

## **Development of Markets for Northeast Kansas City, KS Growers**

The **Kansas City Center for Urban Agriculture** (renamed “Cultivate Kansas City” in 2011) of Kansas City, Kansas received \$41,723 to provide training and business development support for refugees and low-income families, and develop the Juniper Garden Farmers Market and other markets for urban growers in low-income neighborhoods in Kansas City.

[Final Report FY09](#)

**FINAL REPORT TO USDA-FMPP**

Title of Program: Development of Markets for Northeast Kansas City, KS Growers  
Grant Number: 12-25-G-0935  
Kansas City Center for Urban Agriculture  
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Kansas City, KS 66106  
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**ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES**

Tasks & Timelines	Fall, 2009	Winter 2009	Spring 2010	Summer 2010	Fall 2010	Winter 2011	Spring 2011	Summer 2011
<i>New Farmers Recruited: Juniper Gardens Residents, Oak Grove &amp; Walnut Boulevard Neighborhood Associations, Catholic Charities, community gardeners, other networks</i>	<i>Summer 2009</i>			X	X			X
<p>These were the farmers that participated in the program over the two year course of the grant: Amina Durow, Angela Greene, Aye Aye Nu, Beh Paw, Beh Htoo, Dena Tu, Halima Durow, Jefferson Family, Kabibi Genevia, Khadijo Yussef, Lay Htoo, Maku Gurung, Mary Me, Ma Than, Nyakang Kuoth, Pay Lay, Pelagie Mukarwigermera, Ray Nay Paw, San Dar &amp; Soe Myint, Zawadi Daniel, Warren Kittler.</p>								
<i>Bi-weekly field walks</i>			X	X	X		X	X
<p>Weekly and bi-weekly field walks by the staff and an interpreter as needed occurred in both growing seasons, with more informal learning and exchange happening during the regular course of work. The farmers showed improvements in production skills, which evidenced in their market sales, shown below.</p>								
<i>Juniper Gardens Farmers Market- organizing</i>		X	X			X	X	
<i>Farmers Market Community outreach: Flyering, Church bulletins, Community agencies &amp; organizations contacts, PSAs</i>			X	X	X		X	X
<i>Community- and farmers' market-based nutrition and healthy eating education: classes, cooking demonstrations, recipes, farm tours, in partnership with WyCo Extension and other neighborhood programs</i>			X	X	X		X	X
<p>The Farmers' Market showed over the two year grant period significant improvements in sales and neighborhood presence. In 2011, \$27,177 was brought in from SNAP and SFMNP dollars including the Beans&amp;Greens Match; we estimate an additional 5-10% on top of that in cash sales; the 2010 sales were \$13,230.</p> <p>In 2010 and in 2011, the Healthy Eating Education Team distributed flyers to stores and public places (grocery stores, day care sites, public library, gas stations, liquor stores, etc.) and put out door hangers in Juniper Gardens and in the surrounding neighborhood every month that the market was open. Churches were called and follow-up flyers were mailed to them. The Education Team and Farmers' Market and Beans&amp;Greens staff did one-on-one outreach and emails through the SNAP staff, the KCK Housing Authority, United Way, the Willa Gill Center, Youth Build, neighborhood canvassing, Havenside, and other neighborhood based organizations. 25 yard signs pointing to the market were placed around the neighborhood and downtown area on market day. In 2011, we modified the yard signs</p>								

