better health for all. According to the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), every year more than 10 billion farmed animals are raised, transported and slaughtered in the United States (NASS, 2005). It has been documented that seventy percent of all the grain produced in the United States is fed to these farmed animals, yet over 38 million people live in households experiencing food insecurity (Ayres, 1999, p. 6). Land and crops that could be used to feed the hungry are instead being used to feed animals raised for food; one expert explained that it takes up to 10 pounds of grain to produce just 1 pound of edible animal flesh (Gold, 2004, p. 22). In *The Food Revolution*, John Robbins (2001) explained that “The process of rearing farm animals in the United States has changed dramatically from the family farms of yesteryear. This reality, coupled with the exemption of farm animals from laws that forbid cruelty to animals, has [resulted in]...more animals being subjected to more torturous conditions in the United States today than has ever occurred anywhere in world history” (p. 220).

These torturous conditions include debeaking, dehorning, force-molting, tail docking, branding, and teeth removal to name but a few. By providing only vegan meals, the Community Restaurant will serve as a model to the efficiency of veganism as a means to reducing hunger and to the importance of instilling an ethical and humane approach to consumption.

- 5) The Community Restaurant will work to obtain a large portion of the food (if not all) from within the community as a means to restore the connection between people and the sources of their food. A large percentage of produce will be procured through Community Supported Agriculture. This will help provide secure annual income for local farmers as well as minimize the number of miles food travels from field to table; experts have averaged that in the United States a piece of food travels 1,300 miles to get onto our plate (James & Lahti, 2004). A 2005 Organic Consumers Association (OCA) report also indicates that nearly half of the food in the United States – including fresh vegetables, fruits, and grain products – are annually lost to waste by retailers, restaurants, and consumers (OCA, 2005, ¶ 2). In response to this waste, the Community Restaurant will ask local supermarkets to donate edible vegan products that would otherwise be thrown away. Donations will also be accepted from other community members, organizations and businesses.
- 6) With the cooperation of a local school, the Community Restaurant will also obtain a small percentage of produce from the establishment of a community garden. This collaboration will empower the youth tending the garden and affirm their importance in the health and sustainability of the community.

- 7) The Community Restaurant will strive to be a model of sustainability for the community through the following practices: composting food scraps, purchasing only reusable supplies (cloth napkins, glass cups, etc.), encouraging customers to provide their own containers for leftovers, providing a living wage to all employees, promoting a democratic workplace, and purchasing organic ingredients and products. These practices are designed to preserve the health and sustenance of the community and its members.
- 8) The Community Restaurant will be a space and outlet for community groups working to enrich the community and its members; a place for discussion and reflection, and for getting out ideas and exploring alternatives. Community activists, artists, visiting progressives and other individuals working to create a healthier community will be encouraged to view and use the Community Restaurant as a source for creating positive, social change. (Note: A section of the restaurant will be reserved only during business hours to these community groups when requested in advance.)

4) Relationship to Program Objectives

The Community Restaurant is designed to meet the food needs of the Greater Boston community and serve as a model to local businesses, governmental agencies and community members on how to effectively incorporate the community in reducing and eliminating hunger on a local level. The Community Restaurant works to build community and create positive social change by creating an alternative model of community and consumption that is democratic, sustainable, ethical and just.

5) Evaluation

The Community Restaurant will be evaluated by its success in providing free vegan meals while maintaining overhead through in-kind donations. Records of the number of business and patron donations will assess the success of the business and the need for further exposure and financial support. Qualitative assessments will be used to evaluate the productivity and effectiveness of the community garden and the community/service exchange board.

6) Self-Sustainability

This grant, along with others, will provide the necessary funding to cover initial costs to maintain overhead for the first year. If our fundraising goals are not met, all grants promised will be returned. After the initial costs of starting the business, along with a steady clientele, the Community Restaurant will sustain itself through in-kind donations from patrons and local businesses.

7) Finances

Personnel Costs

Employee Title/Position	Hours Per Week	Yearly Wage
Line Cook	40 hr/wk	\$10/hr = \$20,800/yr.
Line Cook	40 hr/wk	\$10/hr = \$20,800/yr.
Line Cook	40 hr/wk	\$10/hr = \$20,800/yr.
Line Cook	24 hr/wk	\$10/hr = \$12,480/yr.
Prep Cook	40 hr/wk	\$10/hr = \$20,800/yr.
Prep Cook	40 hr/wk	\$10/hr = \$20,800/yr.
Prep Cook	32 hr/wk	\$10/hr = \$16,640/yr.
Waiter	40 hr/wk	\$10/hr = \$20,800/yr.
Waiter	40 hr/wk	\$10/hr = \$20,800/yr.
Waiter	40 hr/wk	\$10/hr = \$20,800/yr.
Waiter	24 hr/wk	\$10/hr = \$12,480/yr.
Total Personnel Costs	400 hr/wk = 20,800 hr/yr.	\$208,000/yr.

