Community Food Work as Critical Practice:
A Faith-based Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Historically, many faith-based hunger relief efforts address food insecurity through the emergency food system, but they often do not challenge the systemic causes of the need, which according to some, are poverty and inequality. As a promising alternative, community food work is a radical approach to food system change that imbues values of justice, sustainability, and equity into the food system to reduce the pervasiveness of poverty and inequality in society.

I used narrative inquiry as methodology in a faith-based context to explore the role of criticality in community food work. Additionally, I explored the treatment of hegemony in these practitioners' critically reflective practice. I engaged six practitioners in narrative-based interviews and subsequently asked them to read and analyze their own interview. I then gathered all participants for a collective reflection session where we reflected on excerpts from the interviews and used them as a foundation for further dialogue and reflection.

Each practitioner used their faith to varying degrees in the performance of their work. I found significant notions of feeling called to serve, and bringing God's kingdom to earth, but an avoidance to use this work to evangelize. The narratives reflected community food work as a community development effort and extended beyond the context of food. Affirming, trusting relationships serve as a foundation to how this group of practitioners approach their work, and provide the space to interact with their work in radical ways and raise critical consciousness.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my Creator and Savior. It has been as much a spiritual pursuit as it has an academic pursuit. To God be the glory and praise!

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Community Food Work as Critical Practice: A Faith-based Perspective
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

The United States Agrifood System

The neoliberal and capitalistic nature of the global political economy have transformed the food system into an export industry in the global south with an import and processed food preference in the global north (McMichael, 2000). The world saw a spike in agricultural productivity in the 1970's when the World Food Conference responded to food insecurity by supporting new production technologies (Fairbairn, 2011). The World Food Conference in 1974 was the first time that the concept of 'food security' took its place on a political agenda (Carney, 2012). This spike in production, termed the "Green Revolution" marked the climb of hybridized crops that were hardier and yielded more than the previous varieties. This response was purely production focused, and the world powers believed that more food meant less hungry people globally (Carney, 2012). Consequently, the diverse mosaic of small family farms and local food economies has shifted to a focus on large-scale farms and labor-saving technologies (Carney, 2012). This new food system provided benefits such as increased production and product availability, notwithstanding a set of costs. Among them are the environmental damage caused by chemical application and habitat loss, poor farmworker conditions, and embedded inequality (Allen, 2014; Guptill, Copelton, & Lucal, 2013). Questions of "Who benefits?" and "At what cost?" are politically charged, but are unavoidable when the food system we have created threatens justice for so many.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) deems households with members who face times where they do not have access to enough food for an active, healthy life as food insecure (Coleman-Jensen, Nord, & Singh, 2013). According to this definition, food insecurity affects approximately 17.6 million households and has not improved since 2008 (Coleman-Jensen, Nord, & Singh, 2013). One way the United States reacted to the food crisis at home was by funneling more money into its Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) programs. Millions of taxpayer dollars are now poured into these food assistance programs, but they do not address the underlying causes hunger- they merely prolong the sociocultural and political reasons for it (Poppendieck, 1998). Additionally, many farmers and farmworkers are paid so little that they themselves are food insecure (Allen, 2004; Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010). This irony has not gone unnoticed, and is a result of our economic and production oriented society that has continually widened the gap between the powerful and powerless. This is exacerbated by our capitalistic and neoliberal political economy, which sets up a structure where there are winners and losers. Emergency food safety nets and assistance programs may help those who are left marginalized, but they do not remove the problem from society. Anderson (2008) and others argue that the U.S. agrifood system perpetuates food insecurity through lack of participation in political decisions about food, elimination of traditional foodways, and poor environmental stewardship.

The recent resurgence of alternative food discourses brings hope in our ability to revolutionize the food system and bridge the gap that capitalist and neoliberal society has etched. But first, I want to briefly carve out my position on capitalism and neoliberalism in order to not mislead the reader as this critical thesis unfolds. Although capitalism and neoliberalism have widened the income gap in recent years and contributed to many injustices, which I will indeed

critique here, I do not wish to vilify these systems in totality. Although I do hope we one day will unearth better systems, I firmly believe that there is room within existing ones to create more just societies. For example, in the 1960's African American's experiences improved economic opportunities due to industrialization, albeit still paired with overt racism and Jim Crowe laws (Bonillo-Silva, 2014). While still in a position of oppression, some African Americans faired better economically due to capitalism. The unanswerable here is whether this means that capitalism did good. Our social systems right now are broken; the food system is broken. There is inequitable distribution of benefits in the food system that are attributed to capitalism (Allen, 2014; McMichael, 2000). We may yet lend reparations to the current systems, or we may completely redesign the social order. Social justice perhaps will never actualize, or maybe will not emerge as one might envision, but is a value I consider highly worth pursuing.

Alternative food discourses are an attempt at imagining a fair and just food system and are characterized by the terms community food security, food justice, food sovereignty, community food systems, and community food work. Food justice strives for a more equitable food system where the risks and benefits of food are distributed evenly among all involved (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011; Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010). Community food security is a concept that addresses problems with the current agrifood system on a local level and engages collaborative relationships to develop and implement programs (Abi-Nader et al., 2009). Food sovereignty is an alternative discourse that strives to create a food system that breaks the hegemonic barriers to neoliberalism and capitalism and return complete control from production to consumption to the people (Fairbairn, 2011). Community food systems can be defined collectively as a "collaborative effort to build more locally based, self-reliant food economies- one in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution and consumption is integrated to enhance

the economic, environmental and social health of a particular place" (Feenstra, 2002, p. 100). Community food systems can reshape the food system at the social and economic levels because they take a holistic and comprehensive approach to making change (Abi-Nader et al., 2009). Pieces of these various discourses have contributed to the umbrella term of community food work (Slocum, 2006), which I will discuss later in this chapter as a cornerstone to this thesis.

Despite their counterculture luster, alternative food movements that specifically address socioeconomic inequity are still somewhat subject to the political fixation of our country. Furthermore, they can still create white spaces that build social, physical, and financial barriers for people of other races to participate (Cadieux & Slocum, 2015; Guthman, 2008; Slocum, 2007). Some of these programs include food policy councils, accepting SNAP and WIC at farmer's markets, and community gardens. Integrating the intent of community food work to eliminate racism from the food system with ideas of food justice and community food security paints a food system that reflects justice, sustainability, equity, and other such values (Abi-Nader et al., 2009; Slocum, 2006).

The groups of people working on building community food systems are just as diverse as the types of programs that build the systems. The government is supporting this type of work through its many research and community food project grants. Additionally there are a number of non-profit, private, and community based organizations that are putting community food security and food justice on their agendas. For the purpose of this research I will be focusing on faith-based practitioners in community food work.

I would like to pause here and briefly explain my use of the word 'equity' in contrast to the term 'equality'. Many authors writing about food insecurity and alternative agrifood movements use the term 'inequality', and I have honored their work by using their words in this

thesis. However, the process of redistributing privilege and resources through new systems brings me to the conclusion that the term ‘equity’ is more appropriate in the context of this study. Daymont (1980) illustrates the contrast in a study on the labor market, concluding that even if racial discrimination were eliminated in the job market (equality) it would take almost fifty years for the black-white income ratio to reach .95 (equity). Thus, equality does not presuppose equity. When considering social justice and the food justice movement, discourse related to equity shines through, especially in Gottlieb and Joshi’s (2010) explanation that the risks and benefits of the food system are shared fairly. Therefore, when writing from my own voice, I will use the term ‘equity’.

Faith-based Organizations in Alternative Food Work

A wide of variety of faith traditions embrace food as a part of worship, celebration, and faithfulness. The Christian faith commands followers to treat others justly and mercifully, and the Bible is replete with examples of Jesus feeding people, sharing meals, and giving to those who have little. Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and other religions include fasting and feasting in celebrations and holidays as a form of religious expression and worship (Mann & Lawrence, 1998). Thus, food has an intrinsic connection to faith, fellowship, and our spiritual existence.

Faith-based organizations (FBOs) represent people’s faith in a way that they can express it through the missions, activities, and theology of programs (Schneider et al., 2011). According to Todd (2012), FBOs have the privilege of being able to create empowering community settings and reduce social marginalization. Faith-based organizations generally have intrinsic social and cultural capital that make them adept at engaging in social justice work (Todd, 2012), and researchers have shown that high levels of social capital can increase a group’s success at community food system work (Crowe & Smith, 2012). Further, faith-based groups have been

urged by the U. S. government to provide social welfare services for the public. Faith-based groups have been a part of the anti-hunger landscape throughout our nation's history, but this work has generally taken the form of charitable programs (Poppendieck, 1998). Although the work of faith-based groups has been varied and at times controversial, the intersection between anti-hunger work and alternative food discourses lays the foundation for faith-based organizations to be key players in alternative food movements.

Problem Statement

Food insecurity affects approximately 17.6 million households in the United States (Coleman-Jensen, Nord, & Singh, 2013). Hunger is a symptom of food insecurity, which state, civic, and private sectors have all attempted to address. As part of the civic sector, faith-based organizations have been involved in social welfare work throughout history and have been on the forefront of many social movements such as Apartheid and the U.S. civil rights movement (Wood, 2009). Many religions include social justice as a creed (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013; Yaghi, 2009), which explains the extent of faith-based communities' involvement in this work. Furthermore, faith and food are intrinsically connected (Mann & Lawrence, 1998), as it serves sacramental, celebratory, and social purposes for people of faith. However, much of faith-based hunger intervention work has taken the form of welfare rather than justice. This aid is a simple technical fix that is being applied to the "wicked problem" (Hamm, 2009) of food insecurity. Being a wicked problem, food insecurity has no solution since its conditions are so embedded in the ever-changing social fabric of humanity, but we can still take steps to reduce the problem. Different organizations have similarly different capacities and capitals to address food insecurity, but with book titles reading *Toxic Charity, Sweet Charity?,* and *When Helping Hurts* indicate not

only the innocuous nature of charitable work, but the potential harm that can result from these approaches.

A justice-based approach can challenge us to reveal, grapple with, and change the root causes of food insecurity, which according to Poppendieck (1998) are poverty and inequality. Community food work is of particular significance to food insecurity because it can do just that. Proponents of community food work challenge the pervasiveness of poverty in the food system by imbuing it with values of justice, sustainability, and equity (Slocum, 2006). Practitioners engaged in community food work are educators that have the potential to use their practice to promote justice and equity. Critically reflective practice is important for community food work practitioners because it can uncover power relations in practice (Brookfield, 1995, 2000, 2009) and challenge hegemony present in practice and broader social structures (Brookfield, 2000). Criticality inherently aims to reshape capitalism into democratic-socialism by transferring decision-making power to those whom the decisions affect (Brookfield & Holst, 2011). Critical reflection upon these aspects can result in practitioners who use their practice as a platform for justice and equity.

Research Questions

This study will explore faith-based community food work as values-based practice. My research puzzle (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) draws upon Brookfield's (1995, 2000, 2009) critically reflective practice, Slocum's (2006) understanding of community food work, and Abi-Nader et al.'s (2009) framework of *Whole Measures CFS* to explore faith-based community food work as values-based practice. Focusing on practitioners and their practice, the questions I wish to address are threefold:

1. How, if at all, are practitioners performing community food work in their faith-based practice?

2. How, if at all, are these practitioners illustrating critically reflective practice in their community food work?

3. How do these practitioners treat the presence of hegemony as a specific and critical element of community food work?

Conceptual Framework

Community Food Work

Community food work is a term that encompasses many different alternative food discourses. It promotes fair prices, sustainable practices, and accessible, affordable, culturally appropriate healthy food for all people (Slocum, 2006). Community food work proponents critique the current food system for its destruction of small-scale local farming, as well as human, ecological, and animal health (Slocum, 2006). Community food work entails a wide variety of programs including urban gardening, farmer's markets, community-supported agriculture, nutrition education, and more (Slocum, 2006). Community food work takes a holistic approach to food system reform that also focuses on economic development and cultural pride (Slocum, 2006). Community food work takes inequity and inequality in the food system very seriously and calls attention to the institutionalized biases that many alternative food discourses entail (Slocum, 2006, 2007). Alternative food movements often fail to acknowledge intersections of race, class, and gender (Guthman, 2008; Slocum, 2006). Community food work calls its practitioners to be cognizant of the way inequity manifests in their work and to strive to shift the balance of power towards disenfranchised groups (Slocum, 2006).

Whole Measures for Community Food Systems

Whole Measures for Community Food Systems (*Whole Measures CFS*) is a values-based planning and evaluation tool developed by the Community Food Security Coalition, and serves as the framework of this study for identifying and defining indicators of values in community food work (Abi-Nader et al., 2009). *Whole Measures CFS* was created in response to practitioners' desire for a tool that represents community food systems not only in quantifiable terms but in terms of the impact of the relationships cultivated, values incorporated into the work, and respect communicated between participants (Abi-Nader et al., 2009). *Whole Measures CFS* helps groups define and express the complex outcomes and stories that emerge from their work (Abi-Nader et al., 2009). The creators of *Whole Measures CFS* incorporated six fields and practices of community food system work (or community food work) into its design. These are justice and fairness, strong communities, vibrant farms, healthy people, sustainable ecosystems, and thriving local economies. *Whole Measures CFS* not only includes, but also emphasizes, sociocultural inequalities as well as sustainability and farmer income. This makes *Whole Measures CFS* a unique and holistic tool for planning and evaluating community food systems and community food work as values-based practice.

Critically Reflective Practice

It seems clear that an alternative food movement that allows equal participation and distribution of power is what those who embody the discussed values would promote. But how does one arrive at this location when we are encapsulated in the individualistic politics of the global free-market economy? Critical theory sheds light on this dilemma because in terms of adult education, it illuminates the ways in which adults can learn to build a commitment to the "common good" (Brookfield, 2005, p. 32), also framed as democratic-socialism (Brookfield &

Holst, 2011). Critical theory informs a critical approach to adult learning that sees ideology critique as an essential part of adulthood (Brookfield, 2005). Critical theory stems from the Frankfurt School where philosophers built a lineage of critical social theories critiquing capitalism. Thinkers including Hegel, Kant, Marcuse, and Habermas influenced the concept of critical reflection and the critically reflective practitioner that I incorporated into this research.

Critical theory attempts to understand the current state of society and then bring it into question for the purpose of changing it to eliminate inequality (Brookfield, 2009). By using critical theory a person finds new ways of making meaning from his/her experiences, which in turn gives him/her new ways of participating in the world (Brookfield, 2009). The dominant ideology of a person defines his/her role in social constructs such as capitalism, patriarchy, and classism (Brookfield, 2009). It reproduces the "normal" social structure that creates racial, gender, economic, and social inequalities (Brookfield, 2009). Ideology critique is a thinking and reflection tool that helps people to question the dominant ideology that maintains these and other structures of inequity in society. Being critical inherently calls a person to become political and take action towards creating a society that is more democratic and collectivist. Critical reflection is a form of ideology critique where a person comes to realize how dominant ideology shapes his/her assumptions and way of life to justify inequity. Dominant ideology is therefore promoting the agendas of others, the more powerful, in the everyday actions and worldviews of people. By locating oneself in dominant ideology and coming to terms with its consequences, a person can begin the process of critical reflection where he or she discerns the discrepancies between his/her own assumptions and understandings of the world (Brookfield, 2000).

The reason critical reflection is significant to faith-based community food practitioners is that faith-based groups have been key members of the resurgence of emergency food aid

(Poppendieck, 1998), which is a progeny of dominant ideology. As people see greater need for food support they respond by freely giving more of themselves, which allows the government to maintain the majority of its spending on issues unrelated to food insecurity and social change (Poppendieck, 1998). The unquestioned need for emergency food aid in the United States is highly institutionalized in the way we think about and act on hunger, and illustrates the silent, and even applauded, pervasiveness of hegemony. Once that ideology is critiqued and uncovered as a hegemonic injustice, people can begin the social change process by demanding and creating new agrifood systems that incorporate the values they hold dear.

Narrative Inquiry as Methodology

The organization I selected for this research met a number of criteria. It was a faith-based organization that has been involved in community food work for several years and deals primarily with food insecure populations. I selected participants using purposeful and snowball sampling based on their affiliation with the organization and their willingness to participate. I used narrative inquiry as process and product to guide the methodology for this study. Narrative is both a process and outcome as the researcher and participant live and modify story and experience together (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). My methods of data collection consisted of narrative interviews, document artifacts, participant analysis, a collective reflection session, participant observation, and a research journal. I analyzed the narrative interviews and collective reflection session using *a priori* codes from the tri-fold framework and was open to emergent codes as they surfaced.

I entered into this study with a dialectical critical realist ontology and constructivist epistemology. I acknowledge that a person's experiences are unique and socially constructed but that there are historical totalities that affect reality, whether a person is cognizant of them or not.

To this point, ideology critique can help inform a person about these structural truths as they engage in a critically reflective learning experience.

Significance

This research has methodological, practical, and theoretical implications. I will discuss three primary contributions and positions for further thought. Narrative inquiry is seldom used in community food work research, so this study illustrates the learning potential and challenges to such a methodology. Additionally, this study served as a learning tool for community food work practitioners and provides legitimacy to this practice as a locale for adult education. Further, this research provides insights into the praxis of community food work.

First, this research offers significance to narrative inquiry as a methodology. Narrative inquiry is gaining recognition as a legitimate methodology in education studies, but has not been employed in community food work practice by any extensive means. This study has demonstrated the iterative and generative nature of narrative inquiry as methodology. It also validates its use as both process and product in academic research. Narrative inquiry as a pedagogical orientation to teaching and learning had positive ramifications in this research. The use of narratives to guide individual and collective reflection created space for learning in new and significant ways, for example as the practitioners were able to hear certain perspectives from their coworkers for the first time. I also learned lessons for future researchers to consider if using narrative inquiry to collect practice stories and facilitate critical reflection.

Second, this research has noteworthy implications as a venue for practitioners to tell stories of their work. Creating a platform for storytelling and reflection provided learning opportunities for the participants as well as future use for practitioners outside of the study. Telling and retelling these stories in various modes proliferated the meanings made from them in

the ways the practitioners think and speak about their work. Other researchers agree that this research may have implications on practice outside the temporal scope of the study (Peters, Grégoire, & Hittleman, 2004). These narratives have enhanced the understanding of community food work practice as a legitimate approach to adult education and community development, and again, critical reflection as a space for practitioner learning.

Lastly, this research corroborates the theory of community food work as critical practice, illustrating the significance of seeing community food work as a practice that informs and is informed by our work on the ground. Thompson and Pascal (2012) explain that the concept of critical praxis needs to be further developed, and this research begins to explore the possibility of a practice that is performed, theorized and reflected on, reimagined, and then re-performed as praxis takes shape. Praxis here also reflected Freire's (1972) assertion of loving, humanizing relationships as the pinnacle to such work. I feel confident in claiming that practitioner research can provide an epistemological reorientation as we, in the academy, elicit and value practitioner knowledge as legitimate and informative. Scaffolding that, practitioners can create new knowledge in the process of practitioner research, as was evidenced in the multiplicative conceptualizations of the work during the participant analysis and collective reflection session portions of this study. This research demonstrates empirical stories of critical reflection in community food work that reveal the role of hegemony in practice. Implicit in the narratives was the responsibility towards challenging hegemonic social relations and assumptions.

Definition of Terms

Community food security: A situation in which a community is able to provide all people at all times access to healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate, environmentally sustainable food

that they can choose and have the means to prepare in a desirable way (Adapted from Hamm & Bellows, 2003).

Community food system: A local food and social system that connects people with food, community, and land (Adapted from Abi-Nader et al., 2009). It is a "collaborative effort to build more locally based, self-reliant food economies- one in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution and consumption is integrated to enhance the economic, environmental and social health of a particular place" (Feenstra, 2002, p. 100).

Community food work: Work that "promotes fair prices and sustainable practices in farming as well as accessible, affordable, culturally appropriate nutritious food for all" (Slocum, 2006, p. 327). It includes farmer education, health and nutrition education, environmental advocacy, and social justice values.

Critical reflection: A reflexive habit of deconstructing the dominant assumptions and ideas that perpetuate inequality and inequity and prevent people from realizing the reality they have the right to, and subsequently challenging those assumptions and ideas (Brookfield, 2009).

Critically reflective practitioner: A practitioner who critically engages with the ideological basis of his or her practice to look beneath the surface to see what thoughts, feelings, values, and assumptions he or she draws upon (Thompson & Pascal, 2012) to perform a more equitable and just practice in line with democratic-socialist ideals (Brookfield & Holst, 2011).

Faith-based organization: an organization created by faith communities or their members to address community needs in the context of theology of justice and/or charity of that particular faith (Schneider, 2013).

Food insecurity: The USDA designates food insecurity as "…uncertain, insufficient, or unacceptable availability, access, or utilization of food" (Carney, 2011, p. 75). Household food

insecurity, according to the USDA, is when a household has members who face times where they do not have access to enough food for an active, healthy life (Coleman-Jensen, Nord, & Singh, 2013).

Food justice: "Ensuring the benefits and risks of where, what, and how food is grown and produced, transported and distributed, and accessed and eaten are shared fairly (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010, p. 6). Food justice advocates bring issues of race to the forefront of the conversation.

Food sovereignty: A situation where the populace has the right to develop and maintain its capacity to produce and distribute its own food in a way that respects culture and diversity (Fairbairn, 2011). The emphasis in this concept is the framing of control over one's food system as a right. It is generally used in the context of food movements in the southern hemisphere.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

There is space in the food system for private and civic organizations to feed the hungry people in our society. In fact, the U.S. government encourages it. Faith-based organizations have traditionally been a key player in these services, but often their efforts take the form of charity and emergency food. Although this serves a certain need, these avenues do not attempt to sever the ideological and institutional roots of hunger. Additionally, they do not promote the values that one would find in community food work. Some faith-based organizations throughout the country are taking a broader approach to hunger by building community food systems. Faith-based organizations have unique community capitals that position them to be successful in this type of work. Moreover, practitioners who have learned through ideology critique will be more apt to engage in work that promotes community food values.

Hunger in the U. S.

Hunger has been a concern influencing the U.S. political scene since the early 1900's. The first emergency food assistance program was instated during the Great Depression to attempt to balance the farm surplus with city poverty (Allen, 1999). After World War II, the U.S. economy slowed down and many Americans became newly poor (Allen, 1999). The contemporary food assistance we see today began in the late 1960's under President John F. Kennedy's, when "anti-hunger" joined the wave of social movements taking hold at the time (Allen, 1999). Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty" continued this anti-hunger trend. Emergency food benefits were reduced in the 1980's such that those receiving benefits still could not obtain an adequate diet (Allen, 1999). This trend has continued on, with many other industrialized nations casting off their responsibility for social welfare as well (Allen, 1999).

The government encourages the private and third sectors to take responsibility for emergency food, volunteerism, and charity (Allen, 1999). The G.W. Bush administration started an initiative to build social capital and bolster small non-profits, congregations, and other faith-based institutions. The goals of this were to remove Federal barriers to community-serving programs, stimulate economic growth by increasing tax deductions for nonprofits, faith-based programs, and community groups, and build greater cooperation through Federal initiatives that support people in need (The White House, n.d.). Since then, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has created the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to bolster its agricultural research, education, and extension programs. The 2008 Food, Conservation, and Energy Act established the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) under NIFA. The program funds research, education, and extension programs that address food and agricultural sciences.

SNAP provides nutrition assistance to low income individuals and families, and is the largest government program to address hunger (Mabli, Ohls, Dragoset, Castner, and Santos, 2013). SNAP partners with states, faith-based and neighborhood organizations, and nutrition educators to help people access assistance. SNAP is able to increase food security in households (Mabli et al., 2013), but relies so heavily on government subsidies that it is a precariously established program and is a hegemonic stopgap in our food system. The participants in SNAP and WIC rely on taxpayer money for their stipends, and often do not end up keeping that money within the local economy.

The USDA's total budget for 2011 was estimated at $146 billion, with the largest sums funding their nutrition assistance (SNAP and WIC) and commodity programs. What's more, in fiscal year 2011, the USDA estimates that one in seven Americans was enrolled in SNAP

benefits (USDA-FNS, Office of Research and Analysis, 2012). Reading summaries of SNAP and WIC, these programs are purposed to act as a reactionary "safety-net" rather than a proactive initiative to reduce poverty. Although acting as a safety net may be the purpose of these programs, it gives me pause that so many Americans are in need of such a net.

In 2011 only 11% of AFRI applications were funded, totaling just over $240 million (U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture, 2013). This demonstrates that community food system programs are still facing great financial need, and they do not seem to take priority for USDA funding. Since government assistance was reduced, and other sectors were struggling to reach the demand for food assistance, policy makers established a competitive grants program to fund community food projects as a part of the 1996 Farm Bill (Allen, 1999). The Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program fights food insecurity by funding projects that "promote the self-sufficiency of low-income communities" ("Program Synopsis: Community Food Projects," 2011). These grants are administered by the W.K. Kellogg foundation and the USDA and fund projects ranging from the creation of food cooperatives to the establishment of community supported agriculture, and bolstering of nutrition education. This program has overlap with SNAP and WIC, and encourages food assistance participants to purchase local foods. Both WIC and SNAP are making fresh local foods available to low income households by educating participants and making farmer's market produce a buying option. The WIC Farmer's Market Nutrition Program began in 1992 and most states participate. This provides pregnant and post-partum women and their children access to locally grown fruits and vegetables and promotes the awareness of farmer's markets.

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service also hosts a Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program. Low-income seniors are provided coupons that can be exchanged for foods at farmer's

markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture farms ("Senior Farmer's Market," 2013). Additionally, the USDA Economic Research Service (USDA-ERS) has authored a community food security assessment toolkit to help community organizations and planners assess various aspects of food security in their community (Cohen, 2002). This is a useful educational and organizational tool for people that are unfamiliar with community food security (Lutz, 2006). Nonetheless, these tools still operate within the neoliberal bounds of our economy and need to be approached with scrutiny of their transformative potential.

Cooperative Extension was formed in 1914, and it currently hosts programs addressing food insecurity throughout the nation. Cooperative Extension was incorporated into the Farm Bill in 2008 to support the movement of information from the lab to the field and back again (U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture, 2013). NIFA provides the federal funding for the Cooperative Extension System (U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture, 2013). Other sources of funding for extension are state and local governments. Congress has allocated money through the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program (SARE) for sustainable agriculture research, education, and training as well.

When addressing how to provide resources to those in need, it is imperative that they find the power to become self-sufficient in the community, and not reliant on emergency assistance. Food access is a term often misused and misinterpreted in discussions about food security because its meaning takes on different forms depending on one's values. Further, one's primary values will lead to certain strategies and commitments over others (Allen, 2014). Social justice groups often address the issue of food access, but the diversity of members ranging from educators to farmers to consumers leads to just as much diversity in the meaning of food access

(Mann & Lawrence, 1998), Mann and Lawrence (1998), and others suggest that the problem of hunger in the United States is not caused by a lack of food or overpopulation, but instead a lack of power, access, and democracy. The poor should not be viewed as dependents in need of charity, but rather as agents of their own liberation entitled to equitable resources and power (Mann & Lawrence, 1998). Food access as presented by Mann and Lawrence (1998, p. 22) is access to food that "is produced and distributed in ways that enhance rather than destroy the land, water, farm families, and communities." This eliminates the processed, low cost and low nutrient foods we so often find in soup kitchens and food banks.

Traditionally, food access has been thought of as acquiring food through socially accepted channels (Allen, 1999). However, Radimer et al. (1992) revealed that what some might consider unacceptable channels (i.e. WIC, school meals), women at risk of food security considered perfectly acceptable. The unacceptable channels in this case were food pantries and charity of friends and family (Radimer et al., 1992). The increase in food banks in recent decades indicates that the "acceptable" channel of government assistance programs does not sufficiently meet the needs of those who face unemployment, poverty-level wages, and inadequate pensions (Allen, 1999). Allen (1999) suggests that as long as these problems persist and food access is based on ability to pay, there will be hunger in the U.S.

Others have added that food access includes economic and transportation components as well (Anderson, 2008). Food-assistance programs also diminish the choice for people to eat healthy foods. Americans receiving food stamps or going to a local food pantry are not offered the same range of food choices as middle and upper class Americans. Anderson (2008) identifies food-assistance programs are mere stopgaps that are not providing people with their right to

food. Communities need access to fresh locally produced foods at affordable prices that can be sustained into the future. They also need to be able to conveniently get to the distribution center.

Food insecurity is rooted in gender, racial, ethnic, and socio-economic inequities (Hamm, 2009), as well as poverty (Poppendieck, 1998). Ideally, alternative food systems aim to provide all people with healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate foods, but the current power structure and democratic system may be hindering their ability to take root (Allen, 2004). Because the causes of food insecurity are so structural and deep-rooted, reactionary initiatives to subdue the problem in fact only allow the problem to persist. Framing hunger as a food access issue drastically simplifies the complexity and pervasiveness of the issue and prohibits any sort of political solution. Naming hunger a technical problem of food access diverts the attention of well meaning citizens to provide technical solutions, such as donating to food drives and volunteering at food banks. Once the root cause of food insecurity is revealed and accepted by Americans, we can begin to unpack this "wicked problem" (Hamm, 2009) and address it at an appropriate scale. A wicked problem is set in contrast to a tame problem. Tame problems have technical solutions that are generally easily identified. Wicked problems have no solution because they are embedded in a constantly morphing human context and at best we can hope to take steps to remedy the problem without ever actually solving it (Hamm, 2009). There are a number of alternative food discourses in the U.S that are attempting to take steps to do just that.

The modernist paradigm supported high production-oriented agriculture and touted science and economics as the vehicle driving humankind to a higher and ultimately inevitable level of development and productivity (Guptill et al., 2013). A focus on economics is dangerous because it spawns the globalization and commodification of food whereas a focus on community food systems strengthens local economic and social systems (Hinrichs & Lyson, 2007). We are

now at a political location where alternative food discourses are recognized by the federal government and among other political, institutional, and independent organizations throughout the country. However, Allen (2004) gives heed to these discourses, cautioning that they may rest upon the same principles as conventional agriculture, and create similar social inequities.

A new agrifood movement needs cohesion and synergy in order to gain civil support. Changing the current food system will take organized action that proposes realistic and beneficial alternatives (Hinrichs & Lyson, 2007). We need community-based practitioners to build frameworks that satisfy the visions of a new agrifood movement while enticing a significant number of public supporters. Understanding how food journeys from the field to our plate to our bodies and souls can aid in the appreciation of a more meaningful foodway.

Foodways explain the physical, social, and circumstantial routes food take from production to consumption. Foodways offer an insight into social and spiritual life, and can illuminate patterns of social inequality (Guptill et al., 2013). Foodways offer a sense of identity and social belonging through the ritualistic reproduction of food cultures (Guptill et al., 2013). Regional cuisines, holiday meals, and class accepted foods are all examples of how foodways can confer a sense of community, or exacerbate a sense of exclusion. Foodways offer visible evidence of the distinction between the "haves and the have-nots" (Guptill et al., 2013, p. 24). As we will later see, there are a number of approaches to alternative foodways in the U. S. that are attempting to rectify the injustices of the dominant foodway.

Alternative Agrifood Movements

Alternative agrifood movements are framed according to a spread of factors including values, politics, ideologies, and available resources (Allen, 2004). Discourses are significant in agrifood movements because they shape how people perceive and give meaning to their

experiences (Allen, 2004). According to Allen (2014) the topics and categories each particular movement considers most important determine the allocation of energies. These then create common understandings and mechanisms for changing the food system.

Some alternative agrifood movements are accused of reinforcing the hegemony of neoliberal economic ideology (Fairbairn, 2011; Slocum, 2006). Neoliberal philosophy raises the market to the status of a governing body and politicizes our economy (Alkon & Mares, 2012). This philosophy primarily rests on market deregulation, trade liberalization, and the privatization of state enterprises and public services (Alkon & Mares, 2012). By touting solutions based on entrepreneurship and local market linkages, some of these alternative movements reinforce values of personal responsibility, competition, and efficiency (Fairbairn, 2011). They can also fail to address pre-existing injustices in the food system. For example, the focus on the plight of the small family farm has overshadowed the issues surrounding farmworker rights (Allen, 2004). Moreover, farmer's markets radiate localism, but they are predominantly middle class white zones (Slocum, 2006). How food is produced, packaged, promoted, and sold targets white middle class citizens who have concern for their health and the environment (Slocum, 2006). With social and economic barriers to accessing farmer's markets, low-income and marginalized communities are effectively denied participation in these endeavors. Furthermore, many alternative food initiatives absolve the state of its responsibility to food system deficits (Fairbairn, 2011).

Clearly alternative agrifood movements are imperfect, yet that does not mean they are not useful or productive. In light of this, Allen (2014) offers the idea of oppositional stances that directly challenge the practices, beliefs, and discourses of the dominant culture. Balancing a potential binary, Allen (2014) pushes for a confluence of alternative and oppositional stances to

change the agrifood system. There is give and take in the efforts of alternative agrifood movements, for example if a group has an oppositional viewpoint on an issue but sees the only way forward at present through an alternative route. I appreciate Allen's (2014) balanced portrait of alternative agrifood movements, and her fair reminder that no one movement can be cast as purely oppositional or alternative. Below I present summaries of some of the most prevalent alternative agrifood movements in the United States. Although separated by origins, goals, and commitments, these alternative agrifood movements converge at times, and are given here as isolated categories for ease of understanding.

Food Security

Food security was a concept first recognized at the World Food Conference in 1974. Food insecurity was a problem that manifested as hunger around the world, so the United Nations rallied for increased agricultural production to feed the hungry (Carney, 2012). They emphasized the need for access to a world supply of food and to offset fluctuations in production and prices (Maxwell, 1996). Food insecurity was understood as a result of inconsistent production and global exchanges (Maxwell, 1996). Although that paradigm is still believed by some today, widespread hunger exists despite a perfectly adequate global food supply (Maxwell, 1996). This gives heed to the shift in understanding that food insecurity is not just a result of inadequate food supply. Starting in the 1980's researchers began to bring the issue of food access into the fold, until eventually it took center stage (Maxwell, 1996). Delegates of the 1996 World Food Summit further unpacked the complex nature of food insecurity when they recognized that solving the problem of hunger among vulnerable populations would take more than understanding their nutritional status and amount of food available (Carney, 2012). Many groups looked at food insecurity as primarily an issue of food access (Maxwell, 1996). However, several

circumstantial factors resulting from social, political, economic, and environmental influences affect food insecurity (Carney, 2012), and thus it cannot be reduced to simply providing more access.

Community Food Security

The concept of food security was reframed as *community* food security in the late 1980's for the North American context (Fairbairn, 2011). Community food security diverges from food security in a number of ways, but it is significant to note that the concept materialized outside of governing bodies by those working in the field of nutrition, sustainable agriculture, and community development (Fairbairn, 2011). There are seven main aspects of community food security found in the literature. These are: "food access, safe food, culturally acceptable food, nutritionally useful food, sustainable systems by which food is produced and distributed, community independence and functionality, and social justice" (Lutz, 2006, p. 19). All seven of these are incorporated in the Hamm and Bellows (2003) definition that states community food security is "a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice" (p.37). The focus of this frame is the social injustice of limited food access for low-income communities (Fairbairn, 2011).

When considering community food security one must delineate what community means. Communities can be geographic, interest based, or situation based, and are mediated by the people who construct and act in them. They are influenced by income, gender, ethnicity, occupation, and many other personal characteristics. Geography actually plays a minimal role in the construction of communities (Allen, 1999). Current research argues that community is comprised of membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional

connection (Lutz, 2006). If we are to achieve community food security then a sense of community self-reliance needs to be reinstated so that individuals are not seeking resources and supplies from outside the limits of their community. A food secure community is self-reliant and controlled by local community members. Gillespie and Gillespie (2001) claim the system will also be resilient to economic insecurity, weather challenges, and other disturbances.

Further hindrances to establishing community food security lie within the economic, social and political structures of society. Decentralization of social welfare means an increased cost to the public sector and individuals, but these parties are given no additional power to change the conditions that created the problem in the first instance (Allen, 1999). Public participation in the food system can lead to democratization and allow public concerns to become integrated into food policy. Otherwise, food policy is based on economic factors and consumers are externalized from the process (Anderson, 2008). Tanaka et al. (2015) explain the community food security movement is a convergence of two alternative agrifood priorities: sustainable agricultural production and food access. These two priorities, although not mutually exclusive, engender contradictions. For example, practitioners and researchers still struggle to strike a balance between the needs of producers and consumers at the farmer's market stand (Campbell et al., 2013). Ensuring equitable access to healthy food among consumers becomes quite problematic when the farmers are expected to survive on their farm income without help from government subsidies (Campbell et al., 2013). This is one of the many contradictions and dilemmas that further entangles us in the wicked problem of food insecurity.

Community food security is a concept that combines interests, values, and concerns from many other food movements including sustainable agriculture, social justice, and anti-hunger (Pelletier, Kraak, McCullum, Uusitalo, and Rich, 1999). Community food security offers a more

purposeful integration of agendas and strategies that enhances advocacy and planning efforts (Pelletier, Kraak, McCullum, and Uusitalo, 2000). Some scholars believe that community food security is limited in its local-based approach to food system reform (Fairbairn, 2011). This could result in a disconnected patchwork of impact and lack the collective impact that a larger scale approach could have.

Food Justice

The demand for social justice has permeated alternative food movements in recent years. Proponents believe that food security is impossible without social justice as one of the necessary points of entry to analyses of solutions to food insecurity (Cadieux & Slocum, 2015). Food justice does not prescribe clear routes to establish a more just food system, but the concept opens up pathways for political and social action and advocacy (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010). Academics and social organizations are taking a stab at engaging with food justice work. According to Patricia Allen (2008), over half of alternative food institutions have a position on food justice, and many are engaged in food justice work. Allen (2008) believes this new ethical position of so many is quite possibly the beginning of a strong social movement that can bring about social change. However, it takes more than an ethical position to bring about social change, and coordinating effective change tactics can prove to be tenuous. Food justice efforts are still moored to the political economy and capitalistic nature of the United States, which creates an alternative food system that is much more easily accessed by the privileged than the marginalized (Allen, 2008). Alternative agriculture programs such as community supported agriculture and farm-to-school, albeit with equity and justice in mind, still rely on private funding and flexible labor agreements which engenders the same power dynamics that can be seen in the conventional agriculture system (Allen, 2008).

The social, economic, and political inequalities in our food system can be traced to power differentials across the United States and the food system as a whole lacks much justice and fairness (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011; Campbell et al., 2013; Guthman, 2008). Patrons of the emergency food net are primarily women, children, elderly, and racial minorities (Poppendieck, 1998). Furthermore, ethnic minorities are often the farmworkers who face exploitation and hold the lowest paying jobs as a consequence of farmers, often small farmers, trying to maximize their profit (Campbell et al., 2013). This is not to say that farmers are at fault, but that they are pressured to maintain a farm business within our capitalist and individualistic society (Campbell et al., 2013). Though these and other challenges stand in the way of food justice advocates, food justice has created a language and vision which people can use to address inequities in the food system as well as seeking to change the system we are tied to (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010).

