

Brownsville Farmers Market Promotion and New EBT Project

Calapooia Food Alliance of Brownsville, Oregon received \$44,448 to increase the amount of local food that is produced and consumed, with particular focus on low-income families and on small farms/farmers. Funds were used to purchase infrastructure, implement an advertisement campaign, and update information technology

[Final Report FY09](#)



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Final Performance Report

Date: November 8, 2011
Recipient Name: Calapooia Food Alliance/Brownsville Farmers Market
Title of Project: Brownsville Farmers Market Promotion
Grant Number: 12-25-G-0972
Location: Brownsville, Oregon
Contact Name/number: Tatiana Perczek/541-409-9722

Project Summary:

The purpose of this project was to increase the amount of local food that is produced and consumed around Brownsville, Oregon and surrounding areas. Although Brownsville is a small rural town with access to many thousands of usable acres, most farmers choose to grow grass seed or raise sheep instead of growing agricultural crops. People in Brownsville have gotten out of touch with food production and instead source their food from convenience stores or large supermarkets. One of our biggest goals with this grant was to put community members more in touch with where their food comes from and to encourage veteran and would-be farmers to produce more food for our community. This project had a particular focus on low-income families and small farmers. Through the efforts of this grant we also sought to enhance the Brownsville Farmers Market experience and give community members a dependable place to buy and sell local food.

Project Approach:

The three main scopes of our project were to 1) increase consumption of local farm products 2) increase production of local farm products, and 3) enhance the farmers market experience. The first thing we focused on was forming relationships with local farmers in order to get them involved in two of our projects, the Brownsville Farmers Market and Willamette Local Foods. We held many vendor meetings for both projects and hosted community "Munch Events" to reach out to potential vendors as well as customers. At the Brownsville Farmers Market, we also operated a large community booth so that we could sell vendors' products for them. This worked well for many farmers who were already participating in bigger markets on the same day and allowed us to have a bountiful display of produce for customers at our small market. In order to bring more customers to the market, we also focused on making the market more of a

community event with volunteer musicians and events like pumpkin rolling and bread baking competitions.

At the online marketplace we created, Willamette Local Foods.com, we gave farmers a place to sell their goods and we presented community members with a new way to get food from local farmers. We had ads running every week in our local newspaper, *The Times*, for the farmers market and for W.L.F. to also increase customer participation and awareness. In addition, we wrote articles every week educating the community on seasonal local food and the kinds of products our farmers have to offer. Lastly, we created a new website and brochure for the Brownsville Farmers Market as well as the Calapooia Food Alliance in order to better publicize them.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

- We have encouraged many new vendors to participate in the Brownsville Farmers Market and have enhanced the market experience because of it. We have more fresh food products to offer than when we started and more regular customers. Many of our new vendors are young farmers who also are benefiting from their first experiences as a market vendor.
- We are now able to accept EBT cards for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program at the Brownsville Farmers Market. In partnership with the Ten Rivers Food Web, we were also able to offer a SNAP incentive program this year where customers could double their EBT money for fresh food purchases. This has increased purchases at the Brownsville Farmers Market and there is more awareness about the market in and around Brownsville.
- We have facilitated farmer-to-farmer mentoring and created a more connected farming community in and around Brownsville. This grant has helped to bring farmers together on common goals. They now help each other with farming needs and carpool when transportation needs overlap. The farmer-to-farmer mentoring has been of particular importance to our young farmers who are learning from our older generations of farmers.
- We have majorly increased awareness of both the farmers market and activities of the Calapooia Food Alliance through our advertisements, ads, and articles in the *Times* and our e-mail updates. The Calapooia Food Alliance has a much stronger community presence than when we started and the community now comes to us for its local food needs. Our Munch articles in *The Times* have also helped greatly to raise community awareness of what healthy food is and where it can be found locally.
- We have made the market experience vibrant with more vendors, volunteer musicians, new signage, and exciting events we've organized like a Bread Bake Off.
- We have a beautiful new website for the Brownsville Farmers Market where the general public can come to learn about the market and vendors can print out necessary forms.