Fringe Benefits

Social Security		\$26,000/yr.
Unemployment Fund		\$26,000/yr.
Total Fringe Benefits		\$52,000/yr.

Other Than Personnel Services (OTPS)

Appliances	Quantity	Cost
Coffee Grinder	1	\$500
Coffee Maker/Brewer	1	\$235
Cooking Timer	1	\$5
Cuisinart	1	\$150
Soup Blender/Mixer	1	\$300
Soup Warmer	1	\$150
Toaster	1	\$20
Total		\$1,360
Cookware	Quantity	Cost
Colander	1	\$10
Cooking Utensils (grater, measuring cups, can opener, peeler, ladle, spatula, etc.)		\$150
Crock Pots (Large)	2	\$380

Cutting Boards	7	\$210
Frying Pans	6	\$150
Hotel Pans w/ Covers	4	\$170
Mix Bowls	5	\$70
Pans (6")	6	\$55
Sauce Pans	2	\$70
Sheet Trays	10	\$120
Squeeze Bottles	12	\$13
Strainer (Large)	1	\$42
Tupperware		\$100 worth
Total		\$1,540
Cooking Goods (based on 650 customers per week)	Quantity	Cost
(Note: Food order estimates are based on the sample menu provided. Items on sample menu are representative of the highest cost of food preparation.)		
Breads		\$200/wk = \$10,400/yr.
Fair Trade Coffee Beans	20 lbs/wk = 1,040 lbs/yr.	\$75/wk = \$3,900/yr.
Dry Goods		\$1,050/wk = \$54,600/yr.
Soy Products		\$1,075/wk = \$55,900/yr.
Produce		\$1,150/wk = \$59,800/yr.
Tea Bags	75 bags/wk = 3,900 bags/yr.	\$12/wk = \$624/yr.
Total		\$3,562/wk = \$185,224/yr.
Large Equipment	Quantity	Cost
3 Section Kitchen Sink	1	\$750
Conventional Oven/Stove	1	\$2,500
Exhaust Hood	1	\$760
Hand Sink	1	\$105
Prep Tables	4	\$660
Reach-in/Sandwich Unit	1	\$1,500
Shelves For Storage	5 sets	\$150
Walk-In Refrigerator	1	\$5,500
Total		\$11,925
Dining Furniture	Quantity	Cost
Baby Stools	2	\$80
Chairs	40	\$1,600

Tables	10	\$1,200
Total		\$2,880
Sanitation	Quantity	Cost
Brillo Pads	1 case	\$10
Brooms	3	\$21
Buckets	5	\$25
Cloth Aprons	24	\$55
Cloth Rags	120	\$60
Compost Bins	3	\$150
Dishwashing Gloves	3	\$12
Dust Pan	1	\$5
Earth-Friendly Cleaning Liquid	2 bottles	\$12
Garbage Can	1	\$25
Kitchen Mats	5	\$105
Mop	1	\$20
Mop Bucket	1	\$60
Plunger	1	\$10
Recycling Bins	3	\$90
Sponges	1 case	\$10
Spray Bottles	5	\$10
Toilet Scrubber	1	\$10
Total		\$690
Tableware	Quantity	Cost
Bowls	36	\$25
Cloth Napkins	200	\$255
Eating Utensils (forks, spoons & knives)	62 sets	\$126
Glass Cups	62	\$100
Mugs	36	\$30
Plates	48	\$80
Salt & Pepper Shakers	24 sets	\$40
Water Pitchers	3	\$60
Total		\$716
Electronics/Office Equipment	Quantity	Cost
Calculator	1	\$5
Cash Drawer	1	\$35
Copy/Print Machine	1	\$60