Food Sovereignty

The concept of food sovereignty is hailed as a basis for global agricultural change because it demands control through socially embedded markets and democratic governance of the food system (Fairbairn, 2011). It frames food as a human right in the sense that the populace has the right to develop and maintain control over the production and consumption of food in order to respect their livelihoods (Cadieux & Slocum, 2015; Fairbairn, 2011). Food sovereignty began in the global south with the La Via Campesina movement (Carney, 2011; Fairbairn, 2011). Food sovereignty is a concept created by peasant farmers for peasant farmers, and it is yet to be seen if its translation to industrialized countries will compromise its foundations (Fairbairn, 2011). Proponents call for collective control over resources and argue that food is not a commodity to be merchandized in the market (Fairbairn, 2011). Originally this movement was framed around civil disobedience and expanding the political possibilities of a food movement

(Fairbairn, 2011). U. S. based food sovereignty movements do not participate in the civil disobedience aspect of food sovereignty, but they still demand political change (Fairbairn, 2011). In the North American context, its discourse tends to bleed together with food justice discourse (Cadieux & Slocum, 2015).

Fairbairn (2011) highlights the strength of food sovereignty in acknowledging the structural inequity Native Americans face as producers and consumers in the food system. Food sovereignty activists also bring gender discrimination to light, which is a piece missing from other alternative food discourses. Conversely, food sovereignty in the U.S. framing does not adequately address the struggles that farmworkers face (Allen, 2004). Similar to community food security, local control of the food system is heavily pushed in the U. S. frame of food sovereignty. This in fact is in direct contrast to the original construction of the concept where sovereignty should be exercised on many levels (Fairbairn, 2011).

Community Food Systems

In order to improve our food system, we first must know what a food system consists of. According to Gottlieb and Joshi (2010) a food system "is the entire set of activities and relationships that make up the various food pathways from seed to table and influence the how and why and what we eat" (p. 5). This broad definition sets up a framework for addressing food system issues from an innumerable variety of disciplines and entry points into the work. Community food systems are a venue for community development because they incorporate economic, environmental, and social considerations, which are the three pillars for sustainable community development, according to Dale and Newman (2010).

Community food systems can be defined collectively as a "collaborative effort to build more locally based, self-reliant food economies- one in which sustainable food production,

processing, distribution and consumption is integrated to enhance the economic, environmental and social health of a particular place" (Feenstra, 2002, p. 100). There are countless ways a community can organize and address problems they may face, but certain strategies use a more holistic process and have had many successes in the field. Organizing can begin within the community, or it can stem from an outside organization inserting themselves into a community to help it tackle a problem. Either way, partnerships between organizations and stakeholders are necessary to create lasting change, especially in the complicated food system. Collaborations can form to address a specific problem, or may assemble based on common interests and concerns (Block et al., 2008).

Similar to other discourses, many community food system initiatives are dominated by white middle class Americans who impose their sociocultural lens on the definition of food security (Campbell, et al., 2013). This places the racial and ethnic inequalities of our current food system into alternative food system movements. Slocum (2006) advocates an analysis of intersecting forms of power and privilege, and finding ways for diverse groups to work in alliance. Understanding how sociocultural influences affect how people come to know food security will help to inform alternative food movements (Campbell et al., 2013).

Community Development and Alternative Agrifood Systems

Alternative agrifood systems require extensive community development planning and work. The community organizing strategies described below are by no means the only or best strategies. They are discussed in order to illuminate some benefits and drawbacks to approaches for community development and food system planning. These have been used to create vibrant communities because they incorporate many different, less obvious, aspects of the agrifood system such as the local economy, political climate, and social relationships.

Values-based Community Development

Community development is a value-laden endeavor. Oftentimes it requires an outside practitioner to assist a community in defining its needs and then meeting those needs (Cruikshank, 1987). This can result in value dilemmas that must be teased out by the stakeholders in the process. Cruikshank (1987) found that practitioners engaged in grassroots community development projects had little control over their work and value decisions. There has historically been conflict over the juxtaposition of task and process in community development (Cruikshank, 1987). Focusing on a task can lead a practitioner to determine what is right for the community and convince others to get on board. Focusing on process can be a long drawn out participatory activity that rarely goes as planned. Although participation is a major value of community development, citizen participation is often distorted by a number of factors. Jules Pretty outlines a ladder of participation ranging from manipulative participation to self-mobilization (Pretty, 1995). There has been a rapid expansion of participatory approaches to development in recent decades, but projects continue to span along the spectrum of participation as organizations and practitioners use a number of methods and interpretations of participation (Pretty, 1995). Further confounding community development are the many roles a practitioner can assume, including “enabler, organizer, facilitator, expert, consultant, planner, educator, and negotiator” (Cruikshank, 2987, p. 27).

The field of community development is littered with idealist terms such as “empowerment,” “citizen control,” and “social justice” (Cruikshank, 1987, p. 16), but those terms are poorly conceptualized, extremely difficult to put into practice, and even more difficult to measure. Values and ideologies of community development practitioners are quite heterogeneous, which some argue is a great asset to the work (Cruikshank, 1987). Since the

range of values is so diverse, it is important to examine and reflect on them so practitioners can learn about their own and others' beliefs. Values greatly influence the approach that practitioners take (Cruikshank, 1987) so this is an important and iterative piece to their work. Fussell (1996) frames community development as "an iterative process whereby old beliefs and values give way to new ones" (p. 46). Development occurs when social reality adjusts to meet felt needs (Fussell, 1996).

Heifer International (Heifer) has been providing sustainable development assistance to countries throughout the world for over 60 years (De Vries, 2011). Their mission is to "end hunger and poverty and to care for the earth" (De Vries, 2011, p. 45). Heifer has 12 cornerstone values that provide the backbone for all of their work. Heifer frames development as a transformative process that involves changes in relationships, behavior, values, and morals (De Vries, 2011). These lead to changes in living conditions and spiritual change (De Vries, 2011). To kick-start this transformative process, Heifer provides individuals in a community with a live animal (or animals) and educates them in husbandry with the understanding that that person will "pass on the gift" of the animal's first offspring. This creates a cascading effect of change throughout the community. The animals provide a source of nourishment as well as financial income in the form of animal products (milk, honey, meat, etc.). Heifer is careful to partner with local organizations to better leverage resources and build local capacity so that upon their exit, the community is self-sufficient (Aaker, 2007; De Vries, 2011).

Introducing "moral value" into food systems is a way to change how the conventional food system operates (Block et al., 2008). Block and colleagues (2008) explored value chains as a way of identifying social change in the agrifood system. A value chain "describes the full range of activities that are required to bring a product or service from conception, through to the

intermediary phases of production, delivery to final consumers, and final disposal after use" (Block et al., 2008, p. 380). Value chains cannot fully illustrate the complexity of the food system, so Block et al. (2008) modified the term to the concept of a value web. Value webs are multi-directional and relationships can connect any and all members. These relationships have the potential to create strong trust between people, thereby increasing social capital and improving the community's capacity for action.

These webs can enhance small-scale farmers' financial stability by marketing their products with social and environmental benefits (values) embedded in their products (Campbell et al., 2013). However, values-based supply webs are driven by the same infrastructure and markets as conventional webs, so they are still subject to price, efficiency, food safety, and convenience (Campbell et al., 2013). How this will affect the integrity of these value webs is yet to be seen.

Food policy councils are a community based strategy to meet local food needs, address economic problems on small farms, and take steps to preserve local ecosystems (Pothukuchi & Kaufman 1999; Webb, Pelletier, Maretzki, & Wilkins, 1998). These are usually comprised of stakeholders from different segments of the food community such has farmers, food retailers, nutrition educators, and government officials (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999). They often act as an advisory entity, operating independent of the government. However in the case of Toronto, the Food Policy Council operates as a sub-committee of the Board of Health (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999). The committee does however have an unprecedented amount of independence compared to other city sub-committees. Food policy councils are unfortunately often resource poor, project-oriented, and rely on charisma to gain support. Therefore, they do not ask the more

probing questions of the food system, nor do they explore the relationship between the food system and other urban systems (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999).

Another issue with food policy councils is the underrepresentation of the public. Professionals who tend to comprise these councils undoubtedly reflect the values of their particular field and the stakeholders they represent (Pelletier et al., 2000). Since no professional can truly represent the values of the public, it is imperative to involve them in the planning process, as well as the implementation and evaluation of programs when possible.

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) collaboratively organized the North Country Community Food and Economic Security Project. This search conference integrated people's local knowledge and values into the development of the community's food system planning. County residents were able to discuss the origin and future of their food system and what matters to them as a community (Conroe, 1999). Many of the ideas expressed in the search conference were taken to other community organizations and a number of efforts to re-localize the food system were brought to life (Conroe, 1999). Some of these initiatives include the establishment of school gardens, donations of wild game and beef to food pantries, the creation of a "fellowship" kitchen to serve the elderly, disabled, and single parents, and distribution of educational materials (Conroe, 1999). A search conference is a way to create the space for communities to discuss food security. A New York City initiative to improve eating habits of children and strengthen the state's agricultural climate took a multi-tiered collaborative approach to organizing as well. The public school system, university, government, and community based organizations worked together to promote local food system development (Block et al., 2008). These important community wide conversations need to happen in order for a community to discover common goals, and often it requires a community based organization or Extension to

gather people together and facilitate these conversations. This is a good mechanism to encourage partnerships in a community as well. Lutz (2006) suggests that collaborations with outside community organizations can be an excellent resource for addressing CFS.

Civic agriculture has been posited as an alternative approach to the food system as it relies upon citizen participation in food-related activities and organizations (Hinrichs and Lyson, 2007; Lyson, 2004). Civic agriculture relies on the community feeling a sense of place and building sustained relationships (Block et al., 2008). According to Lyson (2004), stronger community ties can provide the links needed to re-localize the food system and therefore create more social, economic, and ecological wellbeing. Collaborations are essential to creating a full and just food system, and often it requires an intervention from a community based organization or an outside professional. These organizations can give a community guidance and direction when assessing the assets they hold and envisioning what they would like their food system to look like.

Community Capitals in Community Development

In order for community development to maintain its momentum there needs to be congruence between local, regional, and federal governments, rural and urban communities, and business and research communities (Dale & Newman, 2010). Community development requires the mobilization of social capital, and since the challenges of congruence are far reaching and complex, it requires evermore the strengths of networks to bind and bridge the diversity of stakeholders in a community (Dale & Newman, 2010). The community capitals framework has gained popularity in the community development literature, and shows how an asset-building approach to development is more likely to be successful in reaching the needs of communities (Crowe & Smith, 2012). The community capitals framework provides a method for analyzing

community and economic development efforts by identifying the assets in each capital, the types of capital invested, and the interaction and impacts across capitals (Emery & Flora, 2006). Community capitals are categorized as natural, human, social, cultural, political, financial, and built (Fey, Bregendahl, & Flora, 2006). Crowe and Smith (2012) explain that the community capitals approach is a useful strategy for training community officials and leaders in methods shown to enhance community well-being. Since food insecurity can be traced back to poverty and inequality (Poppendieck, 1998), using an approach that builds capacity within the community to improve well-being can be an effective strategy for a community to respond to food insecurity.

Pierre Bourdieu (1986) contends that capital takes time to accumulate and can reproduce itself identically or in an expanded form. Furthermore, the structure of the distribution of the different types of capital reveal the structure of the social world and govern its functioning and the chance of success for practices (Bourdieu, 1986). Different capitals can be distinguished by their ease of reproducibility, and how much this process degrades the capital or conceals its transmission, which are inverse properties (Bourdieu, 1986). Community capitals can have a "spiraling-up" effect when existing assets are built upon (Emery & Flora, 2006). Emery and Flora (2006) report an increase in almost all capitals from a community development project that invested primarily in human, financial, and social capital. The "spiraling-up" effect between capitals can be particularly useful if inputs and resources are limited (Emery & Flora, 2006).

Social capital is critical to community development and can influence and be influenced by the ebb and flow of other capitals (Emery & Flora, 2006). Social capital is broadly understood as the actual or potential resources that are connected to a durable network of established relationships that form membership to a group (Bourdieu, 1986). The size of the network and

volume of social capital that is possessed by the collective members of the group indicate how much social capital a person can mobilize (Bourdieu, 1986). The network is woven by either consciously or unconsciously establishing or reproducing social relationships that are usable (Bourdieu, 1986). Organizational social capital is "established, trust based networks among organizations or communities supporting a particular nonprofit that an organization can use to further its goals" (Schneider, 2013, p. 644). Using these networks to gain access to the resources to further their goals is essential to the social capital of nonprofits (Schneider, 2013). These relationships need to be durable, reciprocal, and enforceable so they do not dissolve if a mistake is made or promise broken on an occasion. Emery and Bregendahl (2014) state that people involved in community change work invest social capital to grow other assets.

The three states of cultural capital, according to Bourdieu (1986), are embodied, institutionalized, and objectified. Cultural capital is embodied within a person, which is where we can see most of its properties (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital is often transmitted and acquired inconspicuously and often goes unnoticed as a form of capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu (1986) states that such acts of culture as art collections and social welfare are often disguised as "legitimate competence" (p. 18). However, cultural capital provides value to its bearer, especially if the capital is rare (Bourdieu, 1986). This means that embodied cultural capital provides its possessor with the ability to secure an advantage over those that do not possess the capital. Furthermore, embodied cultural capital determines how we view the world and what we think we can change (Crowe & Smith, 2012). Cultural capital includes values that people possess and pass on to future generations, and can be related to food security (Crowe & Smith, 2012). Institutionalized cultural capital is that which is learned through schooling, and the objectified state is that which is manifested through cultural artifacts such as councils,

foundations and other forms that produce or celebrate tangible objects (Crowe & Smith, 2012). Bourdieu believes that effective cultural capital is that which can be implemented and invested as a weapon into the struggle of cultural reproduction and the field of social classes, where people use their strengths to gain profits proportional to their capital (Bourdieu, 1986). According to Weber, culture is traditionally expressed through religion, and shapes the beliefs, ideas, and practices that affect how people act and interact (Dant, 2003). This provides the context for the subsequent arrangements of material life, such as the economy (Dant, 2003).

Crowe and Smith (2012) found that communities with higher levels of cultural capital had more alternative food sources. The same can be said about communities with high levels of civicness and relationships with other communities and state agencies (Crowe & Smith, 2012). These communities in turn had lower food insecurity rates. Crowe and Smith (2012) believe that this is because communities with higher levels of bridging social capital and civic structure will provide a greater variety of conventional and alternative food sources for its residents. Activities such as commitment to meaningful organizational development, establishing and strengthening networks, and support for community-level development have been identified as key to garnering relationship networks (Emery & Bregendahl, 2014). Relationships, as social capital, are also a driver for community and individual empowerment (Emery & Bregendahl, 2014). Communities that have values and beliefs conducive for change rather than sustaining the societal norms are more likely to support a greater variety of nutritious and environmentally conscious food sources (Crowe & Smith, 2012).

Positioning Faith-based Organizations in Alternative Agrifood Movements

With grounding in the agrifood system and alternative agrifood movements we can now see how faith-based organizations fit into this conversation. People of all faiths have been the

force behind many social movements in history including civil and labor rights in the U.S., Apartheid, and urban reform (Wood, 2009). Religious people have raised their voices against social injustices and offered aid to the needy as an answer to a call of their faith.

Jewish theology traces kindness and justice back to the Law of Moses and Maimonides (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013). The concepts of *tikkun olam* (healing the world) and *tzedakah* (charity, justice, and righteous duty) also underlie Jewish theology of service. The organization of these services is very community driven between synagogues and temples, and this helps create and maintain leadership, Jewish identity, and relationships (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013). Muslim faith based organizations have fundamental duties to service and charity stemming from *zakat* (obligatory charity) and *sadaqa* (voluntary charity) (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013). From his study on American Muslim FBO's Yaghi (2009) concluded that religious beliefs, the Quran, public awareness, and humanitarian values were the main motivators for service. Some values that Muslim organizations identify with and can be found in their holy texts include empowerment, justice and fairness, and responsibility and accountability (Yaghi, 2009). These values and others offer Muslims guidance as they try to fulfill the mandates laid out in the Quran and Sunnah.

There are conflicting views on whether Christian religious tradition encourages social reform by promoting social justice, or if it hinders it because charismatic Christians tend to take passive political stances (Feldman & Moseley, 2003). What's more, literature points to Christian believers as "homoprejudiced, judgmental, and dogmatic" (Donaldson, 1998, p. 89). Christianity is viewed as extremely conservative on social issues and in conflict with social justice values of equity and shared power, among others (Edwards, 2012). What is more, some denominations have played questionable, if not despicable roles, in events throughout history.

Despite faith communities' sometimes tumultuous history and various approaches to social betterment, faith-based organizations are characterized by a wide array of religious expression (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013). However, a common thread amongst them is that these organizations are influenced by religion and have explicit goals of providing social services (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013). In particular, a faith-based organization can be defined as an organization created by faith communities or their members to address community needs in the context of theology of justice and/or charity of that particular faith (Schneider, 2013). The development of their systems of stewardship is based on religious values and practices (Schneider, 2013). Faith-based organizations can possess unique social capital in these pre-established norms and social trust present in their shared values and beliefs.

Before the modern era in the United States, religious organizations provided most of the social welfare services (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013). In the modern period, the state was the prime social welfare provider, and religious organizations scaled back to primarily filling spiritual needs (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013). In the late 1900's this juxtaposition of state and social services came under scrutiny, which allowed for a reevaluation of the role that religious entities should play in social welfare. President Clinton even signed an act in 1996 with a "Charitable Choice" provision. This was aimed at facilitating the involvement of religious organizations in social welfare (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013). In light of this, academic publications relating to faith-based organizations increased. However, the role of congregations did not change much, and many still tend to serve only emergency needs (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013). Religious organizations can be seen providing food, shelter, and clothing to those in need, among an array of other services. Community service mandates such as these are upheld in

religious traditions as means of religious expression and proselytization (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013).

Wood (2009) makes the distinction between "priestly" and "prophetic" work within faith-based organizations. Prophetic work refers to objections to unethical or unjust arrangements in our society. Priestly work offers assistance to neglected and needy people, including those with spiritual needs. With their heavy involvement in the emergency food aid scene, it seems that many faith communities are missing the prophetic side of the work. Providing aid to those in need will not provide them with opportunities to change their circumstance, and will not convince policy makers to change the structure of current systems.

Bielefeld and Cleveland (2013) found three typologies of religious expression in their study of over 889 publications. These are organizational control, expression of religion, and program implementation. Organizational control is revealed through funding sources, power dynamics within the organization, and how the decision-making processes unfold (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013). The self-identity of the organization, religiosity of participants, and the definition of outcome measures illuminate the expression of religion within the organization (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013). Lastly, program implementation is interpreted through the selection of services provided, integration of religious elements in those services, and the level of obligation to participate in specific religious activities (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013). Bielefeld and Cleveland (2013) pose the question of "why" faith-based organizations are engaging in service provision. Is the service established to proselytize new individuals, or is it an expression of their call to serve?

Unique to religious organizations is a homogeneous belief system that unifies the mission of members that is not seen in most secular organizations (Schneider, 2013). Faith based social

programs can serve a "sacramental" function for people where social ministry is a symbolic expression of divine commands (Harden, 2006). There is substantial literature focused on faith-based organizations as independent organizations relying on their congregational constituents for resources such as funding and volunteers (Schneider, 2013). However, Schneider (2013) suggests that there should be a greater focus on the culture of faith-based organizations in resource development, and that they cannot be held equivalent to secular organizations. Faith-based organizations are created to address community needs in the specific context of the theology of justice and charity of the faith (Schneider, 2013). Thus, the values held by the faith will be the guiding light as the organization navigates the mission, resources, and outreach objectives of their programs.

Food and Faith

Food and faith have gone hand in hand across all types of religions and doctrines. The Christian faith commands followers to treat others justly and mercifully, and the Bible is full of examples of Jesus feeding thousands and giving to those who have little. Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and other religions include fasting and feasting in celebrations and holidays (Mann & Lawrence, 1998). Thus, food has an intrinsic connection to faith and our spiritual existence. McGovern, Dole, and Messer (2005) conclude that within the Jewish and Christian faiths the themes of justice and loving one's neighbor calls the faithful to feed the hungry. Failure to feed the hungry is noted as such offenses as "serious sin" (McGovern, Dole, & Messer, 2005, p. 14) and "blasphemy" (Bonhoeffer, as cited in McGovern, Dole, & Messer, 2005, p. 14). These strong statements argue that feeding the hungry as a moral obligation, and not just an ethical choice (McGovern, Dole, & Messer, 2005).

As previously noted, people of faith have always been involved in hunger issues in some form or another (Rosenberger, Richards, Nevin Gifford, & Gossen, 2006). Often churches will offer hunger relief through soup kitchens, food pantries, and holiday food baskets. Although these are well-intentioned programs, they merely temporarily relieve the problem of hunger in our society. Furthermore, charities are usually susceptible to the whims and impulses of citizen and business donation (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999). Cadieux and Slocum (2015) classify charity models as patronizing relationships that do not seek systemic change. Instead of offering charity to those in need, FBO's have the capacity to provide programs that facilitate community self-reliance. Faith communities are often conveniently located in neighborhoods and urban areas, and own green spaces. These green spaces could potentially be converted into gardens. Moreover, many churches have kitchens, cold storage, parking, and members eager to serve the community (Rosenberger et al., 2006). Churches could therefore serve as a location for a small farmer's market, CSA pick-up, cooking classes, or a community garden, among others.

There are a number of faith-based organizations in the United States such as Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Come to the Table, and The Baltimore Interfaith Food and Farms Program, aimed at educating the public about food issues and building a just food system. A community food system will not be created by one church alone, so networking and partnerships are a strong catalyst to creating sustained change. A collaborative strategy is being wielded by the Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. The Ministry has a Food and Farms Program that aims to empower communities to build just and sustainable food systems (Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon). Come to the Table, located in North Carolina, has a similar mission to relieve hunger and sustain local agriculture (Hermann, Liu-Beers, and Beach). Come to the Table is a collaborative project between the Rural Life Committee of the North Carolina Council of

Churches and The Rural Advancement Foundation International. Come to the Table turns social assets into capital by holding yearly conferences that provide networking opportunities for church members, farmers, community development professionals, and policy makers.

There is hope that alternative food systems can secure healthy, just, and sustainable food to those who are left hungry and ill because of our current food system. Organizations can assist communities in transforming their food system because they are educated on the topic and have access to various forms of capital. Faith based community organizations can fill this role because they possess many assets necessary to community organization such as built spaces, like-mindedness, and a call to serve. McGovern, Dole, and Messer (2005) advocate for people of faith to become involved socially and politically in hunger issues. They recognize the structural disparity between rich and poor in our world and believe that, "the right to eat in a world overflowing with God's abundant food ought not to be dependent on random kindness or fortuitous benevolence" (McGovern, Dole, & Messer, 2005, p. 88). These authors propose a dualistic approach to ending hunger of both charity and justice work. However, some of the work they advocate for such as increased food stamp funding does not offer a strong rebuttal to the neoliberal and capitalist regime, which others as we will see below believe is necessary for a just food system.

Conceptual Framework

Community Food Work

Community food work is a concept that encompasses a number of alternative food discourses, including those listed above. Proponents critique the industrial agriculture system for destroying small-scale farms, environmental health, and human and animal wellbeing (Slocum,

2006). Stemming from these critiques, Slocum (2007) declares four aspects of community food work: farmer support and education, nutrition education, environmental advocacy and social justice. Community food work turns the spotlight on inequity in the food system and calls attention to the institutionalized biases that many alternative food discourses entail (Slocum, 2006, 2007). Community food work demands its practitioners be aware of the way inequity manifests in their work and to constantly strive to shift the balance of power towards disenfranchised groups (Slocum, 2006). Slocum (2007) critiques alternative food movements for ignoring issues of race and privilege in rhetoric. This failure to confront change is stifling alternative food movements, which community food works seeks to rectify. Tanaka, Indiano, Soley, and Mooney (2015) describe community food work as that of concerned citizens, activists, and professionals building capacity to identify and address food security issues in their own community.

Whole Measures for Community Food Systems

Very few formal evaluations are executed for community-based community food security projects. Much of community-based development and education is based on qualitative and long-term behavioral and value changes, so this is an area that needs more attention in the literature and the field. This disconnect is widened further when funding is sparse and organizations do not want to funnel limited funds into evaluations, but evaluations demonstrating outputs and outcomes are just what could secure them more funding.

Grantees of Community Food Projects grants, funded through USDA-NIFA, have expressed a desire for an avenue to communicate their work (Abi-Nader et al., 2009). These people and organizations need an outlet for showcasing their outputs and links between them, the relationships built through their work, underlying values that permeate their actions, and the way

respect was communicated through the project. *Whole Measures CFS* was created for this purpose and can serve as an invaluable planning and evaluation tool for organizations as well as their funders and beneficiaries.

Whole Measures CFS is a toolkit devised to give groups working towards community food systems an evaluative lens on their practice. It is a values-based planning and evaluation tool to assess how organizations are building and sustaining healthy and whole communities. It does this by promoting planning and dialogue geared towards organizational and community change (Abi-Nader et al., 2009). It uses dialogue as a learning tool to give its users new and more holistic ways of viewing the projects and food systems they are involved in.

Whole Measures CFS uses six fields and practices to inform dialogue about community food security. The fields are "justice and fairness, strong communities, vibrant farms, healthy people, sustainable ecosystems, and thriving local economies" (Abi-Nader et al., 2009, p. 8). It helps organizations collaborate and share stories that reveal the complexities of community food projects. *Whole Measures CFS* uses dialogue and learning as a process to incite change. *Whole Measures CFS* provides a structured six-step process for conducting the evaluation.

The first step for *Whole Measures CFS* is to create an evaluation team. This team ideally contains between six and twelve members that have different perspectives to bring to the dialogue. The *Whole Measures CFS* framework has a set of rubrics used for evaluation, so the evaluation team must next familiarize themselves with the rubrics. Then, the team should identify its intended outcomes. The tool can and should be modified for each individual project, and at this stage it is important for an organization to explore how their mission and values relate to the fields and practices within *Whole Measures CFS*. Step four should be implemented at least halfway through the community food project, and invites the evaluation team to reflect on past

activities. These assessments serve as the foundation for the next step: group dialogue. Group dialogue can inspire higher levels of shared meaning and views on the progress of the project. This phase is intended to promote learning, and discussing variation in evaluation responses is encouraged. This will help each member of the team use a critical lens to evaluate his or her views and opinions. This process provides the group with alternate ways of looking at the progress, which will provide them with a more holistic understanding of the project. The last step is to use the results of the assessment to improve the program, draft reports and acquire funding, educate the community, and/or contribute to the body of knowledge in the community food security movement. *Whole Measures CFS* goes beyond counting participants and weighing produce by asking its users to articulate their vision for their community, how to go about building it, and how to measure their success in a "whole" way (Abi-Nader et al., 2009, p. 7).

Elements of *Whole Measures CFS*

There are many ways to create whole communities. This version of *Whole Measures CFS* includes six **fields** of practices that reflect a vision for whole communities seen through the lens of community food system development. Each field includes: a summary of its underlying intent, a set of four values-based **practices** that express this vision in action, and descriptions of sample outcomes often achieved by community food system groups that contribute to the larger set of healthy relationships that make up a whole community. The related practices and sample outcomes for each field are shown in *rubrics* (scoring tools that use a table to list and rate the criteria for what counts) so that individuals and organizations can respond to and rate their work against these measures.

The *Whole Measures for Community Food Systems* Fields and Practices are:

Justice and Fairness

- Provides food for all
- Reveals, challenges, and dismantles injustice in the food system
- Creates just food system structures and cares for food system workers
- Ensures that public institutions and local businesses support a just community food system

Strong Communities

- Improves equity and responds to community food needs
- Contributes to healthy neighbor-hoods
- Builds diverse and collaborative relationships, trust, and reciprocity
- Supports civic participation, political empowerment, and local leadership

Vibrant Farms

- Supports local, sustainable family farms to thrive and be economically viable
- Protects and cares for farmers and farm-workers
- Honors stories of food and farm legacy through community voices
- Respects farm animals

Healthy People

- Provides healthy food for all
- Ensures the health and well-being of all people, inclusive of race and class
- Connects people and the food system, from field to fork
- Connects people and land to promote health and wellness

Sustainable Ecosystems

- Sustains and grows a healthy environment
- Promotes an ecological ethic
- Enhances biodiversity
- Promotes agricultural and food distribution practices that mitigate climate change

Thriving Local Economies

- Creates local jobs and builds long-term economic vitality within the food system
- Builds local wealth
- Promotes sustainable develop-ment while strengthening local food systems
- Includes infrastructure that supports community and environ-mental health

Figure 1. The fields and practices of *Whole Measures CFS.* Whole Measures for Community Food Systems was developed by the Community Food Security Coalition and builds on the original Whole Measures from the Center for Whole Communities.

Critically Reflective Practice

The critically reflective practitioner does not accept a priori assumptions about how the world is. Instead, she adopts an inquisitive approach that enables her to identify the ideological basis to her practice and look beneath the surface to see what thoughts, feelings, values, and assumptions she draws upon (Thompson & Pascal, 2012). Practitioners are social activists in practice (Cervero & Wilson, 2001) and consequently political and ethical questions confront practitioners in their practice such as "Who benefits?" and also "Who should benefit?" (Cervero & Wilson, 2001). Practitioners undoubtedly affect the wider world in which they live and therefore cannot be relieved of their duty to that world (Cervero & Wilson, 2001). Cervero and Wilson (2001) argue that the scope to which practitioners can engage in critical practice to affect social change will vary depending on their position, but space can be found if practitioners are clear about their goals and find ways to embody them in everyday practice.

Practitioners have power in their practice, and through critical reflection, can use that power to unpack dominant discourses and assumptions that reproduce hegemony, and subsequently challenge them (Stepney, 2006). A critical professional, according to Barnett (1997), is one who is able to interpret the world through theory, handle theoretical frameworks in action, act within ethical codes and values, deploy professional knowledge throughout society, engage with multiple and sometimes competing discourses, and has a right and a duty to speak out on controversies related to their professional and professional knowledge (pp. 132-144). For this research, the connection to theory is crucial to the understanding of reflection in practice. Ford, Johnson, Brumfit, Mitchell, and Myles (2005) stress that the "relationships between formal theory, professional practice, and reflection are complex and value-laden" (p. 393). Freire (1972)

claims that humans are beings of praxis, which through reflection and action, transform reality and are the source of knowledge and creation.

Critically reflective practice integrates theory and practice by tailoring theoretical and empirical knowledge to fit the circumstance of challenge in specific practice situations (Thompson & Pascal, 2011). Thompson and Pascal (2011) explain that professional practice is not a simple process of applying scientifically derived solutions to practice problems, but is instead a matter of wrestling with the intricacies of theory and practice and using one's professional artistry to move forward as best as possible.

Critical Social Theory

Critical theory is a philosophical body of thought that stems from the Frankfurt School in Germany. Pupils of the Frankfurt School including Horkheimer, Adorno, Kant, Marcuse, Habermas, and Wellmer are accredited with being the primary figures to conceive of critical theory ideology (Geuss, 1981). Morrow and Torres (2002) identify critical theory as one of four paradigms of inquiry that have influenced educational research, the other three being positivism, postpositivism, and constructivism. Ontologically it sits with a historical realist perspective, transactional and subjectivist epistemology, and dialogic and dialectical methodology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Critical theory stems from a lineage of centuries old philosophy concerning knowledge, society, and the self. Jean-Jacques Rousseau is attributed with first toiling with the dialectical and critical theories of the subject and society in the 18th century (Morrow & Torres, 2002). This provided the footing for Kant and Hegel to continue the discussion in the German tradition. Kant paved the way for constructivist understanding of knowledge, but is critiqued for the silencing of history in analysis of epistemology (Morrow & Torres, 2002).

Many of critical theory's foundational analytical categories such as false consciousness, commodification, praxis, and emancipation emerged from Marx's interpretations of and dialogue with Hegel (Brookfield, 2001). Further, Freudian theories are said to be of the same philosophical lineage as Marx and formative in the development of critical theories (Geuss, 1981). Critical theories are frames for governing human action in that they are aimed at producing enlightenment to enable one to determine what his or her own interests are, and are inherently emancipatory. Moreover they are epistemological modes that are different from natural sciences in that they are reflective rather than objectifying (Geuss, 1981, p. 2). Critical theory from the Frankfurt School criticizes positivism and asserts that reflection creates valid knowledge (Geuss, 1981). There are emerging critical theories interested in oppositional social movements to the dominant oppressive power. Lather (1991) lists these camps as feminisms neo-Marxisms, and poststructuralisms. They are positioned with a counter-hegemonic charge, with feminism taking the lead in Lather's opinion.

The idea of false consciousness can be misappropriated due to the use of the word "false". False, in this sense, does not mean something is untrue, but rather that it is an incomplete truth because truth is constantly changing. A false consciousness is limited in its ignorance of deeper social tendencies and connections (Eagleton, 1994). Our social practices construct the obstacles and limits to which we try to see beyond; the bourgeois class is contained within its 'false' consciousness primarily because it is seeing the world through the lens of the bourgeois class (Eagleton, 1994). The class's entire frame of consciousness is rendered by a set of material limitations (Eagleton, 1994).

According to Lukács and others it is the task of the oppressed to understand social structures and their place in them to then be able to realize their own interests (Eagleton, 1994).

For example, those with colonizing power may feel no interest in inquiring into colonialism, whereas the colonized may need to understand their own condition within a wider context to challenge the consciousness of those with power (Eagleton, 1994). There is a problem lurking here though; there can be no stagnant truth waiting for us to grasp, because the act of knowing immediately changes what is known. Eagleton (1994) continues to fault this logic for the following reason: if the proletariat class is tasked with bearing 'true' consciousness of society as a whole, it assumes that one already knows what that truth is. This contradicts the concept that to know something is to immediately change it (Freire, 1973), and assumes that one knows what the truth is. Totality is rather a dynamic and contradictory development process where cognition is a dialectical marriage of facts and values as we come to understand the world in a certain way.

Modernist critical pedagogies have emerged from Kant's conceptions of justice and human autonomy (Morrow & Torres, 2002). Building upon this, Hegel began to integrate contextual factors such as history, class, and gender, which are formative in the development of epistemic subjects, into philosophy and social theory. His philosophy dealt with the subject-object dialectic in how the relationship between the knower and the external world affected the social production of knowledge. Hegel also purported the force of something greater than ourselves- the force of history, that is greater than any one mind (Dant, 2003). Hegelian dialectic concludes that knowledge is constituted in social relationships – that self-consciousness exists only in being acknowledged (Dant, 2003, p. 7). Even an experience can be ideological, in the sense that it is unexamined and partial, until the subject patiently uncovers and explores its manifold relations with the whole (Eagleton, 1994).

Hegel delved into the struggle of self-consciousness, and believed that humans come to learn freedom by acts of resistance and self-reflection. He illuminates the paradox of a master

and a servant, where the master is dependent on the subordination of the servant while the servant has a vision of freedom due to his or her bondage (Morrow & Torres, 2002). This paradox will emerge later in Freire's writings on *concientizacion*. Hegel's earlier writings also link self-consciousness and mutual recognition between people to love rather than conflict.

Marx believed that Hegelian philosophy recreates the totality of religious thinking in terms of the possibility of absolute knowledge. For this he was critical of the Hegelian tradition, but he did build upon the Hegelian idea of abstraction of consciousness when it is confronted with something that is beyond and independent from human existence (Dant, 2003), such as history or God. Marx's criticism of society is one of the most widely known applications of critical theory, and is aimed primarily at examining the alienation of people from their actions and the products of those actions. Marx asserted that the political economy ascribes value to products rather than the labor that produced them, and that material relationships must change in order for society to change (Dant, 2003). Now our story weaves into Marx's application of Hegel's master-servant relationship to a class divided society based on exploitation (Morrow & Torres, 2002). The exploited working class can understand true freedom as equity and raise consciousness to abolish class divisions through revolutionary praxis. This implies a theory of learning where dominant consciousness can be transformed into emancipatory consciousness (Morrow & Torres, 2002). According to Morrow and Torres (2002) though, Marx gave little attention to the learning process required for this transformation. He gave more in the way of a "negative social philosophy" (Morrow & Torres, 2002), naming inhibitors to autonomy such as the theory of alienation, class domination, and ideology.

A discussion of ideology is necessary to understand the makings of the Frankfurt School and critical theory. Geuss (1981) identifies two large camps of ideology: descriptive and

pejorative. First I will share his explanation of ideology in the descriptive sense. An ideology can be distinguished as a set of beliefs with manifest content as well as functional properties that influence actions. Geuss (1981) gives the example of an economic ideology as one where a set of beliefs with manifest content significantly influences economic behavior, whether those beliefs are explicitly economic or not; a set of religious beliefs that affect economic behavior are nonetheless an economic ideology. Therefore, there can be significant differences between the manifest content and functional properties of an ideology, and the manifest content can influence or regulate the functional properties. There is much ambiguity surrounding the categorization of ideologies. It is often difficult to classify a behavior or institution as falling under an umbrella of "political," "economic," "religious," and so on. From the example above it is clear that there is overlap between the categorization of ideologies.

The above dissection of ideologies provides a "narrow" sense of what the term can mean (Geuss, 1981, p. 8). Ideology in a "descriptive" sense means that every human group has ideologies because they inherently have beliefs, but they may not hold ideologies in each of the narrower senses (Geuss, 1981, p. 9). If for example they do not have a monetary system they will not have a fiscal ideology, as was most likely the case for hunter and gatherer societies (Geuss, 1981). In a purely descriptive sense of the word, the ideology of a group is all of the beliefs that members of the group hold. Adding to this, an ideology can also be a worldview. Lastly, ideology can be understood in a programmatic sense as a way of translating ideas into action. Here, a "total ideology" is a set of beliefs infused with passion intended to transform a whole way of life (Geuss, 1981, p. 11).

The second camp of ideology, a pejorative sense, is a criticism of the beliefs, attitudes, and desires of people in a society (Geuss, 1981). The assumption here is that people in the

society are deluded about themselves, their society, and their interests, and that they must be shown their error (Geuss, 1981). Habermas thought critical theory should identify emancipatory potentials in the *Zeitgeist* of the time, and also conceptualize the institutional frameworks and democratic processes through which those potentials can be realized (Masquelier, 2012; Jacobs, 1986). Cole, another protégé of the Frankfurt School advocated for democratic control of industry to regard laborers as individuals rather than machines (Masquelier, 2012). He believed capitalism was the crowning destroyer of freedom and individuality of the worker (Masquelier, 2012). According to Marx, the intent of critical theory is to act as a catalyst for revolutionary social change. Marx's critical theory of society describes ideology as a barrier to people correctly understanding their true situation and interests (Geuss, 1981, p. 3). Critical theory is therefore relevant in bringing attention to the fact that we still live in a culture that reflects the rationale of industry and the political economy and the ramifications of such ideologies (Dant, 2003).

