

Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) Final Performance Report

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	March 31, 2016 – September 30, 2016
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Recipient Organization Name:	A Simpler Place in Time, Inc.
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	A SIMPLER PLACE FARMER’S MARKET DEVELOPMENT AND CSA NETWORK EXPANSION
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 15-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15FMPPFL0094
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Riverview, FL
Total Awarded Budget:	\$51,963.00

FMPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?

Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).

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State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by FMPP staff. If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary.

For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.

Goal/Objective 1: To establish a direct-to-consumer, producer’s only, weekly farmer’s market that accepts EBT/SNAP benefits.

Progress Made: In the final three months of the project, reported here, we continued to hold our direct-to-consumer producer’s only, weekly farmer’s market that accepted EBT/SNAP benefits although we faced restrictions due to Summer afternoon weather. Heavy thunderstorms beginning in May and extreme heat in the month of June required us to call a number of the markets in the summer due to weather.

Impact on Community: The Thursday evening market was a thriving community-gathering place. Residents could enjoy the outdoors and attend a free yoga class, participate in an Easter Egg Hunt, enjoy chef prepared meals using only ingredients sourced at the farmers market, and most importantly shop directly with local farmers and food artisans. The market also accepted SNAP/EBT benefits to create new low-income access to locally grown, fresh, healthful food.

Goal/Objective 2: To market and promote the farmer's market throughout its first nine month season by developing engaging signage, establishing an online presence with printed promotional materials, and marketing through local media outlets.

Progress Made: We continued to promote the farmers market in the final three months with engaging signage which included feather flag signage along the main road of the market. We continued to maintain the online presence by updating with new vendors that joined the market and continued to run the advertisement in our local newspaper/media outlet through May, 2016. Additionally we continued to use our most influential promotional outlet, Facebook, by using grant funds to boost farmer's market event posts. We found the facebook to be the most effective marketing tool. It enabled us to reach the most people in our local community through direct and targeted marketing.

Impact on Community: We were able to use the promotional materials to engage our community with the farmers market. The marketing outlets also translated into increased market traffic through target marketing. We found facebook and social media to be the most influential. Social media had the most impact on our community because we were able to reach far more people than we ever could with print material and signage. The social media campaigns highlighted our farmers and producers, the farmers market, and the our farm tour and farm to table events. Farmers and producers participating in the market also received connections within the community through our marketing that they would have not otherwise received. Social media enabled exposure to thousands of people within our community.

Goal/Objective 3: To educate our community about our local and regional food systems through community planned events such as on-farm tours with members of our CSA Network. Holding educational events at our farmer's market that teach our community the benefits of growing their own food and supporting their local and regional food systems.

Progress Made: We held two farm tours and one farm to table luncheon within the first six months of the project which were reported on our interim progress report. In the final leg of the project we held a farm tour that visited four different farms in the course of a day.

Impact on Community: The direct connection with farm tours is one of the most impactful experiences we believe we can have within our community. It is one thing to shop at the farmers market but it is another to see and understand how our food is grown, raised, produced, etc. We were able to expose our community to local farms and the differences in each. We toured a hydroponic farm, a ranch, and two small farms growing intensively using permaculture and sustainable growing methods. And because of social media we were able to share photographs of each of these farms and the tours with those in our community that were not able to attend the event(s).

Goal/Objective 4: To increase low income participation in the farmer's market by accepting EBT/SNAP benefits. Additionally, the market is located within 5 miles of ERS Low Income and Low Access tract 12105014802 and within 10 miles of ERS Low Income and Low Access tract 12057013912; allowing us to serve and improve low income participation in our community.

Progress Made: In the final three months of the project we continued to accept EBT/SNAP Benefits and improve low income participation in our community.

Impact on Community: Some community members would not have visited the farmers market nor made a direct to consumer purchase with our vendors had it not been for the EBT/SNAP opportunity. We are confident in saying we were able to serve low income families at our community market by having the ability to accept SNAP/EBT benefits. The close distance to both the Low Income and Low Access Tracts were crucial to the impact the market played on improving low income participation within our community.

Goal/Objective 5: To increase overall access within our community to locally grown produce.

Progress Made: We witnessed first-hand the increase in our community's overall access to locally grown produce. Our farm participants increased over the duration of the market and by the final stretch of our project we had more than doubled local farm and producer participation in the farmers market.

Impact on Community: By increasing the number of local farms and producers participating in the farmers market we were able to increase overall access to locally grown produce in our community. Through the expansion of our CSA Network by adding a pick up location for CSA shareholders at the farmer's market we were also able to increase overall access within our community to locally grown produce.

Goal/Objective 6: To increase local farmers and local producer's direct-to-consumer opportunities.

Progress Made: We had a 100% increase in local farm and producer participation over the course of our first farmer's market season. Since we were a new market and the only producer's farmers market in our area we directly increased direct-to-consumer opportunities for local farmers and producers by adding over fifteen new vendors and direct-to consumer market opportunities.