Credit Card Machine	1	\$200
Desk & Chair	1 desk, 1 chair	\$70
Laptop	1	\$450
Phone	2	\$40
Outlet Surge Strip	3	\$30
Safe	1	\$100
Stereo w/ Speakers	1 stereo, 4 speakers	\$120
Total		\$1,110
Miscellaneous Items	Quantity	Cost
Cutlery Box	2	\$20
Exit Sign	2	\$10
Fire Extinguisher	1	\$190
First Aid Kit	1	\$35
Handicap Rail for Bathroom	1	\$21
Laminated Menus (In English, Spanish & Braille)	20	\$100
Serving Trays	5	\$20
Van	1	\$5,000
Wet Floor Sign	1	\$20
Total		\$5,416
Miscellaneous Expenses		Cost
Advertising (grassroots)		\$1,000/yr.
City Trash Pick-Up		\$600/yr.
Total		\$1,600/yr.
Permits/Licenses		Cost
501C3 Processing		\$150
Board of Health Certificate of Registration		\$150
Business Permit		\$150
Capacity Permit		\$150
Common Victualer License		\$150
Restaurant Zoning		\$150
Total		\$900
Insurance		Cost
Auto Insurance		\$1,000/yr.
Liability Insurance		\$3,000/yr.

Total		\$4,000/yr.
Total OTPS		\$217,361

Indirect Costs

Interior Expenses	Quantity	Cost
Air Conditioner	1	\$500
Brushes	2 sets	\$20
Carbon Monoxide Detector	1	\$60
CFL Flood Light Bulbs	18	\$162
CFL Fluorescent Bulbs	4	\$36
Earth-Friendly Paint	10 liters	\$169
Fluorescent Lighting	2	\$40
Smoke Detector	3	\$42
Track Lighting	6	\$200
Total		\$1,229
Inspections		Cost
Building Inspection w/ Blueprints		\$300
Electrical/Plumbing Inspection		\$150
Total		\$450
Insurance		Cost
Business Insurance		\$3,000/yr.
Total		\$3,000/yr.
Installations		Cost
Internet		\$100
Ventilation System		\$10,000
Total		\$10,100
Utilities		Cost
Electric		\$450/mo. = \$5,400/yr.
Gas/Oil		\$450/mo. = \$5,400/yr.
Internet		\$58/mo. = \$696/yr.
Phone		\$40/mo. = \$480/yr.
Water		\$450/mo. = \$5,400/yr.

Total		\$1,448/mo. = \$17,376/yr.
Rent	900 square feet	\$2,000/mo. = \$24,000/yr.
Total Indirect Cost		\$56,155
Total Cost of Overhead		\$533,516

Revenue

The Community Restaurant's estimated revenue is based upon the following:

8 am to 10 pm: hours of operation.

12.5% occupancy (5 people) at all times.

45 minute meals per customer/group.

650 customers per week.

\$10,260 – cost of overhead per week.

\$15.79 – amount the restaurant must receive per customer to break-even.

Conservative Projection of Revenue

If 1/3 of the clientele cannot contribute financially, and another 1/3 of the clientele can only contribute half of the cost of production (\$7.90), then the final 1/3 of the clientele must contribute \$23.69 in order for the total weekly cost of overhead to be met.

Sample Menu

An assortment of staple international dishes using vegan, local and organic ingredients.

American

Veggie-Bean Burger (serves 2)

½ tomato
chopped lettuce
2 buns
¼ onion
½ cup uncooked chickpeas
¼ cup flour
½ cup uncooked kidney beans

Pasta Salad w/ “Chicken” (serves 4)

16 oz. penne
½ container vegenaïse
chopped parsley
1 tomato
1 green pepper
1 onion
2 cups faux chicken chunks

Grilled “Cheese” w/ Tomato Soup (serves 2)

½ block soy cheese
4 pieces of bread
2 tablespoons soy butter
6 tomatoes
¼ olive oil
chopped basil
salt & pepper to taste

South & Central America

Burritos (serve 2)

1 cup uncooked black beans
1 tomato
chopped cilantro
½ jalapeno
½ onion
2 tortillas

1 cup uncooked rice
½ package vegan ground beef

Tacos (serves 2)

1 tomato
½ onion
2 taco shells
½ package vegan ground beef
2 cups shredded lettuce
½ tub vegan sour cream
1 avocado

Quesadillas (serves 4)

1 avocado
1 block soy cheese
4 tortillas
2 tomatoes
chopped cilantro
1 jalapeno
1 onion
1 tub vegan sour cream

Asian

General Gau's "Chicken" (serves 2)

4 cups faux chicken chunks
2 cups broccoli
½ cup duck sauce
½ cup sweet & sour sauce
1/8 cup dried chili peppers
¼ cup unrefined cane sugar
¼ cup chopped scallions

"Pork" Fried Rice (serves 2)

1 cup diced cubed seitan
1 cup uncooked white rice
¼ cup snow peas
¼ cup sprouts
¼ cup bok choy
¼ cup onion
¼ cup mushroom
¼ cup soy sauce

¼ cup duck sauce

“Chicken” Fingers (serves 2)