Critical Pedagogy and Praxis

Education grounded in unearthing oppressive dominant ideologies is imperative to emancipation. Paulo Freire promotes a critical pedagogy opposite of the "banking" notion of education where men and women are turned into "automatons" rather than allowing them to become more fully human (Freire, 1972, p. 74). Freire (1972) goes on to say that depositing knowledge in a banking fashion fails to recognize the contradictions those deposits contain about reality. Freire was influenced by the Frankfurt School's body of work, but diverges in his understanding of praxis. Friere takes a subject-subject ontological posture rather than a subject-object posture (Morrow & Torres, 2002). Similar to Hegel, Freire also prioritizes love instead of conflict in relations (Freire, 1972). Praxis arises from the "dialogical learning processes that might mediate between the realities of human need and the capacity to reflect and act in

liberating ways" (Morrow & Torres, 2002, pp. 29-30). For Freire as well as Habermas, intersubjective communication and learning processes are central to gaining a critical lens. Freire frames praxis as the potential for diverse possibilities to emerge through the process of humanization (Freire, 1972; Morrow & Torres, 2002).

I tend to agree with Freire's premise of praxis as an intersubjective communicative relationship. However, as he clearly explains, there are a number of different relationships humans can have to each other, which do not illustrate praxis. The subject-object relationship reflects the banking model of education where the educator treats the learner as a subject to imbue knowledge into. During a subject-subject relation the task of the educator is not to persuade with knowledge but rather liberate through communication. Intersubjectivity enters when the two subjects communicate in reference to a knowable object. The act of communication is mediated by the object and allows the subjects to think together, which influences the individual's thoughts (Freire, 1973). With an idea commonly referred to as communicative action, Habermas grounds knowledge in the symbolic interaction between subjects who recognize each other as individuals (Habermas, 1971 as cited in Morrow & Torres, 2002). The unity of theory and practice in a critical theory is directed towards the autonomy of the inquiry, the dialogical nature of an educational process, and the participatory basis of leadership in political mobilization (Morrow & Torres, 2002, p. 59). The paradoxical and dialogical unity of theory and practice in political transformation presents a situation where those who do the enlightening have an unavoidable superiority over those to be enlightened, but still requires self-correction thus that each member of the relationship is a participant in the enlightenment (Habermas, 1973). Lather (1991, p. 11) summarizes praxis nicely as the "self-creative activity through which we make the world….*the* central concept of a philosophy that did

not want to remain a philosophy, philosophy becoming practical." Action is incumbent, for by performing praxis one is faced with the problem of what he or she knows, and what he or she is going to do about that knowledge (Lather, 1991).

Freire and Habermas both believed that human history reveals a struggle for democracy and individual autonomy, linked to the dialogical and developmental nature of human subjects (Morrow & Torres, 2002). The process of colonization is shared between these two men in their concerns with a theory of society. For Freire this is antidialogical action, and for Habermas, strategic rationality (Morrow & Torres, 2002). Habermas calls for a reconsideration of Marxist tradition by critical theory to rethink a theory of society. Freire, on the other hand, links social rationalization to collective learning processes.

I mention these influential thinkers as an intellectual trail to the work of Stephen Brookfield, who is a contemporary adult educator and theorist I drew on to scaffold the framework of this study. Brookfield (2005) recognizes three main assumptions about how the world is organized that frame critical theory. First, Western democracies are innately unequal societies that contain racial, economic, social, and gender inequalities. Second, the way this structure is reproduced as normal, natural, and inevitable is through the dissemination of dominant ideology. Lastly, critical theory is used to help us understand the current state of inequity in society before we can attempt to change it.

An implicit part of critical theory is the reorganizing of dominant ideology to allow people new ways of making sense of their experiences. New meaning making schemes lead to transformation which then gives a person new ways of participating in the world that breaks the bounds of dominant ideologies (Brookfield, 2009). Critical theory deems a critical adult as one who takes action towards a society where the social and economic norms are democratic and

collectivist (Brookfield, 2009). Being critical is therefore a highly political process that affects and is impacted by social change aims.

Criticality as an approach to adult learning comprises a number of tasks such as learning how to perceive and challenge dominant ideology, revealing power and bucking hegemony, overcoming oppression and pursuing liberation, reasoning, and practicing democracy (Brookfield, 2005). Ideology is not inherently a negative thing. However, when it leads to the oppression of the populace there is a need to call it into question. Ideologies are the sets of beliefs, values, morals, explanations and justifications that we hold as true and right (Brookfield, 2009). They are not limited to our beliefs about social systems, but also encompass our moral reasoning, interpersonal relationships, ways of knowing, and judging what is real and true (Brookfield, 2009). The two most prominent dominant ideologies of our time are capitalism and bureaucratic rationality (Brookfield, 2005). In these systems people learn to value themselves and others based on how they are affected by the market and see reasoning as a means to solve problems of social and economic origins. Reclaiming the right to reason about philosophical questions is imperative to deciding on our own values to live by (Brookfield, 2005).

Hegemony

Antonio Gramsci brings the concept of hegemony into the conversation by explaining how people justify themselves in embracing dominant ideology because they are convinced it is in their best interest (Gramsci, 2005; Brookfield, 2000). Hegemony describes “a social formation where the dominant power is subtly, pervasively diffused throughout habitual daily practices, intimately interwoven with ‘culture’ itself, inscribed in the very texture of our experience from nursery school to funeral [parlor.]” (Eagleton, 1994, p. 197).

Hegemony becomes deeply embedded in culture and preserves the status quo that protects the interests of the powerful. Over time, hegemony can create barriers to justice that do not even need enforcing (Brookfield, 2005). Foucault identifies a shift from sovereign power enforced by a central force to disciplinary power enforced on a person by him/herself (Brookfield, 2005). This shift in power gives the common person just enough power that one is content so that he or she peacefully and unknowingly permits the existence of hegemony (Brookfield, 2005). Consent and coercion are deeply embedded in the success of hegemony in society, and Eagleton (1994) believes in capitalist societies the prevalence of consent far outweighs the need for coercion. The power of the bourgeois class in this case remains invisible and overt domination is less needed since the proletariat class has consented to hegemony (Gramsci, 2005; Eagleton, 1994).

Hegemony plays a role in preventing the power of praxis to create change. Gramsci elaborates that the average person has practical activity, but has no theoretical consciousness of that activity. S/he might have a contradictory consciousness: one implicit in activity that unites his/her class to transform the real world, and a verbal one that s/he has uncritically inherited from the past that produces moral and political passivity (Gramsci, 2005). Gramsci (2005) believed that critical consciousness takes place first through an ethical and political struggle to arrive at a higher level of one's conception of reality. This struggle for consciousness of being part of a hegemonic force is a continuing step to the merger of theory and practice (Gramsci, 2005).

Practitioners and social organizations have considerable power in their practice, and charitable and benevolent endeavors generally exercise "power over", which is oppressive in nature (Brookfield, 2009). "Power over" is the ability to gain control over resources and people (Riger, 1993). Investigating these power relationships is one of the purposes of critical reflection.

Power cannot be denied or erased, so in the least it needs to be named and can then be redirected to serve the interests of the many rather than the few (Brookfield, 2009). According to Brookfield (2005) part of becoming an adult is learning to recognize how power is used and abused in our lives. In addition to the practitioner or service organization having power over those they serve, the entire service system imbues hegemony on those providing the service. Brookfield (2009) gives the example of a social worker who, because of budget cuts, sacrifices more of their time, energy, and personal relationships to take on more work responsibilities that they believe are a reflection of their selfless devotion to the empowerment of clients. This mindset allows more money to be funneled into corporate tax breaks and military expenditures while the social worker gives more and receives less. This example can be translated into charitable giving. People see a greater need for food support in our country, so they gladly give more goods to food pantries and volunteer more hours at a soup kitchen, while the government maintains its vastly unequal expenditures and subsidies to agribusiness subsidies and other endeavors. Thus, the charity system is highly hegemonic and institutionalized as an unquestioned need in and service to American society.

Critical Reflection as Ideology Critique

Ideology critique is an application of critical thinking to challenge and change the processes that maintain the inequities that dominant ideologies subject society to. Ideologies are the beliefs, values, myths, explanations, and justifications that seem empirically true, self-evident, and morally desirable to a populace but actually work to maintain an unjust social and political order (Brookfield, 2001). However, some theorists, such as Gramsci, question this inherently negative nature of ideology, and that ideologies by definition are not false (Brookfield, 2001). Regardless, ideology is predominantly understood as having negative,

oppressive connotations, especially within the field of critical theory (Brookfield, 2001). We perform our ideologies everyday in our decision, behaviors and interactions (Brookfield, 2001).

Criticism involves judgment, and according to some critical theorists, such as Adorno, critique is essential to democracy (Dant, 2003). Critique moves beyond identifying fault to set up a line of opposition to an entire system (Dant, 2003). In terms of ideology critique, one reflects "on the way [he/she] know[s] things and the freeing of knowledge from illusions imposed from outside" (Dant, 2003, p. 7). Critique is not for the purpose of reaching a final judgment, but to disagree in order to find something more complex and fundamental (Dant, 2003). It helps us to "understand how we learn political ideals, morality, and social philosophy within institutions of civil society….that the constructs and categories we use to understand our daily experiences are ideologically framed" (Brookfield, 2001, p. 16). Critique in and of itself does not lead to social change, but produces only ideas and texts- in fact a reproduction of present culture. But, what can arise out of these ideas and texts is a culture of reflection, one that it constantly questioning itself, and resisting the tendency to accept the taken for granted (Dant, 2003). This culture of reflection leads to learning.

Brookfield (2000) outlines four conceptualizations of critical reflection. The first is associated with ideology critique, which I will cover in depth in this section. The second is more psychoanalytically and psychotherapeutically inclined and emphasizes critical reflection as the identification and reconsideration of inhibitions developed in childhood as a result of various traumas (Brookfield, 2000). Transformative learning theorists such as Mezirow and Gould frame this as an experience where adults come to realize how their assumptions inhibit them from realizing their full developmental and relational potential as persons (Brookfield, 2000). A third conceptualization of critical reflection is in terms of analytic philosophy and logic. Here, critical

reflection aids one in argument analysis. Criticality appears in one's recognition of logical fallacies, differentiation between opinion vs. evidence, use of various forms of reasoning, and more (Brookfield, 2001). Pragmatic constructivism defines the fourth conceptualization of critical reflection. It emphasizes the role people play in constructing and deconstructing their own experiences and meanings (Brookfield, 2001). This position maintains that events happen to people, but people construct experiences. Critical reflection helps a person to understand their experience (Brookfield, 2001).

Although these four conceptualizations are not mutually exclusive, I will draw heavily from the camp of critical reflection as ideology critique. As such, we will now delve deeper into this concept. According to Brookfield (2000), critical reflection has two distinct purposes. First, to understand how considerations of power undergird, frame, and distort adult learning processes and interactions. Second, to analyze one's own practices to reveal the hegemonic assumptions embedded within them. Ideology critique can be a learning process by which people learn to recognize how "uncritically accepted and unjust dominant ideologies are embedded in everyday situations and practices" (Brookfield, 2005, p. 13). As an educational activity, ideology critique focuses on helping people realize how capitalism shapes their social relations, beliefs, and assumptions to maintain inequity (Brookfield, 2005). Hence, in order to challenge this often tacit dominant ideology one must first recognize how it lives within them and works against them by furthering the aims of others (Brookfield, 2009). This leaves ideology critique as an adult learning experience because people need an "uncritical assimilation of norms in childhood and adolescence" to reflect back on (Brookfield, 2005, p. 272).

Critical reflection brings people to unwrap the layers of power that create and maintain the hegemony of a system (Brookfield, 2009). Adding to that, critical reflection from the

constructivist mindset evidences itself when people realize how they are constructors of their own reality based on making meaning from their experiences (Brookfield, 2009). These discourses turn the critical reflection spotlight on issues of power and the creation of realities founded on dominant ideologies that frame our experiences. As our focus and understanding of power and ideologies shifts, the way we craft meaning from our experiences can begin to change.

Critical reflection in this vein involves deconstructing the dominant assumptions and ideas that perpetuate inequity and prevent people from realizing the reality they have the right to. Bringing our assumptions to light is the first step in ideology critique. Assumptions are often tacit and are the ties that hold our perspectives, habits, and meaning making systems in place. They are the understandings we have about how the world works, or should work, and are embedded in and manifested through language and action (Brookfield, 2009). Our ability to embody implicitly contradictory assumptions is limitless, and uncovering why we give meaning to experiences in the ways that we do is the crux of identifying our own assumptions (Brookfield, 2009).

Identifying these assumptions can spark the beginning of the process of critical reflection. It is here where we can discern any discrepancies between our assumptions and the way events play out in real life. In transformative learning discourse, this is termed a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 1990). The second stage is to investigate whether following that assumption leads to the outcomes we expect. Third we must take into account other perspectives of the assumption to see a situation through a different set of eyes. Lastly we can take informed actions based on careful scrutiny of our assumptions and with good reason to believe those assumptions will achieve the outcomes we intend (Brookfield, 2009).

Brookfield (1995) delineates four lenses of critical reflection. These are 1) the autobiographical 2) the students' eyes 3) our colleagues' experiences and 4) theoretical literature. The autobiographical lens is a way of self-reflection and is the foundation of critical reflection (Brookfield, 1995). Educators can focus on their experiences as a learner or as a teacher in order to become aware of the assumptions and instinctive reasoning that frame how he or she works (Brookfield, 1995). The student lens focuses on student's experiences and interpretations of the teaching. More importantly, this lens can uncover the actions and assumptions that confirm or challenge the existing power relationships in the space. The third lens probes deeper into teaching habits by seeking the insights of peers (Brookfield, 1995). This can occur either formally or informally. According to Brookfield (1995), the last lens is that of theoretical, philosophical, research literature on education or practice. I would add conceptual literature to this lens as well, including grey literature. Even more, I would add intellectual information gathering through venues such as blogs, videos, and music to this list, thereby incorporating a wider swath of thought and experience from which to draw comparisons and further develop our theory of our work. Consulting and/or participating in such reflection can help educators connect their work to broader political processes (Brookfield, 1995).

Brookfield (2000) states that critical reflection will allow us to lead more authentic and compassionate lives, improve the lives of others, help organizations become more successful, and meet the needs of society. It is the adult educators' responsibility to understand how social and power structures operate in our world today. Then, one can reflect on his or her own experiences and biases to separate oneself from the power structure imposed by society. The equitable redistribution of power and knowledge will break down the societal assumptions we hold true and allow for a restructuring of systems. Thompson and Pascal (2012) frame critical

reflection as a way to challenge dogma and prejudice. Learning through critical reflection involves developing an open-minded, inquiry based approach to practice (Thompson & Pascal, 2012). Critically reflective practice has the potential to emancipate people from restricting perspectives to develop new meanings (Thompson & Pascal, 2012).

Thompson and Pascal (2012) lament that the concept of critical reflection in practice has been co-opted into a "buzzword" (p. 315) that shows little evidence of analysis, understanding, or theoretical sophistication. Much reflective practice is reflective "on" or "in" but not "for" action (Thompson & Pascal, 2012, pp. 316-317). Becoming critically reflective means ensuring that practice does not become so mechanical that it circumvents our critical intellectual faculties (Thompson & Pascal, 2012). Further, if practice becomes routinized and bypasses one's mental capabilities, it can run the risk of bypassing one's value base as well, which can result in actions that run counter to one's values (Thompson & Pascal, 2012). Thompson and Pascal (2012) argue that reflexivity is essential to critical reflection in that a person must acknowledge him/herself as a player in the setting he or she practices in. Combining the analytical process of criticality and reflexivity puts the self under analysis and can create a well-developed approach to critically reflective practice (Thompson & Pascal, 2012).

There is a contradiction lurking in ideology critique within constructivist discourse. The two ways of knowing, juxtaposed together, stand in stark contrast. Knowing from an ideology critique standpoint is when we breach "false consciousness to reveal the fixed reality of the material world's economic inequities" (Brookfield, 2009 p. 39). Constructivism takes the angle of reality being individually, culturally, and socially interpreted (Brookfield, 2009). Therefore, there is no fixed way of knowing or affirmative level of knowledge one can attain. Much dissatisfaction comes from the distinction between the emancipated critically aware and the

“ideologically duped” unaware (Brookfield, 2005, p. 327). There is the sense that those who are critically aware have a more legitimate and correct interpretation of reality. Herein lies the epistemological clash with constructivism. Further, taking these possibly more correct interpretations for granted can become as oppressive as dominant ideology (Brookfield, 2005). Proponents of critical theory as well as feminist theory urge the necessity for self-criticality and the dangerous us/them mentality (Brookfield, 2005). Brookfield combines these two ways of knowing in a way that makes meaning from adult experiences on an individual basis but in a way consistent with ideology critique. Allowing adults to be the experts on their experiences, but still believing that reflecting on these experiences properly can result in ideology critique, can lead them to a new level of understanding of a more fixed social and political reality (Brookfield & Holst, 2010). Thus ideology critique can confer constructivist realities but not to the point of absolute relativism.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Drawing upon Brookfield's (1995, 2000, 2009) critically reflective practice, Slocum's (2006) understanding of community food work, and Abi-Nader et al.'s (2009) framework of *Whole Measures CFS*, I explored faith-based community food work as values-based practice. For this study I took a critical realist ontological position and a constructivist epistemological position. I used narrative inquiry methodology to work closely alongside practitioners in a faith-based organization to understand the role and nature of critical reflection in their work as community food work practitioners. I purposefully invited the participants based on their faith-based orientation as well as the work I knew they were doing in their city. I used a variety of field texts as data, and worked with each practitioner to co-create meaning from them. I used *Whole Measures CFS* to identify the occurrence of community food work values in practice as well as Brookfield's four lenses of critical reflection (Brookfield, 1995). Furthermore, I regarded the reflective methodology of this study as an adult learning experience and gauged its effectiveness in promoting reflection and new meaning making through the iterative process of telling and retelling of stories related to practice.

Ontology and Epistemology

Ontologies and epistemologies are, broadly defined, ways of making meaning of the world (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). More specifically, ontology is a way of viewing reality, and epistemology is how we gain knowledge of what we know (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

Dialectical critical realism has informed my ontological approach to this research.

Realism entails the recognition of reflexivity and the role of meaning in social action (Carter & Sealey, 2009). Further, Carter and Sealey (2009) stress that reality is not exhausted by empirical accounts of experience. Therefore, the empirical analysis of reality is just one element of social reality (Carter & Sealey, 2009). The goal is to uncover values, beliefs, and assumptions that shape the experiences each participant lives, tells, retells, and relives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). A realist position concedes that the world can only be known through the terms of available discourses, but this does not imply that any description or explanation is better than any other (Carter & Sealey, 2009).

Critical realists posit that the world is layered into different domains of reality (Roberts, 2014). These realities are abstracted refractions of ontological entities, such as history, that affect us whether or not they are absent from our knowledge (Roberts, 2014). This is the theory of causal powers in which mechanisms work on us regardless of our level of awareness of them (Roberts, 2014). Critical realism supports the claim that we need a certain level of *a priori* knowledge about the causal properties of a contradictory totality in order to gain critical awareness of how these processes operate and are reproduced at various levels into more concrete contexts (Roberts, 2014).

Critical realists tend to accept the existence of totalities, but urge that these totalities are refracted in ways that fragment the totality so that our observations of it cannot be reduced back to that totality (Roberts, 2014). Roy Bhaskar, from whom we see the concept of critical realism originate, described this phenomenon as diffraction. However, diffraction fails to account for the dialectical processes evident in such ontological understandings (Roberts, 2014). Dialectical connections and refractions can aid one in understanding how a totality might exist as a system

of influence. Roberts (2014) elucidates this concept in his description of capitalism as a Daist mode of production:

> A mode of production is comprised through a dialectical relationship between forces of production and relations of production….But the relationship between forces and relations of production is also a "totality" insofar that the other more concrete social entities, say, education or religion, are refractions of a mode of production in the sense [that] these concrete entities obtain a unique social identity, or social form, through their refracted dialectical connections to a mode of production (p. 9).

The dialectically contradictory forces of free wage labor (producers) and capital (means of production and products) mediate the capitalist mode of production, which then governs the realities we construct (Dant, 2003; Roberts, 2014).

Archer (2007) emphasizes the self in realism, claiming that the world can affect how we are. Realism in this case insists that the world regulates what we can make of it and therefore what it makes of us (Archer, 2007). Adding to existing theory, Archer (2007) further articulates that our sense of self emerges from our embodied practice in reality. A continuous sense of self requires doing work in the world (Archer, 2007). We continuously mediate the structures of society while transforming and reproducing that society. Reflexivity is an active internal conversation, an assessment, of our devotions and our subordinations and their alignment to the self (Archer, 2010, 2007). There is here the sense of 'right' and 'wrong' *vis-á-vis* the continual judgment of one's decisions and actions as they influence and are influenced by social structures.

Critical realism has implications for qualitative researchers wishing to gain knowledge of phenomena. Critical realists have been charged with relying on *a priori* knowledge about how structures operate in an open system, and that open systems imply that there could be many causal accounts of the same social phenomena (Roberts, 2014). However, Roberts (2014) points out that a dialectical view of reality argues that there is pre-existing knowledge of historical

totalities, but that there is not pre-existing knowledge about structures and causal mechanisms operating on and within a specific social context. To ensure a strong methodological approach using critical theory, the researcher should focus on how causal powers within a setting are refractions of other contradictory causal powers in a historical totality (Roberts, 2014). The research context can be treated as a self-contained totality that nonetheless refracts a larger totality of which it is part (Roberts, 2014). Facts, in dialectical critical realism, are mediated by historic totalities through which causal powers and relations function to generate our knowledge of the world (Roberts, 2014).Realities can be uncertain and change over time (Manning, 1997) as totalities are refracted in various social contexts (Roberts, 2014). Since the variables affecting reality are constantly changing, there are infinite interpretations of reality (Manning, 1997). The experiences I construct with participants from this study are tentative and may even change over the course of the inquiry.

I look at epistemology with a constructivist lens. A constructivist understanding of phenomena maintains that meaning is formed by individuals and their subjective views. This meaning is shaped by personal history and interactions with others (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). Social constructivist theory explains the interactions and learning that occurs when individuals engage in dialogue and activity about shared problems (Merriam, et al., 2007). The purpose is to capture a lived experience. Critical reflection on the meaning a person attaches to their work provides a framework for values and motives to be laid out, critiqued, and reapplied to improve one's work. Using constructivist theory, this process allows for the creation of shared meaning where individuals learn by negotiating their own and others' experiences.

Infusing constructivism with critical theory, I take the position that a person's reality can shift once they go through a critical reflection process or processes. Therefore, reality can be constantly rearranged and modified as a person takes on new interpretations of their assumptions and ideologies. The participant is the instrument of knowledge generation, and he is the expert on his own reality. Constructivism generally imbues an inductive methodology where the researcher develops theories based on the participant's views (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). However, this research will combine inductive and deductive methodologies. Because of anecdotal and academic knowledge in this area, I have already made generalizations about the phenomena and narrative inquiry, but I will be careful to be open to new interpretations of experience as the inquiry unfolds.

Researcher Reflexivity

I bring my lens of experience and understandings about the world into this research. Being raised in a middle class white family in upstate New York has afforded me privileges that, for much of my life, kept me unaware of how deeply rooted institutionalized inequalities are in society. My undergraduate education in conservation biology invigorated my commitment to and admiration for the natural world. However, the decisions conservation biologists have to make about the management of species were lacking the deeper, more philosophical questions of right and wrong and whose interests are being served. I still carry with me an attachment to the natural world, but decided against graduate education in that field. The next significant mile marker in my adult life was an internship I completed on an organic, mixed vegetable CSA farm in the state of Washington. This six-month internship was my first immersion into the production and distribution side of the food system. The farm was located amongst a sea of vast orchards, vineyards, and hops fields, where migrant workers would come for the harvest to work for white

farming families who have owned the land for generations. The town has a significant sedentary population of Latinos/as as well. Some farming families believed they treated their workers very well, and indeed they did, but the signs of injustice and oppression still permeated the town. This is something I did not notice until reflecting back upon my time there. That experience is why I decided to pursue the degree of Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education. I wanted to work with those who our food system gives the least to, and seems to take the most from. The critical posture I now hold towards the dominant agricultural system is largely due to my graduate studies and reflection on experience with a new lens. This has very much shaped the questions I am posing in this research.

Significant to my past, present, and future is my identity as a Christian. This has shaped my values and how I relate to the food system. I believe food is a gift from God that every person has the right to. From where I am standing, adult education has significant potential to address and minimize food insecurity. I believe that critical reflection and the deconstruction of hegemony are essential to adult education and creating a just food system. God is not bound by the social, political, and economic constructs of our time, and we should strive to be free of them as well in order to envision and create a world where there truly is justice for all, independent of whether or not we believe that world will ever come to fruition. My faith also influences my ontology as constructivist but not absolutely relativist. I believe that there is an absolute truth in this world- the existence of God. There are also more influential truths to our realities, such as the socioeconomic position of a person. My faith can be an asset to this research because the participants might feel they can relate to me on that level. It may also present a struggle as I try to maintain my separate identity as a researcher in a practice environment where I wish to identify and integrate. Reflection and reflexivity will be necessary for me throughout this

research to minimize the bias my faith gives me. Additionally, the guidance of my committee continually assisted me in balancing my role as researcher and being a part of the research.

I am drawn to narrative inquiry as a methodology because of its potential to represent the person through story. Meaning is ascribed to stories by the narrator and also by the listener and affects both of their realities. This means that not only will my positions affect data collection; they will affect data interpretation and dissemination as well. Here is where co-constructing meaning with participants will be essential to a representational narrative. I will also look to the literature and my committee for direction on data analysis and identifying themes from the narratives.

Methodology and Study Design

Practitioner Research

Practitioner research is becoming a popular stream of research in the Unites States, Australia, and the United Kingdom (Hamilton & Appleby, 2009). Research with practitioners can open up opportunities for critical reflection, dialogue between practice and research, and creating new knowledge through practitioner perspectives (Hamilton & Appleby, 2009). One concern in practitioner research discourse is the co-optation of the research to produce a 'what-works' problem solving approach rather than a platform for critical inquiry (Hamilton & Appleby, 2009). The criteria to which practitioner research is judged and who controls the judgment are crucial to the critical stance of the purpose and outcomes of the research (Hamilton & Appleby, 2009). The contributions that practitioner research can make to the field of adult education are clear yet complex (Hamilton & Appleby, 2009).

Reflective practice has had a long-standing presence in the field of adult education (Hamilton & Appleby, 2009). This form of inquiry is often associated with action and participatory methodologies and traditions aimed at giving voice to marginalized populations (Hamilton & Appleby, 2009). It gives value to practical knowledge, which has often been viewed as insufficient in academic research (Hamilton & Appleby, 2009). Discussions around who are the legitimate creators of knowledge and the relationship between theory and practice are at the heart of practitioner research (Hamilton & Appleby, 2009). Critically questioning what counts as evidence in this research and how that evidence is used in making practical decisions is important to the increasing skill demands in adult education (Hamilton & Appleby, 2009). Epistemological issues such as who can have what knowledge and for what purpose, and the significance of knowledge making processes and products create tensions in practitioner research (Hamilton & Appleby, 2009).

Narrative Inquiry

I used narrative inquiry as methodology for this study. Narrative inquiry is becoming popular in educational research because it challenges the traditional positivist epistemology in research (Kim, 2008). Narrative inquiry has actually transcended the realm of describing a methodology and is considered a pedagogical orientation to teaching and learning (Kim, 2008). It is about capturing experience as researcher and participant are partners in constructing meaning from the storytelling. The living, telling, retelling, and reliving of stories interact in a reflexive relationship throughout narrative inquiry. The researcher and participant live and modify story and experience in the process of inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The researcher becomes part of the "storied landscape" that is under study, which means that our life, who we are, and who we are becoming are under study (Clandinin, 2013, p. 30).

Clandinin & Connelly (2000) think about narrative inquiry as a three dimensional narrative space. The first dimension is the personal and social interaction; the second dimension is the past, present, and future; and the third dimension is place. These are termed interaction, continuity, and situation, respectively (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) refer to these first two dimensions in terms of directionality, which aids in understanding the inquiry as a collision and mingling of storied lives. The inward, internal conditions such as feelings, hopes, reactions, and moral disposition are countered by the outward environment, or existential conditions. These directions are nested in the personal dimension. The other two directions are backward and forward temporally- past, present, and future, which are nested under the continuity dimension. A researcher experiences a participant's experience by inquiring into these four directions simultaneously (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

There is tension at the boundary of formalist and reductionist views of inquiry and the actual inquiry undertaken that a researcher must grapple with (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). A researcher comes to narrative inquiry with various attitudes, assumptions, and ways of thinking about inquiry and it is important to be cognizant of these constructions throughout the inquiry process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Before beginning an inquiry a researcher must compose his or her own narrative beginnings, something to the effect of an autobiography. A researcher navigates the three-dimensional space of inquiry as he or she frames present standpoints by retelling the past and moving back and forth between the personal and social, while constantly situating it in place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narrative inquirers need to be aware of the many layers scaffolding a narrative and anticipate threads weaving through it (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). According to Dewey (1938) people are individuals who should be understood

as such, but not solely as such. People are always in relation to a social context, which builds the foundation for their experiences to then begin scaffolding upon each other.

Criticisms of narrative inquiry include that it is under-theorized from an academic perspective (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and that researchers often neglect to fully engage with the transposition of story to inquiry (Kim, 2008). This means that researchers need to think about the ways in which a story is an inquiry before they engage in telling that story (Kim, 2008). The voices that present the story come from the narrator as well as the theory that conceptualizes the story (Kim, 2008). Embracing a theoretical understanding of the process of narrative inquiry can give researchers the rigor expected from academia, the openness that narrative inquiry requires, and the language to communicate the means by which these were achieved (Kim, 2008).

The translation of lived experience into lived theory, suggested by Kim (2008), is a concept that can mend some of the rifts identified in narrative inquiry. Applying social science theory to inquiry positions the story as a starting point of a process of coming to know and contributes to the understanding of the historical, social, and political world in which it is embedded (Kim, 2008). Nonetheless, this application of theory can overshadow the story on which the entire narrative inquiry process rests. Therefore, in Kim's (2008) concept of lived theory, theory continually textures the experiential narrative in such a way that the indelible line between story and theory ceases to exist. Lived theory is the process and result of a dialogical relationship between reality and theoretical concepts (Kim, 2008). This weaves the lived experience of an individual into the broader context of social and educational issues (Kim, 2008).

Critical realism adds insights into methodological approaches to qualitative research. Critical realism emphasizes the significance of using qualitative research to ensure that a respondent gains awareness of the causal mechanisms affecting the context under study. This

involves reflecting on how one reasons in the context and what he/she feels enables or constrains him/her to act in particular ways (Roberts, 2014). Adding a dialectical component to this approach, the researcher elicits in the participants a reflexive mode of understanding towards the contradictory and historical totality under study (Roberts, 2014). Roberts (2014) suggests designing the first interview to explore a participant's actions and activity in a context, and using subsequent interviews to explore his/her life history in order to frame his/her activity in wider processes over time. This facilitates an iterative critical reflexivity to then develop the ideologies and assumptions embedded in beliefs circulating the research context (Roberts, 2014).

Questions of Reliability and Validity

Positivist social science poses specific demands for the reliability, validity, and trustworthiness of data. This empirical tilt to the research can tinge research designs that break outside the positivist paradigm. Narrative inquiry is one such camp of research, but I argue that this research can create legitimate and valuable knowledge. Since narrative inquiry is a fluid and iterative process it lacks a concrete set of methods to substantiate validity and reliability. In fact, those terms are all but absent in narrative inquiry discourse. Because of this, my methods cannot be validated in the general sense of the term, but instead in the sense that myself and the participants are the experts on our own experience and therefore have provided our valid interpretation. The intent of a narrative inquiry is not to create generalizable findings, but to provide a rich description of a particular experience in a specific context. This experience can then be used to theorize about larger social situations.

There are a few practical considerations for researchers designing a narrative inquiry to improve its reliability and validity in context. Lather (1991) notes that a check for reliability in postmodern research can come from the participants in the study. Further, the construct validity

of this particular study can be understood through the combination of *a priori* categories for the data as well as openness for the data to speak for itself and to speak through the practitioners. The resulting reality created from this inquiry is not only authored by the researcher but by the participants as well; a co-creation of knowledge from several perspectives. Lather (1991, p. 68) evens brings up a new form of validity, catalytic validity, to praxis-oriented research, which represents the degree the research process "re-orients, focuses, and energizes participants toward knowing reality in order to transform it". This orients the research as an intentional and transparent intervention with its impact channeled at greater participant self-understanding (Lather, 1991). This is almost a direct affront to the "neutral" positivist researcher, but recognizes the power and subjectivity of research.

Methods

Research Questions

This research draws upon Brookfield's (1995, 2000, 2009) critically reflective practice, Slocum's (2006) understanding of community food work, and Abi-Nader et al.'s (2009) framework of *Whole Measures* to explore faith-based community food work as values-based practice. Table 1 lists these constructs, supporting literature, and the research questions developed from them. Focusing on the practitioner and their practice, the questions I wish to address are threefold:

1. How, if at all, are practitioners performing community food work in their faith-based practice?
2. How, if at all, are these practitioners illustrating critically reflective practice in their community food work?
3. How do these practitioners treat the presence of hegemony as a specific and critical element of community food work?

Table 1. *A priori* propositions

Construct	Supporting Literature	Research Question(s)	Method
Whole Measures for Community Food Systems	Seven field and practices listed in *Whole Measures*- justice and fairness, strong communities, vibrant farms, healthy people, sustainable ecosystems, thriving local economies (Abi-Nader et al., 2009).	How, if at all, are practitioners performing community food work in their faith-based practice ?	Interview Observation Document analysis Collective reflection session
Community Food Work	Community food work promotes fair prices, sustainable practices, and accessible, affordable, culturally appropriate healthy food for all people (Slocum, 2006). Community food work proponents critique the current food system for its destruction of small-scale local farming, as well as human, ecological, and animal health (Slocum, 2006). Encompasses many alternative food discourses including community food security, food justice, and food sovereignty.	How, if at all, are practitioners performing community food work in their faith-based practice?	Interview Observation Document analysis Collective reflection session
Critically Reflective Practitioner	Helps people become aware of how ideologies such as capitalism, patriarchy, and others justify and maintain economic and political inequity (Brookfield, 2009). Bringing our own assumptions into light and reflecting on them can allow one to take informed actions to achieve the outcomes we desire (Brookfield, 2009). Critical Reflection is an important piece uncovering power in practice (Cervero & Wilson, 2001) and social change (Brookfield, 2005).	How, if at all, are these practitioners illustrating critically reflective practice in their community food work? How do community food practitioners treat the presence of hegemony as a specific and critical element in their work?	Interview Collective reflection session

Piloting the Protocols

I verified the interview and collective reflection session protocols with my committee members and a community food work expert and practitioner at Virginia Tech. I did not conduct the protocols, but sought recommendations on the questions. Furthermore, since the interview protocol was adapted from an extensively used protocol for the Practitioner Profiles of the Appalachian Foodshed Project (Niewolny, D'Adamo-Damery, N., D'Adamo-Damery, P., & Landis, 2014) for which I was the interviewer, I had experience conducting narrative interviews of this nature.

Organization Description

Organization A

In order to better contextualize the narratives in place and time, it is fitting to provide a description of the organization where these practitioners work. To maintain confidentially, I am referring to this organization as "Organization A." A faith-based group affiliated with a denominational Christian church started this organization to engage in social, economic, and spiritual justice issues in the region. It originated as a community organizing nonprofit and transitioned to its food and farming angle in 2010, when the current executive director, Eddie, and farm manager, Taylor, were hired. The mission now is to facilitate collaborative partnerships among stakeholders to assure food access and educational supports to supplement and make that access meaningful. There is a newly hired program coordinator, Blaire, as well as a part time community advocate from one of the housing communities, Terry, who happens to be a past participant of their prescription produce program. There are two farmers in residence per season,

and this is the first year a volunteer coordinator is on the farm as well. The farm relies heavily on volunteer work, with total volunteers hours accruing to over 4,000 in 2014. In recent years they have grown upwards of 70,000 pounds of produce in one growing season. The organization has a nine-member board plus the board chair.

Program Description

A prescription produce program is this organization's flagship program, and the primary program shared in the narratives. 2015 will be the third year of the 12-week long program. So far they have worked with six cohorts of families, with each cohort consisting of ten to fifteen families. This free program primarily targets public housing communities, which according to the practitioners are low- to extremely low-income, and primarily African American communities. Blaire and Terry run the weekly program right at the housing community with help from an intern and farm stand help from Eddie and less frequently, Taylor. Participants meet with the community resource center employee and have their blood pressure and BMI taken before they receive a prescription for their weekly produce. They then walk out into the courtyard to the farm stand and exchange their prescription for one serving of vegetables per day for each family member for the entire week. Other non-participating community members can shop at this market for highly subsidized prices. Every two to three weeks the practitioners do education classes with the participants or lead a grocery store tour to learn shopping habits such as how to compare fresh, frozen, and canned goods, and read nutritional labels. Participants also have the opportunity to visit the organization's farm outside of the city.

Complementing this program is a youth run farm stand and a newly built school garden. The organic farm-grown produce is used in food pantries, pop-up markets, meal programs, and educational activities throughout the area. There are plans to expand the farm and build a new

location within the city to create a facility for community education and seminary students to learn more about faith and food. The new location is also expected to provide income for the organization to infuse back into programming.

Two of the practitioners relayed different programs in their narratives. Onyx, the executive director, started a nonprofit for homeless youth and related that work to the work that this organization does. She framed the effort as social justice work but in a different context. Casey works for a partnering organization and does youth-based food and nutrition education. She talked about her work with youth, and briefly connected it to the partnership she has developed with this organization and the prescription produce program. They devised heir partnership to provide education to parents and children about food and nutrition to have a more concerted impact on behavior.

Organization B

Organization B is a nonprofit formed in the city to promote and create programs for healthy youth. Organization B established a coalition of likeminded partners in the city to advance programs and policies for healthy youth, particularly to prevent childhood obesity. Organization B began partnering with Organization A on their prescription produce program in 2014.

Participant Selection

I selected the organization for this study based on a number of criteria, both pragmatic and research oriented. I used Internet searches as well as recommendations from colleagues and professors to compile a short list of potential organizations. I contacted four organizations via email to express my research interests and inquire as to whether they would like to talk further about potential research. After receiving no responses, I proceeded to reach out to the executive

director of Organization A because he had worked with my advisor previously and therefore a personal contact already in place. The executive director expressed interest from the beginning and gave strong indication that the organization would be willing to participate, so I proceeded to create and submit my IRB protocol with them in mind. Since I had intended on using purposeful sampling, this series of events was informative as to how I would structure my protocol.

