

Nuestras Raíces of Holyoke, MA received \$82,587 to provide farmer mentors to beginning, immigrant and refugee farmers and to purchase packaging, display supplies, market tents, promotional brochures and posters for the farmers.

[Final Report FY10](#)

Recipient Name: Nuestras Raices Inc.

Title project: Tierra de Oportunidades

Grant Number: 12-25-G-1158

Holyoke MA 01040

Project summary:

As our nations demographics change quickly, immigrants, refugees and ethnic communities have become the movers and shakers of the food system, as workers, growers, food entrepreneurs and consumers.

Immigrants and refugees face great barriers to becoming farmers are the following: language barriers, lack of access to capital and lack of familiarity with U.S. economic system. But with training, support and access to high-margin markets, they can become some of the regions newest and most successful farmers. With Nuestras Raices at the forefront of a movement to grow new farmers, the number of farm in the state increased by 27 percent from 2002 to 2007, the biggest growth in 4 decades (U.S. Census of Agriculture).Massachusetts has a rich history of small farm and is one of the nation's leaders in direct marketing. Training and supporting a new wave of immigrants and refugees farmers, and reconnecting, farmers with communities will conserve vital farm land and heritage, and rebuild local and rural economies.

An estimated 78% of crop workers in the U.S. are foreign-born and Hispanic farmers are the faster growing and demographic group of new farmers in the country (+50% between 1997 and 2002, 2002 Census of Agriculture).A 2002 marketing study, in which interviews with executives representing 40 supermarkets chains and individuals stores in the U.S. found that Hispanics, African-American, and Asian-Americans account for 37% of all sales in supermarkets. The Greater Springfield metro district is the 6th poorest in the country (2000 census), but that does not mean that is doesn't have demand or buying power to support farmers markets.

The Greater Springfield Metro Region, including Holyoke, is the 6th poorest area in the country. Holyoke alone, less than half the population of Springfield, has 13491 SNAP participants (of 38,000 total residents), as January 2009 and 2380 WIC clients. The Mason Square, Springfield, market is located in a inner-city neighborhood where about 40%of residents, or 3,534people, are food insecure.

Project Approach

Training and facilities support for beginning farmers to support to direct markets

“Growing Farmers”:

- a. Direct marketing training
- b. Weekly inspection at Farmers Market and farm stand.
- c. Workshops on Farmers Market presentation of produces.
- d. Monthly training in rules and regulations involving the Board of Health Department.

Farmers

- a. Recruit and convene team of farmers/mentors.
- b. Site visits to mentors farms (Pleasant Valley Gardens Methuen M.A. 01844, Enterprise farm 75 River RD South Deerfield M.A. 01373).
- c. Approach CISA (community involved in sustaining agriculture) to get in contact information of local –pioneer valley farmers.

Farmer to farmer trainings on marketing

- a. Each individual farmer trained each other at Farmers Market set up, pricing, display.
- b. Assisted each other with customer services approaches. Produces cleaning equipment, establish a wash station via other grants (CDBG).

Develop new direct markets.

1. Outreach with flyers, lawn signs, banners, radio show, newspaper, press release, door by door outreach and poster in store and local agencies in the Springfield, Holyoke area.
2. Donahue Elementary School Farmers Market, starting in July to October from 10am to 2pm.
3. Farm store ran cooperatively during the week and weekends from 10am to 4pm.
4. Permits were submitted on time for the farmers market and store.
5. Run double deal programs in two markets, Holyoke Market and Donahue Market.

6. Promoted on-site farm stand at the incubator farm
 - a. Radio show promotion.
 - b. Social media promotion
 - c. Signage near entrances with banners and banners in site farm.
7. Collect data on number of beginning farmer's sales, end of year financial of farmers report by staff.
8. Count double deal coupons, participated in a U.S.D.A. study H.I.P. (Healthy, Incentive Program).
9. Double Voucher, thru Wholesome Wave Foundation we promoted this double deal Voucher program , double the costumer coupons that are recipients of WIC,SNAP and SENIOR BOUCHERS, promoting this with , flyers ,posters ,press release and radio show.
10. Marketing of farm store two immigrant costumers and others
 - a. Marketing campaign, radio show 1490 Spanish radio station reaching around 12,000 listener per hour, Spanish press releases in local news papers (El Sol Latino, Pueblo Latino) and The SUN another local news paper. Flyers distributed through restaurants, small business, agencies and Housing in Holyoke, Springfield, West Springfield, Springfield and Chicopee.

Goals and Outcomes

1. **Growing farmers**
 - a. Outreach
 - b. Weekly basis of 12,000 listeners in radio show.
 - c. Conference to NOFA and NAFDA.
 - d. Flyers in local festivals.
 - e. Marketing campaign.
 - f. 50-100 farmers reach during campaign
 - g. Participating in the FMPP programs was from Tierra de Oportunidades, 15 current farmers, 10 beginners' farmers; from LSS were 36 from two different locations.