2 cups faux chicken strips

2 cups flour

1/3 cup water

½ cup spicy mustard

Indian

“Chicken” Curry (serves 2)

1 cup faux chicken chunks

1/3 cup squash

1/3 cup onions

½ cup potatoes

½ cup tomatoes

¼ cup curry

1 teaspoon cardamom

1 teaspoon cumin

1 teaspoon coriander

1 teaspoon turmeric

sea salt

Samosa (serves 2)

1 large vegan pastry dough sheet

4 potatoes

1 cup peas

1 onion

1 teaspoon turmeric

1 teaspoon curry

1 teaspoon coriander

Raita (serves 2)

1 cucumber

1 cup soy yogurt

1/8 cup dill

sea salt

Soul Food

Sweet Potato Pie (serves 4)

1 pie crust
4 sweet potatoes
¼ cup soy butter
1 ½ cups vegan marshmallows
¼ cup flour
½ cup brown sugar

Corn Bread

1 ½ cup corn meal
1 ½ cup flour
¼ cup unrefined cane sugar
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ cup canola oil
1/3 cup water
sea salt

Collard Greens (serves 4)

4 cups chopped collard greens
1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
1/8 cup cider vinegar
1/8 cup minced onions
1 teaspoon unrefined cane sugar
1/8 cup minced mushrooms
pinch of cumin
pinch of rosemary
salt & pepper to taste

African

Ethiopian Lentils (serves 6)

2 cups lentils
6 cups water
¾ cup green peppers
2 cups red onions
¼ cup soy butter
2 garlic cloves
1 tablespoon berber sauce
salt & pepper to taste

Injera (serves 5)

¼ cup teff flour

¾ cup flour
1 teaspoon sea salt
1 tbs. vegetable oil

Vegetable Stew (serves 8)

1 cup onions
4 carrots
4 green peppers
3 cups water
1 can tomato sauce
4 tbs. vegetable oil
2 tsp. sea salt
½ tsp. ginger
4 potatoes
8 cabbage wedges
salt & pepper to taste

Middle Eastern

Falafel (serves 2)

2 cups chickpeas
¼ cup flour
chopped parsley
¼ cup tahini
¼ lemon juice
1/8 olive oil
2 levash wraps
1 cup shredded lettuce
1 diced tomato
sea salt

Vegetable Kabob (serves 2)

1 cup cubed tofu
½ cup diced onions
1 cup diced pepper
½ cup diced squash
½ cup diced zucchini
1 squeezed lemon
chopped parsley

Grape Leaves (serves 2)

8 grape leaves

1 chopped tomato
1 squeezed lemon
chopped parsley
¼ cup uncooked rice
salt & pepper to taste

Mediterranean

Pizza (serves 4)

1 block soy cheese
½ can tomato sauce
3 cups flour
1 tablespoon of yeast
sea salt

Pasta & “Meatballs” (serves 4)

16 oz. spaghetti
½ can tomato sauce
1 bag vegan meatballs

“Chicken” Parmesan (serves 4)

4 pieces of faux chicken
1 block soy cheese
1 ½ cups bread crumbs
½ can tomato sauce
16 oz. spaghetti

Chapter Four

Statement of Learning

In the process of creating this ILP, I became aware of the realities of hunger in Eastern Massachusetts and throughout the state. I learned that the conventional approach to fighting hunger does not address the structures that support food-insecurity, nor empower the community to see its end . Consequently, while there are many organizations working to alleviate hunger, food-insecurity continues to pervade the homes and streets of Boston; thousands of residents still lack access to adequate food. Despite the staggering figures, I discovered that there are many organizations, groups and people working to create communities in the Boston area that are sustainable and free of hunger. These groups are deviating from the conventional approach to fighting hunger by providing opportunities for all citizens to regain their power and recognize their ability to contribute to the health and sustainability of the community. Rather than focusing on deficiencies, they are building communities rooted in the capacities of its members, nurturing and affirming their importance to the future of the community.

It is through these findings that I realized the importance of developing a Community Restaurant. I learned that for hunger to truly cease, our definition of community must be redefined and restructured, and that the Community Restaurant could be a model of this newly defined community. The issue of hunger cannot be looked at unilaterally; no simple answer such as more money or more soup kitchens can solve it. Putting a band-aid on hunger does not solve the problem. Thus, I realized that I had to design the Community Restaurant to look at the problem on the whole, that hunger is part of a network of problems. That is why the restaurant has to be eco-friendly and animal-

friendly; all aspects of the community must be empowered and cared for. The sustainability of the community depends upon the health of all its member. This is the only way to ending hunger.

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