



CSA PROJECT OUTLINE

BACKGROUND

The Family Life Foundation charity was founded in 1974 within the Toronto region for the purpose of supporting the well-being of family life. Today, the Family Life Foundation (FLF) serves community as a conduit for like-minded individuals and organizations to collaborate for the purpose of education, information and best practices sharing, capacity building and projects that positively affect community and family life.

In 2010, the Family Life Foundation Waterloo-Wellington (FLFWW) chapter was formed to serve Waterloo Region, Guelph and Wellington County.

VISION

Our communities are healthy, strong and vibrant. Individuals and families enjoy a lifestyle that avoids the pitfalls of today's society.

MISSION

Seek out innovative, community-based social enterprise solutions to address systemic societal problems that ultimately erode the health and vitality of community and family life.

PROJECT OUTLINE

The FLF supports innovative commerce that positively impacts the well-being of families and supports community development. Historically, FLF has supported programs that include barter, community currency and local employment trading systems. These innovative, community based programs improve community economic conditions by encouraging local trade and commerce that augments traditional monetary systems.

As economic conditions in a community decline, families face challenges in meeting the necessities of life. Adverse conditions create hardships and significant stress on families; negatively impacting their well-being. A shortfall of family income often results in cut-backs, including vital resources such as food. At FLF we believe that healthy and strong families (and communities) thrive with good, healthy foods and the most cost effective and readily available is found locally. Many local producers have created Community Shared Agriculture programs, or CSA's that provide families within the regions the opportunity to purchase directly from producers, healthy, fresh produce and products such as vegetables, fruits, honey and preserves.

Boxes of produce are assembled either onsite or delivered to drop-off locations throughout the regions, or, they may be assembled and picked up at the producer's location. Members pay a fee to receive the boxes on a weekly, bi-weekly or other time allotted basis.

The CSA programs provide an opportunity for farmers/producers to connect directly with consumers. Families are provided with wholesome, healthy and often organic foods that are direct and fresh – in accordance with the 100 Mile Diet concepts. Unfortunately for some families CSA membership fees are out of scope for their budgets.

While some CSA producers report being at maximum capacity, the majority are struggling to cope with the financial demands of running a business and marketing in order to gain members within their programs.

Therefore, significant opportunity exists, to ensure that *everyone* has access to local food at an affordable cost. It is also a means for local producers to reach out to community and garner new members and increase farm-gate sales.

Currently, communities such as Calgary, Toronto, Salt Spring Island, Ithaca, New York and others communities around the world are embracing community currency programs to improve local economies. The region's existing community currency; OUR Community Dollar Program (OC\$), could be utilized to address this gap.

METHOD

OMAFRA's Ontario Market Investment Fund, a four year program, encouraging marketing support for Ontario producers would be applied for in partnership with community organizations under the lead application of the FLFWW. OMAFRA provides matching grants of up to \$100,000.00 to community groups, businesses and individuals who have innovative projects that demonstrate benefit to producers.

For a period of one year with grant funding, FLFWW would supply CSA partners throughout the community (approximately 40 CSA producers in Waterloo, Guelph/Wellington) with complimentary membership producer's kit (value: \$699 each). Each kit contains one-thousand dollars in local community currency; instructional DVD; complimentary listing (with URL link) on the OC\$ website's merchant data base; counter and window signage plus one hundred copies of a CSA producer's (pocket-size) recipe book to distribute. Each CSA producer would be allocated one page to include a recipe and information about their CSA program. The booklet would also explain CSA programs as well as contain 20 dollars in local community currency.

In addition with funding, FLFWW would seek out community partner organizations (local food groups, faith groups, family groups) to receive a total of 20,000 complimentary CSA recipe booklets (including 20 dollars in each booklet) to distribute/use; plus additional currency to provide to families and individuals they work with and support (program education, marketing materials, consulting and mentorship). Total insertion of local community currency including merchant kits could exceed one half million dollars in value.

Local CSA producers would be encouraged to issue community currency to encourage new clientele/members which could be used to partially pay (percentage determined by the CSA) for future purchases or with other existing OC\$ participating local members (example: hair cutting, signs, printing etc.). This project provides the CSA with an opportunity to strengthen existing client relationships and rewards clientele for their continued support and business. Established community currency programs are recognized and accepted by all levels of government.

A funded program would create *local networks* between consumer, seller and local producers that would *increase* the economic viability of the community as well as reduce costs to the consumer, seller and supplier by introducing community currency and the resources to put those networks in place. Networks would grow naturally and exceed the life of the CSA project.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- Create marketing material including advertising and promotion that promotes the CSA community currency program.
- Create and print CSA producer's recipe booklet.
- Contract (one year) full time person to administer, manage and coordinate the program.
- Contract (one year) two part-time "sales" person to meet with producers and area merchants to introduce the program and to create value-chain networks for the CSA's and local membership.
- Monitor and track results of the program.
- Administrative expenses such as office rental, office equipment, vehicle mileage reimbursement and other incurred expenses.
- Purchase OUR Community Dollar program memberships.

EXPECTED RESULTS

1. Increased memberships/business for CSA producers.
2. Increased marketing exposure for CSA producers.
3. Increased cash flow for CSA producers.
4. Increased membership loyalty by CSA members.
5. Increased business community economic benefit.
6. Increased spending dollars for individual families.
7. Increased health benefits for regional families.
8. Increased well-being within the community.
9. Positive awareness throughout the regions and potential for project expansion into other services and areas.
10. Expanded CSA programs as producers see benefits.
11. Expanded markets and economic growth.

CONCLUSION

FLFWW seeks to coordinate with community partners, regional CSA producers and OUR Community Dollar program, to apply for grant funding under the OMAFRA Marketing Investment Fund to aid local CSA producers in promoting CSA programs and garnering new clientele; in addition to serving local families and community in providing affordable access to healthy, local produce grown in the region.

Application to the OMAFRA Marketing Investment Fund will be made in the fall of 2010. Interested partners are encouraged to contact FLFWW to indicate levels of support (note, in kind support is ineligible for this grant:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/domestic/omif/guidelines.htm>)

For further information please contact acting Executive Director of the Family Life Foundation Waterloo-Wellington, Cindy Moyer at cindym@flfww.org or by calling 226-476-1209.