Fresh Approach Annual Report 2019

Building Healthy Communities,
One Carrot At A Time
Every winter season, December to early February, we reduce our active community programming to allow our team to spend time with their loved ones, reflect on work completed, and relationships built and maintained the previous year.

During this time of reflection, we also work collectively to find ways to improve our programs for the communities we serve. In January of 2019, our Staff embarked on drafting a Theory of Change to identify our long-term goals and determine what paths our programs need to take to get us there.

Our Theory of Change gave us a strong foundation to begin the year’s Staff and Board collaboration to complete our 2020-2022 Strategic Plan. Our Strategic Plan and Theory of Change envision equitable, healthy communities across the Bay Area - and we are working to make this a reality.

By improving opportunities for health and helping create healthy behaviors, we are improving food security and health equity; by enhancing community engagement and social cohesion, we are creating healthy cities grounded in equity and diversity; and by increasing demand for local food and helping to create community food spaces, we are helping to build a more sustainable, climate-resilient, and economically viable local food system.

2019 was also a year of transition for my role at Fresh Approach. As Lucy Norris stepped down as our Executive Director in December, the Board asked for me to take on the role, effective January 2020. After nearly seven years of managing and directing program activities, I am honored to have this opportunity to continue supporting small farmers and our Bay Area communities, and our amazingly dedicated and big-hearted Staff.

Fresh Approach’s programs would not be able to support communities without every Staff, Intern, Volunteer, and Board member’s efforts; and every community member who has engaged with us. The folks I have been fortunate to work alongside the past seven years have not only shaped our work, they have shaped me.

Thank you all for your hearts and dedication.
2019
By the Numbers

Who Benefits from Fresh Approach’s Programs?

- **69%** Program Participants Receiving Federal Benefits
  - Including CalFresh (SNAP), WIC (Women, Infants, and Children), SSI (Supplemental Security Income), SSDI (Social Security Disability Income), or Medi-Cal/Medicaid

- **49%** Program Participants with Diet-Related Chronic Illness
  - Including diabetes or pre-diabetes, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol

- **12%** Program Participants who are Extremely Food Insecure
  - Often receive groceries from a food bank or other charity, and/or often worry about running out of food before getting the funds to purchase more
People with expanded access to fresh fruits and vegetables by household size

73%
Percent of sales to low income customers (those making <200% of the federal poverty line)

95
People who learned how to grow, plant, and harvest their own food at the Collective Roots Community Garden

97%
Percent who reported feeling more comfortable cooking fresh fruits and vegetables at home after VeggieRx

$112,268
In produce purchased from local, small farms
People who learned to cook healthy, fresh produce on a budget in our VeggieRx Cooking & Nutrition classes
Food Access By the Numbers

- $35,320
  Total in vouchers for free farmers’ market produce distributed to nutrition and gardening class participants

- $35,683
  in free produce distributed at Mobile Farmers’ Market stops through Market Match program, a 31% increase over the previous year

- $47,320
  in free produce distributed at the East Palo Alto Community Farmers’ Market through the Market Match and Fresh Checks programs

- $16,407
  in vouchers for free farmers’ market produce distributed through community partnerships

- $11,000+
  in produce donated to local food pantries, with less than 1% going to waste

= $145,730

in fresh, locally grown produce distributed in 2019
Where We Work

San Mateo County
- Collective Roots Community Garden
- East Palo Alto Community Farmers’ Market
- Community Compost Hub
- Food Waste Prevention Classes
- Community Ambassador Project

San Francisco
- VeggieRx Cooking & Nutrition Classes

Contra Costa County
- Community Ambassador Project
- Mobile Farmers’ Market
- VeggieRx Cooking & Nutrition Classes

Alameda County
- “Train the Trainer” Project
- Mobile Farmers’ Market
- VeggieRx Cooking & Nutrition Classes

Santa Clara County
- Mobile Farmers’ Market
- VeggieRx Cooking & Nutrition Classes
Participant Demographics

- **12.7%** Asian (Vietnamese, Philipino, Other)
- **3.5%** American Indian / Indigenous
- **13.9%** Black / African American
- **52%** Latino / Hispanic
- **17.3%** White
- **<1%** Other / Decline to State
In 2019, 1.5 tons of food waste diverted from local landfills via our Community Compost Hub.

Community Compost Hub

Closing the Loop on Food Waste in San Mateo County

The Community Compost Hub is a community compost network, providing food scrap collection at our weekly farmers market located in East Palo Alto.

The collected food waste is composted at our Collective Roots Community Garden, becoming nutrient-rich soil for community vegetable plots and the home gardens of local residents.

With funding from the San Mateo County Office of Sustainability, the Compost Hub has given locals without curbside compost pickup the ability to divert their kitchen waste from local landfills.
Waste Not, Want Not

Helping Low-Income Communities Take Action Against Climate Change

Food waste is a major climate issue. By reducing the amount of food that gets thrown away, we can reduce carbon emissions and save the energy required to produce, transport, and cook the food.

Since summer 2019, we've been working to grow awareness of the food waste problem by leading free Food Waste Prevention workshops for low-income residents of San Mateo County.

Here, participants learn how to reduce their in-home food waste and save money by making the most of the food they purchase by preserving foods, making food last longer, and knowing how to tell when foods are really ready to be thrown out.

Community workshops like this food preservation class were sponsored by the San Mateo County Office of Sustainability and developed in collaboration with Leah’s Pantry.
In 2019, we developed a new VeggieRx class series with a focus on helping families step away from sugar sweetened beverages.

Three rounds of four classes have been taught in East Oakland since August 2019, each including a class session inside a grocery store – strengthening the participants’ ability to spot healthy food and beverage choices in places they frequently shop.

Classes were taught at the 81st Ave Library in East Oakland, and included vouchers for free, locally grown fruits and vegetables. Our Mobile Farmers' Market visited the spot right after class, giving participants an easy shopping option when veggies were fresh on their minds.
Training the Next Generation of Nutrition Educators

Fresh Approach has completed a standardized nutrition curriculum that is now being taught to Americorps members and volunteers at Lifelong Medical Centers in Berkeley.

With this new curriculum, multiple Lifelong campuses will begin offering free nutrition and cooking classes to community members starting in 2020.

The first classes will be taught at the West Berkeley Lifelong campus, and have been developed for parents with small children.
Growing Deeper Roots with our Community Ambassador Program

As part of our commitment to inclusive collaboration, a Community Ambassador program was developed to make a stronger link with the communities we serve, and help us improve our programs with the support of resident community leaders.

These 6 — 8 week volunteer positions for community members include a stipend, and ask participants to create a unique project to support healthy food access in their community.

“Becoming a Community Ambassador helped me get more involved in my community, develop some wonderful friendships, and allowed me to share my knowledge about having a healthier lifestyle through diet.”

Towanna Turner, Community Ambassador
Expanding our Network of Volunteers

Thanks to the help of our AmeriCorps Public Ally Volunteer Specialist, we had a record 321 volunteers in 2019 who worked a total of 1,710 hours.

From distributing Fresh Checks match tokens to shoppers at the East Palo Alto Community Farmers’ Market to teaching nutrition classes in Cantonese, our incredible volunteers play a major role in our ability to support healthy food access.
Vision for 2020 and Beyond

In 2020 and Beyond, we will:

- Increase food access and education outcomes in four Bay Area counties of Contra Costa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Alameda.
- Strengthen and improve Bay Area-wide outreach and advocacy to increase referral rates and participation in existing food assistance programs.
- Increase program capacity to serve increasingly diverse ethnic and minority communities; including seniors, adults, and households with children.

How We're Building Healthy Communities in the Years to Come

#1 Create Healthy Behaviors & Improve Opportunities for Health
#2 Grow Community Engagement

- Expand Fresh Approach’s youth and community leadership and empowerment impacts through its programs and volunteer opportunities.

- Reframe/refocus education curriculum with stronger focus on social and racial inequities in the food system.

- Be a trusted resource for partner organizations and agencies by creating training modules to expand program impacts and diversified program income.
#3 Increase Demand for Local Food and Create Community Food Spaces

- Engage direct market farmers, backyard growers, and urban farmers as key constituents by assessing needs, providing technical assistance, and promotions to help strengthen the viability of local food systems in a changing economy and climate.

- Demonstrate Fresh Approach’s programmatic commitment to easing social and racial inequities in the local food system.
Our Partners

We're Thankful for Our Committed Partners Who Help Expand Our Impact
Our Partners

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Public Health Working for You

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Santa Clara County PUBLIC HEALTH

BOTHIN FOUNDATION

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Isabel Medina
Food Access Program Manager

Ellen Olack
Food Access & Marketing Specialist

Andy Ollove
Food Access Program Director

Christopher St. Pierre
Finance & Admin Specialist
Help us make fresh produce affordable and accessible for everyone.

Your donation gives thousands of families the resources and skills to bring healthy, local fruits and vegetables into their kitchens.

GIVE TODAY

www.freshapproach.org