- We have updated and improved our website for the Calapooia Food Alliance. This website is a wealth of information and has links to pdf's of our Munch articles. Anyone can go on our site to learn about our various projects, read the minutes of our meetings, and even donate to the C.F.A.
- We printed an educational brochure about the Calapooia Food Alliance which we have passed out at events and at the market to raise awareness about the various projects of the C.F.A. We have also printed a great tri-fold display board to bring to events. As one of our big projects, we conducted a city-wide survey about the Brownsville Farmers Market to help us better serve our community.
- We have held two classes for the community on *Winter Vegetable Gardening*. This has helped to educate community members on the importance of locally produced food and we used these classes as an opportunity to promote local farms and the projects of the C.F.A .
- We printed laminated signs where we can make announcements for the farmers market and Calapooia Food Alliance. We also have new extra-large wooden signs to make sure people know where the market is, when it is, and what kind of products are available at the market.

Beneficiaries:

There are many organizations and community members who have benefited from this project. First of all, the Brownsville Farmers Market has been majorly enhanced by this project and all vendors and customers have benefited. The Calapooia Food Alliance has benefited greatly as well through all the goals achieved, as detailed above. Sharing Hands Food Bank in Brownsville benefited from the successes of this project. We had a hefty donation of fresh food for them after many market dates for the past several years. All the small farmers and customers who have participated in Willamette Local Foods online marketplace have benefited. All customers who order from Eugene Local Foods in Lane County have also benefited because they were able to order from our farmers by tapping into the same database. Local farmers who have benefited from our projects include Fraga Farm, Open Oak Farm, Sunset Lane Farm, KB Plant World, Running Wild Rice, Salmon Brook Farm, Rouse Farm, Springbank Farm, the Mushroomery, Weppeler's Farm, JK Cattle Ranch, Rainshadow El Rancho, Telltale Farm, Berkey's Blueberries, and Rowe's Garden.

In years to come, the Brownsville Farmers Market will continue to grow because of the connections and customer loyalty we've created in the last few years. Vendor participation in the market has increased by 20% and we expect it will continue to increase. Customer participation has also increased as a direct result of this grant and local food purchases are higher than ever. Willamette Local Foods will also continue to operate and provide our farmers with increased sales and publicity. Through this website, we've been able to connect our

farmers with food buying institutions and individuals who want to support them and these relationships will also continue to build as the support for local food grows.

Many things made possible by this grant will also continue to benefit the Calapooia Food Alliance. The new websites for the Brownsville Farmers Market and C.F.A. will serve us for years to come and provide us with a means to reach out to the surrounding community and all the new signage will also enhance the market for years to come. The Calapooia Food Alliance is also continuing to write Munch articles in *The Times* to keep educating the world around us on food-related issues.

Lessons Learned:

The part of our project we encountered the most trouble with was the Willamette Local Foods online marketplace. We created this marketplace with the help of our friends at Eugene Local Foods. They created us a sister website to Eugene Local Foods that could share both a product database and customer database yet have deliveries into Linn County (where Brownsville is located) as well as Lane County (where Eugene is located). The project helped our farmers get sales and publicity mostly from Eugene customers since that website had already been doing well for quite some time but the site never took off around Linn County. The main problem was the lack of promotion and advertising to get the website popular enough to support itself. This was especially needed since we have such a small population to work with when compared to Eugene. Luckily, we acquired another small grant recently which will help us with the advertising and promotion the site needs.

Additional Information:

Please visit the new Brownsville Farmers Market website at:
<http://www.brownsville-farmersmarket.org/>

Check out our updated site for the Calapooia Food Alliance at <http://www.gocfa.org/>
Make sure to click on the links to some of our *Munch On This* articles!

Contact Person:

The project manager and contact person for this project is Tatiana Perczek. She can be reached at farmersmarket@gocfa.org or 541-409-9722.