- h. Around 67 Farmers participating and having technical support from Nuestras Raices Staff in a monthly basic approximately 5 to 7 hours per month in individual basics and needs.
- i. Around 71 Farmers sold in a cooperative way in different farmers markets.
- j. 10 new farmers sold independent this year in Western Massachusetts, in different Farmers Markets.
- k. Big lost due to hurricane Irene in 2011 lost 80% of crops grown the 20% left not good quality to sell.

Expanding Local and Rural Economies

1. Look 2011 numbers in past report.
2. Lost \$15,000 due to Foundation reduction of funds.
3. Profit sales \$35,000 including all the farmers, WIC, Double Voucher, Senior Coupons, and E.B.T., Prescription Boucher.
4. Donahue Elementary School Farmers Market, located in a urban area in 210 Whitening Farm Road Holyoke M.A., located near a residential area with approximately 500 apartment complex of low income family, two elder complex housing with 200 units per building. This Farmers Market is provide fresh food to this neighborhood that the closes stores is near buy a mile and half from the living area and most of this people have to depend of local public transportation to get to the near store.

Lesson Learned

1. More outreach in the community to bring more people to the markets.
2. Educated agencies to learn and disseminate of Farmers Market to their members
3. More contact and communication with the City officials such as Board of Health in regards to rules and regulations.
4. More training to farmers focused on rules regulations based from the board of health, based on record keeping.
5. Weather being a big factor of sales includes Hurricane Irene.
6. The communities that their farmers markets are located to learn the needs of those communities to grow crops that they would consume and increases sales for the farmers.

Jueves 16 de Junio

Nuestras Raíces, Holyoke, MA

Contacto: Jesús Espinosa 413-364-1233

Dirección de La Plaza de Mercado: 210 Whiting Farms Road, Holyoke, 10-2pm

Una Plaza de Mercado Abre en Holyoke Los Sábados en Donahue Elementary School

El Mercado empieza Sábado el 9 de Julio

La organización Nuestras Raíces abrirá una Plaza de Mercado con Donahue Elementary School todos Los Sábados Julio-Octubre entre 10-2pm. Los organizadores del mercado están emocionados para proveer comida saludable al barrio de Tokeneke y sus alrededores , crecer una buena relación con la comunidad de la escuela.

Como muchos mercados en esa área, La Plaza de Mercado en Donahue Elementary quiere ser accesible para toda la comunidad. Aceptarán los beneficios de WIC, SNAP, y Senior FMNP, y además se van a multiplicar esos beneficios con el programa de Double Deal. Así, todos los beneficios son multiplicados por 2 cuando alguien las usa en La Plaza de Mercado.

La Plaza de Mercado en Donahue Elementary apoya a todos los agricultores locales – los agricultores de Holyoke! Agricultores quien alquila pedazos de terrenos en la de Finca Nuestras Raíces siembra una gran diversidad de productos incluso a Ají Dulce, gandules, lechuga del país, calabaza, berenjenas de todas clases y hierbas , más venden todo a la comunidad.

El gerente del mercado Jesús Espinosa está emocionado para trabajar junto con la comunidad de Donahue Elementary School. Más que apoyar a los agricultores, el mercado es un lugar para celebración y educación. Cuánto cuesta un tomate de 2.5lb a \$3.50/lb? Cómo son las finanzas de una finca? Todos son oportunidades para los estudiantes de Donahue Elementary aprender de nuestro mundo.

Nuestras Raíces es una organización del pueblo que promueve desarrollo económico, humano, y comunitario en la ciudad de Holyoke, Massachusetts a través de proyectos que tienen que ver con la agricultura, alimentos, y el medio-ambiente.

Donahue Elementary School Farmers Market

SATURDAYS ONLY

LOCATION: 210 Whiting Farms Road
Holyoke, MA 01040

TIME: 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM (Rain or Shine).
Starts July .16, 2011 to October 29, 2011.



329 Main Street, Holyoke, MA 01040
www.nuestras-raices.org

Photo 1: Setting Up for the Downtown Holyoke Farmers Market



Photo 2: Customers Visiting the Holyoke Farmers Market



Photos 3 & 4: A Before and After Shot of Hurricane Irene's Impact on Nuestras Raices Urban Farm:



Photo 5: Wide View of Nuestras Raices Urban Farm After the Hurricane:



Farmers Market Promotion Program
 Lutheran Social Services Subcontract
 Grant Reporting for Oct 1, 2010 through Sept 30, 2011

Participation in LSS Agriculture Program	Central MA	Western MA
# of farmers participating in farmers markets	6	8
# of farmers markets attending each week	2	2
Total Farmers Market Sales through LSS Agriculture Program (as of 8/22/11)	Central MA	Western MA
Cash income	\$1019.50	\$539.30
WIC coupon income	\$92.50	\$45.00
EBT income	\$62.05	\$111.00
Senior voucher income	\$125.00	\$40.00
Fruit and Veggie Voucher	\$5.00	\$0
Credit/Debit Sales	\$28.65	\$0
WIC Fruit and Vegetable Checks	\$0	\$0
TOTAL INCOME	\$1333.15	\$735.30

Grafton Farmers Market

Highlights: Clientele really enjoys supporting our mission. We have had great feedback about supporting the farmers that we support. We have a small group of regular customers that come to our stand first! Market is at a great location and we are one of the only two “organic growers”, which allows a small edge. The population at market generally understands our prices and has an appreciation for our unique varieties of produce. The market also does a good job at advertising the market, along with having a great face book and website page.