I was intentional in selecting this organization because the practitioners are engaged in many broader city and statewide food initiatives, take a faith-based approach to their work, as well as an explicitly justice- rather than charity-based approach; there is an apparent critique of systemic inequity in their work, which is what I was interested in exploring as critical practice. I wished to find an organization that produced grey literature such as white paper reports or toolkits in order to expand my data collection opportunities. Once I had received VT-IRB approval for this research, I invited the executive to participate via email. He then served as the liaison for the rest of the participants and was the intermediary for me to contact and invite other practitioners. He suggested practitioners based on their role in the organization and the partnerships Organization A had with them. The executive director made the initial contact with most of them, and acted as the liaison to set up interviews with several of them. For the others, he provided me their email addresses to make the request. I contacted a total of eight potential participants, and six agreed to participate. I assigned each participant a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality as follows: Eddie, the executive director; Taylor, the farm manager; Blaire, the program coordinator; Onyx, the board chair; Terry, a past program participant, health department employee, and Organization A employee; Casey, a partner and member of Organization B.

This purposive sampling of practitioners was similar to Peters, Grégoire, and Hittleman (2004). I use the title “practitioner” in the sense of a person who works or volunteers for the

organization on a regular basis and works in an educational or outreach capacity with community members. This could mean they offer organizational and leadership skills to the direction of the work, or are on the ground administering the work.

Data Collection

Using single case study design, I explored the collective community food work of this group of six practitioners (Woodside, 2010). A case study is an inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real life context (Yin, 1994). This case study was not intended to provide generalizable predications or relationships, but to offer a description of community food work for the purpose of illustrating and inciting critical engagement with the work.

The unit of analysis for this research was community food work practice as illuminated through each practitioner's perception and performance of their work. I employed a multi-modal data collection strategy in order to gather a comprehensive number of texts supporting each participant's stories. First, I conducted one 60-90 minute semi-structured interview with each participant, guided by an interview script (see Appendix B) but able to take the form of an ongoing conversation. The protocol was adapted from the Practitioner Profile Project interview script created for use in the Appalachian Foodshed Project (Niewolny, D'Adamo-Damery, P., D'Adamo-Damery, N., & Landis, R., 2014). Additionally, I conducted a content analysis on both gray and academic literature to inform the protocol. The work of Stephen Brookfield (2009, 2001, 2000, 1995) on critical reflection greatly influenced the interview protocol.

After I transcribed the interviews, I sent each transcript to the corresponding participant and asked them to not only vet it for accuracy, but asked them for a written analysis of their transcript; I asked for two to three themes with a short description and excerpts is possible. The participants consented to this at the time of the interview consent. This step reflects the method

used by Richmond (2002) when she listened to the recording with her participants after the interview for them to verify the narrative and to make any changes rather than the researcher relying solely on her interpretations. I used these written responses as field texts to inform my analysis and identification of themes as well as the excerpts to scaffold the collective reflection session.

The collective reflection session served as another layer of data collection and analysis. Here, I posed specific questions to the practitioners as a group (see Appendix C), and provided the space for them to pose questions to each other as well. I adapted Peters, Grégoire, and Hittleman's (2004) guided collective reflection with youth development practitioners. First, I gathered informed consent from each participant to participate in the collective reflection session. To begin the session I shared *Whole Measures CFS* with the practitioners as a way that I had been framing their work, and as a framework for discussion at the session. I then provided a compilation of excerpts from the narrative interviews for us to spend time reading aloud to each other. After this I opened the floor for reactions and reflections on the excerpts, and continued the collective reflection session based loosely on the protocol I had prepared.

This reflection session was a time for dialogue between the practitioners where they could reflect and learn about their work as a group and individually. The reflection session supported the retelling of stories shared in the narratives, and the telling of new stories as they emerged. Raelin (2004) explained how as we reflect with others, our thoughts get re-shaped as they are converted into language; language we persuade others with about our points of view, and language that can reframe our position as well. I audio recorded all interviews and the collective reflection session on two devices and transcribed them electronically.

The reflection session was designed to elicit multiple meanings and uncover layers of the richness of the personal and social experience of acting as a community food work practitioner. This follows the narrative focus group approach where tacit knowledge will be generated, maintained and changed through social participation. I also noted interactions among the participants as data points as they could elude to the intra- and inter-organizational relationships surrounding this work.

Furthermore, I conducted participant observations and took field notes during my observations. I noted the social, temporal, and spatial aspects of each field note collection event. I wrote the field notes by hand and then typed them into electronic format directly after the observation event. Additionally, I kept a research journal where I electronically recorded my inner responses and feelings about the inquiry as a personal debriefing. The field notes and research journal served as field texts because they helped me to maintain a sense of moving in and out of the experience. Although there are multiple interpretations of an event or experience, field notes help to improve the interpretation. Concurrently, research journals help a researcher to reflect and critique the growth of the experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

I completed a content analysis of reports and other materials issued by the organization, in addition to other public accounts of their work, such as newspaper reports and white papers. Additionally, the participants provided me with texts throughout the inquiry such as a logic model, journal article, and program flier. I used these records as field texts for the study. I stored all field texts electronically on my computer, a thumb drive, and external hard drive.

Overall the data collection period lasted three months. I collected the narrative interviews over the course of two months. It then took approximately one month to receive the participant's transcript analysis, and I sent reminder emails to a few of the participants. I held the collective

reflection session soon after I received the transcript analyses. Each transcript took approximately ten to fifteen hours to edit into the narratives located in Appendices I-N.

Data Analysis and Research Texts

The unit of analysis for this research was the practice of community food work as bounded by these six practitioner's experiences. I explored each of the practitioner's unique experiences and reflections individually as well as in conjunction with the entire group to understand how this practice might represent critical practice. The field texts for this research consisted of the narrative interview transcript, collective reflection session transcript, my field notes, reflective journal, and various organizational documents that I found and were provided to me by the participants.

Many of the field texts remained in their original form when I used them as research texts, but I edited the narrative interviews into final research texts. I strived to not reduce experiences into facts in research texts. I used an editing process similar to Peters and Hittleman (2003) in their crafting of "Profiles of Extension Educators." The narrative profiles for this research are attached as Appendices I-N. The edited transcripts are a combined representation and interpretation of the practitioner's experiences as we both played a role in shaping the creation of the narratives. Memories and experiences are shaped and changed along a continuum (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and the meaning ascribed to them is temporal and interpretive. That being said, the research texts I edited the narrative interviews into will be solidified at the publication of this thesis, and although the stories may morph in other dissemination outlets, they are fixed now for the purpose of this thesis. Moreover, I did not draft all field texts into research texts so this selection process undoubtedly removed pieces of those experiences and stories that were told.

I used *Whole Measures CFS* as a framework for identifying values in the practitioner's experiences. Additionally, I coded for critical reflection based on Brookfield's four lenses of critical reflection (Brookfield, 1995). As I worked through research texts I coded them based on reoccurring themes such as important people, places, stories that interweave, and continuities or discontinuities that appear (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This was an iterative process that allowed the participants and me to re-engage in negotiations regarding the meanings of the texts (Clandinin, 2013). The interim research texts revealed the need for more intensive field texts which then occasionally led me back to working with the participant to construct more authentic meanings (Clandinin, 2013).

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) warn researchers to give heed to the way a participant is represented in research texts. They pose asking participants if they see themselves in the research texts, and if they are portrayed as a character they want to be when others read the text. This signature imbues the right balance of inserting a researchers stamp on the text without obscuring the participant (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The following quote by Petra Munro Hendry (2007) exemplifies my philosophy for the narrative product of this research. "…research is not ultimately about interpretation but about faith. Trusting in the stories and the storyteller…" (p. 494). Many of the data analysis standards that research are held to undermine the nature of narrative inquiry. Methodological rigor and validity are concerned with the "correct" interpretation of results. However Hendry's (2007) quote above suggests that listening to and telling the stories as we hear them is the most correct way to capture experience. Engaging in a constant meta-analysis of a story and fixating on probing for more information creates an environment of distrust where we believe we are properly equipped to make the correct

interpretation of an individual's experience (Hendry, 2007). This is why the analysis of data for this study was a collaborative and iterative process between each participant and myself.

I used *a priori* themes identified in the three guiding frameworks for this study: *Whole Measures CFS* (Abi-Nader et al., 2009), critically reflective practice (Cervero & Wilson, 2001; Thompson & Pascal, 2012), and community food work (Slocum, 2006, 2007) and added emergent themes as I saw fit. I coded for the six fields listed in *Whole Measures CFS*, but did not code specific practices. In terms of critically reflective practice, I sought out statements referring to power, privilege, and reflection. I specifically used Slocum's description of community food work to code for those themes. See Table 2 for an abbreviated code list. I incorporated themes identified by each participant as well. Additionally, I coded the collective reflection session transcript for *a priori* and emergent themes guided by the same frameworks.

As a final note, this inquiry is not generalizable, but holds potential for transferability. I have fortified its potential by purposefully selecting practitioners that fit the specific aforementioned criteria for this study. Secondly, I have provided a thick description of my research design, frameworks, and participants so that readers can determine if the context of this study is relevant to their practice (Jensen, 2008).

Although not used in the traditional sense in narrative inquiries, I would like to briefly address the reliability and validity of this study. As mentioned earlier, postmodern and praxis oriented research have alternative understandings and applications of validity and reliability. In order to improve the reliability of this research, I shared preliminary thematic findings with the participants during the collective reflection session. Since I used the practitioner's themes in conjunction with my own this also provided increased reliability since there was space for the practitioners to counter or corroborate those themes. What is more, I addressed the catalyst

validity of this research by intentionally using critical reflection processes to orient the practitioners towards the political and social change aspects of their work. The particular steps taken to meld the knowledge of the practitioners and myself on several occasions was true to the ontology and epistemology of this study. This research is valid and reliable insofar as it is co-created knowledge between the practitioners and myself about particular experiences in the context of their community food work.

Table 2. Abbreviated code list

Whole Measures CFS	Community Food Work	Critically Reflective Practice	Emergent

Justice and fairness
Healthy people
Strong communities
Vibrant farms
Thriving local economies
Sustainable ecosystems
	Accessibility
	Affordability
	Culturally appropriate
	Ecological health
	Food justice (term used)
	Healthy food for all
	Education
	Education- new experiences
		Autobiographical
		With peers
		Lens of students/participants
		Theoretical literature
		Challenging dominant ideology-inequity
		Challenging dominant ideology- privilege
		Challenging dominant ideology-patriarchy
		Need to raise awareness
			Faith and food
			Evaluation
			Motivators
			  Religious calling
			  Meaningful work
			  Relationship with food
			Partnerships/Relationships

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gain insights into the interaction of theory and practice in faith-based community food work. Further, I wished to elicit stories to spur practitioner learning through critical reflection. To do this I purposefully selected a faith-based organization that I believed to be performing community food work with a strong commitment to social justice. I conducted a narrative interview with six practitioners either employed by or working in close partnership with Organization A. This narrative interview was the first entry point into telling stories of their work. I then provided each practitioner with his or her preliminarily edited transcript and requested that he or she read through it for two or three meaningful themes and to share those with me. This was the second entry point for reflection on practice. I used these themes combined with my own analysis to guide the collective reflection session, which was our final organized entry into these stories.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, narrative inquiry is a broad genre of research and is more accurately described as a pedagogical orientation to teaching and learning (Kim, 2008) in this context. The practitioners and I created and recreated narratives here throughout the inquiry as we engaged with the stories in an iterative and generative nature. Below I will discuss how the narratives revealed the values that drive these practitioners to perform community food work. Further, I will discuss what we can learn about critical reflection as an adult learning experience, and the process and product of telling and retelling stories. It is clear that critical reflection in an organized fashion can have an impact on organizational and individual practice. The narratives provide a window into the performance of community food work as critical practice and illustrate niches for critical engagement with this work. The narratives provided insights into the

three questions guiding this inquiry, which is how I approached the organization and meaning-making of this chapter.

Research Question One: How, if at all, are practitioners performing community food work in their faith-based practice?

Community food work is values-based practice. This is apparent not only in *Whole Measures CFS* but in theoretical musings and practical performance of the work. In their narratives, participants expressed values and goals that could be organized into five of the six fields and practices described in *Whole Measures CFS*. I found evidence in my document analysis of the remaining field. During the collective reflection session, I provided the practitioners with the *Whole Measures CFS* framework where they proceeded to speak to the fields in regards to their work. The evolving narratives illustrate what community food work can look like in practice, the values driving practitioners to do this work, and the meaning practitioners ascribe to their work.

Faith-based Community Food Work[1]

Before we engage with the fields and practices of *Whole Measures CFS* I would like to ground this practice in the practitioners' religious beliefs. The practitioners connected their faith traditions to their values throughout every stage of the narrative process. This commonality likely contributes to the bonding social capital between like-minded practitioners, which can be used to mobilize action and social change and alludes to their increased solidarity as people of faith. The degree to which faith is implicated in each practitioner's practice varies. The ways in which the practitioners express their work leads me to categorize it as both priestly and prophetic

[1] I noted 27 instances of faith mentioned throughout this narrative inquiry.

(Wood, 2009). Bielefeld and Cleveland (2013) question why faith-based practitioners implement programs: is it to proselytize or to answer a call to serve? The practitioners in this inquiry offered no narrative related to converting their program participants, or favoring participants that share similar faith traditions. On the contrary, they try to create an open environment where they do not emphasize their beliefs, while at the same time not hide from those beliefs. Eddie illustrates this nicely in his narrative:

> Faith is certainly kind of the guiding force and the reason why I do my work. We sort of as an organization probably embody that cliché, what people call the Francis idea, but I don't think St. Francis ever really said it: "Preach the gospel at all times, use words when necessary." I think for myself and Taylor that certainly drives the work we do. Not about trying to literally preach the gospel to anyone or use our work as an explicitly evangelical or evangelizing tool, but as a way to fulfill what we feel is our own obligation and desire and joy and gift and to be able to share that with others. That being said, with the exception of giving talks like I did on Sunday at a church or working with a church garden on Wednesday, I think a lot of our vocabulary is not explicitly Christian because these ideals are often broad universal ideals. They are beyond being Judeo-Christian ideals. I think we also feel an obligation to make sure that the work that we do doesn't turn anyone off or scare anyone away and allows folks to all feel like they have a place at the table here. So we try to use as welcoming programs and as welcoming language as possible without trying to hide from who we are and why we do what we do. Which is a delicate balance. (Appendix I, lines 131-145)

The concept of being "called to serve" emerged throughout many of the narratives. During the collective reflection session, Blaire used *Whole Measures CFS* to frame values of her work and how her faith instills those values as a call to serve:

> I would say my faith tradition places a lot of emphasis on justice and how people of faith are called to promote justice, so I think justice and fairness and strong communities come a lot from recognizing that we have a responsibility to others and that we can't operate alone, so kind of looking at the body of believers and seeing that encompasses a lot of people. So knowing that we can't only look at taking care of one aspect- so our own community or our own family- and kind of seeing that all as interconnected so you can't see your own family without seeing another family. And then that tying into health, but if we're not giving them the chance to enjoy life then that's a huge barrier that we're kind of excluding people from what can be a really great opportunity to embrace whatever it is. So healthy food, healthy lifestyles, new opportunities. I think that preventing people from

> being able to embrace whatever it is they want to go after because they can't physically do it, I think that's a huge thing that we need to address.

The next excerpt from the collective reflection session shows the meaning Onyx attributes to her faith as the pinnacle reason for doing this work.

> Onyx: Well I mean I go back to the faith piece. I mean I think for me that's it. That's everything, and it's not, but I think it was reflected in my interview, so that it's not in here or that it's not in this [Whole Measures] I think is kind of a problem. I would say that many of us around this table get up in the morning knowing that we are doing this to create God's kingdom, or however we want to frame it in our heads, and that this is a hell of a lot of work and you don't do it unless you've got some bigger purpose. Because you're not getting paid a heck of a lot to do it, so it has to be grounded in something really important and maybe it's important to me and it wouldn't be as important to somebody else, but I suspect there are several of us here who that is really it, and I maybe have trouble articulating it. That's it, because it would be so much easier to just go work for Capital One.
> Researcher: Let me ask, I totally agree with you faith is this big umbrella value but then I think there can be sub-values under it. So you're faith can give you the belief that justice and fairness is important, your faith can give you the belief that strong communities and relationship with others is important, and so I guess that's what I was trying to get at. Faith definitely underpins everything about this organization and a lot of you as individuals too, but then what does your faith make you strongly believe in? Like what are you trying to accomplish on the ground because of your faith? Are you trying to make healthy people, are you trying to create thriving local economies? That's where I was trying to go with that question.
> Casey: I had mentioned that I think people of faith shouldn't accept the world the way it is, but that they should recognize and have commitment to making the world a better more vibrant, dynamic, just, fair place. So that's something that faith motivates me to action- to not accept the current reality. I also think from the faith perspective just that the body is a gift and that there's so much joy to be found in the body, but that's a challenge for so many people. And I think what the core values for me are just that food is so essential- so fundamental to people's health, happiness, spirituality, sense of community, and that's probably why all of us choose to work in this area, because it's so core to people's wholeness and wellness.

In her response, Casey expresses the connection between faith and food that is so often referred to in the literature, and our need to take care of our bodies since they are a gift from God. The

interwovenness of our bodily existence and spiritual existence provides additional meaning to the work for her personally.

Taylor offers a contrasting take on the spiritual aspect of the work. He sees the spiritual connotations to his work as a happy coincidence and is drawn to the work for the sheer love of it.

> But I don't want to act like that the reason I do what I do has anything to do with my faith, as much as it has to do with just loving the work. I want to be fair. I wouldn't do it if I believed that this is the best thing that someone could be doing who really truly believed in God if I didn't really just love doing this kind of stuff. I even enjoy the mundane stuff like calculating the amount of fertilizer that I'm going to have to put down on a particular piece of land, or making compost. All of those things have theological connotations- you can think through resurrection and returning something to the earth and it being reborn again as dead decomposing materials being reborn in the earth when you put them on the earth and being reborn in plants. There's lots of theological connotations to this stuff, but the reality for me is that I really just like it. I really just love doing it, and maybe there's some theology behind that, but I really just like to do the work. (Appendix J, lines 264-274)

Next we will explore the fields and practices from *Whole Measures CFS* that have emerged through practitioner narratives of their work. The theme of faith-based values will be a common thread throughout these fields and practices.

Justice and Fairness[2]

Like the standpoint of Cadieux and Slocum (2015), many of the practitioners saw social justice as the ultimate goal of their work and of food security. Three practitioners made explicit reference to justice and fairness in their narrative interviews. They spoke of justice and fairness as values driving the work, goals of the work, and characteristics of an ideal community. The other three practitioners did not specifically use the terms justice and fairness, but clearly alluded

[2] There were two instances of food justice directly referenced. I sited four mentions of incorporating justice into programming, seven mentions of a desire for justice in institutions and communities, and seven mentions as a motivating value to do this work. Justice and fairness arose six times during the collective reflection session.

to these values in their practice. Justice was a theme identified by one practitioner in her analysis of her own transcript. The specific quote she chose to illustrate this value states:

> I think ideally we all envision, and I'm sure we have different visions, but it involves neighborhoods that have enough to eat; communities that everybody has enough to eat. Everybody has good food to eat and it's not brought in on a food bank truck and given away, or people don't have to go stand in line and fill out paperwork- do degrading things just to get good food or just to get food period. Sustainable change would somehow turn all of that upside-down, and it's all wrapped up in poverty, it's all wrapped up in racism, and those things are not solved by a food stand, unfortunately. So as wonderful as what we're doing is, it's a long way from making real systemic change, which is eliminating poverty, which is making the playing field fair, which is having a quality education not dependent on your zip code, having a safe place to live. I'm not sure that food and agriculture can make that change, but I think we can partner with enough other groups and enough other people and citizens and neighbors who together maybe we could start to turn those things around. – Onyx

Blaire shared justice and fairness as one of the primary values espoused by her faith tradition. Some practitioners felt compelled to do social justice work because they view it as a commandment from God, whereas others find significance in the connection of faith and food. As mentioned earlier, Taylor, although a person of faith and driven to take care of his neighbors, performs his work because of his love of it rather than its religious implications. From these practitioners stories, it appears that Christian faith provides the underlying values that spur them on to engage in this work, but is not necessarily a primary motivating factor when one considers all of the complicated values, beliefs, situations, and choices that go into one's occupation.

More than a motivator and value, faith was spoken of as a guiding compass in *how* to approach justice-based work:

> So that's been the biggest challenge is how can we develop a program that can be effective and can be consistent but that acknowledges the barriers and challenges that the folks we work with are facing, and how can we do that effectively and faithfully? –Eddie (Appendix I, lines 243-246)

> This might be cliché, but again as a result of my upbringing from my parents, whether you want to look at him as a historical figure, a mythical figure, or just a figure in the faith tradition, Christ is this cool example of this food justice advocate right? And it's a pretty cool model. –Eddie (Appendix I, lines 120-123)

> I think the idea of God loving all of His children and always wants the best for all of His children is a motivating factor of not only taking care of ourselves, but everyone. Seeing everyone as a human family, part of God's family. –Casey (Appendix M, lines 102-104)

During the collective reflection session the idea of faith as a guiding compass also emerged as a ruler from which to measure one's work. I will discuss this interaction in more detail in a later section.

Likewise during the collective reflection session Christ and Mother Teresa were discussed as role models and inspirations for justice-based work. Idealistic concepts such as Zion, from the Mormon tradition, and God's Kingdom, from the Christian tradition, are goals of this work and visions to work towards. There were differing opinions on whether these goals are attainable. Casey believes they are just ideals and will never be realized on Earth, while Eddie found hope in the belief that the arc of human history curves towards justice, albeit slowly.

Food justice work is critiqued for becoming ubiquitous in alternative food discourse and losing clarity on what the work actually looks like (Cadieux & Slocum, 2015). Cadieux and Slocum (2015) explain that there is an overwhelming abundance of claims to food justice within more mainstream food movements, but little analysis of what it takes to actually do it. Much of what the practitioners describe in their work is in agreement with food justice as described by Cadieux and Slocum (2015). Eddie explained in the collective reflection session the need to first address immediate needs, while overcoming existing barriers and simultaneously lowering those barriers. A piece of food justice work to him is developing youth who grow up with better opportunities and better tools than the current generation was dealt. The practitioners address the

immediate need by providing produce to those who otherwise do not have access, and attempt to overcome existing barriers by making that access meaningful through carefully tailored and thoughtful education. Furthermore, the practitioners are attempting to develop entrepreneurial skills with youth in the public housing communities through their youth run farm stand. The practitioners see the need for institutionalizing equity and control over the tools that shape the food system. This may spur from the new generation having more opportunities within and outside their community than the previous generation.

Furthermore, the practitioners are creating awareness with residents in the communities they serve that they equally deserve the opportunities that other's have and to demand those opportunities, such as a grocery store in their neighborhood; Terry is hopeful that a grocery store will move into the neighborhood in the near future. Integral to these practitioners' understanding of justice is racial equity and increased leadership and ownership emerging from the communities whom they serve. They recognize that they should not be the one's going into the community to provide programming.

Justice and fairness are clearly motivating values and goals of these practitioners' work, but what would a just and fair community look like? At the close of each narrative interview I asked the practitioner's what their ideal community would look like. Many of them referred to justice and fairness in their description.

> I don't know how you describe a fair and just community, but we would all be going to the same school. I mean my family lives in the city, and we've sent our daughter to public school but it's been hard. We did it because we thought it was important, but it was hard. And my kid suffered for it. She insists that she's glad she did it and she doesn't want to have gone to the suburbs and she doesn't want to go to a private school, but she didn't get as good of an education as we would have liked at least from the academic standpoint. So I would like for every kid living on my street to go to a good public school. Emphasis on good. We're in the city, but I bet there is one child on this block who goes to city's public schools and the rest go to private schools. Or they grow up until they're in kindergarten

and then they move. There aren't very many kids over the age of six on this street because they move, so there isn't that sense of stability. A multigenerational community would be wonderful. For example when my neighbor's husband falls down, which he does a lot, she can call another neighbor and they come and pick him back up. Older people could stay in their homes a lot longer. Everybody would feel safe. I would say the word family. This is hard, but I think that's all. –Onyx (Appendix K, lines 301-316)

So ultimately I'd like to work in a city where there is not a 20-year difference in life expectancy between literally one zip code in the city and six miles away in the city another zip code. I'd like to live in a city where that gap is closing, and where it's closing because the levels of power are shifting. I also like this city because it's imperfect and messy. Again it's easy for me to say that. If I lived in abject poverty I probably wouldn't be saying I want to live in a city that's messy and complicated and has a messy racial history. I wouldn't be saying that at all. But I'd rather be aware of that and living in a close enough community to see that and be a part of that than to live in a city that either ignored that that exists or that had developed systems to sort of force people out altogether so there was this perfect little city that everybody lived in and had food, but everybody living outside the city didn't. –Eddie (Appendix I, lines 448-458)

My perfect community? I'd have the biggest house on the block- no I'm kidding. I would want to live in a very diverse community if I could afford to. I want my children to see all different types of cultures- all different types of everything. So it would be very mixed; very low-income all the way up to really really wealthy people. I would love a mixed community if it could flow that way perfectly. So in a perfect world, that's where I would love to live and work at; where everybody can get something from the community. –Terry (Appendix L, lines 184-189)

The big picture would be like getting everybody to where they have everything they need and understand what they need to live, instead of just surviving. Or to you know to actually really be able to live instead of, "Hey I get up, I eat whatever because it's what I have, and I use the bathroom and I go to sleep because that's all I have." That you know to be able to *live*. –Terry (Appendix L, lines 192-196)

I think the ideal community, if you were to walk into it, would feel like people are operating in a way that feels natural and that doesn't seem like there are divisions in the community. Also being able to see that people are taking advantage of resources. I think not being able to directly assess the socioeconomic status of a community by walking into it would be a big one too. I think communities are always going to look different just because people are different, so communities are bound to take different forms, but I think in any healthy community you see community relationships, you feel that people are excited and can and are taking advantage of opportunities to either be physically healthy by being outside, eating food that is good, but then also just that they're supporting one another and that

> there's a community conversation happening about being together. –Blaire (Appendix N, lines 268-278)

In these descriptions we see references to opportunity, equity, diversity, and a high quality of life. According to the practitioners, their work approaches these conditions by raising awareness about inequality and inequity, working with community members to find power within themselves, beginning conversations around food, and advocating to the communities that have been historically and systematically ignored.

Strong Communities[3]

Practices that promote strong communities are those that build relationships, improve equity and respond to community foods needs, contribute to healthy neighborhoods, and support participation, leadership, and empowerment (Abi-Nader et al., 2009). This team of practitioners incorporates many of these practices into their work. Relationship building was an overwhelming theme weaving throughout each of the interviews. Additionally, through my observation I came to see how incredibly significant relationships and partnerships were to the practitioners in getting the work done, and linking organizations around shared values and goals. This realization reminded me of the notion that this work is about more than food. These practitioners are pursuing community change and enhancement, with food as the vehicle.

The narrative interviews, collective reflection session, and various documents and observations indicate that strong communities are the fulcrum that will leverage the social change these practitioners wish to see. Strong communities to them mean diverse, safe, educated, engaged, and supportive environments where people have the unfettered ability to empower themselves, should they so choose. The organization is shaping a new vision statement and is working with the terminology of "creating opportunity-rich food environments." Although this

[3] The practitioners spoke of strong communities 25 times in reference to their work.

potential vision statement only refers to food related opportunities, the practitioners are dedicated and motivated to creating opportunities related to all aspects of life and wellbeing.[4]

Making Community Ties Stronger Within the Public Housing Community

In her reflection on her transcript, Blaire expressed:

> …strong communities and strong relationships are both developed over time for everyone—and are often neglected when we think about community needs. I also believe these are essential to sustainable change and working towards social justice. Building a sustainable food system doesn't mean a lot unless there are groups of people in the community that are present and committed to supporting and participating in the system.... As far as what makes them strong- I think that is harder to identify. I think I personally feel like I have strong relationships or am in a strong community when there is a sense of support and validation, and perception of agency over circumstances or surroundings.

This analysis points to an issue that has been criticized by food system scholars recently (Guthman, 2008). Blaire is acknowledging that providing food access is not enough to provide food security. She brings in concepts of support and agency to indicate a strong community, which she places as a precursor to sustainable change and social justice. This excerpt also reveals the irrelevance of food security programs if there are not community members committed to participating.

Since strong relationships and community are so important for food system change, mechanisms to strengthen those communities are necessary before a program can take root. Terry remarked about emerging community relationships vis-á-vis the prescription produce program. This is creating boding social capital within the community that could be used in the future as an asset for change.

> I've seen relationships develop. Some of our clients didn't know anybody. A couple of them didn't come outside- they didn't get with anybody. And now they

[4] This aspect of their work came up in conversation 8 times during the focus group

have a couple friends that they deal with. So I enjoy seeing that. –Terry (Appendix L, lines 172-174)

Organizational Partnerships and Relationships[5]

Food systems change, or any sort of social change work, takes a myriad of actors all working together towards a common goal or goals. Organization A appears to be a staple in its community, and the practitioners are actively engaged in various other boards, task forces, working groups, and councils. Furthermore, they could not accomplish their work without the help from other individuals and organizations. Funding streams and even pieces of program implementation, such as nutrition education, come from partners.

Eddie and Casey are members of the city's food access and equity working group. In a meeting I attended there were representatives from the Health Department, the Institute for Public Health Innovation, the YMCA, the local hospital system, public housing residents, and a few other local organizations. This task force is just one example of the many councils and other such bodies that this organization participates in. Casey works for a coalition aimed at fighting childhood obesity in the city. The coalition is another case in point of various organizations working together for the same end goal and in the process making that work more effective. Casey says:

> We actually had Organization A come in and do a session with us. It was a session where we were looking at lunches and they brought in fresh produce from the farm for our veggie wraps that we made, which was great. I love being part of a coalition where there's all these organizations doing important things and to be able to bring them together, and to use each other's skills and expertise to make them happen has been really great. (Appendix M, lines 218-222)

[5] This meaning emerged 9 times in the interviews. One practitioner expressed, "I'm not sure that food and agriculture can make that change, but I think we can partner with enough other groups and enough other people and citizens and neighbors who together maybe we could start to turn those things around." And "[Our executive director] is always being asked to go to meetings or go to be on committees or task forces or whatever around food justice issues, and you know I think he does it really gracefully and graciously and so the partnerships are really- that kind of builds fabric."

Councils and other organizing bodies like this bring together an interdisciplinary team of partners and combine different kinds of knowledge to help understand, describe, and address complex social issues (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2006).

> We are trying to increase the healthy food that kids can get at school. And that's why we decided to partner with Organization A to do the prescription produce program, where we felt like we could teach kids these messages but if the parents aren't getting them too then there will be a disconnect. So that's why we're trying to come up with more programs to educate parents and inspire and motivate parents to invest the time and energy it takes to have better, more nourishing food at home. The food access task force that I'm part of is trying to tackle that too- how can we make neighborhoods places that have more nourishing food? So those are big, big challenges but we're trying to address them as well. And change comes slowly and you start small, but at least we're starting somewhere. –Casey (Appendix M, lines 243-252)

The working group is attempting to address social issues of food access and equity at city-wide level to bring about policy to change the conditions on the ground. These trust-based networks that the practitioner's are participating in is building the organizational social capital to use and further its goals (Bourdieu, 1986; Schneider, 2013).

Healthy People[6]

Healthy people can be characterized as a value in *Whole Measures CFS* and a promoted ideal of community food work. This includes ones "physical, social, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing" (Abi-Nader et al., 2009, p. 17). Each of these aspects is a core concern to these practitioners. Organization A's prescription produce program addresses this need directly. The program is a fifteen-week program that includes education classes, grocery store visits, health check ups, and a free weekly prescription of produce. The produce is grown on the

[6] Healthy people were explicitly referenced as a value 17 times. "I think health in the big holistic sense of mental, emotional, physical health." "So kind of thinking about like we can help coordinate healthy experiences that are also really positive in your community. How does that make you feel? So like personally that probably makes you feel good because you're eating better food so it's kind of changing how you physically feel, but also you're with community members that you know, you're doing this alongside you're family, our farm stand is out in the middle of the community."

organization's 7-acre organic farm. This program engages people in a social encounter at the produce stand to promote connectedness. The practitioners perceive the community-based location of the produce stand to be extremely important to the embeddedness of the program in the lives of community members. The location of the farm stand provides access to all community members and opportunities for relationship building.

The practitioners connect people to the food system by bringing participants to the farm where their produce is grown. For many participants, this is their first time out of the city, and seeing the farm can be a magical experience. The practitioners also host many volunteers from the larger urban community on the farm. The practitioners spoke to health not only from a physical standpoint, but spiritual and emotional health as well. They expressed that food connects us to Creation, and is essential to holistic wellbeing.

> So we had a group from the city come out, like 45 young girls between the ages of maybe 8 and 15 or something like that, and I think probably 95% African American- there were a couple of Hispanic kids. I remember when we had that staff meeting that was my event for the week because I happened to be the only one there that day and I was getting to walk around with these girls, some of who had been at the farm before, but they start off kind of like, "Eh I don't really want to be here," but then by the end they really like it and they're excited and it's seeing that kind of transformation in people and realizing there's something in all of us that kind of likes that kind of work. That we enjoy it, and even if it's just for an hour every once in a while or something like that, there's something about it that people seem to be drawn to. –Taylor (Appendix J, lines 329-338)

Casey was the most drawn to healthy people throughout her narrative. She continually made reference to the body as a gift from God and the need for each person to be nourished to be their best, most successful self.

> Whatever community I live in, I want to live in a community where everyone is nourished in food, learning, in friendships and relationships; where everyone feels nourished and healthy and whole and that they have the building blocks to create the life that they want. I know that's kind of abstract but to me that's kind of the ideal community where no one is lacking in nourishment. –Casey (Appendix M, lines 325-329)

Vibrant Farms[7]

Vibrant farms as a field was discussed to a lesser extent. Although the organization's farm is essential to its mission and operations, only two of the practitioners gave mention to the farm. The organization continues the legacy of the farm and its mission by hosting interns each growing season. These interns are involved in farming operations, and also volunteer management and education. There is also a newly hired volunteer coordinator to oversee volunteer scheduling and work days.

Sustainable Ecosystems[8]

This field of *Whole Measures CFS* emerged more in the collective reflection session after I provided the practitioners with the framework. Eddie stated this was important to him for the theological values of creation care and stewardship. Taylor also found meaning in this value and felt a responsibility to be the voice for those organisms without one, such as the microbes in the soil. He also expresses his responsibility to the earth:

> So her thing was that our primary vocation as a people is outlined in Genesis and that is to serve and to keep the earth. It's been translated a lot of different ways, but for her our vocation as a people is to do that. When I read it the first time I remember thinking, "You know one of the only ways I can think of for me to be able to do that is through growing food for people." –Taylor (Appendix J, lines 256-260)

Thriving Local Economies

Through my inquiry I found limited indications of work directly addressing the local economy. The primary example I could find was the youth-run farm stand the organization

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[7] This theme arose three times in the interviews.
[8] I found this theme four times during the interviews.

provides. This program is aimed at teaching and encouraging youth entrepreneurship. Sustainable development is a piece of this field, and Onyx spoke of sustainable change in her narrative, which to her meant democratizing the ability to participate in the food system. Taking this forward, she finds importance in that everyone in the community has the economic means to partake in a dignifying transaction to acquire food, and not rely on emergency means.

Acknowledging Culture in Programming[9]

Data here suggest that cultural appropriateness is not only important during program implementation, but program planning and evaluation as well. The practitioners realize the limits on their personal ability to affect the change they desire since they are outsiders to the community. Terry is the only employee considered an insider to the communities since she grew up in one, lives in one still, and now works as a community advocate.

I was fortunate enough to sit in on a meeting between Eddie, Casey, and Terry as they discussed focus groups they will be holding to inform a cultural competency toolkit. They provided me with a handout with a summary on developing cultural competency/humility in food and nutrition education. Proposed focus group questions include inquiries into participant's desired characteristics for a "food/nutrition educator." As an illustration, the first handful of questions relate to the degree to which participants desire an educator to be from their community, share their culture, or at least have an understanding of their food culture and traditions. The questions then move on to what they believe a good "food/nutrition educator" to

[9] I located 24 explanations of cultural appropriateness and humility in the interviews. One illustration from Eddie is, "I mean we really shouldn't be the ones running this program right? We're outsiders in the neighborhood and in most cases middle class white people so that's a challenge for us is moving forward how can we continue to build the program that is more just and more empowering and provides opportunities for direction and leadership from within the community."

be, directly related to past experiences. Questions then move onto the participants' comfort zone around trying new food and how they make their food choices.

Eddie provided me with a paper that he bases his interpretation of cultural humility from. The paper is titled "Cultural humility versus cultural competence: A critical distinction in defining physician training outcomes in multicultural education" by Tervalon and Murray-Garcia (1998). The main points I interpreted from this article are for the practitioner/health care provider to value participant/patient knowledge and continually engage in self-reflection and critique to understand how power imbalances and un/intentional processes of homophobia, racism, classism, and sexism may influence practice. This sounds remarkably similar to critical reflection as ideology critique, although surprisingly no authors that I refer to in this thesis are referenced in the paper. This paper emerged from the health sciences rather than food systems and community development work, which flavors its discourse and is missing the depth and historical layers as to why cultural humility is even an emergent concept.

Eddie is wrestling with his position as an outsider and a sense of illegitimacy to even be designing a toolkit about cultural competence and humility in these communities. However informed about this concept he may be in theory and practice, he does not have the historical realities that these community members hold and therefore has an undoubtedly differing frame with which he approaches the concept. To me, this is the essence of cultural humility and demonstrates the constant self-reflection and critique called for in a critically reflective practitioner.

> There are so many folks doing nutrition work now and health work and food work, and often they look like you and I and don't come from the communities that they're working in, and so we want to put together some toolkits basically, some resources for folks. It's difficult to do it. Because let's say we do focus groups, who says we're even suited for or even capable of asking the right questions and knowing what the right questions are to ask? And just because we

> get some questions from a group in one neighborhood, does that mean it's going to be true of somebody from the neighborhood across the street? –Eddie (Appendix I, lines 421-428)

Again he states:

> Somebody used the phrase cultural humility for me, which is a whole area of research that I wasn't even really aware of, even though it's an area that what they're talking about makes perfect sense to me, but I never had a word for it before. I kept looking at it through the language and lens of cultural competency, which I think there's still something to. I think they can be separate and both valuable. But that was a big "aha" moment to me was to stop thinking about how can you make sure that you're programs are totally understanding of this unique identity of this specific neighborhood, this specific culture, and how can you be more reflective on your role as an outsider and that all the research and planning and focus groups in the world are never going to make you understand what it's like to live in poverty, what it's like to live in the south side of this city or anything else. So how can we have that humility and reflectiveness built into our programs? So I think that was a big piece. –Eddie (Appendix I, lines 256-267)

For these practitioners, cultural competency and humility go beyond the types of food that are being offered; it extends to learning needs, scheduling of programs, and assessment and evaluation approaches. Culturally competent or humble delivery of a program means that it will be interesting and engaging to the participants. The following excerpts illustrate the care that goes into the crafting of programs for these practitioners.