Impact on Community: Our local community was impacted by awareness to and an increase in accessibility of direct purchase opportunities with local growers and producers. The community benefited from learning about where their food comes from, the seasonality of locally grown produce, and the hardships that farmers face. One example among many would be that greens ceased production in the late spring/early summer. Customers learned that our fall and winter months are the core of our local growing season and that most greens are not available locally in the summer. And because we are the only producer's market in our area our community was able to meet with over fifteen local farmers and producer's on a weekly basis.

Goal/Objective 7: To help promote each vendor through our online presence, print materials, and other promotions. Ultimately, generating additional revenue for local farmers and local producers.

Progress Made: Each week we photographed farm and producer participants in the farmers market and made them available on our social media outlets. We created and continue to maintain an online presence on our website with a page dedicated to the markets farmers and producers; including links back to their individual websites, social media outlets, etc. We had print materials made for our farm tours that highlighted the hosting farm. We also promoted other markets that our farm and producer vendors participated in. Vendors were also highlighted in our newsletter that went out to nearly a thousand people. These promotions came at no cost to local farmers and producers yet provided and continue to provide additional marketing outlets for their farms and businesses; ultimately contributing to sales opportunities and revenue streams.

Impact on Community: The online presence for local farm and producers on our website is a place where community members can quickly access sources for locally grown goods. The community can reach them directly as our online page links directly back to the farms own online information. The promotion of each vendor through various promotional outlets brings awareness in our community to their local farms and producers. And it provides community members with opportunities to connect directly with farms and producers outside of the weekly farmers market.

Goal/Objective 8: To expand our CSA Network and farmer's market by locating new farmers.

Progress Made: We successfully created a new producers farmers market and expanded our CSA Network that ultimately introduced over fifteen new farmers and producers to our community. And since the farmers market was started with this project we have literally had 100% growth from inception.

Impact on Community: Our community benefited from the introduction of more than fifteen new farmers and producers to our area. By locating new farmers we were able to bring awareness to locally grown produce within our community and increase direct-to-consumer opportunities for our community and the new farmers.

Goal/Objective 9: To expand our CSA Network by adding a pick-up location for CSA shareholders at the farmer's market location.

Progress Made: During the final leg of our project we continued to host a CSA pick up location at our farmers market. We were able to increase shareholder participation by having a more centrally located and visited pick up site at the farmers market.

Impact on Community: The farmer's market pick up location provided community opportunities for CSA Shareholders that would not have been available at other pick up locations. Things like additional opportunities to shop with local growers and producers set up at the farmers market to supplement their weekly share, free yoga classes, and dinner made with all market sourced ingredients. The pickup location at the farmers market also help foster a sense of community. The market provided a space where shareholders came and spent time engaging with

other members of the community and market.

New Goals / Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? If so, how?

NEW Goal: We had a goal to reach out and identify potential wholesale opportunities. The farmers market and CSA network were already aggregating and working with local farmers and producers on a weekly basis. Exploring wholesale opportunities seemed like a wonderful way to bring additional revenue to the local farms we already worked with, including our own CSA farm.

Progress Made: We were able to make introductions with three prominent farm to table restaurants in our area. Additionally, the introduction of a Chef to the farmers market allowed wholesale opportunities for the farms participating in our farmers market. Chef Alex worked with the farm vendors on a weekly basis to create a menu for that week's farmers market. Finally, we began the work to establish a relationship with a local co-op who was looking for a source for locally grown produce. We are excited to continue to build upon these introductions to continue to grow our local food movement beyond the life of the project.

Impact on Community: The project created an opportunity to explore wholesale possibilities within our community. Because we are a true producer's farmers market we found chefs reaching out to us looking for help aggregating produce. Often times they would come and shop directly with farm vendors. It identified a void in our community which we look forward to build upon.

New Goal: Create a children's program that brings awareness to local and sustainable agriculture within our community.

Progress Made: We held our first farm tour with a local Girl Scout troop. A written program is still in the works but we were able to discuss raised beds, composting, beekeeping, and more with the troop. We were able to show them raised beds with beets, joi choi, tomatoes, and eggplant. And even took the opportunity to sow bean seeds with the group. It was a great start to our program that we now plan to grow beyond the life of the project.

Impact on Community: We were able to show children within our community where their food comes from. Show them how it grows and have them participate in the farm. The discussion that those activities fostered were priceless.

Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, October 1, 2015). Include further explanation if necessary.