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<p>to state, for example, “One block to fresh collards” or “Two blocks to homegrown tomatoes!” The signs let people in the neighborhood know that they can find produce they are looking for only a short distance away.</p>								
<p>Articles were written by the Healthy Eating Education team in the KCK Housing Authority monthly newsletter; several customers said they came because of those articles.</p>								
<p>We used radio advertising and print advertising to attract customers. In 2011, radio ads were aired on Magic 107.3 (Soul, R&amp;B) and KPRS (Gospel) between May 21<sup>st</sup> and August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Ads were targeted on weekends in the first two weeks of each month, highlighting the SNAP match at the market. In 2010, eight weeks of print ads were placed in The Call. Radio ads were aired on Magic 107.3 (Soul, R&amp;B) and KPRS (Gospel) over a 4 week period. Three weeks of print ads were placed in The Call.</p>								
<p>At the market, the team organized cooking demonstrations to educate customers about preparing fresh, healthy food. In 2010, they offered almost weekly demonstrations at the market. In 2011, the team attended ServSafe Food Handler training and learned more about nutrition in their Healthy Parents, Healthy Kids classes. Using their knowledge, they selected recipes to prepare at seven farmers markets throughout the season. Many recipes were selected from <i>Seasonal and simple: A guide for enjoying fresh fruits and vegetables</i>, a publication by University of Missouri Extension. Some of the favorites were grilled vegetable kebobs, crusty okra circles, and wonderful winter squash. For each dish, the team prepared recipe cards for customers to take home with them. The cooking demonstrations were a highlight of the market for many people, a place to try new foods, learn preparation techniques, and socialize.</p>								
<p>While the team had planned to hold an opening day celebration in 2011, we were not able to hire the Healthy Team members early enough to allow sufficient planning for this. Instead we shifted our plans to a closing event. The first Fall Food Fest was held on Labor Day and is certain to become an annual event for us. Using food to bridge cultural divides between the refugee farmers and customers and the African American customers from the neighborhood, we had the farmers and the Healthy Food Team prepare traditional dishes for customers to sample. Music from around the world played on loudspeakers, children lined up for face painting and colored vegetables in veggie coloring packets. The team prepared kid’s cookbooks by making copies of recipes from books and tying them together with ribbons. Everyone had a great time and attendance peaked for the season that day at 195. When the team was unloading supplies at the office, it was great to see groups of kids from the neighborhood walking back home through the farm with painted faces and cookbooks in hand. The Fall Food Fest was a successful tool for getting more people to the market. It served to get neighborhood kids and their families to the market to interact with other customers, farmers, and the Healthy Food Team.</p>								
<p>In 2011, funding was found from the Kansas Health Foundation for a new level of outreach. The team prepared and distributed baskets of fresh, healthy vegetables from the local market to neighborhood residents. Throughout the season the team distributed 51 baskets of produce. The baskets included educational information about the Beans&amp;Greens match for Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program and Supplemental Nutrition Program dollars and simple. We also included nutritional recipes on how to prepare the fresh produce. The first seven recipients to get baskets were seniors in the neighborhood, all of whom were thrilled to get the baskets. We saw a few of them coming to the market throughout the season. The next round of baskets was delivered in July to 21 new residents to Juniper Gardens. In September, the team delivered the final 23 baskets to participants in The Family Conservancy’s Healthy Parents, Healthy Kids class and other supporters of the farmers market. There were a few extra baskets that able to give to share with interested residents. In a wrap-up meeting the team and staff agreed that the vegetable baskets were a powerful outreach tool. The baskets provided residents, many of whom have lost the knowledge of how to cook with fresh foods, a hands-on opportunity to try cooking and new vegetables in a no-risk environment. In addition, the vegetable baskets effectively and positively introduced new neighborhood residents to the KCK Greenmarket at Juniper Gardens. We are pursuing funding to continue this basket outreach in 2012.</p>								

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### Measuring the Impact

We tracked customer attendance at the Juniper Gardens Farmers Market at four markets throughout the 2011 season. Foot traffic counts included all visitors to the market: on July 18, 130 visitors; on August 8, 110 visitors; on September 5 at the Fall Food Fest, 195 visitors; on September 12, 147 visitors. These numbers show that the market consistently had over 100 visitors during the peak months (July-September and that the Fall Food Fest increased attendance significantly. Next season the team will aim to track attendance more regularly, particularly at the first and last markets of the season which likely have lower attendance due to less selection of produce.