> I always ask participants how they learn best. And when they tell me how they learn best I just use that. I'll ask, "Okay do you like people to talk to you or do you like to do hands on or would you rather just see pictures?" And once they tell me then that's it. –Terry (Appendix L, lines 134-136)

> So I think nutrition education can be boring, and it can be really dry, and it can be even preachy and condescending about what you should eat and shouldn't eat, so we try to work hard to let the kids discover these things on their own and have experiences that are memorable and really help them think in deep and profound ways about what they eat and how they can eat better. –Casey (Appendix M, lines 146-151)

Research Question Two: How, if at all, are these practitioners performing critical reflection in their faith-based practice?

Brookfield (2009) identified four lenses through which to perform critical reflection; autobiographical, participants' eyes, colleagues' experiences, and theoretical literature. I used these four lenses to classify the ways in which the practitioner's practice reflection. Each of the four lenses emerged in this narrative inquiry, and I discuss them each in depth here.

Lens One: Autobiographical Reflection[10]

Despite personal experience often being tossed aside as "anecdotal," it is highly valued as a source of insight into practice (Brookfield, 1998, p. 198). The meaning and response a person generates from his or her experiences have an influential and lasting affect (Brookfield, 1998). Autobiographical reflection involves analyzing our own experiences to attain a better understanding of why we may teach or deliver a program in a certain way. It can reveal predispositions we may have that explain why we act or react a certain way in practice (Brookfield, 1998).

Much of the practitioners' autobiographical reflection implicated privilege, cultural appropriateness, and ensuring the work aligns with the practitioner's faith-based values.
The interview questions prompted the participants to contemplate and then articulate the values that are driving their work, which for some was more difficult than they had expected. They were surprised by the fact that they could not provide a clear response immediately, were glad for the chance to think about the questions, and look forward to thinking about them more in the future.

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[10] There were 26 instances of autobiographical reflection in the interviews. The reflection session offered the space for both autobiographical reflection, peer reflection, and reflection through the lens of their clients in the case of Terry's perspective.

Eddie demonstrated the most frequent reflection on how the organization's work fits into larger social structures and institutions. One of his motivations for joining this organization was his questioning of the structures that create power and privilege divides.

> I think one of the reasons I left my last job, though it was a great job, was that the piece of that job that was paying the bills the most was running a holiday assistance program, an Angel Tree kind of thing where you get people signed up for specific gift requests or a family adopts that family for those kids presents, and it's a beautiful thing. You get warm fuzzies, but it's just a Band-Aid program right? It's not creating any lasting change and there's no reason to believe that because of that gift that same family won't need to be in that line next year and it doesn't address the sort of systemic issues of why that person is in that line to begin with, or why that person who was giving the gifts was in a position of power and privilege to be able to give those gifts. –Eddie (Appendix I, lines 29-38)

He continues to struggle with the potential friction between doing charitable work while at the same time engaging in justice-driven models to prevent the need for charity in the future. He recognized the dualism as a necessary piece of the work.

> And so as I was in that job I was realizing more and more that I wanted something that allowed me to not ignore those immediate needs and those warm fuzzy moments, but allow us to find models to work upstream and get closer to the source and help folks swim as we're saving babies, if that makes sense. –Eddie (Appendix I, lines 39-42)

This vignette occurs again a few lines later:

> This allows me to work in a similar population but in a more systemic way and try to address justice models more than charity models, although certainly part of what we do is old-fashioned charity, so then that's problematic in some ways. –Eddie (Appendix I, lines 52-55)

Another point of reflection was on the limits of the programs the practitioners are currently running. Eddie laments that the farm is only a three-season farm and when the program is not running they do not offer the community members any supports to access healthy food. He sees this as a lapse in their responsibility to their participants. Moreover, Casey regrets that the Food

Investigators program she developed lasts for five weeks and then there is no follow up with the participants. She fears that the youth that participated will feel discouraged. Casey says:

> I think also you do this five-week course with the kids and it really impacts them, but then what's the follow up? I wish there was a program where we could have them come back again for another round, and that's one of the things that we're sort of brainstorming; how it's great that we have this five-week intensive experience, but then what? Eddie is really good with helping me think about, "How do you make kids feel empowered and not discouraged when the food that they are given might not match up to the type of food that we're encouraging them to eat?" We teach kids these ideas, but then if the food that they're served at school or the food that they're served at home or if they're taken out for fast food every night because that's what their family eats- I think that's a challenge. (Appendix M, lines 226-235)

These reflections demonstrate how the practitioners are toiling with their privilege and power to be able to give and take away a program from these communities.

Lens Two: Our Learners' Eyes[11]

Reflection through learners' eyes means just that: seeing oneself from the perspective of a pupil or participant. It can be a jarring or edifying experience, depending on one's readiness to grapple with a positive or negative reaction to one's words and actions. Oftentimes what seemed an inconsequential word or glance can leave a last impression those under tutelage. Peering at oneself through the learners' eyes is a challenging task because often those under leadership are reluctant to be completely honest to those with authority (Brookfield, 1998). Anonymity is a helpful promise, and established trust over time improves the chances of honestly. The practitioners gather anonymous data about their programs via survey evaluations. Now, since there is trust built up over time between the practitioners and participants after a few seasons of the program, the practitioners have conducted a more extensive interview evaluation. These

[11] This theme occurred 10 times. More than gaining the perspective of their participants on the program, the practitioners often tried to place themselves in the shoes of their participants to see the world through another's eyes. This had a great affect on the practitioner's.

sources of information provide points of reference for the practitioners to engage with their participant's perspectives. Eddie describes the evaluation process for the prescription produce plan:

> We do extensive exit interviews and surveys, and in fact the ones we did in a public housing neighborhood on the south side were the first ones we recorded, which were awesome. So we get the transcript of folks saying, "This is what worked, this is what didn't work." –Eddie (Appendix I, lines 289-292)

The following excerpt exemplifies the level of honesty and comfort that trusting relationships can afford a practitioner and participant. Shared trust can clearly result in a participant offering a practitioner an undiluted and useful portrayal of his or her work through the participant's eyes. This makes space for reflection and subsequent improvement.

> So I think getting to know each other so you're at that level where they can say, "What are you talking about?" or I can say, "You eat chicken feet? Like what?!" and where it's not something like, "Oh I have to be super culturally competent" and, "Oh they're going to take it offensively." Just being able to get to know each other and having those relationships build was probably the most rewarding part. –Blaire (Appendix N, lines 175-180)

Lens Three: Our Colleagues' Experiences[12]

Talking with colleagues about work opens one up to a once cloaked version of events he or she has experienced. Brookfield (1998, p. 200) elaborates, "as they describe their own experiences dealing with the same crises and dilemmas that we face, we are able to check, reframe, and broaden our theories of practice." As an organization, there seem to be ample opportunities for collegial reflection and discussion. At a staff meeting I attended, one of the farmers in residence asked how the staff keep going because it seems like this work makes such a small difference and they are up against monstrous

[12] This was specifically mentioned five times. There were further examples of this happening in action during the collective reflection session as the practitioners reflected together.

systemic issues. They discussed how their work straddles charitable and systemic work, and how that is currently a good thing because they get lots of praise for their work, which serves as motivation.

During the meeting Eddie referred to Parker Palmer in his critique of society's obsession with efficiency and effectiveness, and because of that we take on smaller and smaller tasks. The farm manager added that he has been asked how supporting his work is any different than donating fresh produce to a food bank. The staff wants to be able to address people who have these concerns and people with various philosophies by communicating how their model is the best model. Overall the practitioner's know their work is making small changes in the lives of a handful of community members, but have hope in the rippling out of those changes to affect increasingly more people. Considering the historical roots of racism and inequity in our society, alternative food work is in its infancy, and Eddie is excited that taboo words such as these are now entering the discourse of people who do the work. Despite the challenges and concerns that surfaced during reflection together, reflection with peers served as an edifying experience where the practitioners motivated each other to keep their spirits up because the work is worth it.

In the case of Blaire, critical reflection served to connect her values to her practice, which strengthened the meaning she attributed to her work. Her friends and mentors were crucial to her internal and external processing and reflection. It also assisted her in elevating reflection to a reflexive habit, which fits within Brookfield's (2009) conceptualization.

> There were ten of us and I think among the ten of us there were probably a core group of five or six that got really tight and really started wrestling with the

> bigger questions of why we were doing what we were doing, which I think really helped me kind of see the connections between what I believe and why I was there and helped me understand, "Oh I came from strong communities so that's why this is important to me" instead of just saying, "I want to volunteer." Having that core group of five friends and also our mentor was really formative in my learning how to reflect and then getting into doing that as a continual process. Appendix N (lines 59-66)

The collective reflection session was extremely conducive to praise and accolades between the practitioners for each person's skills and contributions to the organization. Discussion around the farm work revealed an admiration and appreciation between the various staff for each of their skills and responsibilities, but also how switching roles would be very undesirable. The conversation at the focus group followed like this:

> 5:…just getting people excited and exuberant about the possibilities of good food and then changing the environment so that they can act on that excitement, that commitment, and desire.
> 2: To me that sounds so much more difficult that growing the food. Because I know where my skills are.
> 3: You don't want me at the farm.
> 4: No, first bug I'm gone. Hot, rain, you got a tough job on you.
> 6: Well you know how you were talking about not feeling connected or not feeling like the program stuff is within your scope? That's totally me at the farm. I'm like, "Wow, we grow a lot of stuff out here!" Even if it's just lettuce.
> 1: I do think that's a part of our organizational goal or truth that we try to acknowledge and we've done more and more of that I think in the last year, which is individually as an organization having people that have very different skill sets, that can do what they do very differently knowing that it's very complex problems

Additionally, there is synergy happening from the many relationships and partnerships between organizations and communities in the region. These partnerships are building the collaborative capacity of its members (Weber & Khademian, 2008) as well as their capacity to make change in the community.

Organizing Collective Reflection[13]

During the focus group there were numerous instances where a practitioner would offer a new insight to his or her colleagues. When Eddie described his theory of change and what he believes the organization should be doing for social change Onyx perked up and stated that she really liked his description, and will remember it. Furthermore, there was disconnect of the understanding of the work between the farm based and city based practitioners.[14] More group reflection could offer a forum for the organizational frame to encompass each person's views and skills, and remind each practitioner of the successes and challenges of various pieces of the work.

> I think it's really easy for your week to all of the sudden become a to-do list so then you stop thinking about why you're doing your work so then your work starts going in a different direction. Then at the end of the week you're kind of like, "Wait I don't even remember what the point of the program is." You're just like, "I just need to get this produce out!" You forget, "Oh I'm doing this because it's a justice issue." So you kind of forget the whole right and privilege framework. I think it would definitely be helpful to start checking in with that more often… –Blaire (Collective reflection session)

> I feel like we're just inundated all the time with more and more possibilities and they're all exciting and you want to do all of them, but you can't do all of them well. I can't, so maybe for me it's keeping these guiding principles somewhere visible so I'm reminded when a new opportunity comes I can be like, "Does this fit with what I care about? Does this further what is most important to me or us as an organization?" Just a check. It feels like we're just trying to figure out one thing when we're trying to start another thing when we're trying to follow up with another thing we didn't finish. So values and guiding principles are important, and I think I can do a better job of checking in with those more often. –Casey (Collective reflection session)

> For me it was realizing that I need to think through a little more carefully like you know, some of the questions that you asked just reading some of my responses I was like, "Wow that's a pretty rambling response there" but like thinking about like you know, something as simple as if you ask me why do I do what I do? –Taylor (Collective reflection session)

[13] This meaning arose four times in the focus group.
[14] This meaning came up four times in the focus group, and once in an interview.

Each of the above excerpts indicates the need for critical reflection even amongst the hectic schedules facing these practitioners. The practitioners express the desire for a regular process of "checking-in" with one's values to be reminded of the motivation and meaning behind their work. The above quotes adhere to Brookfield's (2009) description of autobiographical reflection. They also incorporate the concept of organizing reflection presented by Reynolds and Vince (2004).

> I think that's one of the challenges with our organization as a whole is you know I think we do a good job of staying pretty focused seeing as we could be doing community gardens…there's like 12 different things we could be doing to reach out and still sort of being within our scope, but for the most part we stay pretty focused and still two very different competencies- the programs that we run in the city and the ability to manage that farm into different sort of sets of best practices and two different places 45 minutes away from each other, so how do you as an organization make sure that your staff can have that shared vision and shared understanding without pretending that every staff person needs to have six different skill sets and understand six frameworks for their job to be done well. That poses a challenge for an organization like us that wants to both do the farm stuff and the city stuff. –Eddie (Collective reflection session)

Lens Four: Theoretical Literature[15]

As one of Brookfield's (1998) four ways to engage in critical reflection, I was curious about the extent to which the practitioners used literature to inform their practice. This type of reflection on theoretical, conceptual, and grey literature was not absent from the practitioner's narratives or collective reflection session. During a meeting between Eddie, Casey, and Terry, Eddie handed me a journal article by Tervalon and Murray-Garcia (1998) about cultural humility that he frames his understanding. Further, the practitioners cited the authors Sally McFaye, Michael Pollan, and Wendell Berry. Some of these authors have been critiqued for ascribing to a white privilege frame for food systems work. Also worth mentioning is that none of the

[15] I noticed four accounts of using literature as a foundation for reflection.

practitioners had heard about *Whole Measures CFS* when I presented it to them at the collective reflection session. There is also limited attendance at conferences. This is something Eddie wants to integrate more into their professional development plan. Taylor told Eddie about a conference he would like to go to in the future, and spoke of his experience at a nonprofit growers meeting, but he did not indicate any intersection with academia. During the collective reflection session the practitioners expressed a touch of disdain for theoretical and academic thinking as it was something they unfortunately did not have much time for.

> I'm married to an academic so I know that's hard to get them out of the idea stage and into the on the ground stage. It's good to have the guiding principles, but they inform action. –Casey

> My second theme that I noticed and it sort of speaks to my general life right now- in the last six months I've tried to wrestle with and pick apart privilege in new ways. So that came up in a variety of ways in my responses and I think that's overall good and healthy and will help me be better at what I do, but I think when you take it to the extreme and you're spending- let the academic and the theologian spend a lot of time you know wrestle with that. We all need to be picking it apart in our own way, but if you're so caught up in that you're not going to be able to just acknowledge who's around you and doing the work that they need to be doing. So striking that balance. –Eddie

Here we see how theory can inform practice, but to the practitioners it can be counterproductive to spend one's time dwelling on the theoretical foundations of the work rather than getting work accomplished in the community. Praxis, in this sense, is a time intensive and profoundly personal exploration of one's sociopolitical location and role in wrestling with theory, getting work done on the ground, and where those two binaries may interlace and synergize. Through reflexive habit making, the performance of theory could become integrated into practice. Blaire continues this conversation at the collective reflection session using her values as the foundation and grounding to her work rather than the theoretical literature. She also brings with it the question of the significance of the work if it is not in line with her values.

> I think it's really easy for your week to all of the sudden become a to-do list so then you stop thinking about why you're doing your work so then your work starts going in a different direction. Then at the end of the week you're kind of like, "Wait I don't even remember what the point of the program is." You're just like, "I just need to get this produce out!" You forget, "Oh I'm doing this because it's a justice issue." So you kind of forget the whole right and privilege framework. I think it would definitely be helpful to start checking in with that more often and thinking, "This isn't worth doing if I'm not doing it well" kind of thing. I don't know if that's absolutely true, but kind of checking in with, "Is this worthwhile if it's not being done in a way that's authentic to what I believe?"
> –Blaire

Research Question Three: How do these practitioners treat the presence of hegemony as a specific and critical element of community food work?

The concept of hegemony is pivotal to Brookfield's conceptualization of critical reflection as ideology critique discussed in Chapter Three. Hegemonic assumptions and beliefs often lurk under the veil of our subconscious and are camouflaged by our thoughts, actions, and words that are seemingly benign or even beneficial. However, hegemonic assumptions and beliefs inherently work to serve those with more power; often our oppressors. Brookfield (2009) identifies the "dark irony" of hegemony as people take pride in actions governed by the very same assumptions that serve to entrap them (p. 301). These practitioners are working to challenge hegemonic assumptions they, the communities they serve, and the greater public hold about how the world works and how society is structured. There is incredible nuance and variation in the weight of this goal from practitioner to practitioner, but the organization's trifold goals of improving access to healthy food, building community, and increasing the self-sufficiency of those involved all boil down to restructuring the way systems and people in those systems fare in the distribution of privilege and opportunity. White privilege was the most headily discussed hegemonic assumption; each practitioner addressed race in his or her interview.

Challenging Hegemony Through Community Food Work[16]

Specific hegemonic assumptions surfaced frequently when the practitioners mentioned ideas of not accepting reality as it is now, and educating participants in order to begin questioning their realities and demanding more possibilities and opportunities. The practitioners challenged dominant ideologies of patriarchy, white privilege, capitalism, and income inequality. The narratives reveal a primary goal to raise public awareness about injustices by providing the public with new experiences and relationships. This is a strategy to bring hegemonic assumptions to light and successively challenge them. The practitioners also emphasize how they deliver their programs in a manner that is more sensitive to the socioeconomic and cultural context of the communities they serve than many other organizations do.

Hegemony of White Privilege[17]

White privilege was a central concern shared by the practitioners. Most of the practitioners acknowledged white privilege and struggled with how best to use it for social change. Two dominant meanings of privilege emerged and were corroborated by Eddie in his narrative analysis. These are acknowledging white privilege or "power," and the practitioners recognizing that they are fortunate to do work that they find meaningful.

Race and racism are circling back to the forefront of American consciousness as explicit acts of violence. This overt racism although significant, is not the dominant vein of racism today (Bonillo-Silva, 2014). Instead, a more covert and often unrecognized racism is responsible for the racial oppression we see today. This covert racism is seeping into allegedly socially just alternative food work, which is now being critiqued for its Whiteness (Guthman, 2008; Slocum, 2007, 2006). Many authors, including Bonillo-Silva (2014), regard racism not as a solely

[16] This theme arose fourteen times.
[17] I identified this meaning twelve times. Eddie chose this as one of the themes from his narrative.

ideological or attitudinal phenomenon, but as a structure. This means that racism is a network of relations at social, political, ideological, and economic levels that define the opportunities for various races. Racism is argued as an inevitable force that organizes racial relations in society (Bonillo-Silva, 2014); the salient point being can we rearrange those relations for racial equity? Since the practitioners overwhelmingly were searching for ways to grapple with their white privilege, and subsequently leverage it for good, I thought an investigation into racism and Whiteness would be pertinent to understand where the practitioners fit within the present discourse. Varying degrees of this contemplation and discourse emerged throughout the inquiry. I was offered several stories of being struck by one's own privilege while interacting with program participants at the public housing communities.

> I think definitely the privilege part of having to come to terms with like, "I'm a privileged white girl that's trying to do good things at the right communities" is really challenging. I mean in this city no matter what underserved community you're part of it's probably not a white community, which was really challenging because coming from a more rural place I identified with a lot of the communities I was serving. –Blaire (Appendix N, lines 181-185)

The practitioners do not take their privilege for granted, and express that they feel "lucky and blessed" to be able to do this work[18]. They openly understand that not everyone has an equal opportunity at pursuing their desires.

> So I have been lucky and blessed not only to have every advantage in my backpack but to also be able to see that that's not an accident. That why I'm here is not an accident and that there are systems propping me up that allow me to be here that as a result I feel a responsibility when able, to be a part of dismantling those systems, and creating just, verdant, and equitable communities, to use the NPR Foundation. –Eddie (Appendix I, lines 76-80)

Kivel (2007) explains the dominant ideology of equality in the United States and how the few examples of low-income or marginalized individuals finding economic success serve to blind us

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[18] I identified this meaning four times, and Eddie identified it as well in his transcript analysis.

to the true racial inequity our systems and institutions create. These practitioners have some understanding of the fallacy of this myth and that many others are not as lucky as they are, for very intentional reasons.

> I think my parents certainly first and foremost were the most influential; and then obviously by virtue of my grandparents. They are probably the most influential in how I view work and how I want my personal life and my professional life to be blended together in part of this sort of fabric that makes sense and that they are connected and that I feel really blessed to have a job where all of the things I go to in the evenings that may technically be work like a meeting I have to be at or a presentation or an event, I would probably be there anyway given the chance. –Eddie (Appendix I, lines 108-114)

> Being part of that I think sort of instilled in me a belief that I could do that too; that I could do something really good, and like I said I just feel really lucky and really fortunate and blessed to have the opportunity. I don't feel like it comes along often. –Taylor (Appendix J, lines 237-239)

There was a feeling of incumbency among the practitioners as people of faith to acknowledge their privilege:

> So I think that's a big piece of what drives me is a belief in justice and equity and a feeling of responsibility to acknowledge my own privilege and figure out ways to wrestle with that and be a small tiny part of creating more equitable distribution of not only resources but of privilege. –Eddie (Appendix I, lines 80-83)

I noticed as practitioners were speaking about their experiences that they both explicitly and implicitly indicated that their work was bringing them outside of their comfort zone[19]. The practitioners tended to embrace this as a necessary aspect to doing the work they were called to do and value it as a personal growth opportunity. Relationships between the practitioners and the community members lessened the discomfort immensely.

> At the end of last year, I went to one of the prescription farm stands and got to actually interact with people and they came and asked questions and stuff, and I was surprised by how uncomfortable I felt. There was a little African American boy sitting on the porch. He was the age of one of my kids and I was so drawn to

[19] This meaning emerged 11 times

> just go over to the porch and be like, "Hey man what's going on?" and mess with him like I'd mess with one of my kids, but I didn't do it. And I was thinking, "Would I have done that if that was like a little white kid in the country? Definitely." But I didn't feel comfortable, and so there's a part of me that recognizes that I'm not really that comfortable in that community, probably because I'm not there often enough. I don't know anybody. I haven't formed those kinds of relationships. –Taylor (Appendix J, lines 471-480)

> So I said to a friend who was sort of my spiritual mentor, "I want to do the hard stuff. I'm tired of just sitting around in our Sunday school class just talking about this shit, let's go do something. It has to be hard." Because it does- it just has to be hard. We have to get out of our comfort zone, and I guess I can't make anybody else change, but I have to figure it out for myself. And then the path just started opening. I can't say that I specifically sought anything out or did anything, I just said, "Yes" to things that got put in my path, and so this organization was sort of my baby step in that direction. They were dealing with those hard issues, and it wasn't too scary, you know? I didn't have to go alone into the housing projects, I didn't have to get to know people too intimately, but it was a step in the right direction and it gave me a little bit of awareness that I didn't have before. It just helped me start learning. –Onyx (Appendix K, lines 117-128)

> So it was a matter of getting to know families that have evolved in that setting and then learning different cultural norms and stuff like that. Because in the communities I grew up in you didn't yell- like it just wasn't a thing. So even though it was funny because I would draw a lot of comparisons between these two communities- it didn't look like the neighborhoods I grew up in, but we're kind of similar because all military bases are pretty standard as far as all the houses looking the same- but I just remember standing at the farm stand once and people were yelling and there were kids everywhere and like no moms are outside so I think I'm responsible for these kids. I didn't really know. –Blaire (Appendix N, lines 137-145)

By engaging with these new experiences, practitioners are learning about themselves and their boundaries in their practice. One of the benefits of doing the work is the ability to push those boundaries and be better because of it, as reflected through the excerpt below.

> I think our involvement is not just to help others, but to help ourselves become compassionate and more patient and more aware and conscious. I don't see this work just to help others. I feel like I'm also helping myself and my family- all of us be better. –Casey (Appendix M, lines 360-363)

As mentioned previously, the practitioners questioned the appropriateness of even doing work in low-income communities since they are outsiders and carry with them a different historical and social lens; therefore they embody assumptions they might not even be aware of. The tacit nature of these assumptions can have unforeseen effects on their practice, and their sensitivity to this is clear in their commitment to obtaining community input about cultural appropriateness.

> I mean we really shouldn't be the ones running the program, right? We're, with the exception of Terry, outsiders in the neighborhood and in most cases middle class white people. And not that there's not lots of common ground and commonality, but we know that ultimately we're not the best suited to be creating systemic change. It's going to ultimately come when folks like us don't come in and try to fix something or provide a program, but provide supports for folks to run their own programs. –Eddie (Appendix I, lines 246-252)

They also very much value the presence and active participation of Terry as a community member, colleague, and past program participant. During my observation and the collective reflection session Eddie often asked for her insights, and the example from the collective reflection session below is a demonstration of the value placed on her presence and opinions.

> Terry this is more for you, what do you think if this report was handed to somebody who has participated and met us coming in and out and read the way that we're talking about the work and in some ways talking about the communities that we work in? How would you imagine that would feel or does feel? Not to put you on the spot to speak for everybody at the community, but I think we're not just talking about the community here, we're talking about a variety of communities that we serve, but you are the only person in this room that is actually in that community on a regular basis 40 hours a week, whereas for the rest of us it's somewhere between one hour a year and 10 hours a week max. –Eddie

Assumptions about white privilege infiltrate numerous people's realities without their notice. Most of the practitioners are acutely aware of their privilege and deal with it regularly as a part of their practice. Eddie stated that in the past few months he has been finding new ways to pick apart and deal with his privilege. Eddie also gave me a tour of the city and spoke to the

intentional displacement of African American communities during city planning. He is not timid to speak his mind and share the information he has with others who will listen. The practitioners actively and intentionally bring conversations about race into their work.

Eddie even left his previous charity-oriented job because he recognized the hegemonic implications of that work. Here a balance is important to note: he was not inherently demonizing charity models, but expressing the need to be working towards systemic change at the same time. Several times he spoke of the old proverb of saving drowning babies, while working upstream to prevent babies from falling into the water in the first place. This dual approach to the work does not ignore the immediate need, while at the same time challenges the systems that created that need and works to build new more just and fair systems.

The experiences illustrated above disarmed the practitioners and disrupted their previous conceptualization of themselves in relation to the participants. This disruption then fed into a re-evaluation of why the practitioner's reacted they way they did, and how they might alter their interactions or perceptions in the future. I see also the place of dialogue and relationships tempering the two parties- practitioner and participant- towards a subject-subject relationship rather than a subject-object relationship where the object must be acted upon. The two are acting together to create a new social arrangement that challenges hegemony. As Freire (1973) says, to know something is to change it, and by knowing each other, the practitioner and participant are changing each of their realities.

Hegemony of Class Assumptions[20]

The practitioners recognized certain assumptions about class in their narratives. Onyx brought up the point that many people assume that low-income people do not like

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[20] This theme arose three times.

to eat unhealthy food. In the following excerpt Onyx is commenting on the assumptions that middle and upper class individuals make about low-income individuals about their eating habits, and second she is lamenting how unfair it is that these communities do not have an acceptable grocer to purchase food from. These two assumptions about low-income individual's shopping and eating preferences must be revealed to the greater public in order to reframe people's perspectives on low-income communities.

> Because people say, "Oh poor people they don't want to eat fresh vegetables." "Well really? How would you know that? Because they don't go to McDonald's and order fresh vegetables? Or the WaWa on the corner?" Actually it's not even as nice as a WaWa. So I think creating awareness all around is what we need to do. –Onyx (Appendix K, lines 328-331)

Onyx brings to light hegemonic assumptions that middle class people might hold about low-income community member's dietary preferences. These assumptions probably exist because of a lack of familiarity or relationship with people who live in these communities. The assumption permits the apathy that more privileged people feel because they believe that the low-income residents do not even want their food access to change. It also prevents those with certain privileges from questioning why low-income communities have such limited options, not to mention why the communities are low-income to begin with.

Additionally, Terry noted how low-income people are often ignored or disregarded because they are poor. They then challenge these assumptions by trying to enter into their programs and into relationships with their participants as humbly and open-minded as possible.

> I think especially in this neighborhood a lot of people are overlooked just because I guess they are poor and they're here. –Terry (Appendix L, lines 11-13)

Hegemony of Charity[21]

The practitioners are aware of the potential problems and pitfalls of charitable work, and are actively searching for ways to deliver their work in radical, justice-oriented ways. The hegemony here is that charitable work makes people feel as if they are making a difference, and in one respect they are because they are filling an immediate need, but it can become hegemonic when people begin to ignore the reasons for the need and accept it as a normal element of society.

> I think one of the reasons I left my last job, though it was a great job, was that the piece of that job that was paying the bills the most was running a holiday assistance program, an Angel Tree kind of thing where you get people signed up for specific gift requests or a family adopts that family for those kids presents, and it's a beautiful thing. You get warm fuzzies, but it's just a Band-Aid program right? It's not creating any lasting change and there's no reason to believe that because of that gift that same family won't need to be in that line next year and it doesn't address the sort of systemic issues of why that person is in that line to begin with, or why that person who was giving the gifts was in a position of power and privilege to be able to give those gifts. –Eddie (Appendix I, lines 29-38)

> So maybe they'll start to question some of the status quo, because it can't just be us bringing food from the farm for the next twenty years. It really has to be more systemic. –Onyx (Appendix K, lines 322-324)

Hegemonic Language[22]

This meaning occurred more rarely than others but it was significant to me because it demonstrated the power of framing. In the excerpt below, Eddie is struggling with the USDA's definition of food deserts and the stigma that it attributes to those living in those communities. This immediately sets up a negative frame through which to view the people in these communities and their food opportunities. Eddie prefers the term "healthy food gap" because it

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[21] This theme arose nine times.

[22] Two practitioners recognized hegemonic language use in the words "poor" and "food desert." Although this was not a dominant theme, I found it interesting and worth mentioning as a case in point of critical reflection on one's language use.

has a less negative connotation and is defined by more than the location of a grocery store and access to transportation.

> We try to make sure that we're supporting programs and partners and models and neighborhoods in the way I describe it as a healthy food gap. The term that more commonly gets used is food desert. We're trying to move away from that language for a couple reasons. One is it's really stigmatizing language as is often the case, right? We have "low-income" neighborhoods, "high-crime" neighborhoods. We put these negative identifiers on neighborhoods and say this is what this place is. That's not really healthy or helpful to have that sort of negative stigmatizing language around a community based on that, and that language is all defined around one or two key stats that the USDA has basically helped identify this as a food desert neighborhood because of access to healthy food and transportation. But also I think a problem with that phrase is if all we care about is food deserts, then that's all we're really going to look at is grocery stores, because that's how we measure food deserts. And so then the only way we're ever going to fix the problem is just by building grocery stores and that doesn't capture the complexity of the problem, nor does it capture the solutions. Because the solutions are going to be mobile farmers markets, healthy corner stores, a variety of other solutions that won't change that color on the food desert mapper. -Eddie (Appendix I, lines 193-208)

Critical Consciousness Raising

Whole Measures CFS delineates the revealing, challenging, and dismantling of injustice in the food system as a key component to the field of justice and fairness. This work engages participants, practitioners, and community members alike in new experiences that bring them to grow and learn. Revealing and challenging power in a system is a learning process (Brookfield, 2009), and new experiences that give one pause and induce reflection can be a first step to that revelation and subsequent challenge. Much of this learning occurs in practice and through new experiences.

Establishing Trusting Relationships[23]

Trusting relationships are an essential component to dialogue and critical consciousness raising. The practitioners in this study take a number of steps to create trusting relationships with their participants and other community members and organizations. The communities in which these practitioners work are upwards of 97% African American, and most of the practitioners are outsiders. Cultural competence, humility, and appropriateness were all concepts discussed by the practitioners. There were numerous mentions of "meeting participants where they are" and ongoing evaluations of "what worked and what didn't" in a program. These concerns were an effort to provide meaningful experiences with the program, guided by the wants and needs of participants. Despite the fact that I conducted this research during the winter, I was lucky enough to observe a volunteer day on the farm with a group of underserved youth. Eddie began the day with an icebreaker activity where he asked everybody to name his or her least favorite vegetable. This served to level the playing field and acknowledge that everybody has foods he or she likes and dislikes.

Relationships are a key piece to cultural appropriateness and authenticity. Several practitioners emphasized the significance of relationships to the mutual understanding between practitioners and participants. The following excerpts indicate that once a trusting relationship is forged, the space opens for dialogue about similarities and differences among one another. The practitioners intentionally set the stage for safe dialogue between them and the participants.

> This isn't a black guy saying, "I can't possibly have anything in common with what a white guy eats" when we realize at the end of the day it's just personal. We could look exactly the same and have very different food stories and food relationships." And so we also provide a sort of a safety net to basically say, "Hey this is food and we all look at it differently so let's spend some time talking about our own relationship with food and how that might impact the way we want food

[23] I counted seven instances of this concept.

> education, the way we want food distribution, and the produce that we want to try." –Eddie (Appendix I, lines 411-417)

> A lot of people out here get most of their vegetables from the can. I bet 99% of their vegetables come from the can, and the ones they do have fresh they don't eat properly. So just getting them to understand that by building trust so they try new things. I love that we do that with them. And we meet them where they are and don't say, "Hey you ate some sweet potatoes but you destroyed them with all this sugar and butter" and stuff like that. The educators will say, "Okay well that's a good start that you are trying the potatoes. Let's use half the sugar or half the butter." I like that they do that. –Terry (Appendix L, lines 20-26)

The trust and safety established through these exchanges and relationships can lead a person to assimilate a new perspective of looking at his or her situation. These new perspectives can help a person to gaining a higher conception of his or her reality; a critical consciousness of the situation. As noted by Gramsci (2005) and Eagleton (1994) this is a significant step in challenging hegemony.

Ideology Critique in the Communities Served[24]

There are a number of instances of new experiences extending beyond food in the community food work of these practitioners. These new experiences include community members interacting and building new friendships, and children and youth seeing and interacting with people from outside of their community. The practitioners believe that some of these new experiences could help the community members, young and old, to begin questioning why they have little and others have more, a preliminary step in transformative reflection (Cranton, 1996). The excerpts below indicate that according to the practitioners, the participants are gaining knowledge about social inequity and new ways of perceiving the injustice behind it. New relationships with food and society can be imagined through community food work.

> The little children really enjoy it. They're like, "Those people are rich!" Do you know that she has a house?" Even though the program is mainly about vegetables,

[24] I interpreted 26 statements engendering this meaning.

> just to see people from other places is great for them. –Terry (Appendix L, lines 164-166)

> Well maybe with our work there is some awareness when as a family from the communities we serve goes to the farm stand and meets these white volunteers and the staff from Organization A, they start to say, "Oh these white people aren't so bad. Maybe I could live in a neighborhood with them. It wouldn't be so bad." And they might say, "Dang I love eating fresh corn. Why can't I go to the store and buy fresh corn?" So maybe they'll start to question some of the status quo, because it can't be us bringing food from the farm for the next twenty years. –Onyx (Appendix K, lines 317-323)

> She told me how much this course has impacted what she eats and what she wants her family to eat, and it's those beautiful moments of feeling like, "Wow investing in, giving these kids new ideas, new understanding, new capacities can really make a difference in their lives and their family's lives." It's helped transform how they eat and think of themselves and food. –Casey (Appendix M, lines 154-158)

> At the store they're looking at the prices and they always compare the way the vegetables look at the store. That makes me really proud. I'm serious because I can be in there and they'll be like, "The farm stand stuff don't look like this. Look at this!" Just hearing people say, "Hey their potatoes taste better." Or somebody swears that their collards are way better. My mom loves them. She's like, "You know those organic collards are better. I don't know what they do with them but for some reason they taste better." And so just hearing people say that brings joy to me; that I'm a part of something that's really helping them. –Terry (Appendix L, lines 153-160)

One particular quote that deeply affected me was a Onyx's exhortation to individuals to get angry about their situation of oppression. To me this revealed her acute awareness of the injustice of the situation, and her frustration that many individuals have accepted their position in society, thereby perpetuating hegemonic beliefs about the world.

> I think that people have to get angry. I work with a lot of teenagers from the Southside and Northside from the housing projects, and they're not angry. They don't realize how unfair it is. Some of them do. Actually some of them *really* do, but they're a small number. –Onyx (Appendix K, lines 78-81)

The learning occurring here likens to various conceptualizations of empowerment. Knowledge, in the context of empowerment, can be defined as, "an understanding of the relevant social context, including the power dynamics at play, the possible routes to goal attainment, the resources needed, and ways to obtain them" (Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010, p. 653). Alsop et al. (2005) define empowerment as, "the process of enhancing an individual's or group's capacity to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes" (p. 17). Perkins and Zimmerman (1995) speak of empowerment as, "a process by which people gain control over their lives, democratic participation in the life of their community, and a critical understanding of their environment" (p. 570). The term empower was used by three practitioners and tended towards usage in the sense of bestowing power upon others. Eddie is striving for the programs to be empowering to create more leadership within the community.

> So a challenge for us is moving forward how can we continue to build the program that is more just and more empowering and provides opportunities for direction and leadership from within the community? I mean that's a barrier, that's a challenge, and we haven't done it yet. (Appendix I, lines 252-255)

This use of the term reflects Perkins and Zimmerman's (1995) definition. The significance here is the desire for control by the participants over their own lives, and specifically here the program. Casey uses empowerment in a different way:

> We recognize children usually are not the main decision-makers of what they buy and what they eat. They're eating a lot of their meals at school and their parents buy things, but we've tried to empower them saying, "When you can choose, let's try to choose the best you can." (Appendix M, lines 177-180)

And again here:

> Eddie is really good with helping me think about, "How do you make kids feel empowered and not discouraged when the food that they are given might not match up to the type of food that we're encouraging them to eat?" (Appendix M, lines 230-232)

Here, there is no allusion to bringing power differentials to light or a critical understanding of one's environment. The purpose is to provide children with the power to make a choice to eat healthier food and turn that choice into the action of eating healthier food. This description therefore more reflects Aslop et al. (2005). Blaire was the third practitioner to mention empowerment during the collective reflection session.

> I think that there are plenty of empowered people or people that want to be empowered to take ownership over their food. So just bringing the resources to make those opportunities available. –Blaire

This again reflects Aslop et al. (2005) since the participants will be the one's to take control of their food choices. There is no mention of a critical awareness of the environment and democratic community participation. Empowerment here is about turning one's desire into a choice and an action with outcomes.

Ideology Critique in the Wider Community[25]

Churchgoers and other community members are integral to the farm operation, and the practitioners voiced their gratitude for the volunteer hours. There is another purpose to engaging the broader community in their work though. More than simply feeling the need to reach out to communities in need, many of the practitioners take it upon themselves to raise awareness in the wider community about the injustices their neighbors face on a daily basis. The practitioners took on this charge by offering formal presentations, conversations, and volunteer experiences to community members, and specifically church members whom they are affiliated with. Several practitioners raise concern that more community members need to have this critical awareness.