- i. Number of direct jobs created: 1.5 – one full job of the market manager. We employed a parking attendant once a week during the farmers market.
- ii. Number of jobs retained: 15+ - The customer support provided by the addition of the farmers market helped retain jobs for our local farmers and producers.
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 2 – as we continue to explore wholesale opportunities as one of our new goals we have indirectly created the need for a delivery driver and food hub manager.
- iv. Number of markets expanded: 1 – we expanded upon our CSA.
- v. Number of new markets established: 1 – we created a new producers farmers market; the only in our community.
- vi. Market sales increased by \$____ and increased by ____%. As written in our Project Narrative we quantified this in a few different areas. The farmers market provided a new pick up point for our CSA and increased CSA members/sales by \$6,370.00 throughout the project; well exceeding the anticipated 10% growth as stated in the project narrative. Farmer's participant's sales at the farmers market have increased by at least 20%.
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 15+
 - a. Percent Increase: 100%

Discuss your community partnerships.

- viii. Who are your community partners? There was no change from the interim report to the final three months of our project reported here.
- ix. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project?
- x. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant?

2. Did you use contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the FMPP project? We worked with Todd Bates Creative to create the farmers market logo and print materials for the farmers market and farm tours. Having good promotional materials created a face for the market that facilitated the success of the market. We found this to be true with our website and online presence as well.

3. Have you publicized any results yet?* No

- i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?
- ii. To whom did you publicize the results?
- iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?

*Send any publicity information (brochures, announcements, newsletters, etc.) electronically along with this report. Non-electronic promotional items should be digitally photographed and emailed with this report (do not send the actual item).

4. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?

If so, how did you collect the information? We polled the market participants through our email newsletter and in person at the market.

What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? The market time should begin earlier to coincide with the release of schools in the community. We have changed the time of the weekly farmers market from 4-8pm to 3-7pm in our second season. We also found that visitors wanted a location that allowed for onsite parking. In our second market season we have changed the location to our first season's offsite parking location which is large enough for parking and the farmers market although the new location is not on a main road. We also received feedback that some are not able to make it out on a weekday and a request for weekend market was noted.

Budget Summary:

- i. **As part of the FMPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report:**
- ii. **Did the project generate any income?**
 - a. **If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?**

Thanks to the FMPP award, A Simpler Place in Time was able to open and operate the first season of the Thursday evening market and expand its CSA Network to add a pick up location at the market. The farmers market generated \$4,520.00 from vendor fees throughout the course of the project. The addition of a pick up location for our CSA generated \$6,370.00 in gross sales. This earned income was used to pay for a parking attendant during market nights, additional promotional materials and equipment like generator rental and lighting at night, and to assist with rent and dumpster rental in our second market season to continue the project beyond the life of the grant.

Lessons Learned:

- i. **Summarize any lessons learned. Draw from positive experiences (e.g. good ideas that improved project efficiency or saved money) and negative experiences (e.g. what did not go well and what needs to be changed).** We learned that mother nature makes an open air market

difficult especially with Florida afternoon thunderstorms. In our second season we planned to make the market season shorter; beginning in late October and ending at the end of May. We also found that having agriculture available to our community at the farmers market is important. Our new location in our second season (still within 0.10 miles of our first season's location) has a market garden that allows visitors the ability to experience something growing first hand. We also found that the market requires more than one employee especially if we want to achieve our new goals.

- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving:** As discussed in more detail in our interim report, obtaining EBT/SNAP terminals took exceptionally longer than we planned. We would highly recommend allocating a decent amount of time toward obtaining.
- iii. Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project:** We projected income from adding a pick up location for our CSA at the farmers market. While we successfully added the pickup location and it became our most visited we were not able to fulfill the number of shares we projected. The farm faced issues that were beyond our control; record rain and heat. We also overestimated project income from vendor fees because we had to call the market a handful of times over the late spring and summer months due to severe thunderstorms. Overall we would suggest quantifying project income on tangible numbers which are not impacted by things like weather that may be out of the grantees control.
- iv. Future Work:**
 - i. How will you continue the work of this project beyond the performance period? In other words, how will you parlay the results of your project's work to benefit future community goals and initiatives? Include information about community impact and outreach, anticipated increases in markets and/or sales, estimated number of jobs retained/created, and any other information you'd like to share about the future of your project.** We have commenced our second farmers market season which is already work in action beyond the performance period. The community impact was so large in our first season that the community came out in great support of our second season. We saw more people on opening day of the second market season than any market night in our first season. We began with returning farmers as well as five new producers. The community needed the farmers market. We continue to be the only producers farmers market in our area. In our second season we also created two new jobs and retained one for support during the market. We are currently extending the life of the project beyond the grant and would not have had this opportunity had it not been for the FMPP grant funds in our first market season.
 - ii. Do you have any recommendations for future activities and, if applicable, an outline of next steps or additional research that might advance the project goals?** We want to implement a children's program for the market garden on the farmers market property. The next steps will be to plan a half day and full day that will focus on awareness of local and sustainable agriculture. Additionally, we want to explore more wholesale relationships and opportunities to help bring local farmers and producers goods to market.