

Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)
Final Performance Report
October 1 - March 30, 2016
and forecast for
April - September 2016

Date: April 26, 2016

Recipient Name: ACTS Career Center

Project Title: Brown Baptist Missionary Baptist Church (BMBC) – ACTS Farmer’s Market Promotion Program

Grant Number: 14-FMPPX-0100

Project Location: Southaven, MS

Amount Awarded: \$40,379

Contact: Pennie Nelson (662) 796-2287 pl.nelson@comcast.net

I. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal #1: To provide a food market location that benefit farmers and low-income consumers, thus increasing the economic return on investment to historically underserved communities (both farmer and consumer)

Goal #2: To teach business skills, logistics, and supply and demand principles as a gateway to employment opportunities for youth

Goal #3: To connect low-income consumers with food producers to build community capacity to address issues of food security

Goal #4: To respond and alleviate the local food desert by providing access to fresh food and promoting healthy eating and lifestyles





Goal #5: To outreach to the community by promoting comprehensive responses to food access and nutrition through workshops and trainings.

II. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

The following activities were used to achieve the goals and objectives of the project and to meet our overall mission of addressing chronic health issues seen in the community and congregation, educating people about the benefits of eating locally grown food, collaborating with local small scale growers to expand accessibility, assisting farmers in having a direct market, teaching youth the business of farming, and improving lives through agriculture and conservation initiatives.

- Planted Spring Crops March 2016
- Replanted in the **community garden**. Intergenerational – Youth and Senior matched.
- Increasing the hours that the Farmer’s Market is open (Monday - Thursday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.)

Fig. 1 - Brown Youth Initiative participants on field trip.

□ **Four Health and Wellness Workshops held.**

□ **Childhood Obesity Workshop**

□ Consistent promotional activities held through social media, church announcements, outreach, local media, and partnerships. Interactive booth with promotional items.

□ Staff Volunteer over saw the November fellowship promoting health and wellness. The event featured a healthy meal with fresh greens from the BMBC farm site.

Fig. 2, and 3 - Fall 2015 - Greens assortments grown using high tunnel and in-ground agricultural methods.

□ Soulful Christmas Showcase - Farmer's Market Vendors set up booths to promote the BMBC Farmer's Market (formerly, the BMBC Business Showcase)

□ Youth Farm Programming - 2016 Curriculum drafted. Youth Farm market sessions will last 4 weeks for 120 hours. However, a select few will have the opportunity to work in the comprehensive program for an extended amount of time to assist with the market and serve as tour guides. This program starts in the spring and last until the end of summer. The purpose of this program is to involve youth in agriculture and conservation.



Fig. 2 - BMBC Farmer's Market Vendor. Davis Farms has participated as a vendor since inception. Canned produce is grown on the Davis multi-generational farm.

III. PERFORMANCE

Accomplishments

- SNAP EBT approved in September 2015. Training was held November 5, 2015. Since that time the market has accepted SNAP EBT. Approximately 2% of our customers use the service.



Fig. 3 and 4 - 2015 - Fall greens assortments grown using high tunnel and in-ground agricultural methods.

- Farmer Market – The farmers' market venue provide the opportunity for the accessibility to fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as homemade preserves, jam, salads and other goods. Farmers' market has also served a place for people to be exposed to and try a wider variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Following the grand-opening (2015), the market continued to get local support from the local media and partners. The BMBC Farmer's Market was featured in local newspaper publications. The Chamber of Commerce continues to promote the market as public service announcement.
- Customer levels remained steady. We are now averaging 75 customers per day to the market.
- The market remained open during the winter and maintained 6-8 consistent vendors and suppliers
- Strengthened relationships with local and regional USDA representatives and local farmers.
- The Fall harvest of greens (grown in-ground and in the high tunnel) were beautiful, tasty, and a big winner at the farmer's market.