> People really don't understand poverty. People really don't understand homelessness. They don't really understand what the day-to-day is like. We just have no idea- until you really expose yourself and learn and ask questions. You know when you visit a friend or a student in a homeless shelter, or drop them off

[25] I attributed this meaning to seven comments made by the participants.

> at their apartment, or you have students who have murders on their front porch, or whatever, you just know it's not the world that you're growing up in or living in and you need to figure this out. And it's got to stop. It's just not fair. –Onyx (Appendix K, lines 129-135)

> I felt like it was a unique opportunity and we were uniquely positioned to be able to have conversations with folks about food and food justice that may not previously be having conversations. A lot of churches are just now starting to think about food as part of their social justice programs, their mission programs, their ministries, and I was excited about the opportunity to be able to be a part of that conversation with churches about how we can be more faithful as it relates to our food, and the way that we do food programming and the way that we think about our food system. –Eddie (Appendix I, lines 67-73)

> So those relationships have to form because until we realize that poverty, crappy education, and ridiculously unhelpful public transportation affect real people, real families, real children who are not *other* then I think we'll be more motivated to stand up for them and our community. And we'll start to realize how much stronger our whole community will be if it's fair for everybody. –Onyx (Appendix K, lines 104-109)

Summary of Findings

The narratives revealed each of the fields of practice from *Whole Measures CFS.* The three most prominently featured fields of practice from these narratives were justice and fairness, strong communities, and healthy people. The values discussed reflected the responsibilities of the practitioners in their role with the organization. Missing was an explicit concern for thriving local economies, yet I found evidence of this through document analysis. The roots of these values stem from faith-based ideals and beliefs for many of the practitioners. The practitioners' performance of their work incorporates concepts of food justice and community food security. They see the problems with charitable work, but still operate in that realm because the need is great. Their goal is to simultaneously break down the structures and barriers that are causing the need for charitable work. The way the practitioners framed their work was extending beyond

providing food for their participants to creating opportunities for these individuals to improve their wellbeing in a variety of ways.

Secondly, the practitioners practice critical reflection through each of Brookfield's (1998) four lenses. The most common representation of critical reflection was autobiographical reflection. There were opportunities for peer reflection at staff meetings and informally through conversation. Moreover the practitioners gained insights into their work through program evaluations and conversation with their participants, thus focusing the participants' lens. Lastly the practitioners used theoretical literature not only in the form of peer-reviewed journals, but looked to theological and conceptual writings on food and faith. The collective reflection session revealed the desire for more frequent reflection and the little explored potential of reflecting on practice. The practitioners most commonly reflected on their struggle with white privilege and the systemic inequity their participants face. They see their work as a venue for revealing this inequity and challenging people to change the present conditions of oppression and inequity. This indicates an active effort towards raising a critical consciousness amongst themselves, the participants, and the wider community.

Critical reflection can illuminate hegemonic assumptions and beliefs. The practitioners are struggling with their positionality as a result of their place among a plethora of social hierarchies, and are striving to use whatever privilege or resources they have to dismantle those structures. Positionality in this sense speaks to race, class, gender, and other aspects of identities as markers of relational positions rather than fixed qualities (Maher & Tetreault, 1993). The organization overall is wrestling with the politics of who gets what and why in an environment where there are not many models to scaffold their work. Community food work in this context is

touching the brink of new frontiers, and bringing issues of race and poverty to the heart of the work.

The practitioners are using their work as a means to challenge hegemony by raising critical consciousness. The specific hegemonic beliefs they discussed included charity, white privilege, class, and language use. They indeed are endeavoring to raise critical consciousness by building trusting relationships to spawn dialogue and engage in new experiences to begin questioning and challenging the status quo. Particular hegemonies the practitioners are addressing are white privilege, social class, charity, and discourse surrounding the communities they serve.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This narrative inquiry has provided a look into the experience of faith-based community food work practitioners and the role critical reflection plays in their work. Next I will outline the most prominent lessons and conclusions I have drawn from this inquiry. Because community food work in inherently value laden and makes normative claims, critical reflection can play a pivotal role in revealing the motivations for the work and whose interests it serves. The narratives created have revealed significant insights into: 1) the discourse of community food work from a faith-based perspective, 2) the role of critical reflection in the practice of community food work, and 3) the use and refinement of narrative inquiry as methodology. Below I will discuss each of these topics in more detail and offer implications for both theory and practice.

Adult Learning In and Through Community Food Work

The narratives here present community food work as a rich locale for adult learning. Adult learning in these terms is not as self-explanatory as it sounds. Adult learning (and education) is a politically driven agenda aimed at enhancing one's ability to work for a democratic-socialist society. It is about equalizing control of access to wealth education, health care, creative work, and collaborative decision making processes (Brookfield & Holst, 2011). So how are adults learning about new social, economic, and political arrangements through community food work? I heard several accounts of this learning from the narratives offered.

I want to share two distinct points of adult learning that the practitioners underwent. First is the creation of a program for which there were few examples to build from. Eddie shares how

difficult this was in the beginning stages as they were trying to create a program that provided food and educational supports right in the communities where the participants lived. He and the other practitioners involved at the time had to learn to navigate the uncharted waters of innovative program planning. Secondly, the practitioners have to learn how to communicate with a population they may have previously been lesser connected to. Blaire and Taylor share this sentiment in their accounts of the yelling in the community that was jarring at first, and the story of feeling uncomfortable approaching a young African American boy in the community, respectively. These learning experiences are iterative since social relationships are always in flux, and in the case of adult learning, edging towards a democratic-socialist arrangement. This arrangement would entrust people with control over the decisions that affect their lives (democracy) and promote labor that is an enjoyable part of personal fulfillment (socialism) (Brookfield & Holst, 2011). Although these descriptions of democracy and socialism are simplified, they provide an alternative perspective on the highly stigmatized politics of socialism, and misconceptions of democracy.

Community Food Work Discourse

This research reveals that practitioners of community food work do not necessarily use one alternative food discourse to frame their practice. Rather, they use guiding values to generate practices they deem acceptable. Furthermore, they see a higher purpose by creating God's kingdom and carrying out God's commandments for performing justice-oriented work. Framing, as described by Fairbairn (2011), can be an aspirational project, serving to name potential solutions to an identified crisis; in this case the crisis is the brokenness of the current agrifood system. Community food work could be a more appropriate frame because it encompasses values from many alternative food discourses to guide the movement. As we can see from these

narratives, community food work as performed by one practitioner can encompass multiple alternative food discourses. Additionally, Abi-Nader et al. (2009) attempt to build a holistic discourse through *Whole Measures CFS*, which encompasses values that span across many alternative food discourses including community food security, food justice, local food, and sustainable agriculture.

I have been mulling over Eddie and Terry's description of potential future directions for food security in the communities where they work. In his narrative, Eddie expressed that food security will not ultimately come from a grocery store moving into a neighborhood, but will come from things such as mobile markets and healthy corner stores. These can be described as alternative food practices. Terry's hope that her community will have a grocery store soon emerged at the collective reflection session, and does not necessarily blend into alternative food discourses. To me, this indicates different approaches to build a food secure community, and links to Cadieux and Slocum's appeal to the many faces of food justice practice. I see the divergence as a significant point because Eddie is the executive director of the organization and therefore has certain trainings and experiences that shape his perception of reality. Terry is from the community where the organization works and has different trainings and experiences that color her reality. Guthman (2008) finds similar suggestions that African American residents of food deserts want conventional grocery stores. This begs the question: What is the ultimate goal of this work? I see the ultimate goal as creating opportunities and possibilities for a more socially just food system. There is not an end goal of what that will look like but an ever-changing process of creation. Just as Michael Hamm (2009) states, food insecurity is a "wicked" problem and does not have an endpoint, so is community food work as a continuing practice to ameliorate

the problem. This ever-changing process implicates critical consciousness raising as a means to change, which I will speak to more in a latter section.

Community food work is a very slow process, and these narratives suggest it requires patience, dedication, and recognition of the small victories. Further it takes time to cultivate deep and trusting relationships. The practitioners do not disregard the structural inequities that are worsening food insecurity, and they are diligently working to oppose them. Although the practitioners are up against structural inequity, they find meaning in the small changes they have made with individuals and families they serve. Overall the practitioners explained their understanding of change coming from strong communities, which take time and capital to build. The nexus of people and organizations in the region are creating an environment for incremental change to snowball. Casey brought up policy change on the local level to better support the programs she is implementing. She and Eddie sit on the city food task force, which does some policy work, and Eddie sits on a council for statewide policy work. Perhaps community food work means supporting communities to be able to transform their own food system, whether that means erecting a full sized grocery store, or a mobile farmers market, or another desire.

From these narratives, community food work practitioners acknowledge challenges and limitations, but do not let those dictate their commitment to change. Peters, Grégoire, and Hittleman (2004) emphasize how important it is to practice a pedagogy of hope, and I see this pedagogy embodied in the practitioner’s stories. In practice, hope can come from the small victories that encourage and give life to the sometimes tumultuous and conflicting work of community food work. The practitioners know their work is not easy and they do not expect it to be, but celebrations of small battles won can spur them can inspire ever greater victories. Although this work is laden with critiques of current social structures, the practitioners do not

permit themselves to become bogged down in the problems or issues to the point of paralysis and surrender. Rather they take an assets-based approach and seek to infuse the communities where they work with supports to leverage leadership for change from within the community.

Affirming approaches for social change tie into the community capitals framework mentioned in Chapter Two. The work these practitioners are performing mirrors what Emery and Bregendahl (2014) state about practitioners investing social capital to grow other assets. The practitioners see strong communities as the crucible for social change, and so invest in social capital by building relationships not only in the communities where they work, but also between organizations in their region. This will bolster organizational and community social capital in the spiraling-up effect (Emergy & Flora, 2006), where an increase in almost all capitals can result from a community development project that invested primarily in human, financial, and social capital.

Transcending Critiques of Alternative Food Practice

Slocum (2007) categorizes alternative food work under four umbrellas of practice: local farming support, nutrition education, environmental advocacy, and social justice for oppressed groups (generally either farmworker rights or hunger and food insecurity). I find the work of the practitioners in this inquiry falling under the nutrition education and social justice frames. Guthman (2008) criticizes alternative food work for remaining prisoner to the neoliberal regime of market solutions and bringing good food to low-income people in the name of empowerment and health. While I find remarkable likeness in how the practitioners talk about their work and the discourse of food justice, I find it also curious that only two of the practitioners conceptualized their work as such. While the subjects of their work are similar to countless other organizations doing alternative food, the approach and humility the practitioners entered their

work with combined with their critique of structural inequity, elevates their practice as an informative window into food justice practice in the United States context. Much of the work they do would fall under Guthman's (2008) characterizations of nascent food justice work including growing fresh produce, providing it at below-market prices, and educating residents about the food. This narrative inquiry reveals that there is positive potential in these projects and that they are not necessarily creating patronizing relationships. Guthman (2008) names the problem in many of these endeavors as the "effect of white desire to enroll black people in a particular set of food practices" (p. 433). The practitioners are countering this by using their programs as a venue for dialogue and relationship building, and their constant effort to consider the perspectives of the program participants.

Despite the fact that I did not personally witness the programming in the communities, the stories of the practitioners were consistent in their impactful descriptions of the program, and are even further corroborated by the stories of Terry, who is a resident of a community they serve and a past participant of the prescription produce program. I had not entered this inquiry expecting to speak with a program participant, so this perspective although singular, is extremely valuable in understanding the impact on the communities and the relationship between the practitioners and the participants. I will further emphasize here the value the practitioners place on the opinions of those they serve, and their authentic and humble attempt to emancipate their practice from the whiteness of alternative food.

Although critiques of neoliberalism and capitalism are in no short demand, and even serve as a tenet for this thesis, Slocum (2007) suggests moving past those critiques to look for the possibilities community food work can offer. She wishes to see how racial difference and connection can be better understood through these practices. The narratives in this inquiry

provide portals through which we can view the sometimes messy and complicated, yet deeply rewarding interracial practice of community food work. This connection across difference generates friction. Friction lurks in the vicissitudes of relations with others and creates spaces for building or breaking down hegemony, and empowerment or disempowerment (Slocum, 2007). The friction is addressed in the approach the practitioners take to talking about food with African American participants and their effort to create a safe respectful space for dialogue to recognize difference and sameness.

According to Slocum (2007) whiteness transcends race and is an unattainable hope that non-white people aspire to. Whiteness is also a spatial delineation achieving distance from non-white groups and often distant from toxic or blighted spaces. The spatial environment of the public housing communities that the practitioners serve was a topic of conversation as Eddie gave me a driving tour of the city. He told me about the racialized history of the city and the intentional, and recent, isolation of African American communities. A goal of their work is to reduce this isolation and the lack of an "opportunity rich food environment" for the residents suffering this forced isolation. Many of the practitioners envision a community composed of mixed races, incomes, and ages. They are actively acknowledging the injustice of the present racial discrimination and exclusion from other parts of the city. They even speak to how many of the community members are excluded from experiencing environments outside of the city, and how trips to their farm provide this opportunity. Whether or not the practitioners realize this, even sharing knowledge they have had the privilege of attaining is racialized practice that could be slowly breaking down the barriers to power through knowledge.

The practitioners offer varying indications of their awareness of whiteness and white spaces, but overall their practice challenges the seemingly indelible lines drawn around

whiteness and non-whiteness. This means that community food work, in the context of this organization, is racialized practice and does not ignore the racial history and repercussions of it on spaces and as a result how people interact with their environments. Racial privilege is a central concern to the organization, as it is for food justice advocates in general (Cadieux & Slocum, 2015). However, their commitment to self-determination for the communities they serve draws upon food sovereignty discourse, albeit more from the consumption rather than production side (Cadieux & Slocum, 2015). The practitioners are not advocating for the community members to travel to white space to get fresh produce, such as a farmers market or co-op, but bring the food to their neighborhoods. They are not trying to penetrate white space with non-white bodies, but instead are trying to open spaces for equal opportunities to emerge for all races.

Guthman (2008) goes on to say that if one is to become an ally in anti-racist struggles, there is value in participatory action alongside people of color, and to even draw upon the resources of white privilege in that struggle. By leaving the comfort of white space, white people engage in anti-racist practice and have a clearer perspective on the contours of their privilege (Guthman, 2008). From their narratives, the practitioners are clearly attempting this anti-racist practice and are seeking ways to use their privilege as a point of leverage in the struggle.

Community Food Work as Community Development

The emphasis on strong communities throughout the narratives in addition to the multifaceted approach to social change reflects community development discourse. In fact, the organization calls its program “a regional food access and community development project” on its website. The work of the practitioners is aimed at increasing leadership and participation from within the community to make decisions that affect them. Anderson (2008) states how broad public participation like this allows an array of concerns to be debated and affect policy. This

political engagement has developmental potential for the community and the opportunities available to its residents. The passive consumer role that the residents currently play can be transformed through education and network building, which the practitioners are attempting to provide supports for.

Because the practitioners are trying to nurture leadership from the communities they serve, they are attempting to mobilize existing assets and transform them into capital for community development. The asset-based approach draws notice to the talents of individuals and social capital in the form of relationships (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). According to Mathie and Cunningham (2003) asset-based community development derives a sense of community, which then spurs active citizenship. This theoretical chain of events, should it occur as such in practice, could develop a community that has autonomy and authority in the decisions that affect its future. This is what the practitioners are attempting to do through their community food work. By building relationships within and outside the community, and fostering supportive environments for leadership to incubate, the practitioners are setting the stage for community driven asset-based development. Numerous authors support this work, and have asserted that the power to build communities lies within the hands of local people (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). The asset-based approach is reflected in the language the practitioners use as well to describe the communities they serve. They avoid using terms like "food desert" and "poor" and instead recognized the networks that are already present in the community create new ones.

In conjunction to developing relationships within the community, the practitioners are strengthening citywide networks by partnering with countless other organizations and serving on food system task forces and councils. Part of development, according to Brookfield and Holst (2011), is working with others to create collective movements and institutions. This is evidenced

through the collaborative disposition of Organization A as an institution and the practitioners as individuals. Mathie & Cunningham (2003) point out how social relationships are at the core of asset-based community development. This connection offers new possibilities for development as relationships are partnerships are forged in the name of community food work.

Theories of Change

If the purpose of critical reflection is to transform one's perceptions to create a more just practice to better spur social change, then ascribing to a theory of social change is imperative. Dupuis and Goodman (2005) call social change an imperfect politics with an emphasis on articulating open, continuous, reflexive processes to bring a representative group together to explore ways to change their society (p. 361). Perhaps not surprisingly, several theories of change were proposed during the focus group. However, I do find it interesting that practitioners with diverse theories of change work for the same organizational goals and vision. This may reach back to the solidarity forged between shared values and its significance to social and cultural capital despite divergent theories of change.

During the focus group Eddie shared his theory of change, which was a novel way for it to be expressed to Onyx. She very much appreciated his perspective. He explained that he believes immediate needs, such as hunger, cannot be ignored, but whilst still working to reduce the barriers that cause hunger, and eventually eliminate those barriers altogether. He sees systemic change as a necessary piece to social change. Blaire expressed a very different perspective on change during the focus group. She frames her work using a smaller, more localized view and does not necessarily think about how it fits into a larger vision of change.

Terry made several remarks alluding to an individual empowerment and community development approach as well. Casey sees the best strategy as a balance between community-based work and policy oriented work.

The practitioners have different yet harmonious theories of change, and regard themselves as change-makers to varying extents. The practitioners place strong communities as a precursor to social change, and individual empowerment and community development as a strategy to do so. This follows the premise that if we build strong communities, those communities can then have the capacity to assert demand for the change they desire; a healthy corner store, clean water, better public transportation, and so on.

Many of the practitioners expressed frustration on occasion about the seemingly small impact their work might be having, the systemic inequity the participants face, and the occasional lack of consistency in participant attendance. Many of the remarks about practitioners making small changes were concluded with a sense of contentment in at least touching a few lives.[26] This connects to the idea of agency offered by Brookfield and Holst (2011). This means keeping broad and long-term goals, for instance food justice, within one's sights, but setting shorter-term achievable goals to maintain a sense of agency and political empowerment.

I found a connection between the practitioner's values and their theories of change. Furthermore, I heard stories connecting faith-based values to *why* these practitioners work for change. The practitioners named influential Christian figures such as Mother Teresa and Jesus Christ as inspirations for the work they are doing, and strive to mimic their legacy. Moreover, as mentioned in Chapter Four, reasons for creating change resounded with hope of bringing God's kingdom to earth. For example, Eddie has Catholic values of caring for the poor, as well as a strong belief in justice and changing systemic inequity. His theory reflects these values in his

[26] Overall, there were four remarks about frustration, and four remarks about the work making small changes.

dual focus on addressing immediate needs while working to eliminate the cause of those needs. On the other hand, Blaire spoke most frequently of creating strong communities, and creating opportunities for individuals, which is reflected in her theory of change as helping individuals with changes in their lives rather than affecting larger systems.

Even more compelling was Onyx's emphasis on relationships during her interview. She believes in connecting people and organizations and removing the concept of the "other." Then during the focus group, her theory of change honed in on relationships and learning from and partnering with each other to form a more powerful social change front. Misselhorn et al. (2012) and Caton Campbell (2004) present similar theories of change that start with the individual to build strong communities, which serve then as leverage for wider social transformation. Crowe and Smith (2012) explain that embodied cultural capital determines how we view the world and what we think we can change. The practitioners each embody faith-related cultural capital, but still reach different conclusions about their ability to affect change. This is an interesting intersection and point of friction between the narratives. Also implicated here is Dewey's (1938) theory that people are embedded in a social context and that context influences how we interpret experiences and impute meaning to them. Because these practitioners have varying views on reality and what reality can be in the future, organizing reflection with them together can enable them to learn from each other's realities and ascertain new layers of refracted histories and experiences.

The connection between values and theories of change frames the alternative food system conversation as a moral discourse. The best way to approach these new systems is a moral decision that each person involved must grapple with. The narratives indicate that a

practitioner's values have a substantial effect on which approach he or she believes is most significant and impactful, and consequently where he or she will direct one's energy.

Narrative Inquiry as Methodology and Pedagogy

My interpretation of narrative inquiry is strongly influenced by Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) writing on the methodology. Further, I used Peters, Grégoire, and Hittleman's (2004) framework for practitioner profiles to engage the practitioners in the telling, retelling, and interpreting stories about their practice. This generative and interactive process created many useful and critical points of entry into story, through which new meanings could emerge.

The practitioners participating in the narrative interview provided the first layer of reflection in this research. The difficulty some of them had in providing what they believed to be adequate and articulate answers to the questions reveal that these are not questions the practitioners are thinking about in their day-to-day practice. Analysis of their own transcripts provided the practitioners with a second layer of reflection. This point of reflection seemed to come more easily to the practitioners because they had shaped their beliefs and practices into words, so they tended to seek out those points they already believed to be significant. One practitioner, Blaire, did express that she had a more difficult time identifying what was significant. The analysis she provided me was the most detailed as well. This supports the claim that critical reflection is a deeply personal process and although a deeply theorized concept, cannot be confined to a particular set of fixed capacities or activities. Another point to mention here is how Blaire thought she was not articulate in her narrative. This same concern came from most of the other practitioners. This was a new experience for the practitioners and seeing their thoughts transliterated into words was somewhat uncomfortable.

An emergent theme during the collective reflection session was the heavy reality of the lack of time the practitioners have to engage in theoretical thinking about their work. This idea became more crystallized as I reflected back on my methodology, and my sometimes-tenuous job of encouraging the practitioners to analyze their own transcripts. I noted how many of the practitioners viewed this an additional task to check off their list rather than a learning opportunity. In retrospect they saw value in the process, but were resistant to allocating their precious time to this extraneous task. Managing time, energy, and money is a labyrinth very familiar to nonprofit sector work. First, the practitioner's time is very precious and they are often balancing multiple projects and partners and have many loose ends they are just barely able to tie. I can understand the lack of enthusiasm and prioritizing when it comes to doing something they saw would serve me more than it would serve them. This then is my second point, where there is this chasm between the goals of academics and the goals of practitioners. Not that academia and practice are mutually exclusive, but historically research has been extractive of communities and knowledge was/is created in the academy and endowed upon communities. Practitioner research turns that knowledge creation paradigm upside-down and values their experience as a significant contribution to both theory and practice. Navigating this new relational space is a learning opportunity for the academic and practitioner to map together. I hope that partnerships like this grow and are better honed to serve each party equitably. Below I will discuss the practice of reflection on a regular basis as a means of professional development and organizational learning.

Collective Reflection as an Adult Learning Process

Reflection, transformation, and experience intersect at points of tension and sublimation. There is tension between the theories of how the intersection is governed individually and

collectively, and they can sublimate to create an ideal foundation for adult learning. Interestingly, Kolb (1984) believed that learning only occurs when there is reflection and internal processing of experience. Only then can one make sense of an experience and transform his or her previous understanding. Supplementing this theory with Dewey's (1938) assertion that we learn in relation to others and scaffold our own experiences on others', we can see how organized practitioner reflection incubates transformative possibilities. The practitioners in this narrative inquiry appeared to benefit from both individual and collective reflection, and specifically understood more clearly the values that drive them to do this work, points of cohesion and divergence between them and their co-workers, and the potential critical reflection offers for their practice.

Something further worth noting is the reflection that occurs when we convert thoughts into language. Here, we can begin to reframe our position as we attempt to persuade others with our opinion or argument (Raelin, 2004). This inquiry provided multiple points at which thoughts were converted to language and reflected upon. When the practitioners first had to construct their narratives in the interviews, putting their thoughts into words challenged them. Next, when they read through their own transcripts they were surprised at times by how they spoke about their work. They then had to convert their thoughts about their narrative into words in the form of a brief analysis. At the collective reflection session they took the written word and then converted it to the spoken word as they reflected on the excerpts provided. This iterative interaction with story generated novel and revelatory conceptualizations and realizations about the practitioner's role in food system change and social justice.

These steps indicate the affect of converting thoughts to words, and the difference between the spoken word and the written word in how one frames his or her practice. The fact

that the practitioners found disconnect between the ways they individually and organizationally frame their work in theory and in practice substantiates the need for more written and verbal reflection. The practitioners themselves stated such as well. There is clearly potential for professional development and organizational learning for emancipatory and humanizing work using collective reflection.

A Conversation on Empowerment

From the definitions and excerpts on empowerment in Chapter Four, we can see that there are divergent opinions on what exactly empowerment is among scholars and practitioners alike. Something in common between each of the practitioner's use of empowerment is that there is action involved to change the current situation. Cattaneo and Chapman (2010) continue that empowerment is embedded in context and its aim is to change a person's social influence, rather than only psychological sensations. This means empowerment must be action oriented and moves beyond people's feelings and perceptions of themselves and into the ways in which social context constrains or facilitates their efforts toward a goal. From a study conducted in 2000, Speer found that community members who had critical awareness of power and how to exert power to create change had higher levels of participation in their communities, which is consistent with Zimmerman's (1995) assertion that critical awareness and access to resources are essential to empowerment. Lather further corroborates this understanding when she defines empowerment as "analyzing ideas about the causes of powerlessness, recognizing systemic oppressive forces, and acting both individually and collectively to change the conditions of our lives," (Lather, 1991, p. 4).

I argue that the practitioners are creating opportunities for that critical awareness, or critical consciousness, to emerge in their participants. We can see this through the critical

questions they are encouraging in community members such as why they do not have a grocery store in their community, or better public transportation. Furthermore, the practitioners see their role as providing opportunities and supports for the community members to determine and demand their own goals. This removes the often misused determination of empowerment as something done unto another, and allows the community members to undergo the process themselves.

Connecting empowerment to non-formal learning, I now wish to articulate how transformative learning theory provides the setting for the process of empowerment to occur. Thus, empowerment can be framed as a non-formal learning experience. According to Mezirow (2000), transformative learning theory's focus is on how we learn to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, and meanings instead of those we have assimilated from others. It entails a level of social responsibility and clear-thinking decision-making. O'Sullivan, Morrell, and O'Connor (2002) define transformative learning as, "experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions….Such a shift involves our understandings of ourselves and our self-locations…our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race, gender…and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy" (p. xvii). This definition connects to many remarks from the practitioners about creating opportunities for community members, considering issues of race and class, and the potential for justice.

Mezirow (2000) outlines a series of steps a person would likely go through during a transformative learning experience. The process begins with facing a disorienting dilemma. This is the "pedagogical entry point" where people engage with their dilemma as a potentially transformative experience (Taylor, 2007, p. 183). Once a person decides to address their

dilemma they begin the transformative process by examining their feelings and assessing assumptions, exploring new roles and relationships, planning a course of action, building self-confidence in new roles and relationships, and reintegrating those roles and relationships into one's life in accordance to new perspectives. Transformative learning is a paradigm shift as one's vantage point changes and his or her world is seen through a new frame. However, transformative learning can often be traumatic and place a person in conflict with their intrapersonal and sociocultural relationships. The process of navigating this space and developing a new praxis is where transformation occurs.

Two practitioners discussed similar processes during the focus group. Eddie spoke of "cognitive dissonance" in his practice, and Onyx spoke of the "stages of change model." White privilege, poverty, environmental destruction, polarizing arguments, and their place in the shuffle are all disorienting dilemmas that the practitioners are grappling with at the moment. As they work through their role in each of these they will potentially reformulate their perspectives and frames as they develop a new praxis. This iterative process of change can be at the same time transformative and empowering. With this being said, the participants in tandem with the practitioners found empowerment through this community food work.

Critical reflection is a central process in transformative learning (Cranton, 1996). Significant learning can occur through interpersonal interaction and dialogue (Cranton, 1996; Freire, 1972). For example, Jarvis, as cited by Cranton (1996) believes the highest form of reflective learning occurs when individuals are seeking to achieve another's development. This description fits with the practitioner's goal of helping participants to develop their own community, in addition to their educating the broader community about inequitable conditions in their city. Cranton (1996) states that educators learn with their students as well as with other

educators and professional developers. Participating in this research could be considered a professional development experience. A crucial step for critical reflection to become transformative is a fundamental change in perspective. An exciting piece to this research was the collective reflection session where the practitioners had moments of budding transformative reflection.[27] It is probable that even more reflection occurred than was captured because so much reflection is unarticulated and intuitive rather than explicated (Cranton, 1996).

Critical Consciousness Raising and Pedagogy

Through their efforts to build and nurture relationships, provide public housing communities with the resources to access produce, and create leadership from within those communities, the practitioner's are working to raise critical consciousness all around. There is momentous potential within community food work to consider and re-consider one's own thoughts, biases, and assumptions that undergird not only the work, but also one's participation in the social labyrinth of the time. This reconsideration opens the interstitial spaces between one's created reality and one's previously unimagined reality.

Amidst many vehement criticisms of charitable work and its ineffectiveness in alleviating social problems, the practitioner's do not inherently demonize charity. Rather, they see the present need for it and are hopeful that their work will diminish that need for future generations. Eagleton (1994) states that certain social standpoints are more valuable than others, but when one class or population is bestowed as the finders of truth, a person confines him or herself to a paradox of then claiming to know what that truth is to be found. In the case of Organization A, I argue that melding together different social standpoints creates a higher collective critical consciousness and provides more opportunities to confront one's false consciousness. The

[27] I found eight similar mentions of a new perspective emerging from reflection on practice.

interactions between practitioners, participants, community members, and other service agencies create spaces for epistemological and ontological friction and new beginnings to emerge.

False consciousness is false insofar as it cannot punctuate the apparent frozen world to release the totality of tendencies and connections that underlie it (Eagleton, 1994). An ideology then, is false less because it is incorrect, but more so in that one is unable to move beyond the structural limits imposed by the social standpoint of the bearer him/herself. If we wish to advance our ideas we must break free from the frame of our consciousness; we must practice dialogue with others who embody a different frame. This is a way to change the reality we live in.

Community food work is a radical act. Radicalization implicates an increasing commitment to the position one has chosen. It is "…critical, loving, humble, and communicative, and therefore a positive stance," (Freire, 1973, p. 10). The radical believes him/herself to be correct but respects the right of others to have varying opinions; he/she instead tries to convince others to adopt this position through loving dialogue and acting in resistance to oppressors. The radical also subjects him/herself to reflection. According to Freire (1973, p. 15) radicals reject "assistencialism" as palliative social or financial assistance policies that attack symptoms but not causes of social ills. I cannot help but find the connection here to how Poppendieck (1998, p.5) describes the charity culture in the Unites States:

> "[Charity] is symptomatic of a pervasive despair about actually solving problems that has turned us toward ways of managing them: damage control rather than prevention….It works pervasively on the cultural level by serving as a sort of "moral safety valve"; it reduces the discomfort evoked by visible destitution in

our midst by creating the illusion of effective action and offering us myriad ways of participating in it."

Traditional charity in American culture, if conceptualized as assistencialism, often places the recipient as a passive object and stifles dialogue and the development of critical consciousness. Community food work has emancipatory potential in that it counters the passivity of charitable work and equips the food insecure with knowledge and resources to question the status quo and develop a critical consciousness of their situation. I see this progression of steps continuing with fostering agency and determination to then demand changes to their food system and in their communities. In this way they are imagining and enacting new realities that only they can create.

Critical pedagogy is a central tenet to critical consciousness raising. Paulo Freire writes beautifully and extensively on the topic in his 1972 book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and Henry Giroux tackles the topic extensively through many works. Giroux (2006) asserts that pedagogy is a political and moral act. Pedagogy should enable students to expand the possibilities of their understanding of a critical citizen and use their knowledge to similarly expand the possibilities of what it means to live in a democracy (Giroux, 2006). A critical educator or practitioner will be intentional about his or her power in practice to intervene in the world and affect the condition of human lives. What is more, critical practitioners recognize the weight of questioning and negotiating the relationship between theory and practice, in effect, how to perform their praxis.

Related to critical consciousness raising, critical pedagogy makes apparent the complexity and multiplicity of history. The subject begins to see refractions of history thereby piecing together a more comprehensive snapshot of the causal factors of his or her reality. The educator's task, as described by Giroux (2006), is to ensure that the future points to a more socially just world. The practitioner's personal and organizational work goals echo this

sentiment. Education in this sense is a project for "democracy and critical citizenship" that questions why work is performed in a certain way and whose interests it serves (Giroux, 2006, p. 32). I have one last comment on critical pedagogy through Giroux's eyes before I move onto Freire's conception; an educators prime responsibility is to instill in learners a belief that democracy is favorable and possible and that they have the power to shape it.

Freire's (1972) operationalization of the critical practitioner is one who can shepherd the oppressed to emancipation through *concientizacion*; a garnering of critical consciousness. The critical practitioner here practices a pedagogy of intersubjectivity where the educator does not take students to be "banks" into which to "deposit" knowledge, but instead as beings to become more human alongside. Education is the practice of freedom through dialogue. I see Freire's description of praxis as a right that each person has to claim, as a critical educator brings learners to the realization of their own power to name the world and thereby change it. In other words, a critical practitioner aids in the maturation of praxis "in words, in work, and in action-reflection" with his or her learners (Freire, 1972, p. 88). Here this again lends to the practitioner's community food work in their emphasis on dialogue, and helping others to realize their power as change-makers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Limitations

I recognize this study is subject to limitations as a qualitative narrative inquiry. First, the small pool of participants makes this study non-generalizable, although that was never a goal of this research. The number of practitioners who work for the organization as well as the number who were willing to participate limit the number of unique experiences shared with me.

Additionally, since the data collection period occurred during the winter, the organization's programs were not in effect. This means I was not able to observe the practitioners as they performed their programming. Moreover, there are programs the practitioners perform that they did not discuss in the narratives. This means there is work the practitioners are engaging in that I cannot speak to in this thesis. In retrospect, I wish I had asked specifically about these programs in addition to the prescription produce program, which everyone was eager to talk about. Nonetheless, the fact that this was the most visited program in the narratives could be telling about where the practitioners feel their energies should be focused.

I am challenged by the minimal amount of time I had to develop trust with the participants before we began the reflections. Peters, Grégoire, and Hittleman (2004) stress how important it is to develop trust with people before you engage in organized reflection. I was able to spend varying amounts of time with the practitioners and therefore had similarly varied levels of trust developed with them. I spent the most time with Eddie. I also saw Casey, Terry, and Taylor a few times and was growing to know them. Unfortunately the only time I was able to spend with Onyx and Blaire was during the narrative interview and collective reflection session.

Narrative inquiry is a time intensive methodology, which therefore limited the number of practitioners I was able to work with in the given timeframe. As described in Chapter Three, the methods used in this research took months as myself and the practitioners were in communication and separately analyzed the transcripts. More perspectives may have perhaps enhanced the richness of this study, and should be considered in the future.

The nature of this research blended the lines between the researcher and the researched. I strived to immerse myself in the experiences of the practitioner's while maintaining a researcher's lens, but the balance was sometimes difficult to achieve. In my field journal I

recorded accounts of not knowing how much to engage in activities on the farm and in a staff meeting, although the practitioners tried to be very inclusive of me. I also took note of this uncertainty when calculating how much of the conceptual framework to reveal to the participants. Throughout this inquiry I continually reassessed my position between being transparent about this research and the conceptual frameworks I was using, and concealing enough as to not influence the practitioner's narratives. This is an ongoing point of consideration for me, since Lather (1991) stresses the importance of self-disclosure on the part of the researcher in emancipatory research (1991).

Not unnoticed is the evanescence of these experiences. By this I mean that the accounts in this inquiry are representative of the participants and myself in a particular spatial, temporal, and social environment and will undoubtedly morph as those environments evolve. Furthermore, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) note the muddled distinction between fact and fiction in story and narrative inquiry. The "facts" that the practitioner's shared with me, and the characters represented in their stories are the only representation I was able to know; I had no history, memory, or images to construct the characters myself. The participants shaped themselves and others into characters derived from refractions of their memory, which is necessarily limiting in recounting a character or an experience.

Recommendations

This research made contributions to community food work practice and theory, and legitimizing practice as a space for adult learning, yet there is still much to be explored about the fruitful and diverse performance of community food work. Future research exploring this content area and methodology would prove useful for community food work theory and practice. The implications of this methodology on learning through individual and collective reflection should

be further investigated. I see this as an extremely bountiful locale to encourage more just practice, which is necessitated in many community food work discourses. Future research could also explore new ways of using narrative inquiry to engage practitioners in critical reflection.

Perhaps as significant as the stories that are told are the stories that are not told (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Of course my questions were prepared to guide the conversations in a general direction, but the choice of which stories were spoken and which remained silent was a joint decision between the participants and myself. Additional opportunities for reflection would enhance the richness of future inquiries and the conceptualization of organized reflection as an adult learning experience. Roberts (2014) suggests grounding the first narrative interview in story, and then subsequent interviews in the history of the person to better ground those stories.

Recommendations for Research

It will be important for future researchers wishing to elicit critical reflection to first build trusting relationships with the participants. Perhaps spending time conducting participant observations before the interviews begin would provide time for mutual trust to grow and provide a deeper level of reflection and openness. Future researcher could also engage the participants more closely in the analysis of the narratives to build even richer co-created meanings and increased reciprocity. This will take a lengthier time commitment from the participants, and may be impractical in many situations where practitioners are extremely busy with work related duties. Exploring ways to build this into organizational culture could be an additional avenue for this research to continue.

Reynolds and Vince (2004) challenge the predominant notion that reflection is an individual process, and present ways of thinking about learning through reflection as a collective

endeavor. Organized reflection with practitioners engages collective experience to inform individual experience (Raelin, 2004). Reynolds and Vince (2004) believe that the internal dialogue of reflection is stimulated and enhanced by external dialogue, and does not end once the external dialogue ends. Future research could better explore the impact of collective on individual experience by juxtaposing collective reflection sessions with individual subsequent interviews in a long-term study.

These interviews and reflection sessions could be arranged using different techniques to stimulate reflection, and I am excited by this prospect. I see space here for creative approaches to organizing reflection individually and collectively. I might suggest using an adapted version of Stephen Brookfield's Critical Incident Questionnaire, found at www.stephenbrookfield.com, to begin a collective reflection session. Furthermore, techniques and steps used in Appreciative Inquiry (Whitney & Cooperrider, 1998) would provide an assets-based approach to engage practitioners in autobiographical and peer reflection. These steps would include interviewing a colleague about an experience and then reporting back to the larger group. Appreciative Inquiry may also help to bridge the divide between the city and farm work that these practitioners are experiencing because it builds a collective vision and uses group process to choose steps to achieve that vision. Future research could incorporate even more participant analysis. I see this constructivist meaning making as incredibly appropriate and valuable to practitioner research. Further, Lather (1991) attributes such methods as an emancipatory approach to research. What I would recommend here would be to provide the participants several opportunities to engage in analysis and meaning making. The process could be designed in a dialectical manner where each party would build upon previous analyses such that both are active subjects in the vivifying of

knowledge (Lather, 1991). Furthermore, this process would improve the reliability of the study as described by Lather (1991)

Patti Lather (1991) discusses post-Marxist critical theories in her book about postmodern research and pedagogy. She notes the lack of exploration into the methodological implications of emancipatory social sciences, touting that such a science would help us to understand the misdistribution of power and resources and to change that distribution. She further adds that research aimed at critiquing the status quo and building justice is research as praxis (Lather, 1991). Research here can bring to life, or animate, knowledge instead of verifying truth (Lather, 1991). Community food work research fits into this frame since the work intends to question inequity and create new food system possibilities. This narrative inquiry illustrated research as praxis, but much more can be done to explore the emancipatory potential of community food work research.

Augmenting practitioner perspectives with program participant and community member perspectives could further illuminate the concepts of critical consciousness raising and praxis. Richmond (2002) explains that transformative learning can occur when groups come together to critically reflect, and this combined with the hope of using dialogue to assimilate perspectives outside ones own reality offers great potential for research to not only describe how this process occurs but to also contribute to its development. Understanding how community food work can raise critical consciousness was not an intent of this research; rather it emerged towards the conclusion of my formal analysis. Its significance to social justice and social change, and connection to critical reflection as ideology critique, warrants the concept further exploration.

Recommendations for Practice

This narrative inquiry demonstrated a need and desire for critical reflection on practice in this group of practitioners. Creating a culture of reflection would likely have strong positive effects on an organization and its staff. In terms of community food work practice, cognizance of the political connotations of the work can elevate the work to a radical performance of critical consciousness raising. Understanding this work's emancipatory potential and radically committing to ones values through practice can be an edifying and hopeful experience. This is likely not limited to faith-based practice, and similar recommendations can be transferred to practitioners from all value traditions.

This narrative inquiry has helped me to draw recommendations for community food work practitioners in their practice beyond the use of critical reflection. I will outline just a few recommendations for practitioners to consider. First, community food work in this context encompassed a holistic approach to food system and community change, taking into account numerous aspects of the human context of the work- an apt approach to the wicked problem of food insecurity. Along this line, since food insecurity is such a wicked problem and the inequitable systems practitioners are up against are of such a large scope, it appears important to remain hopeful and celebrate the incremental steps the work takes towards social justice.

Significance

The challenges to building community food systems span the breadth and depth of the social and economic facets of our nation and even world. However, there is great potential stemming from community level organizing around food systems. Community food work is premised on critiquing and transforming the current agrifood system into a more just system. Faith-based organizations are important players in this work because they are historically

involved in social welfare, and contain a wealth of capital useful to this work. This study had methodological, practical, and theoretical implications that inform the fields of community food work, narrative inquiry as methodology, and critically reflective practice.

The Organized Practice of Critical Reflection

The prudent community food work practitioner will engage in critical reflection to uncover the dominant ideologies and assumptions that reify the structural injustices in the food system and their practice. By using their work as a context for critical reflection, practitioners can better learn about and address the structural oppression and hegemony that infiltrates their work and the food system. Understanding the mechanics of hegemony in practice can help to deconstruct it. This can implicate needed changes in practice as well as policy. Furthermore, individual community food work practice is not frequently shared in this context, but can be a valuable tool for improving practice. By exploring the role of critical reflection in community food work practice, we can gain insights into the realities of what this work looks like. Additionally, reflecting and sharing practice stories can illustrate community food work as a legitimate space for adult education. Peters, Grégoire, and Hittleman (2004) discuss the use ascribed to practitioner reflection in their work with Cornell Cooperative Extension Agents.

This narrative inquiry revealed community food work as an asset-based community development project incorporating multiple alternative food discourses. Values were indispensible to the practitioner's work and served as a guiding compass to determine what fell within the scope of their work. I find worth in the shared values of the responsibility to serve others, steward the earth, and altogether work towards social justice. Although these values are not inherently faith-based, many of the practitioners found meaning through performing their faith-based values: their praxis. This creates unique social and cultural capital that the

practitioners can use to forge bonds between themselves and frame their work in a unifying demeanor to move towards a common vision. Reflecting together can increase the change potential of these capitals *vis-à-vis* shared space, time, and experiences. What is more, reflecting together can serve to humanize through recognition of struggles, challenges, and moments of triumph in practice. The need for more emphasis and value attributed to reflection on practice was evidenced in this research, and practical ways to enact such a culture should be considered.

Narrative Inquiry as a Generative Methodology in Community Food Work

Narrative inquiry is a little used methodology in food systems research, but I found it to be a compelling way to personify and frame the work. It placed the affect and experience of the work under inquiry and revealed new layers of the work through an iterative and generative process. Using narrative inquiry with practitioners acting as inquirers also created a more balanced portrait than the researcher alone would have been able to produce. Narrative inquiry here has also produced useful stories that the practitioners can continue to benefit from. These stories will live beyond their unchanged written form, while continuing to evolve in the minds and the practice of the practitioners. The ways they may influence the progression of their work are unknown and will ebb and flow as they are needed or useful.

Narrative inquiry as methodology is suited well for critical realist and constructivist ontologies and epistemologies, respectively. This methodology can still provide the rigor and triangulation expected from qualitative research. Narrative inquiry also provides the flexibility and fluidity to follow the meandering story lines of human experience. The ability for participants to engage with their words in written form was a consequential element to this narrative inquiry and benefitted the participants in addition to this research. This methodology

transcends a set of methods and concurrently functions as a pedagogical tool to instill critical reflection in various manifestations into practice.

Community Food Work as Critical Practice

Finally, this research added to the theory of community food work as critical practice and what that performance looks like. Although the experiences and analyses presented in this inquiry cannot be generalized to a broader population, they do hold transferability to begin connecting them to wider social behaviors and practices related to faith-based community food work. Lather (1991) describes the goal of theoretically guided empirical work as increasing specificity at the contextual level to illustrate how wider issues are rooted in everyday life. Theory then becomes an expression of feelings and experiences rather than frameworks overlaid on lived experience.

Hamilton and Appleby (2009) state that practitioner research has the potential to contribute to adult education and the use of practical knowledge in the academe. This research combines theory and practice in a way that can contribute to practical and academic knowledge, and integrate them for reflexive praxis. This may then subsequently inform critical practice theory. Community food work as performed by these practitioners laid out a critique of the currently racialized and classed food system and intentionality towards dismantling that system. Critical practice of these practitioners rested on relationships and community building in a way that humanized each other in mutual recognition of their places in the food system. Community food work also engages a constant self-critique where the practitioners engage with their own positionality as white middle class practitioners. Community food work is about more than food-it is about creating spaces and opportunities for people to realize their full potential as humans. However esoteric and idealistic this might sound, the practitioners still find hope in the small

changes they are seeing in the lives of the people they serve. Community food work is a practice of criticality yet one of hope that interlocks with the values one holds dear, and a vision for a just and fair future.

Through its incumbent hope and vision we can see community food work's emancipatory potential as praxis of dialogue, relationship, and love. Community food work, as demonstrated in this narrative inquiry, rests upon a bedrock of uplifting interpersonal relationships, whereby springs of opportunity and learning can flow. This is in the family of critical theory stemming from Marx (Geuss, 1981) and trickling down to Paulo Freire (1973, 1972) and Jürgen Habermas (Morrow & Torres, 2002). Many of the practitioners were unsure at how to create broader social change, but I found numerous indications of critical pedagogy as the answer they promote and practice. Further, they expressed uncertainty at how to scale-up food system social change, but I see a pedagogy of love, hope, and criticality as the response that they promote and practice. This pedagogy humanizes the "other" and builds community through a visceral commitment to values, self-honesty, and authenticity.

Final Remarks

This narrative inquiry was not meant to raise a certain set of practices as the gold standard for community food work, for that would be unfaithful to the nature of knowledge and reality in this study and in alternative agrifood movements. A more productive way to absorb this inquiry is to open oneself up to the many lines of narrative expressed individually and collectively by this group of practitioners. The wholeness of community food work is brought into focus by the myriad concerns and aims reflected in the snapshot of practice described by this narrative inquiry. The practitioner's praxis is messy, challenging, self-exploratory, and never

complete; it creates space for critical engagement with such work and reveals how they are working through issues of justice.

The narratives presented here nurtured cognitive space for the practitioners to begin thinking about their work in new ways, and create possibilities never before considered. These possibilities can continue to emerge through a thoughtful and personal praxis as the practitioners use their own experiences and the experiences of those around them to diligently craft a practice that is harmonious with their values of love and responsibility to people and the earth. They intentionally move in and out of spaces they occupy and the spaces their participants occupy to see the world from multiple vantage points, striving to complement their reality with the reality of others. Through relationship and dialogue the practitioners come to recognize the "other" as the "same." This is the beauty of the subject-subject dialectic- that we can come to know others and be known so deeply and personally that we simultaneously become more human. Praxis takes in the political, the social, the economic, but it does not remove the personal. Community food work, to these practitioners, will never be a stagnant set of practices, but instead a dynamic conversation with their values, hopes, and human connections to bring about ever increasing glimpses of the just future they each envision. By disrupting dominant narratives, imagining new social relationships, and posing challenging questions to themselves and others, these practitioners and critical pedagogues are on the frontlines of a social justice movement by raising critical consciousness.

The value of the sanctity of human life drives me to do this work. – Casey

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Contact Letter

DATE

Participant Name
Address

Re: Community Food Work as Critical Practice: A faith-based Perspective

Dear, Name

Greetings, my name is Becca Landis and I am a graduate student at Virginia Tech in the Department of Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education. I am contacting you about the opportunity to participate in a study about the experiences of faith-based practitioners who are currently engaged in community food work. This research will be conducted by myself under the direction of Drs. Kim Niewolny, Tom Archibald, and Susan Clark. The research has been approved by the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board. I am contacting you because of the work you have done with ORGANIZATION.

This study was developed to explore the role that critical reflection and values play in community food practitioner's work. I will conduct two interviews with you that are audio recorded. These interviews will last about an hour each. If you attend work events or meetings I would appreciate attending those as well- recording is optional in such meetings. Additionally, I will shadow you while working in order to observe, take notes and photographs, and have conversation. We will work together throughout the data collection process to fill in gaps we identify or seek further clarification of topics. I will compose a narrative of your work from which I will ask you to identify and write about three themes you find. After this, I will provide you with the narratives of your colleague's narratives for reading. Then, we will gather a group to reflect on the narratives together. I will come to ORGANIZATION to conduct all research so no travel will be required from you. I will work with you to find convenient dates and times to conduct this research. Data collection will occur during the months of November and December.

There are no financial benefits to participating- but there may be several indirect benefits. The reflection this research provides you could benefit your practice. Additionally, you will receive a narrative account of your experiences. I am also willing to compose other documents for publication that we agree on. I reserve ownership rights for the thesis document I submit based on this research as well as presentations and professional journal publications. Ownership of other documents can be negotiated between us. I do no anticipate any negative effects of this research on you.

Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate without penalty. Your identity will be kept confidential- only myself, my research committee, and other research participants

will know your identity, unless you consent to revealing your name in dissemination. Should you choose to keep your identity confidential, you will be given a pseudonym in all dissemination materials. All data will be kept on my password protected computer as well as an external device that will be locked in a cabinet or drawer. I will keep all data for at least three years.

For more information you can contact me at lrebec4@vt.edu or (845) 616-2383 and/or my faculty advisor Kim Niewolny at niewolny@vt.edu or (540) 231-5784. For information about your rights as a participant please contact the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board at (540) 231-4991.

Thank you so much for considering this opportunity. I very much look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,
Becca

Appendix B: Interview Script

Time: 60-90 minutes

* The following script is a guide for each interview. The questions within each section do not need to be asked in order or explicitly. Just be sure to note that every question is answered throughout the course of the interview. *

Thank you for taking the time to do this interview with me. This interview will consist of three parts. First we will talk about your background. Then we will talk about the work that you do at ORGANIZATION, and I will ask you to illuminate this work by telling me stories that are significant to you. Lastly we will talk about your reflections on your work. You can choose not to answer any question.

Part 1: Background

1. What is your job title and how long have you been in this position?

[Community Food Work]

2. What is it you do in your work?

[Whole Measures]

3. What most motivates you to do this work?
4. What types of values drive you to do this kind of work? How so/Why?

[Community Food Work]

5. What attracted you to this job? What were you doing before you came here?
6. Can you tell me about some key people and/or experiences in your life who deeply influenced why this work is important to you?
7. Since you currently work at a FBO, what role does faith play in your community food work?

Part Two: Community Food Work Practice Story

1. Describe a particular program/project that was/is especially meaningful to you:
    a. Let’s start with the first thing you did and go on from there.
    b. What was your role?
    c. What community does this work focus on? Can you tell me more about this community and the people who live in it?
    d. What was the most rewarding part? How so?
    e. Where did you find support during this program/project?
    f. Who were the key partners? What were their roles?
    g. What did you find to be challenging? Why?

h. How did you overcome those challenges?

Part Three: Critical Reflection on their work:

[Critically Reflective Practitioner]

1. Did you have any personal realizations during or after the project?
2. Can you tell me about a practice that worked really well? Why do think that was?
3. Can you tell me about some approaches/practices that haven't worked well? Why do you think they do not work well?
4. Have your approaches or practices to your work changed at all? Why? How so?
5. How did you receive feedback on, or evaluate, your work? What did you do with that feedback?

[Whole Measures]

6. What impacts has this project had on the community? Can you tell me about a specific example?
7. How did the actual outcomes compare to the intended outcomes?
8. How were these outcomes affected by the context of your work, such as the social, political and economic factors of the community?
9. Have any relationships and/or partnerships changed as a result of this project? Do you expect them to change?
10. At the end of the day, what kind of community do you want to live and work in? How might your work help build and sustain that community?

Appendix C: Collective Reflection Session Script

Time: 90-120 minutes

Script: I want to start by saying how much I appreciate you all working with me throughout this research and for taking the time out of your busy lives to be here today for this collective reflection session. Since you have all read the profiles we won't go in to depth about their content to start. Take a few minutes to walk around the room and read the quotes that I've posted from each of your narratives.

After everyone has circled the room, reconvene as a group.

Use the captions and each participant's experiences as the context in which to base these questions (adapted from Whole Measures CFS):

1. What are some quotes that resonated with you?
2. What are some overall lessons we have learned by reflecting on our work in these narratives?
3. What do we see as the main values driving our work?
4. In what ways do we see our work affect the creation of healthy, whole communities?
5. When you think about the future of this kind of work, what gives you a sense of hope?

Appendix D: Informed Consent Document for Participant Observation

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent for Participants

in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Title of Project: Community Food Work as Critical Practice: A Faith-based Perspective

Investigator(s): Rebecca Landis lrebec4@vt.edu (845) 616-2383
Kim Niewolny niewolny@vt.edu (540) 231-5784
Susan Clark sfclark@vt.edu (540) 231-3083
Thomas Archibald tgarch@vt.edu (540) 231- 6192

I. Purpose of this Research Project
The purpose of this study is to explore your experiences as faith-based practitioner engaged in community food work. I seek to understand the role of critical reflection in your work as a community food work practitioner. This research project is for partial fulfillment of a Master's degree. I will write a thesis based on the findings as well as present at least one conference and publish at least one peer-reviewed article.

II. Procedures
You will be asked to allow me to observe you during your work activities for the entire day. I will take notes during this time. If at any time, you do not wish for me to observe you, I will leave the room/premise until you would like me to return. I may also ask you to discuss the work you are doing and/or why you are doing it. Some conversations will be recorded. Data collection will occur in December 2014- January 2015.

III. Risks
There are not any apparent risks to participating in this research.

IV. Benefits
There are no anticipated benefits to you participating in this research activity.
No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality
Your identity will be kept confidential in all dissemination of this research. You will be given a pseudonym in all stored data. Your name will appear on a code file, which links your name to your pseudonym, but that file will be kept on a password protected computer and a file that will be locked in a cabinet. All data will be kept for at least three years. The research team will have access to all data and your identity. At no time will the researchers release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent. The other research participants will know your identity.

The Virginia Tech (VT) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study's data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

VI. Compensation
You will receive no financial compensation for participating in this study.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw
It is important for you to know that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free not to answer any questions that you choose or respond to what is being asked of you without penalty. Please note that there may be circumstances under which the investigator may determine that a subject should not continue as a subject. Should you withdraw or otherwise discontinue participation, you will be compensated for the portion of the project completed in accordance with the Compensation section of this document.

VIII. Questions or Concerns
Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact one of the research investigators whose contact information is included at the beginning of this document.
Should you have any questions or concerns about the study's conduct or your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact the VT IRB Chair, Dr. David M. Moore at moored@vt.edu or (540) 231-4991.

IX. Subject's Consent
I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent to:

(Check all activities that you consent to)

______ Have you shadow my work for the day

______ Have our conversations recorded throughout the day

______ Have you take notes throughout the day

______ Have my work photographed throughout the day

____ Date__________
Subject signature

____
Subject printed name

David M. Moore
Chair, Virginia Tech Institutional Review
Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

Office of Research Compliance
540-231-4991
moored@vt.edu

Rebecca Landis
Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education
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(845) 616-2383
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Kim Niewolny
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Appendix E: Informed Consent Document for Narrative Interview

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
Informed Consent for Participants
in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Title of Project: Community Food Work as Critical Practice: A Faith-based Perspective

Investigator(s): Rebecca Landis lrebec4@vt.edu (845) 616-2383
Kim Niewolny niewolny@vt.edu (540) 231-5784
Susan Clark sfclark@vt.edu (540) 231-3083
Thomas Archibald tgarch@vt.edu (540) 231- 6192

I. Purpose of this Research Project

The purpose of this study is to explore your experiences as a faith-based practitioner engaged in community food work. I seek to understand the role of critical reflection in your work as a community food work practitioner. This research project is for partial fulfillment of a Master's degree. I will write a thesis based on the findings as well as present at least one conference and publish at least one peer-reviewed article.

II. Procedures

You will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview about your community food work. The interview will be audio-recorded, and I will take notes of salient points you make during the interview. Data collection will occur in December 2014- January 2015. Once data is collected and analyzed, I will draft a narrative for you and send it to you for vetting. This means that we may engage in phone and email conversation to draft a narrative that we are both satisfied with. I will ask you to identify and write about three main themes you find in your narrative. You will also use that time to determine if you are satisfied with your narrative. If not, we will work together until we are both satisfied with the narrative of your work. Should we decide that we need more data, I may return for further collection or gather the information via phone or email conversations. This will be mutually agreed upon.

III. Risks

There are not any apparent risks to participating in this research. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board. You have the right to remain anonymous in any publication of profile documents produced from your interview. You also have the right to share your identity in any subsequent publication, including outreach materials and booklets, for public dissemination. A second consent form will be provided to you when your transcribed and edited interview is complete. At that time you may choose to consent to the use of your identity in publication.

IV. Benefits

You may reach a deeper level of self-awareness due to the reflection this research will ask you to engage in. It may also improve your work as a practitioner. Collective reflection is known to improve individual as well as organizational practice (Reynolds & Vince, 2004). You will

receive your individual narrative report at the end of the study as well. No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

Your identity will be kept confidential in all dissemination of this research. You will be given a pseudonym in all stored data. Your name will appear on a code file, which links your name to your pseudonym, but that file will be kept on a password protected computer and a file that will be locked in a cabinet. All data will be kept for at least three years. Myself and my committee members will have access to all data and your identity. At no time will the researchers release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent. The other research participants will know your identity.

The Virginia Tech (VT) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study's data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

VI. Compensation

You will receive no financial compensation for participating in this study.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

It is important for you to know that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free not to answer any questions that you choose or respond to what is being asked of you without penalty. Please note that there may be circumstances under which the investigator may determine that a subject should not continue as a subject. Should you withdraw or otherwise discontinue participation, you will be compensated for the portion of the project completed in accordance with the Compensation section of this document.

VIII. Questions or Concerns

Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact one of the research investigators whose contact information is included at the beginning of this document. Should you have any questions or concerns about the study's conduct or your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact the VT IRB Chair, Dr. David M. Moore at moored@vt.edu or (540) 231-4991.

IX. Subject's Consent

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

____ Date__________

Subject signature

____

Subject printed name

David M. Moore
Chair, Virginia Tech Institutional Review
Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research Compliance
540-231-4991
moored@vt.edu

Rebecca Landis
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Appendix F: Informed Consent Document for Focus Group

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
Informed Consent for Participants
in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Title of Project: Community Food Work as Critical Practice: A Faith-based Perspective
Investigator(s): Rebecca Landis lrebec4@vt.edu (845) 616-2383
Kim Niewolny niewolny@vt.edu (540) 231-5784
Susan Clark sfclark@vt.edu (540) 231-3083
Thomas Archibald tgarch@vt.edu (540) 231- 6192

I. Purpose of this Research Project
The purpose of this study is to explore your experiences as a faith-based practitioner engaged engaged in community food work. I seek to understand the role of critical reflection in your work as a community food work practitioner. This research project is for partial fulfillment of a Master's degree. I will write a thesis based on the findings as well as present at least one conference and publish at least one peer-reviewed article. Data collection will occur in January 2015.

II. Procedures
You are asked to participate in a 90-120 minute focus group with the other participants in this study. You will be asked to read various excerpts from each participant's narrative and then discuss some focus questions as a collective group. This focus group will be recorded and transcribed.

III. Risks
There are not any apparent risks to participating in this research. The research has been reviewed and approved by the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board.

IV. Benefits
You may benefit from this group reflection process by strengthening your understanding of your work and the value it has in the community. Further, this may strengthen your organization's cohesion by reflecting together on your work.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality
Your identity will be kept confidential in all dissemination of this research. You will be given a pseudonym in all stored data. Your name will appear on a code file, which links your name to your pseudonym, but that file will be kept on a password protected computer and a file that will be locked in a cabinet. All data will be kept for at least three years. The research team will have access to all data and your identity. At no time will the researchers release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent.

The other research participants will know your identity.
The Virginia Tech (VT) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study's data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

VI. Compensation
You will receive no financial compensation for participating in this study.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw
It is important for you to know that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free not to answer any questions that you choose or respond to what is being asked of you without penalty. Please note that there may be circumstances under which the investigator may determine that a subject should not continue as a subject. Should you withdraw or otherwise discontinue participation, you will be compensated for the portion of the project completed in accordance with the Compensation section of this document.

VIII. Questions or Concerns
Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact one of the research investigators whose contact information is included at the beginning of this document. Should you have any questions or concerns about the study's conduct or your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact the VT IRB Chair, Dr. David M. Moore at moored@vt.edu or (540) 231-4991.

IX. Subject's Consent
I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

____ Date__________
Subject signature

____
Subject printed name

David M. Moore
Chair, Virginia Tech Institutional Review
Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research Compliance
540-231-4991
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Rebecca Landis
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(845) 616-2383

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Appendix G: Informed Consent Document to Release Identity

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
Informed Consent for Participants in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Consent for Identity to be Shared in Community Food Work Practitioner Profile Publications

Title of Project: Community Food Work as Critical Practice: A Faith-based Perspective

Principle Investigator(s):
Rebecca Landis, Graduate Research Assistant, Virginia Tech
Kim Niewolny, Virginia Tech

Purpose of this Research/Project
The overall purpose of this research is to explore the role of critical reflection in community food work practitioners practice. This project will produce a narrative profile of your work as a practitioner.

Anonymity and Confidentiality
You have the right to remain anonymous for this interview-based research. If you choose for full anonymity, your identity will be kept confidential at all times and will be known only to the research team. *If you choose to share your identity, only your name and organization will be shared. By signing below, you agree to decline complete anonymity of your "practitioner profile." This means you permit your name and the name of your organization to be listed in publication of this research. Your identity will still remain anonymous on all thesis related dissemination.*

Subject's Permission to Share Identity in Community Food Work as Critical Practice: A Faith-based Perspective Publications

"I voluntarily permit the use of my name and organization in my Community Food System Practitioner Profile. I have read and understand this informed consent and the conditions of this research, and have had all of my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent."

____ Date__________
Subject signature

____ Date __________
Witness (Optional except for certain classes of subjects)
Should I have any pertinent questions about this research or its conduct, and research subjects' rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject, I may contact:

David M. Moore

Chair, Virginia Tech Institutional Review
Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research Compliance
540-231-4991
moored@vt.edu

Rebecca Landis
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Kim Niewolny
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Appendix H: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board Research Approval Letter

Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board
North End Center, Suite 4120, Virginia Tech
300 Turner Street NW
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
540/231-4606 Fax 540/231-0959
email irb@vt.edu
website http://www.irb.vt.edu

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 23, 2014

TO: Kim Niewolny, Rebecca Danielle Landis, Susan Clark, Thomas Greig Archibald

FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires April 25, 2018)

PROTOCOL TITLE: Community Food Work as Critical Practice: A Faith-based Perspective

IRB NUMBER: **14-1144**

Effective December 22, 2014, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the Amendment request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: **Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 5,6,7**
Protocol Approval Date: **November 25, 2014**
Protocol Expiration Date: **November 24, 2015**
Continuing Review Due Date*: **November 10, 2015**
*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

Invent the Future

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution

Appendix I: Eddie's Story

1 I am the executive director of Organization A. I took this job almost five years ago-
2 in March 2010. We're a small organization that tries to do a lot. That means we all wear a
3 lot of hats, but that's not unique to our organization. Ultimately I'm responsible for making
4 sure everything happens. I guess what I do has been evolving the last few months and will
5 continue to evolve as we grow our staff. But I'm responsible for fundraising, I end up
6 being the face and voice of the organization both to the general public and to our volunteer
7 base, but also within the communities where we serve. I do outreach and get programs
8 started and then even though we have a program coordinator who will be sort of day to day
9 responsible for managing programs, I'm ultimately responsible for development, design,
10 oversight, and evaluation of programs.
11 We have a small but very capable team, which means that my main job is to sort of
12 fill in the blanks. I make sure everything is working well together, and then make sure
13 probably most importantly that we can pay our bills. I also make sure that the partners that
14 we work with and the communities that we serve as well as our volunteers, our funding
15 community, and the press, understand what we do and our voice, mission, and story are
16 getting out there. That being said the running joke is that I'm the office farmer- the desk
17 farmer- because you assume the person in charge of an organization that has a farm is a
18 farmer, but really our farm manager is the brawn and the brains behind the farming
19 operation. He's an incredibly smart farmer.
20 So we have a farm manager that's in charge of the farm, a program coordinator in
21 charge of programs, and then an administrative person who's part time and helps keep us

22 in order and making sure I don't totally burn things. And then we have another staff who
23 you'll meet today and works part time in one of the communities that we serve.
24 I think part of my motivation is that broad idea of, "How can you do the most good
25 with your skill set or with where you are with your skill set?" So part of it is a job like this
26 in general and the responsibility of this allows me to use my gifts and allows me to hide
27 my weaknesses and rely on other people who have strengths that I don't have to achieve
28 the most good. Now this job in particular is probably a little bit different answer, a little
29 more specific answer. I think it's a couple things. I think one of the reasons I left my last
30 job, though it was a great job, was that the piece of that job that was paying the bills the
31 most was running a holiday assistance program, an Angel Tree kind of thing where you get
32 people signed up for specific gift requests or a family adopts that family for those kids
33 presents, and it's a beautiful thing. You get warm fuzzies, but it's just a Band-Aid program
34 right? It's not creating any lasting change and there's no reason to believe that because of
35 that gift that same family won't need to be in that line next year and it doesn't address the
36 sort of systemic issues of why that person is in that line to begin with, or why that person
37 who was giving the gifts was in a position of power and privilege to be able to give those
38 gifts.
39 And so as I was in that job I was realizing more and more that I wanted something
40 that allowed me to not ignore those immediate needs and those warm fuzzy moments, but
41 allow us to find models to work upstream and get closer to the source and help folks swim
42 as we're saving babies, if that makes sense. How can we find systemic solutions while not
43 ignoring the need in our community? And so on that line, I think food and working with
44 food and agriculture seemed like as good as any a way of doing that, and an area that's

45 long been an interest of mine; thinking about food and food systems and hunger and
46 obesity, but never actually doing sort of professional work in that field. So again this
47 allowed me to work with someone like our farm manager, who filled in my deficiencies
48 there. He's a great farmer, great thinker, and allowed me to get my hands dirty doing
49 something, not literally dirty although that does happen occasionally, but allowed me to
50 sort of get in and do work that I felt was important that I may not have had specific
51 programming experience with, but I spent a lot of time broadly working with the issues,
52 and working broadly on youth, family, and schools programming. This allows me to work
53 in a similar population but in a more systemic way and try to address justice models more
54 than charity models, although certainly part of what we do is old-fashioned charity, so then
55 that's problematic in some ways.

56 I felt like this job spoke to my skill sets in that I tend to know a little bit about a lot
57 but not a lot about a little bit. Even though we do a lot with food, this is partly about food,
58 it's party about agriculture, partly about the environment, partly about health, partly about
59 poverty, partly about education, and so I think this allowed me to play on that a little bit. I
60 think access to good healthy food should be a basic right and it allowed me an opportunity
61 to work on that in a way that I thought I could be a fit. The fact that it was a faith-based
62 organization but that had an ecumenical heart and spirit about it also really appealed to me.
63 A Methodist organization that would hire a guy who was raised Catholic said a lot to me
64 about the spirit of the organization and the commitment to work with and reach and serve
65 all people. I also think this work can be done and is being done well by explicitly Christian
66 groups, explicitly ecumenical groups, secular groups, and I think they're all bringing great
67 things to the conversation. I felt like it was a unique opportunity and we were uniquely

68 positioned to be able to have conversations with folks about food and food justice that may
69 have not previously been having conversations. A lot of churches are just now starting to
70 think about food as part of their social justice programs, their mission programs, their
71 ministries, and I was excited about the opportunity to be able to be a part of that
72 conversation with churches about how we can be more faithful as it relates to our food, and
73 the way that we do food programming and the way that we think about our food system.
74 Certainly justice is a huge value for me. I have pretty much every advantage you
75 could ever want. I'm tall straight white Christian male and I'm from a middle class family.
76 So I have been lucky and blessed not only to have every advantage in my backpack but to
77 also be able to see that that's not an accident. That why I'm here is not an accident and that
78 there are systems propping me up that allow me to be here and as a result I feel a
79 responsibility when able to be a part of dismantling those systems and creating just,
80 verdant, and equitable communities, to use the NPR Foundation. So I think that's a big
81 piece of what drives me is a belief in justice and equity and a feeling of responsibility to
82 acknowledge my own privilege and figure out ways to wrestle with that and be a small tiny
83 part of creating more equitable distribution of not only resources but of privilege.
84 I started working in a high end restaurant when I was 15 and that was the first time
85 that I started thinking about food not just as fuel, but as this thing to be celebrated.
86 However, it quickly became, or could become something, that was this false idol. We're
87 sort of obsessing about this food in a way and not thinking of the problematic nature
88 maybe of where that food was sourced or the amount of money being spent on that food.
89 So I had that sort of experience juxtaposed with growing up in a household that was very
90 aware of hunger and worked around hunger issues. My mom works at a college and led

91 hunger initiatives and hunger banquets and spent time doing feeding ministries and feeding
92 programs with kids, so I was acutely aware that there was this dichotomy; A need and
93 ability to celebrate food and that it's a beautiful thing that's not just sustenance, and yet for
94 many people it's just a goal to access food to live. So I think I grew up with those kinds of
95 concepts in the back of my mind, and then there are maybe a few layers over that. I think
96 one layer is that my grandfather spent his entire life pretty much selling tractor equipment
97 to large commodity farmers, and so I think there was this recognition as I got older of this
98 really interesting parallel or interesting intersection where really great people make livings,
99 in part because they have to, growing food in a way that may not be great for themselves,
100 their communities, and the earth and recognizing that there's some gray area there. It's not
101 as simple as, "Commodity farming is good. Commodity farming is bad." It's complicated
102 so I think there was that layer to be able to think about agriculture in a way and work with
103 that sphere in a new way. And then I think I was certainly, probably even without realizing
104 it, fascinated by and my parents always made clear this biblical idea of table fellowship. I
105 think there's a lot there to wrestle with and think about and a lot of the more beautiful
106 pieces of the Christian tradition can work around table fellowship. Those are a few reasons
107 why I like this work.

108 I think my parents certainly first and foremost were the most influential; and then
109 obviously by virtue of my grandparents. They are probably the most influential in how I
110 view work and how I want my personal life and my professional life to be blended together
111 in part of this sort of fabric that makes sense and that they are connected and that I feel
112 really blessed to have a job where all of the things I go to in the evenings that may
113 technically be work like a meeting I have to be at or a presentation or an event, I would

114 probably be there anyway given the chance. Both my parents worked to try to find a way
115 to make their life's work and the way they pay their bills in sync with the way they view
116 the world and their personal commitment to the world, and I feel really lucky to have a job
117 where I feel the same. That being said it's a privilege to be able to have a job that allows
118 you to do that. Lots of people would love to have a job that they love, but instead have to
119 have a job that allows them to pay the bills, and feed their families.

120 This might be cliché, but again as a result of my upbringing from my parents,
121 whether you want to look at him as a historical figure, a mythical figure, or just a figure in
122 the faith tradition, Christ is this cool example of this food justice advocate right? And it's a
123 pretty cool model. And I can think of lots of people from the communities we work with,
124 four or five in particular since I've moved to this city, who are inspirations in the way
125 they're committed to either their own community or they're committed to another
126 community. That they've just said, "I have the ability to give of myself and my resources
127 and I want to commit wholeheartedly to invest in building a more equitable city or a more
128 equitable neighborhood." There are a handful of people who are really my heroes. Terry,
129 who you'll meet today is one of my heroes who made commitments not because they have
130 to but because they want to; to their families, to their neighborhoods, to the city.

131 Faith is certainly kind of the guiding force and the reason why I do my work. We
132 sort of as an organization probably embody that cliché, what people call the Francis idea,
133 but I don't think St. Francis ever really said it: "Preach the gospel at all times, use words
134 when necessary." I think for myself and Taylor that certainly drives the work we do. Not
135 about trying to literally preach the gospel to anyone or use our work as an explicitly
136 evangelical or evangelizing tool, but as a way to fulfill what we feel is our own obligation

137 and desire and joy and gift and to be able to share that with others. That being said, with
138 the exception of giving talks like I did on Sunday at a church or working with a church
139 garden on Wednesday, I think a lot of our vocabulary is not explicitly Christian because
140 these ideals are often broad universal ideals. They are beyond being Judeo-Christian ideals.
141 I think we also feel an obligation to make sure that the work that we do doesn't turn
142 anyone off or scare anyone away and allows folks to all feel like they have a place at the
143 table here. So we try to use as welcoming programs and as welcoming language as
144 possible without trying to hide from who we are and why we do what we do. Which is a
145 delicate balance.

146 Almost two years ago we got some funding to do a program model with the help of
147 an intern for a prescription produce program with the basic idea being for 12 weeks at a
148 time we're going to write prescriptions for our produce so that each week the recipient of
149 the prescription gets produce. So that's basic, and on the secondary level of that is if you
150 can't open your medicine it's not doing you any good, right? So how can we provide the
151 support for people to use that medicine? Is that recipes, is that classes, what is that? The
152 way that's taken shape now is we've had six cohort groups of 10-15 families for 12 weeks.
153 We work primarily in public housing communities but we've done one program outside of
154 public housing at a specific site, and in most cases there's a resource center in the
155 neighborhood. That's an apartment that's been converted into a resource center that the
156 health department runs.

157 We're there one day a week and the key participant from each household comes
158 and they get their prescription from Terry or one of our staff members. The prescription is
159 equal to one serving per person per day for everyone in the household, so there's enough

160 produce for your whole house for that week at one serving per day. We tried to find the
161 amount that wasn't so little it wouldn't have any impact, but wasn't so much that folks
162 were saying, "What am I going to do with all of this? I don't cook fresh fruits and
163 vegetables very much." So they get that prescription and they get their BMI and blood
164 pressure checked just like you would when you went to a doctor each week to track that. In
165 some cases that's an important measure, in other cases it's not it's just to sort of build in
166 that consistency and tying food to health. They talk with our staff about what worked about
167 this week, what didn't work, what recipes they used, what produce they used, what went to
168 waste, and then they step outside the resource center in the middle of the public housing
169 where we have our farm stand set up. And so participants can actually go and pick up their
170 produce. It'll say, "Two cucumbers, six bunches of carrots" or whatever it is, and they can
171 pick and choose those. While we're there any other resident in the neighborhood can come
172 shop at the farm stand at highly subsidized prices. Participants in the program get it for
173 free, and then every two to three weeks we have classes with participants. So they get
174 recipes each week, they check in each week, answer questions each week, and then every
175 two to three weeks we do a grocery store tour on how to compare fresh frozen and canned,
176 and read nutritional labels, a trip to the farm, cooking demonstrations, etcetera.
177 At this point in the program I actually do almost nothing. We'll see as our new
178 program person starts, Blaire, how much I'll do. Historically my responsibility has been to
179 design the program and help our program coordinator. We started the program a little just
180 before she started, so I helped her get it off the ground and since then I've filled in just
181 about every job needed. But actually on the day to day the goal this year would be for me
182 to have almost no role other than touch base with our Blaire and Terry who's on the

183 ground and say, "Are things working? Do you have the resources you need? Are we
184 measuring the right things?" And really putting my work into the before, "Are we
185 designing this program the right way that meets the needs for this community and speaks
186 to the needs of this community in an effective and competent and humble way?" And then,
187 "Are we executing that program effectively?" So actually the program itself would be
188 Terry doing the BMI and blood pressure checks, our old program coordinator doing the,
189 "How's everything going interns and staff?" I'm just filling in on the farm stand actually in
190 the neighborhood making sure folks are getting their produce and that the farm stand is
191 running smoothly. So I do little to nothing on a day-to-day basis of actually implementing
192 the program.
193 We try to make sure that we're supporting programs and partners and models and
194 neighborhoods in the way I describe it as a healthy food gap. The term that more
195 commonly gets used is food desert. We're trying to move away from that language for a
196 couple reasons. One is it's really stigmatizing language as is often the case, right? We have
197 "low-income" neighborhoods, "high-crime" neighborhoods. We put these negative
198 identifiers on neighborhoods and say this is what this place is. That's not really healthy or
199 helpful to have that sort of negative stigmatizing language around a community based on
200 that, and that language is all defined around one or two key stats that the USDA has
201 basically helped identify this as a food desert neighborhood because of access to healthy
202 food and transportation. But also I think a problem with that phrase is if all we care about
203 is food deserts, then that's all we're really going to look at is grocery stores, because that's
204 how we measure food deserts. And so then the only way we're ever going to fix the
205 problem is just by building grocery stores and that doesn't capture the complexity of the

206 problem, nor does it capture the solutions. Because the solutions are going to be mobile
207 farmers markets, healthy corner stores, a variety of other solutions that won't change that
208 color on the food desert mapper.
209 So I like to talk about it as a healthy food gap- that we have to work to close our
210 healthy food gaps because they exist in our schools where kids are getting two meals a day
211 and if those are their only hot meals then they're not going to be as nutritious as we need
212 them to be. There's a healthy food gap in our food pantries, where we are trying to do good
213 and do right by our neighbor but we often are not serving the healthiest food. There's
214 obviously a food gap in our communities where there's an overabundance of unhealthy
215 options and a lack of healthy options, in the more traditional food desert term. There's a
216 healthy food gap in our own pantry sometimes. We might live in a healthy neighborhood
217 and have access to all this good food but there's often this healthy food gap between the
218 healthy food we ought to have in there and the food that we do, for a variety of complex
219 reasons. And so we work to close that healthy food gap in three neighborhoods where we
220 see it being the biggest. That is the east end of town, the south side of town, and the north
221 side of the neighborhood we're in now. This is the third sort of neighborhood we work in.
222 It's the smallest divide in this neighborhood. In the east end we work in or around sort of
223 dense public housing. The east end of this city has one of the largest, densest, and most
224 isolated public housing communities in the country.
225 It's all challenging. It's still challenging. We still haven't figured out the right way
226 to do it. We're still tweaking it and that's for lots of reasons. Any new program is going to
227 be difficult. When we started it two years ago there were a few prescription produce
228 programs in New York, but not a whole lot out there. There's more now. But very few run

229 like ours where it's trying to eliminate every barrier possible and it's being prescribed and

230 filled and education supported all in the same neighborhood that folks live in. And so it

231 was a challenge without a model to build it off of.

