SHAPE UP KITTITAS COUNTY—Food Access Coalition
Thursday, June 11th, 2009
10:00 A.M.-11:30 A.M.
WSU Extension Conference Room
MEETING MINUTES

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead

Food Access Coalition for Kittitas County Mission Statement:
To advocate for all people of Kittitas County to have consistent access to healthy food and an understanding of nutrition by promoting and developing local programs and partnerships.

ATTENDEES

Robin Read Ochoa, Shape Up
Colleen Donovan, Heifer
Denise Horton, community
Frank Schuchman, Upper County
Billee Lorig, FISH
Roger McCune, FISH
Dale Larson, WSU Extension
Susan Calvin, Library/Community
Stefanie Wickstrom, KEEN/Community

WORKSHOP

- The Food Policy Councils and Community Food Assessments workshop in Tacoma is next Wednesday. Colleen is one of the presenters on Community Food Assessments. Robin and Sarah Bedsaul are going for sure along with Dale. Stefanie is going with some of her collegues. Lorinda Anderson from the Civic Engagement Center is going. Frank and Denise would like to go, but won't know until the last minute if they are able to.

UPPER COUNTY EFFORTS

- Frank shared that the next meet on food access issues in Upper County will be next Tuesday the 16th at 6pm. Robin had some flyers to pass out. This meeting is a follow up to the meeting that was held May 5th to see what people want to work on first and who will do what.
- Frank is also starting some cooking classes for kids and gardening classes with the Roslyn Public Library

PRODUCE DONATION FROM COMMUNITY GARDEN

- Roger and Denise discussed the importance of FISH collaborating with the community garden on the food that is being grown for donation. FISH now has a truck and the ability to wash produce in their new kitchen. Roger would like the effort to be coordinated and organized.
- There was discussion about what the food bank can do to compost produce that is no longer distributable. There is no space on the current property and the community garden can only take so much. The question came up as to if the new county compost facility is open yet or not.

- Billee mentioned that if they have more donations than they need, they distribute to other local food banks in the county.

FOOD BANK UPDATES

- The new food bank distribution hours are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, & Friday from 3pm-5:30pm and Wednesdays from 9am-12 Noon.
- The new kitchen will be completely done and ready to use by July 1st. Shortly after, FISH plans to begin serving soup lunches on Monday, Wednesday, Friday. The Rotary Club's support in this effort has been wonderful!
- Another program FISH plans on starting will be a cooking/mentoring program called Tastes, Smells & Talks. They want to create a program that will be more attractive than just "cooking classes". They want to be able to show people how to prepare some of the typically unwanted items (spinach for example). Some other ideas that surfaced were gathering recipes from FISH bank clients and having them volunteer to teach, and getting local agencies and businesses to sponsor each class. The Food Access Coalition may be able to provide some support to the food bank in this project by participating in the planning process.

STRAIGHT FROM THE SOURCE

- Colleen will be updating the "Straight from the Source" list of local sources for purchasing farm fresh foods. It will be published in Town Talk probably in June. At some point, we will see an email version that can be widely shared.

BACKPACK PROGRAM

- Billee has been talking with Mt. Stuart school staff about starting a weekend backpack food program next fall. The schools are providing backpacks and FISH is providing the food. There are still some logistics to work out like how to distribute the packs and avoid any kind of stigma.

GLEANING

- The CWU students have given Billee some tools for doing the gleaning project.
- Robin met with a new volunteer, Teresa Mathieson who is interested in possibly organizing the gleaning project. We will connect with Billee next week.

"GOOD FOOD"

- Stefanie reported that the KEEN sustainable ag committee would like to put on a screening of the film, "Good Food". We discussed the possibility of the Food Access Coalition helping with this endeavor.

SURVEY RESULTS

- Robin handed out the results of the survey—there were 19 respondents. The main project that seemed to have the most interest was a community food assessment. Other projects that seemed to have significant interest were: community kitchen, gleaning, nutrition education. However, everyone agreed that wherever there is an interest, the Food Access Coalition can be supportive of any projects that contribute to our mission.
- There was also discussion around the importance of convening a committee to examine the Food Access Coalition structure. The coalition has been very informal the past couple of years, but many of us agree that it is a good time to re-look at the structure, decision-making, what it means

to be a member, etc. We also agreed, that whatever the result is OK, as long as the structure of the coalition and its membership is clarified.

- The final discussion was about how we see the Food Access Coalition's role in the community and with the different food access projects. It was proposed that the coalition's role is more of an advisory, coordinating, supportive, promoting role for projects that fit within our mission. I'm not even going to try to recreate this, but Colleen drew a great visual of an umbrella as the FAC with all the projects that we are supportive of or involved in underneath. The community food assessment might be an appropriate project for the coalition as it can benefit all food projects. But besides that, the coalition would be a place to share, advise, coordinate, plan, and support. This idea seemed to sit well with everyone at the table but will continue to be discussed.

NEXT STEPS

- Robin will coordinate a separate meeting of anyone interested in discussing further the role, structure, and membership of the coalition.
- The next regular meeting will be used to discuss further a community food assessment. Thursday, July 9th, 10am-11:30am, WSU Extension conference room.