Challenges: A personal challenge we had was having produce early enough to make our commitment to go to market each week. We were not able to go to market due to lack of produce. Volume buying is not happening, consumers buy in very little quantities from us. There are larger farms with more produce at lower prices at the market, and we feel as though the majority of consumers buy more from them. In addition, our end of the market has less foot traffic as the other end, on top of having too much sun entering directly into our tent. For our farmers, the location is harder to get to, unless we as an organization provide the transportation.

Photos:



Main South YMCA, Worcester Farmers Market, Regional Environmental Council

Highlights: Ethnicity! Our farmers are from various parts of the world, and it's great that the food they grow feeds their own populations. This market is located in a low-income part of Worcester that is a gem of culture. Highly Latino, but also trafficked by many refugee families including Bhutanese, Iraqi, and many people from South East Asia and of all parts of Africa. Our unique and more ethnic crops such as amaranth, Malabar spinach, maharage (shelling beans), and mustard greens sell well as a result. Market managers are easy to deal with, and the market overall is developing and has many components to a complete market, including food, drink, craft, meat, honey, maple syrup and information vendors along with live music performances. Coupon usage here is prevalent. The new WIC Fruit and Vegetable Checks are also accepted here. Though we have not received any yet, we are certified to accept these checks. In addition, there is an EBT machine where people receive two for one deals on price in accordance to the grant from Wholesome Wave that the organization in charge of market has received.

Challenges: Once again we are competing against larger farms with more volume and lower prices. People here are often turned away from our prices, which reflect middle of the road prices for organic growers (not certified). Some of our prices are lower than our competitors, but people are doing a lot of "one stop shop" at larger stands. Overall, there is not that many visitors for the prime location.

Photos:



Mason Square, Springfield Farmers Market

Highlights: The Mason Square, Springfield market serves a low-income, diverse community of Springfield. Customers can utilize SNAP, Debit, WIC and senior coupons for purchases. We offer some similar products and also some different items than other stands. Particularly popular has been collard greens, amaranth, sunflowers, shell beans, lettuce. This market is close to where some of our farmers live and in a familiar area to other farmers and friends. The market is steady most weeks. We are excited to be selling back into a community where our farmers live!

Challenges: We have introduced some recipe cards to make it easier for customers to try products that are new to them. The market is still young (3 years) and does not have a large customer base, but it is growing. We keep our prices lower than we could at a high end market due to the customer base.

Photos:



West Springfield Farmers Market

Highlights: This market is near the town center of West Springfield. It is a new market and has promise to grow into a bigger market. It has a diversity of vendors beyond produce.

Customers can utilize their WIC and senior coupons. The market manager is very supportive and welcoming to our participation.

Challenges: Our farm collective is not producing enough produce to attend three markets a week on a consistent basis. It also requires another day of staff time to attend the market as none of our farmers are available on this day. We have attended the market one time this season.

Photos:



Springfield Mobile Market

Highlights: This is an exciting new endeavor within the city of Springfield to service some of the city's food deserts. The bus is owned and operated by Enterprise Farm, a large, organic farm about 30 miles north of the city. They financed the purchase and retrofit of the bus through CSA member donations. They partnered with Springfield Partners for a Healthier Community to identify appropriate locations within the city and devise a route. Partners for a Healthier Community is also engaged in assisting with promotion and supplying a seasonal volunteer to help on the day of market.

The mobile market began this year in July. It comes one day a week to Springfield and makes 5 different stops in the city, staying in each stop for 1-2 hours. The entire route is from 9am – 6pm on Wednesdays. It stops at 3 community centers and 2 senior housing areas. Enterprise Farm has a staff member that drives the bus and sets up the market at each stop. The inside of the bus is set up to be a market, which customers can walk through and shop. They collect their products and pay at the vending table under an awning on the outside of the bus. The mobile market is equipped to accept SNAP/EBT and Debit, as well as cash.

New Lands Farm joined the project in August. Enterprise Farm invited us to join as the featured farm with a table under the awning outside the bus. The New Lands Farm collective has been marketing this way since the first week of August. New Lands farmers offer different ethnic crops and variety beyond Enterprise Farm. Also, Enterprise Farm has offered to bring

complementary products on board the bus to limit competition. The partnership has allowed for the acceptance of WIC and senior coupons, as the state requires at least two vendors to qualify as a market.

As this is a trial year, future markets and collaboration are yet undetermined. There is potential for New Lands to eventually grow and utilize the entire bus one or more days per week in the city.

Challenges: Again, this is a new market and customer base is low-income. Prices and volume purchases are low. Further promotion is needed to see the market expand and greater use at the current stops before further routes are planned. This market is also on a weekday, which is generally a challenge for our farmers who are either working or engaged in childcare duties.

Photos:

