

FIRST HARVEST: A PROPOSAL FOR A FOOD BANK FARM

WORKING DRAFT – APR 2010

Project Goal: Establish a small farm at the new ASHBB warehouse facility in order to

- 1) Increase fresh produce inventory by **growing for the food bank** - cultivate vegetables exclusively for distribution by ASHBB to partner agencies
- 2) Build client capability by **teaching clients how to grow** – Provide a facility for educational programs on growing vegetables with scarce resources (e.g., small land plots, small budgets)

- Malini Ram Moraghan (ASHBB)
- Robert Meinhardt (ASHBB)
- Katie Harris (Full Earth Farm)
- Louise Divine & Herman Holley (Turkey Hill Farm)
- Mark Tancig (Damayan Community Garden, Glori Farm)
- Qasima Boston, FAMU PhD candidate in food security
- Nathan Ballantine, Community Gardener
- TBD, Nursery (Tallahassee Nurseries, Purple Martin Nursery)

1) Plan & Construct	April – June 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct drainage pathways and growing area (beds, shade, sheds) • Line up donated resources for first season (soil, seeds, compost, etc.). • Plan crop calendar, maintenance needs and programs for coming year
2) Plant & Program	Fall 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execute first set of programs (combining educational sessions with planting work needs) • Manage crops (maintain, harvest, distribute, record metrics)
3) Execute & Refine	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust programming based on experience and feedback • Establish an ongoing operating and supply model

- Plant in raised beds rather than directly in soil
- Start with easy to grow, high yield, easy to store desirable crops
 - E.g., Collards, carrots, broccoli, sweet potatoes, peas, peppers, eggplants
- Partner with local org's to operate the farm
 - E.g., Church and community groups, Damayan Community Garden Project

KEY QUESTIONS

<i>Why would ASHBB need this?</i>	ASHBB has the opportunity to increase its nutritional offerings to clients by distributing more vegetables. In FY 08-09, ASHBB distributed less than 4 lbs of fresh produce per person in poverty* for the year. In broad context, the USDA recommends ≈ 1 lb of vegetable consumption per person per day** for a healthy diet.
<i>Has this been done before?</i>	Yes, there are multiple working models across the country of “food bank farms.” Examples cover a wide geography: Georgia (Atlanta), Western Massachusetts, Vermont and Washington state. Some food banks with large growing areas (e.g., 3 acres) operate a CSA model which offers produce for purchase on a subscription basis in addition to donating to food bank inventories.
<i>Who is going to pay for this?</i>	For the startup, we will seek donations of materials and time/labor. For ongoing needs we can consider a variety of options: generating income by selling a portion of harvest, continued donations, grant funding.
<i>How much can that little plot realistically produce?</i>	A lot! A well maintained plot can be very productive. For example, a 300 sqft bed of collards produced 100lbs of collard leaves over ~2 months*** (note, this was in spite of the harsh winter in our region).
<i>How will ASHBB maintain this?</i>	ASHBB will work in partnership with established local organizations, farmers and interested residents who are committed to this mission and region. We are exploring operating models that will minimize managerial burden on ASHBB and keep the farm relatively self-sustaining.
<i>How is ASHBB working with farmers?</i>	In a separate effort, we are planning gleaning projects to help farmers clear land at the end of harvest seasons while salvaging unharvested/leftover crops
<i>What are the next steps?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene the working team and design the farm Develop detailed project requirements and budget Begin securing commitments for materials and labor Prepare garden construction plans to avail April volunteer groups



* 3.57lb produce per person = 305, 423 lbs produce distributed / 85,428 persons in poverty in 2008; Sources: ASHBB, US Census data
 ** Source: http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/vegetables_amount_table.html
 *** Source: Full Earth Farm