The Healthy Food Team conducted surveys twice throughout the market season on July 18th and September 12th. A total of 26 responses were gathered from market customers. The large majority of customers at the Juniper Garden are refugees that have limited English communication abilities, so our survey efforts focused on the English speaking customers. We asked all shoppers that could be identified as English speakers to fill out a short questionnaire about their participation with the market and its impact on their lives.

Of the 26 respondents, ten were first time shoppers, five had attended before but rarely, five sometimes come to the market and six shopped at the market often. Ten customers came from the surrounding neighborhood, traveling less than half a mile to get to the market; another ten traveled over a mile to get there; and six traveled between half a mile and a mile. Eighteen of the 26 customers surveyed drove to market, including half of those that traveled less than half a mile to market. This shows that there is room to improve in the realm of encouraging active transportation for customers coming from within the neighborhood.

When asked about reasons for coming to the market, customer responses varied from just checking it out to looking for specific vegetables, to wanting to buy fresh vegetables. Nearly all customers reported that they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the market. Customers noted good looking vegetables, affordable prices, and a convenient “right out my backdoor” location as the main reasons for their satisfaction with the market. In addition several customers mentioned friendly people at the market and the positive benefits for the neighborhood as additional reasons they like the market.

One role of the Healthy Food Team is to perform cooking demonstrations at the market, showcasing simple recipes for the vegetables that are in season at the market. Many of the customers surveyed were first time visitors, so it makes sense that seventeen had never seen a cooking demonstration at the market. There was an even split among customers sharing whether or not they had tasted or cooked new foods since coming to the market, with thirteen on each side.

This survey shows that most customers are satisfied with the market and many reported positive changes in their attitudes and behaviors. Eight customers said they feel more confident about buying and cooking from raw produce and twelve believe they now eat more fruits and/or vegetables. A handful of respondents also noted that they socialize more with their neighbors, that the neighborhood feels safer, friendlier or more supportive. Several customers want to wait and see what impacts they see.

<i>First year farmer workshops: Marketing, Soils, Basic production, Greenhouse production, Post harvest handling, Sales taxes &amp; income recording, Field mapping, Irrigation, Land Lease, Self-employment income, EBT sales</i>	<i>5 first year farmers Enrolled</i>	<i>Cont.</i>			<i>5-8 first year farmers Enrolled</i>	<i>Cont.</i>		
<i>Workshops for second year farmers: Advanced Marketing, Goal setting, Field Mapping</i>	<i>6 second year farmers enrolled</i>	<i>X</i>			<i>6 second year farmers enrolled</i>	<i>X</i>		

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<i>Workshops for third year farmers: IDA programs &amp; farm capitalization, Farm business management, Seed &amp; supply sourcing independently, others as identified</i>	<i>6 third year farmers enrolled</i>	X			<i>6 third year farmers enrolled</i>	X		

We offered the following workshops for all farmers:

12/9/2009	17	Introduction to Farm Business Development Program
12/16/2009	14	Vegetable Production & Planning 1, How to get started, etc
1/6/2010	16	Vegetable Production & Planning 2, Where to plant what, etc...
1/13/2010	14	Vegetable Production & Planning 3, Pest and Disease control, etc...
1/20/2010	14	Marketing Strategies
1/27/2010	10	Vegetable Production
2/3/2010	11	Greenhouse production
2/10/2010	11	Vegetable Prod. 2
2/17/2010	14	Soils
3/3/2010	12	Sales Tax
3/10/2010	14	Land Lease, Program Guidelines
3/17/2010	12	CSA
3/24/2010	13	Tools
3/31/2010	14	Harvesting Guidelines
4/7/2010	15	Pest Control
7/8/2010	10	Organic Pesticides
12/1/2010	15	Introduction to Farm Business Development
12/5/2010	18	Introduction to Veg Production and Choosing Crops
12/15/2010	16	Veg Production II/planning your crops
1/5/2011	10	Marketing
1/12/2011	14	Vegetable Production 3, organic pest controls
1/19/2011	15	Advanced Organics
1/19/2011	6	Sales Tax
1/26/2011	16	High Tunnels
2/9/2011	18	Greenhouse propagation
2/16/2011	12	Soils
2/18/2011	9	Planting calendar.
2/23/2011	6	Record keeping
2/28/2011	8	Marketing 2
3/2/2011	1	Land Lease/Farmer Agreements
3/9/2011	8	Tools
3/16/2011	19	Drip irrigation
3/23/2011	15	Advanced marketing
3/30/2011	13	CSA
4/6/2011	16	Cooking class- how Americans cook
4/13/2011	13	Cooking class- how Americans cook, 2