- Vegetable Growers Training held (February 11, 2016)



BMBC AGRICULTURE CONSERVATION PROJECT

**Vegetable Growers
Training Conference**
Thursday February 11, 2016
8.30 am – 4.30 pm

- Exploring the Landscape of Small Scale Farming
- Key Small Scale Equipment
- High Tunnel Construction
- Cropping for Season Extension
- Marketing Avenues for Growers

Guest Facilitator: Mark Cain
Co-owner and Manager of
Dripping Spring Garden
Huntsville, Arkansas

Free to the Public

Registration is required to attend and seating is limited
BROWN BAPTIST FARMERS MARKET (MAIN CAMPUS)

Lucille Smith Building
742 Stateline Road East

PLEASE REGISTER ONLINE AT WWW.ACTSCAREERCENTER.ORG

Brown Missionary Baptist Church
Agriculture Conservation Project is a
year-round farm-based, demonstration
project, implemented on two acres of
property owned and maintained by
BMBC. The program consists of
integrated educational activities.
Promoting healthy lifestyles, farming,
business development, having an
impact on the food desert phenomenon
in strikeforce areas and expanding
the Farmers' Market are the key
components of the mission.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT
ACTS Career Center, INC
BMBC Main Campus
Tel: (662) 796-2287

Beneficiaries

- An average of (75) people attend the monthly Health and Wellness Workshop; consisting of community members, church members, BYI participants, and parents. People attended Vegetable Growers Training.

Fig. 5 - BMBC first 2016 promotional activity.



- Senior Citizens (10-12) received produce harvested and donated. Seniors also receive a 25% discount on items purchased at the market.

- Youth participants (15), exposed to agriculture and working in the farmer's market. *Testimonial from Youth Participant – “I have been working for the Agriculture Conservation for about 4-6 weeks. I have learned numerous of things about farming and gardening. A few of the things I learned were irrigation, mulching, plant selection and planting. Installing the irrigation system was a very interesting task when putting it together. I also found out the purpose of compost and its use verses mulch. Lastly, I learned that all plants are different and that some need to be planted certain inches apart from the others”.*

IV. PROBLEMS, DELAYS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Below are some of the lessons that were learned from completing the BMBC Farm during the last six months.

- Good helpers are essential to success.

- As the farm grows and especially if you receive grants, and other financial contributions, the administration, day-to-day operations, reporting, and meeting fiscal responsibilities become more and more important and essential to the overall success of the project.

- Strategically plan for the winter months and expect a decrease in customer visits and vendor participation. Also, include plan to transition from summer to winter growing seasons. It is a challenge to keep customers and vendors engaged.

- Maintain a good variety of health and wellness products to supply and meet demand for highly sought seasonal items (e.g. greens).

- Have a plan for timely harvesting and storage of produce.

- The farm can yield low amounts of produce due to rainy and cold weather, and soil issues. Have a contingency plan in place (e.g. contributions from more growers). The last thing you want is a disappointed customer.





Fig. 6- Fall 2015 photos from farm and market.

V. FINANCIAL SUMMARY

- (See - Attached Form SF-425 for financial report.)

VI. STAFF

The Market employees a team of (4) associates to manage, supervise and maintain the market and implement promotions and outreach events.

The Market Director: Provides the direction for the market's success. The director develops marketing campaigns, drives the overall financial performance of the the market by use of price analysis and comparison. the Director also manages budgets, accounts receivables and payables.

The Market Supervisor: Supervises the Market associate, orders produce from local growers and suppliers, assist vendors with needs and collects vendor fees and assures that the market is clean. The Market Supervisor receives a monthly stipend, The Market Supervisor is mainly responsible for BMBC Kangen water distribution.

A part time office associate assists as an administrative resource and makes weekly deposits

A part-time independent provider maintains the cleanliness of the market facilities, kitchen and restrooms.

The Market also employs a **Part-time Market Associate** to set up and maintain the market and to provide customer service and sale transactions.