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7/12/2011	9	Care and maintenance of equipment 1						
7/14/2011	8	Care and maintenance of equipment 2						
7/19/2011	10	Post harvest handling						
<p>Individual end of season evaluations and goal setting for growers took place both years in the fall and early winter.</p> <p>Over the last two years, we have added more and better workshops. We've added a new workshop on cooking "american style" to enable refugee farmers to relate better to their American customers. In July 2011, we taught for the first time a workshop on equipment breakage, wear and tear and proper care of farm infrastructure. We've also brought in a local farmer and teacher to teach our workshop on post-harvest handling.</p> <p>Four farmers successfully completed the IDA enrolment, training, and approval process. Each of them saved \$1500 and, as of March 1, 2012, three have purchased land and are preparing it for 2012 production; one is still looking for land. The farmers with land are now producing their own transplants in the Cultivate KC greenhouse, one has received a grant for site development; all are continuing production.</p> <p>This year, we saw all the farmers using their own saved seeds and seeds sourced through family networks.</p> <p>In 2011, our growers overall did very well, especially in light of the very difficult growing season characterized by prolonged drought and heat. All in all our 18 farmers sold just under \$105,000 worth of fresh local produce. We are thrilled to see one farmer pass the \$15,000 mark in overall sales. That is \$6000 more than the 2010 record. The average sales per refugee farmer increased as well, rising by 39 percent from \$4637 in 2010 to \$6457 in 2011. These are impressive achievements by farmers working only a quarter-acre plot.</p>								

### **Overall project evaluation**

We saw a tremendous improvement in farmer marketing competency and production competency over the last two years; our new 2012 growers are also clearly coming in at a higher level of skill, in part because of the refugee populations that are coming in (primarily Bhutanese, and different Burmese ethnic groups) and in part because they are benefiting from the advanced skills and norms set by the more experienced growers. The workshops, after several years of development, have settled into a more regular curriculum; our 2012 workshops show little change now from 2011, demonstrating that we have a mix that seems to be solid.

The Beans&Greens program made a tremendous impact on the market sales; the program will continue in 2012.

The Healthy Food Team will continue in 2012; we believe that they will have a slow but certain impact. In 2012, they will organize a more vigorous schedule of market activities; they experienced a learning curve, as did the market overall, over the last two years.

The biggest challenge we see, similar to other markets located in low-income, primarily African American communities, is low turnout by African American residents. While we did see a strong increase in attendance, the market sales grew primarily because of an increase in the numbers of Burmese and Asian customers. Radio and print advertising did get "heard" but there was very low ROI in terms of actual numbers of customers showing up. We do not presently have funding for continued advertising.

In talking to other local markets, and markets located in other parts of the country, the challenges this market has in attracting African American customers is not unique. In talking with them, and in internal evaluations,

we believe that, as in all our work, “normalizing” good food is the job ahead of us, in every community. This means finding every possible niche where people visually, physically, and emotionally interact with food, and to the best of our ability and our budget, creating an ongoing, daily way to insert the presence and reality and option of healthy, locally grown food. We understand that some of our strategies have more impact and staying power and a more immediate ROI- the Healthy Food Team, the Beans&Greens match, family-centered market activities, and lower output strategies like yard signs, flyers, personal conversations, neighborhood visibility through church bulletins, etc. We understand that there is no single marketing/outreach strategy that will do the trick, and so will persist in using a diversity of approaches and people to help our farmers share their good food with their neighbors.