The Market associates payroll is provided from the overall operating budget provided by BMBC, but is offset by the net sales income of the market.



Fig. 7- One of many promotional illustrations use of marketing material.

VII. IMMEDIATE

NEXT STEPS (APRIL 2016 - SEPTEMBER 2016)

- Submit grants to assist in the sustainability of the marketing, promotions, outreach and conservation efforts (FMPP and CIG grants, due May 2016)
- Earth Day Outreach and Promotional - April 2016
- Establish comprehensive year-round storefront marketplace to serve as a primary resource for produce, natural products, and services focusing on conservation, health, and wellness.
- Design 2016 summer curriculum
- June to August 2016 - Brown Youth Initiative (Summer Employment Program). The BMBC-BYI will actually be in session June - July. However, students who accept jobs working on the farm project (agriculture conservation project) have the opportunity to be employed for an extended period. Students will operate all segments of the project (planting, harvesting, working in the market, serving as tour guides, etc.).
- **September 2016** - During the **BMBC Annual Picnic** exposing over 1000 attendees to the farm project. At the annual picnic the BMBC Farmer's Market will be promoted. Promotional items



will be shared, advertising activities and hours available. Other planned activities at the picnic include activities for the old and young alike. In the past we have done activities such as having a pumpkin patch and pumpkin painting activities for children, hayrides that took visitors to the market storefront, given vegetables to seniors. The market and the market display stand will be operated by the Summer BYI youth team. Planned this year is also a tour of the actual farm.

- **Healthy Lifestyles Curriculum** - The healthy Lifestyles curriculum embodies a holistic approach health with a focus on self-determination. The ultimate goal for the Farmers Market Program is to create an environment for participates to have the tools they need to assess their current lifestyles for healthy choice, identify goals and resources to make successful positive changes in those areas of interests. Therefore, the Farmer Market includes various components, for instance, youth experience different methods of create a healthy life styles using fresh fruits and vegetables. There will be several training sessions for the Conservation and Agriculture Farmer Market project.

Topics consist of growing crops, small group sessions, to opening of the farmer's market. Field trips, guest speakers from the surrounding area discuss careers in Agriculture. For example, youth will learn about the Business Leadership Development Program, University of Arkansas Pine Bluff School Agriculture, Shelby County Schools Nutrition Department, and the United States Department of Agriculture as part of the program.

- **Implement Summer Program** - For four days a week, about 6 youth spent seven hours a day participating in the project. Youth can enter the program at 15 years old and can continue until they reach the age of 19. The program incorporates farming conservation practices, and provides experiences for youth and community members to produce fruit and vegetables. Youth will also learn about the aspects of operating the Farmers Market. Youth will be trained to work as Customer Service Associates at the market and will handle transactions and customer care. The program also include an entrepreneurs' session.
- **Conservation and Agriculture** - Youth will work with the farm supervisor about 8-10 hours/week in Hoop- Houses and on the farm to harvest the crops as well as plant the crops. The youth will be trained in planting and harvesting the crops daily. The conservation project provided employment and professional development opportunities for youth.
- There will be **guided lessons** to assist youth in discovering nutrition, explaining their understandings, and reflecting upon their experiences from field trips and the importance of great customer service in the farmer's market.
- **Field Trips** - Youth will explore how food is grown and how animals are raised. The lesson will be about understanding the connection between where food come from and the many ways in which it is marketed. By learning how a farm works, youth will experience the natural world in



new ways and make vital ecological, and economic lives.

connections between the social, importance of agriculture in their



Fig. 8 - Two Brown Youth Initiative participants.

VII. PHOTOS OF EVENTS/ACTIVITIES/PROMOTIONAL

Fig. 9 - Fall 2015 photos from market. Pictured are customers and market manager.



MATERIAL



Fig. 10, 11 and 12 - Earth Day 2016. Executive Director, telling vendors about the project.



Fig. 13 and 14 - One of the monthly workshops held on health and wellness.