232 And then there are the challenges to working in any neighborhood, but particularly

233 low-income dense poverty provides a whole bunch of unique challenges and I think if it is

234 that much of a challenge for me trying to set a program, how much of a challenge it must

235 be to live in poverty on a day-to-day basis. There's a whole host of what I probably overly

236 talk about as poverty related stress and poverty related stress factors that complicate the

237 work. For example are you going to go every Tuesday at two o'clock to pick up produce if

238 there's a chance that you don't have child care even just to leave the house and walk

239 around the corner to do it? If you've got a doctor's appointment that you've got to take

240 your kid to? If the person who was going to give you a ride is sick in the hospital or in jail?

241 If you don't know where your stuff to prepare the rest of this food is going to come from?

242 If you've got to go to the bank? Life is complex for everyone; it's extremely complex if

243 you're living in systemic poverty with lots of factors out of your control. So that's been the

244 biggest challenge is how can we develop a program that can be effective and can be

245 consistent, but that acknowledges the barriers and challenges that the folks we work with

246 are facing, and how can we do that effectively and faithfully? It's also a barrier. I mean we

247 really shouldn't be the ones running this program, right? We're, with the exception of

248 Terry, outsiders in the neighborhood and in most cases middle class white people. And not

249 that there's not lots of common ground and lots of commonality, but we know that

250 ultimately we're not the best suited to be creating systemic change. It's going to ultimately

251 come when folks like us don't come in and try to fix something or provide a program, but

252 provide supports for folks to run their own programs. So a challenge for us is moving
253 forward how can we continue to build the program that is more just and more empowering
254 and provides opportunities for direction and leadership from within the community? I
255 mean that's a barrier, that's a challenge, and we haven't done it yet.

256 Somebody used the phrase cultural humility for me, which is a whole area of
257 research that I wasn't even really aware of, even though it's an area that what they're
258 talking about makes perfect sense to me, but I never had a word for it before. I kept
259 looking at it through the language and lens of cultural competency, which I think there's
260 still something to. I think they can be separate and both valuable. But that was a big "aha"
261 moment to me was to stop thinking about how can you make sure that you're programs are
262 totally understanding of this unique identity of this specific neighborhood, this specific
263 culture, and how can you be more reflective on your role as an outsider and that all the
264 research and planning and focus groups in the world are never going to make you
265 understand what it's like to live in poverty, what it's like to live in the south side of this
266 city or anything else. So how can we have that humility and reflectiveness built into our
267 programs? So I think that was a big piece.

268 We're constantly trying to change things as we go- for instance timing. At one
269 point we thought we needed to have it after sort of work hours. Well we found out that
270 most of our participants weren't employed during the day, so we had it in the afternoon.
271 Then we realized, "Well actually if we have it from three to five that's when kids just get
272 home from school and they need to be taking care of kids." So we needed to push it up to
273 that twelve to three range. So finding the time that works for folks I think is a big piece and
274 it's been a learning curve. Also finding ways to frame the program. You're probably going

275 to get different outcomes and different participation levels if you frame it as, “Hey this is a
276 free produce program, and come to some classes” or, “Hey this is an educational and
277 cooking program that comes with some free produce.” Now one of them would be more
278 effective in getting folks to show up for the first day, but the other might be more effective
279 at getting folks who are willing to commit to the full program. And so figuring out how to
280 frame the program for folks has been a learning experience. Moreover figuring out what
281 kind of classes people were interested in. Thing like not making assumptions that
282 everybody needs to know how to use a knife. That’s not an assumption that we made, but I
283 think that’s an assumption that some of our partners make. With thinking like, “Okay we
284 need to start with the basics.” Often times we’re working with women who have been
285 cooking their entire lives, you know? And while they might not hold a knife the same way
286 that somebody on the Food Network is going to hold a knife, nor do I, it’s gonna get the
287 job done.

288 We’re constantly trying to get feedback on the program, and we’re in the process
289 right now of sort of filling in the gaps on that. We do extensive exit interviews and
290 surveys, and in fact the ones we did in a public housing neighborhood on the south side
291 were the first ones we recorded, which were awesome. So we get the transcript of folks
292 saying, “This is what worked, this is what didn’t work.” So we do those exit interviews,
293 which are sort of more anecdotal and then we do a survey, which is you know, on a scale
294 of one to five how helpful was this program? On a scale of one to five what did you think
295 of this class? On a scale of one to five or strongly, somewhat strongly, etcetera do you feel
296 healthier, have you eaten more produce, have your kids eaten more produce, tried new
297 vegetables? That sort of thing. And then we work to go back and get more information

298 without sort of over-asking folks. A lot of these communities we work in I think sort of
299 have survey and research fatigue, because folks are constantly coming in with the
300 magnifying glass and saying, "Let's find out about this neighborhood and the people who
301 live here." So how can we do it more as partners working together to improve a program
302 and improve access and less as folks trying to hold up a microscope to get information
303 from subjects? And we haven't mastered that either.

304 Participants by and large get really excited about it and really invested in it and
305 enjoy it. I was in one of the neighborhoods a few weeks ago and folks were saying, "Hey
306 when are you all coming back? When's the produce coming back? When is the farm stand
307 going to be back?" So that's been great. It's also a reminder of the responsibility we have.
308 We're really just a three-season farm. How good are we, how much of our job are we
309 doing, and how serious are we taking our responsibility if our model right now is
310 predicated on us being like, "Alright end of November we're out of here, see you in
311 May."? I think it's our responsibility to figure out ways during the off season to expand our
312 season and provide resources for folks to access produce elsewhere, and also to begin
313 taking our data and taking that more seriously, and making the case to corner stores and
314 grocers and saying, "Hey there is a need here, there's a demand here."

315 To be completely honest, getting good health data and seeing the needle move on
316 health has been a lot harder than I thought. I should have known that, but it just wasn't my
317 expertise. We're working with the hospital system to totally reevaluate and revamp what
318 our health outcomes are and how we measure success, and if we're going to use health data
319 to measure success or if we're going to use other indicators. If you can move the needle on
320 that it's incredibly powerful, but even if we could there's really no way with the size of our

321 program that it would be statistically significant or we could take credit for that change. So
322 needing to think more seriously about that has been a learning experience. I think it's an
323 important component even if it's not how we measure success so folks are connecting it
324 with their health, but I don't know if that's the best way to measure our success for
325 ourselves or to set participants up with a false expectation of, "If you just show up for this
326 program you're going to have a better BMI and better blood pressure." Because we're not
327 a health program. We're not health experts. We bring them in and support our program but
328 we're not them ourselves.
329 We're constantly trying to figure out how we can deliver programs in a way that
330 makes sense for primarily folks that live in public housing and dealing with all of the
331 systemic barriers and challenges that come with that. And so it's made it tough to get
332 consistent attendance on programs and get folks to show up for a class or to take a trip out
333 to the farm. It makes it even harder to get good health data and good health work when
334 there are 11 other external health factors going up and down. If you're changing your
335 medication or you're not able to get your medication this week or you're using the ER as
336 your primary care, there's going to be a bunch of factors that obviously change our
337 outcomes and how we try to deliver the program.
338 Actually you know a phrase that our old program coordinator used one day that
339 I've really stolen is, "We're about creating access to healthy food *and* the support to make
340 that access meaningful." I think I've long been struggling with the language and ideas. We
341 knew this is not just about faith, food, and education, right? People like to oversimplify it
342 by saying, "Well we've got to teach people how to use it and like it and you gotta provide
343 access to the food." And is there truth in there? Sure, but really it's more about a broad set

344 of supports that make that access meaningful. So we want to first and foremost provide
345 that access, and then our work is, “How can we make that access meaningful?” In some
346 cases that just means making sure people have the physical tools to prepare it because they
347 want to do it and they know how to do it. In some cases it’s providing patient, welcoming
348 opportunities to try stuff and not like it and try it again, so that takes on a whole host of
349 other things. And certainly there’s been lots of “aha” moments on the agriculture side.
350 Everybody thinks they want to farm or grow food because it’s being romanticized these
351 days and that’s just not true. I realized, and kind of even knew going in because I was
352 honest enough with myself, that I couldn’t be a farmer. I couldn’t be Taylor. I didn’t want
353 to be Taylor. It’s just not my gift or my make up. But there have been a number of sort of
354 “aha” moments about the power of agriculture, the challenges of agriculture, this miracle
355 that happens with growing food. Usually if I spend more than a couple hours at the farm
356 with Taylor there is some sort of “aha” moment for me out there.
357 Certainly I think being at the farm is a really rewarding experience because you’re
358 out there and let’s say 40 people show up on a Saturday who have said, “This is how I
359 want to spend my Saturday morning, driving 45 minutes outside of town in the hot or cold
360 or wet and do something I know nothing about and weed or mulch or spread compost for
361 three hours.” And that’s the only way our work gets done. It’s really rewarding to see
362 people willing to make that sacrifice. It’s really rewarding to see people get the chance
363 from any of the communities that we serve to be able to experience a new part of creation
364 that for lots of reasons they’ve been unable to or not allowed or not encouraged to
365 experience. So the farm experience is just a really powerful. It’s a beautiful place, and if
366 you’ve never been given the opportunity or chance to experience sort of a rural oasis at a

367 farm like that, it can be a really fun experience and it's rewarding for me to be able to have

368 a way to share that with people.

369 I'm really lucky our world is always looking for white male saviors, right? So you

370 can just flip a coin all day long and people would find a reason to get excited about our

371 work. So when you do work like this people naturally sort of get excited about it and say,

372 "Thank you for doing this great work" which those are all sincere well meaning people,

373 very grateful for that and I appreciate that. But I think what's more rewarding, and it

374 happens less and less because as we grow as an organization I'm a lot less boots on the

375 ground, but there are so many really powerful people who have just never had a chance or

376 had a fair shake at getting good access to healthy food, food they can afford, or given time

377 and resources to figure out how to prepare it in a way that they like. When we are able to

378 work with folks and find opportunities for them to sort of overcome barriers or when we

379 see parents get excited about helping a kid because their kid is now excited about broccoli,

380 or cucumbers, or tomatoes, or seeing kids get excited with their parents on the rare

381 occasion that we see that it's really cool. That's really rewarding because it's a chance for

382 us to take all this responsibility and privilege we have and find ways to slowly break down

383 pieces of the system to provide people the chance that they want, that they just really

384 haven't had a fair chance to take advantage of.

385 Our organization is extremely collaborative. We really rely completely on partners.

386 Pretty much every program we do is extremely collaborative. For instance with the

387 prescription produce program the main funder is the local hospital system. They not only

388 fund it but they provide staff support for helping us think through it a little bit, and when

389 we need an educator to come in and do that. They have a mobile kitchen and they support

390 us with that. So they're a big partner. Certainly the resource center's a huge partner. The
391 health department has these resource centers where Terry is employed basically three hours
392 for every one hour that she's with us. She was a partner and now she's really a part of the
393 team. Casey, who will be here later, is with a partner organization. We with them got a
394 grant to do four prescription produce programs over the next 18 months. Every aspect of
395 the work we do is partnership based. There's no way we can do as many programs and
396 grow as much food as we do without lots of partners.
397 I think one of the things that Casey and I have talked about is finding this balance
398 between recognizing that food is extremely personal, and it's extremely emotional and it's
399 told through stories and it's how we tell stories, and you know it's complicated. And so on
400 the one hand it's really important to be aware as much as possible of potential differences
401 in relationships with food, right? And what food we're comfortable with and familiar with
402 to create as inclusive a space as you can when you're building conversations around food.
403 To start by saying, "We're all going to go around and say a healthy food that we really feel
404 good about liking and an unhealthy food that we really like a lot as well." That sort of
405 creates open spaces for equity and saying, "Hey we're all in this together, we all have a
406 unique relationship with food." Which for me is hovering between that space between
407 acknowledging difference and saying, "Hey I want to get to know that difference" and then
408 also being able to use that in a disarming way and say, "Hey because it's food and it's
409 unique and individual, it's personal, we can just talk one on one. This is not just me
410 making any assumption about you or your culture, or you making any assumptions about
411 mine." This isn't a black guy saying, "I can't possibly have anything in common with what
412 a white guy eats," when we realize at the end of the day it's just personal. We could look

413 exactly the same and have very different food stories and food relationships." And so we
414 also provide a sort of a safety net to basically say, "Hey this is food and we all look at it
415 differently so let's spend some time talking about our own relationship with food and how
416 that might impact the way we want food education, the way we want food distribution, and
417 the produce that we want to try." It provides opportunities to figure out what people like
418 and don't like and what works and what doesn't work, and that will be the conversation
419 that Casey and I pick up today.

420 What we're working on is putting together what started out as a cultural
421 competency training guide that the organization Casey works for got funding to do. There
422 are so many folks doing nutrition work now and health work and food work, and often they
423 look like you and I and don't come from the communities that they're working in, and so
424 we want to put together some toolkits basically, some resources for folks. It's difficult to
425 do it. Because let's say we do focus groups, who says we're even suited for or even
426 capable of asking the right questions and knowing what the right questions are to ask? And
427 just because we get some questions from a group in one neighborhood, does that mean it's
428 going to be true of somebody from the neighborhood across the street? And so what we're
429 moving more and more towards is, "Here are some questions that are helpful to ask groups
430 that you're working with, here's a way to have healthy conversations, and also here are
431 ways to be self reflective about going in and doing this kind of work" to hopefully make
432 sure that folks, well meaning folks, have a better skill set when they're going in and talking
433 about food.

434 We had never really worked as closely with Casey's group before. We go to the
435 same meetings together and talk with each other but we never had actually done a program

436 fully together. We’ve worked with the health department in a new way. All of the partners
437 we work with on this are ones we had loose relationships with that we now have much
438 stronger relationships with. And certainly the biggest partners are the communities we
439 serve. I’ve been working in one of them for five years pretty much. At another one we had
440 done a couple things off and on but nothing significant there, and it’s been a great way for
441 us to build relationships with that community, that neighborhood.

442 I could give you the sort of organizational vision of this perfect interconnected
443 system in its wholeness but I don’t see us achieving as the human race that in my lifetime.
444 So as a result kind of the neighborhood and community I want to live in is messy and
445 complicated and imperfect, and has room for grey area, but where little by little we’re both
446 meeting immediate needs like hunger that can’t be ignored, while working side by side
447 with folks who are committed to slowly chipping away that piece of longstanding systemic
448 injustices like access to food, access to banks, access to health care. So ultimately I’d like
449 to work in a city where there is not a 20-year difference in life expectancy between literally
450 one zip code in the city and six miles away in the city another zip code. I’d like to live in a
451 city where that gap is closing, and where it’s closing because the levels of power are
452 shifting. I also like this city because it’s imperfect and messy. Again it’s easy for me to say
453 that. If I lived in abject poverty I probably wouldn’t be saying I want to live in a city that’s
454 messy and complicated and has a messy racial history. I wouldn’t be saying that at all. But
455 I’d rather be aware of that and living in a close enough community to see that and be a part
456 of that than to live in a city that either ignored that that exists or that had developed
457 systems to sort of force people out altogether so there was this perfect little city that
458 everybody lived in and had food, but everybody living outside the city didn’t.

459 I think we have a couple roles and responsibilities in regards to that. One is as a
460 supporter to others, not just individuals and participants but to other organizations.
461 Sometimes the best thing we can do is just get produce to a really effective organization.
462 They've got great programs. Let them run their programs, but let them have healthy food
463 to do it with. So in some ways I see our roles being like helping people that are doing great
464 work to do better work. In some ways I see our role being the advocates and being a voice
465 that people take seriously when they come visit the farm or do an interview or go to
466 workshops. To be like, "Hey this is real and it's not an accident and how can we think
467 more seriously about making sure everyone has access to good healthy food?" And
468 certainly I see our role in a small way being on the ground, directly with partners and
469 families and communities, saying how can we help eliminate barriers? How can we step in
470 and fill a gap that no one else is so folks can live fully?

Appendix J: Taylor's Story

1 I'm the farm manager and I guess I am going into my fifth year. Eddie and I started
2 at the exact same time. So we stared in February of I guess 2010. I was part time the first
3 year, he was full time, and then I became part time volunteer coordinator and part time
4 farm manager so it's like a full time job but I was managing volunteers and managing the
5 farm as well, and finally last year when we hired a program coordinator I was sort of
6 relieved of those duties. But in a lot of ways I'm still managing the volunteer coordinator
7 to manage all of the volunteers.
8 There are two parts to what I do, and more than that in a lot of ways. One of those
9 parts is to manage the farm. And so that's making sure everything from planning out when
10 things get planted, knowing when things are going to get harvested, deciding what gets
11 planted, all of the soil fertility. So I develop a soil fertility program for cover cropping and
12 anything that any normal farmer would do outside of marketing the vegetables, which we
13 do in some ways because we're working with programs and things like that so we have to
14 make decisions about what we want to grow depending on the needs of the people we
15 serve. So one part of it is simply- well not very simply- but managing a farm. And then the
16 other part of it is coordinating and managing the people who come to the farm. I make sure
17 that we have enough people at the right times. That means making decisions about how
18 many people we need on a given day based on the kind of work that we have that needs to
19 be done, making decisions about what needs to be done on a given day versus you what the
20 makeup of the group is- the age and skill level- so all those kinds of things.
21 And then I manage the interns and educating the interns so that they can lead tours
22 of the farm or I can ask one of them to go out and make sure a group is picking a particular

23 area of tomatoes; so teaching them and training them to be able to manage people to take
24 some of the load off of me. This year will be the first year we have a full time volunteer
25 coordinator at the farm, so that will sort of be part of what I do too is to manage the
26 volunteer coordinator. I'll manage the interns so that the volunteer coordinator can then be
27 responsible for making sure volunteers are doing what they're supposed to be doing and
28 leave me to do more of the farm management.

29 I think truthfully it's really just a love of having my hands in the dirt. It's a love for
30 the actual farming itself. And so all of the work with regard to supporting the community,
31 work that I see as good work, but doing work that addresses the food security issue and
32 helps increase access to healthy food in the city is like a bonus to me almost. I feel really
33 fortunate to be able to farm, which is really what I love.

34 I grew up working in greenhouses and doing that kind of work and so I've always
35 loved being outside. I like being able to see something from start to finish and just have
36 very visual evidence of being able to see that- like when you put a seed into a little tray
37 with some dirt and it germinates, and then you get to see that grow from a seed to a
38 seedling and then you put that seedling in the ground, and then three months later you have
39 a tomato, and then you know that someone's eating that tomato and it's a really good
40 quality really good healthy organically grown tomato, there's something very satisfying
41 about that. It is very different from even teaching I think, which is something I was also
42 drawn too because I think with teaching and that kind of work you don't always get to see
43 the results of what you did. Maybe you touch someone's heart or whatever, you're able to
44 reach someone, and maybe you never even know that. With growing food, you get to
45 really see the fruits of your labor. I guess that's where that phrase comes from.

46 I went to graduate school to study theology and the reason for that was because I
47 really did believe I had a calling to do something to care for my neighbor, whatever that
48 might be. I didn't know how exactly how that was going to be framed. I felt that sort of
49 need and knew that I wanted to do something like that, but I didn't know how. When I
50 went into graduate school I had no idea that there was a way to fuse my love for growing
51 food and being outside and working hard with providing for people who don't have access
52 to good food. I just didn't really realize that was possible, and I feel very fortunate to be
53 able to do two things that I'm really passionate about.
54 I feel like farming is one of those things that teaches you values. You go into it not
55 having any understanding of what values really are and then you come out of it being
56 humbled over and over again by what the earth has to teach you. I think I believe in the
57 value of good work. That's one of the most important things to me. It was always really
58 important to me to try to find something that I could believe in. Something that I felt was
59 meaningful work. Because of just who I am and my personality, I've never been
60 comfortable being in an office so I tried a lot of different things. Like, "Okay what can I do
61 to? What is it? Is it building houses? Is it growing flowers?" And so I always knew that
62 that belief in the importance of good work was something that's important to me, but again
63 I didn't know how to like find what that work was going to be.
64 When I was in graduate school I started to just get burnt out with the kind of work I
65 was doing at the time, and the first time I stepped on the farm, I can remember being in the
66 hoop house. It was February and we were cleaning it out to get ready to do the spring
67 planting. I was raking a bed and shaping some beds and stuff like that, and I was like,
68 "This is what I'm going to do." I knew it like that. I knew that this is what I'm going to do

69 for the rest of my life. And I was like, "I can't believe it took me until I was 30 years old to
70 figure this out."

71 So as far as values, I think the belief in the sort of possibility of good work. It just
72 seems like it's hard for people to find work that is meaningful to them anymore, and so
73 believing that that was out there and continuing to search for it was something that I held
74 dear and continued to search for even though there were a lot of times where I didn't think
75 I'd find it.

76 I have a really strong belief in the importance of family, and I think this is good
77 work for me and my family. If there are two of the most important things to me it would be
78 my family and my work, and I think this is good work for my children to be a part of and
79 to grow up with and it's good for my wife to be part of. They don't necessarily work out
80 there but they're integrated into it as being members of my family, and so that's another
81 thing I place a lot of importance on and I think because of the work that we're doing,
82 which is food, we're growing food for people and so we're hopefully improving the quality
83 of people's lives by getting them food, and to me that's part of the importance of the
84 connection of being the microcosm of the larger community. We're providing foo to
85 people and in a lot of ways it's what you do for your family. You help to provide for them,
86 you eat together, you share these meals, you share things. And to me the work that I do is a
87 larger manifestation of what I hope to do with my own tiny family of five. So that's
88 another value that's really important to me that hopefully manifests itself outside of just
89 my little tiny family in sort of a broader level or something.

90 Before I came here I was looking for land. I knew I wanted to farm and so I was
91 looking for land and we moved back and were living with my wife's parents while we

92 were trying to find a piece of land to build a house. We went all over the center of the state
93 looking for land, and happened to go to a place near where my wife's parents live, and a
94 guy was like, "You guys want to farm? Have you heard about this organization?" and I
95 was like, "Well you know, no I haven't" and he was like, "Oh I read an article in the
96 newspaper the Times yesterday about it, you should check it out." and I was like, "Okay".
97 So I went to the internet and found the article and read it and it was like, "We're having a
98 big grand opening out here in a week" so I was like, "Oh cool." So I went to the grand
99 opening.
100 I went to the grand opening and when I got there I looked around and I was like,
101 "Oh my gosh this is going to be a total disaster," and this was just from my somewhat
102 limited experience. There were little broccoli plants that were like two, three, four inches
103 tall that had been planted and there was crab grass that was about two inches tall and
104 obviously I could tell within two weeks that crab grass is going to be overgrown and
105 they're not going to have those broccoli plants anymore. I remember the farm manager he
106 gets up and he says said two things that really shocked me. One of which was, "Farming
107 isn't rocket science" and then he said, "We've got everything planted, now we're just
108 going to sit back and wait for the harvest." And I remember being like, "Whoa man, that's
109 not what you do at all, that's not good. That's not good that that's what you think is going
110 on." And so the truth was the he had never even had a garden. He was hired to be a
111 community organizer, and then when the funding started to dry up for affordable housing
112 and all that kind of stuff food and farming was the kind of thing that they started
113 gravitating towards because people and funders were interested in it. And so the economy
114 was really bad then. I went to the director that day and said, "You know you guys have got

115 to make some changes out here. You’re not going to have anything.” And so he was like,
116 “Well tell me more about what you’re talking about.” And I was like, “Well look around,
117 you see all these weeds? This is going to be a problem.” So that was when he asked, “Well
118 would you want to serve on a farm policy committee?” and I said, “Yeah sure I’d be
119 interested in doing that, that sounds great” and the whole time I’m thinking like man, this
120 is my dream job out here, you know? And so he was like, “Well come in and meet with me
121 in my office.” So I went in and he said “You seem to have a lot of knowledge, we really
122 need to have a real farm manager. We would like our current farm manager to be an
123 educator but he’s not a farmer.’ He was like “We really need to have someone but we don’t
124 know if we’ll have the funding to do it. Would you mind drawing up a plan for us of all the
125 things that we need to do to make this all work?” and I was like, “Well yeah I can do that.”
126 And so I drew up this eight page very detailed plan of all of the things they need to change
127 out there to do a better job, and in the meantime I was actually going in and meeting with
128 the farm manager- going and having a beer with him or something and saying, “Hey here’s
129 how I can help you. I’ll bring you guys some compost, or I’ll help you plant this stuff. I’ll
130 grow some more transplants for you. Whatever I can do to help get this thing going.” And
131 so I remember him saying to me, “Man this is the best job in the world. All I do is I just go
132 home and I don’t have to do anything.” But he didn’t even like it. I remember him saying,
133 “You know I really don’t like this job but it’s great because I really don’t have to do
134 anything.” And I remember being so frustrated by that because I was like, “This guy really
135 does shave my dream job, and he doesn’t even like it!”

136 I ended up getting a call after I gave the director at the time the paper that listed all
137 the things they needed to change, and he gave it to their board. The board decided they

138 needed a radical change to the organization and decided they were going to completely
139 shift all their focus towards just the farm. The director didn't want to do that so he
140 resigned, and the staff were let go, and that day I got a phone call saying, "Hey we'd like
141 you to come in an interview, are you interested in this?" There was a part of me that was
142 like, "Oh that's so sad, I'm so sorry that's terrible" and then there's a part of me like,
143 "Wow I can't believe this is happening to me. I'm so lucky I was in the right place at the
144 right time." They had just put out the posting for the new director's job, so I actually went
145 and met them before he was even hired and they hired me part with this sort of caveat that
146 he and I would get along. And so they wanted us to meet. So we met and were like, "Okay
147 we can work together." So that's how it all happened.

148 I look back on it now and I'm like, "Man I can't believe that that really happened."
149 I don't know if I believe in providence in that way. I'm not sure I believe in all these things
150 sort of fit together like little pieces of a puzzle, because there are lots of horrible things that
151 happen obviously, but that one happened to work out well for me at that particular time. I
152 remember telling my wife's dad when I met with the board, I remember him saying "We're
153 looking for a farm manager" and I was like, "I'm going to get that job. I'm going to find a
154 way. I want to do that." And I don't think anyone thought that was really possible, and I
155 don't think I did either, but then when I happened I was totally shocked.

156 When I was 15 I started working summers in a greenhouse that was growing
157 flowers and there were only like four or five of us. It was small at the time, and we grew
158 bedding plants, which are just like little flats of flowers for garden centers and stuff like
159 that and we'd ship them all over the city. And then during undergrad, I started working
160 there during school. I went to school when I was 18, dropped out, and didn't go back until

161 almost 23. I went back to school for religious studies. But in the meantime I'd been
162 working at this greenhouse, and it ended up being huge. It started small and then it ended
163 up growing and growing and growing until it was like a 15-acre huge greenhouse. We
164 were growing flowers for Home Depot's all up and down the east coast, so I became the
165 shipping manager there. It was a seasonal sort of job so I had lots of time off in the middle
166 of the summer and then in the winter, and I really liked it. I liked working outside with
167 flowers. It was a good job.

168 When I graduated from my undergraduate program, my wife and I got married, and
169 we went to Honduras and lived there for almost a year. That's what sort of motivated me to
170 want to go to graduate school. Like I said I knew I had this sort of calling to do something
171 where I was caring for my neighbor, and I realized while I was there that I felt like I
172 needed schooling or something. I don't know if that's necessarily true, but I wanted to
173 study theology and think through the things that I had been seeing there and really try to
174 figure out who I was with regard to my beliefs and things like that. So while I was there I
175 was working on immigration issues and my interest in that came from having worked at
176 the greenhouse because I had probably 30 or 40 undocumented immigrants that I was
177 managing. I was the only person in the entire place who could speak Spanish and so, and I
178 can't even speak it enough now anymore to communicate hardly, but I could speak it well
179 enough that I could talk to people. So what ended up happening was everyone who worked
180 there would always come to me and say, "I got this letter from the insurance company for
181 my car insurance, what does it say?" And I'd have to read it and be like, "Okay this is what
182 you need to do." Or someone would have a tooth fall out and I'd have to get them to a
183 place where they could go and get free health care. So I started to know all of this and

184 really started to care a lot about that particular population and so I started working on that
185 issue and really focusing on that during my time at Vanderbilt. But it got to the point
186 where I was not working with immigrants as much as I was working more with churches
187 trying to convince them to care about immigrants. Me and this other student started this
188 faith-based nonprofit which was kind of our contextual education. In that year and a half
189 we spoke to like 100 churches. I mean a lot, and we were totally burning ourselves out and
190 I think we both got so caught up in it, but I started to realize that I was disconnected from
191 the people that I really wanted to work with, which were the immigrants themselves. That
192 was who I really cared about. I got so exhausted with trying to convince people about,
193 "You need to think about your faith and think about who you are as a person of faith, and
194 how do you need to be thinking about the stranger among you? How do you need to be
195 thinking about immigrant people? Should you be thinking about them as coming and not
196 having to pay taxes?" All this kind of stuff, and anyway I just got really burned out on it. I
197 remember my advisor saying, "You're the kind of person that you need to have your hands
198 in the dirt." And they were not speaking about farming at all but they were speaking about
199 how I need to be working with the people. "You don't need to be out there trying to go to
200 churches and tell people they need to care about these people, you need to be with the
201 people themselves" and I was like, "Yeah man yeah that's exactly right."
202 And so then through other sorts of events and things like that I realized, "I'm not
203 cut out for this anymore. I can't be in an office." That's when I ended up going and
204 interviewing at that organic farm and meeting that lady and the minute I walked in there I
205 went back to school after working that day, and told them I was changing my major from

206 an MDiv to an MTS, and I'm going to graduate right now. I'm done. And I went to work
207 on the farm and that's what I've been doing ever since.
208 When I was in Nashville I was really fortunate to be able to work with this other
209 student for our contextual education. It was the first time it ever happened at Vanderbilt.
210 They let us join together to start a little nonprofit and because we were working together
211 they gave us three advisors, and so we were really lucky. One of them was a guy who had
212 dedicated pretty much his entire life to prison reform, and so he was an amazing person.
213 And it wasn't that he had any interest in farming or growing food, but he believed
214 wholeheartedly in what he was doing, and he was willing to give up everything for that. He
215 was like, "If I end up living in the street or working at a grocery store, I won't give up on
216 this work that I do." While I was at Vanderbilt, he ended up having a heart attack and he
217 died, and I remember visiting him in the hospital and staring at him thinking like, "This
218 guy is like a modern day prophet here, laying in this hospital." I just felt really fortunate to
219 have known him for that short time because he was so profoundly influential on what I
220 believed to be important now as far as dedicating myself to something and fully giving
221 myself over to something that I believe in, which for me is growing good food for people.
222 The other advisor was a retired Presbyterian Pastor who had sort of become this
223 radical in his old age. He ended up becoming very active in protesting the School of the
224 Americas. I don't know if you've heard of that, it's in Fort Benning Georgia. They
225 changed the name- it's now WHINSEC, but the School of the Americas became kind of
226 infamous for being involved in these atrocities that would occur. Like training soldiers to
227 go back to like Latin America and do these really horrible horrible things, and they were
228 trained in the US and anyway he didn't like this and it's something that he felt very

229 strongly about and he ended up getting arrested at a protest at Fort Benning. And so he
230 wrote this great book about being imprisoned, and he served a 6-month prison sentence for
231 crossing the line onto the bases territory. And there's lots of people that do it. Martin
232 Sheen for example has done it. But anyway what was so powerful for me was seeing these
233 people who were both older men dedicate their lives to something that they really believe
234 in. And I think too being in the School of Theology at Vanderbilt and meeting hundreds of
235 people who were close to my age, who all had this sort of belief in the power of good.
236 They had belief that they had the potential to change something, whatever form that took.
237 Being part of that I think sort of instilled in me a belief that I could do that too; that I could
238 do something really good, and like I said I just feel really lucky and really fortunate and
239 blessed to have the opportunity. I don't feel like it comes along often.

240 The woman I worked with in Nashville on the farm was hugely influential and her
241 way of doing things rubbed off on me- being very detail oriented and being very
242 meticulous in the way that she approached things. I saw her last year- she came here to the
243 farm and visited and so we still keep in contact, but she another person who was really
244 influential in believing in me and that I had the ability to do it. Because farming is hard.

245 There's a theologian Sally McFaye, who's like an eco-feminist theologian. I think
246 it's really cool- she has this metaphor of the earth as sort of being the body of God, which I
247 think is really powerful, and she makes this argument that the same way we sort of treat
248 women is manifested in the way that we treat the earth. There's a lot of ways over history
249 we haven't given women the respect that they deserve, and in the same way we haven't
250 given the earth the respect it deserves. She's big on the importance of bridging the gap
251 between the physical and the spiritual. So saying that it's not so easy to differentiate

252 between the body and the soul. There are connections that can't be separated in a lot of
253 ways. And so for her she had this idea of the earth being the body of God and if we really
254 thought about that, and we really utilized that metaphor and asked, "Would we be doing
255 the kinds of things that we do to the earth to the body of God?" Probably not, right? So I
256 thought it was a really powerful metaphor. So her thing was that our primary vocation as a
257 people is outlined in Genesis and that is to serve and to keep the earth. It's been translated
258 a lot of different ways, but for her our vocation as a people is to do that. When I read it the
259 first time I remember thinking, "You know one of the only ways I can think of for me to be
260 able to do that is through growing food for people." And I thought that with loving to be
261 outside and knowing that I'm actually good at growing food, this is a way that I can sort of
262 embody that philosophy in a really real way. I think that trying to sort of live that in some
263 has been important to me.

264 But I don't want to act like that the reason I do what I do has anything to do with
265 my faith, as much as it has to do with just loving the work. I want to be fair. I wouldn't do
266 it if I believed that this is the best thing that someone could be doing who really truly
267 believed in God if I didn't really just love doing this kind of stuff. I even enjoy the
268 mundane stuff like calculating the amount of fertilizer that I'm going to have to put down
269 on a particular piece of land, or making compost. All of those things have theological
270 connotations- you can think through resurrection and returning something to the earth and
271 it being reborn again as dead decomposing materials being reborn in the earth when you
272 put them on the earth and being reborn in plants. There's lots of theological connotations
273 to this stuff, but the reality for me is that I really just like it. I really just love doing it, and
274 maybe there's some theology behind that, but I really just like to do the work.

275 Originally as an organization we came up with these guiding principles. One of the
276 things that we talked about was that this farm was going to be a way to for people of faith
277 to engage in mission. So one of the things that we offer is an opportunity for people of all
278 ages to come out and do something that they think is missional. It's related to what they
279 believe, and so my hope is I guess that all of the people that come through there have that
280 kind of experience out here that I have- the kind of experience where they are able to do
281 something that they think is meaningful and that they know is good for themselves-
282 because they enjoy it but it's good for somebody else too, and they get to learn. I don't do
283 as much of that anymore as I used to do. Now it's much more tied directly to the farming
284 side of things, and interns and the volunteer coordinator are leading groups on tours and
285 stuff like that, but I still have a lot of opportunity to talk with people because people
286 always have lots of questions.
287 Something I try to convey to our interns is the importance of maintaining an
288 environment that feels very peaceful almost like a respite. It's a place where people can
289 come where they're working hard but they sort of feel like they can rest in a lot of ways
290 because the place itself has that feel to it. I hope that when people come out we're able to
291 talk about what we do and why we do it and the importance of doing it as far as getting
292 people in need food, that they're not only able to recognize the importance of the role that
293 they have in that, but that they are able to gain something else from it too. And I am so
294 grateful to all of these people. I sometimes think, "Man I never do volunteering anymore. I
295 don't really make time to do that kind of stuff anymore." And I realize that we have like
296 4,000 volunteer hours of people coming out there and making this happen, and all those
297 people who are willing to commit and give of their time and bringing their families out and

298 all that stuff is huge. In a lot of ways as a person who manages the farm, I probably feel as
299 grateful to those people as the people who receive food from the farm feel. Because the
300 farming itself is ultimately my responsibility, but the people who come out make it all
301 possible. So I hope that we can convey that sort of gratitude to people, and I think we're
302 able to and I think that's why people come back. A lot of people come back, and I've never
303 heard anyone say anything negative about being out there. I think that's something we
304 strive for, is like creating an environment where people feel comfortable and they work
305 hard. We all work hard and we get stuff done, but it still is fun.

306 The way it would work is that the volunteers would come in, we would welcome
307 them, take them to the outdoor classroom and talk about the importance of the work and
308 about food access- that kind of stuff. We talk about our programming, we talk about where
309 the food's gonna go, and then we start talking about the farm itself. And I think that's the
310 part where I feel most comfortable is actually doing the tour of the farm. The others do a
311 much better job than I do honestly on talking through the food access stuff because I'm not
312 in the city often enough, but the part that I enjoy the most is really talking about the farm
313 and talking about what it means to grow organic food and what are the kinds of pests we
314 encounter and what are the diseases that we see and what do we do to fix this problem, and
315 showing them the greenhouses and the hoop houses- that's the kind of stuff that I'm really
316 good at and I really like doing. We always laugh about the fact that their tours last like 40
317 minutes, and mine last like 20, but that's because I'm like, "Alright we gotta get people to
318 work!"

319 I think the fun part too is once people are out there and doing the work it's fun to
320 see people get excited- especially when new people come out or kids who haven't been out

321 before, and they get to do some of that stuff for the first time. You'll see a kid eat a cherry

322 tomato or that they just picked it off the plant and they've never done that before. Or a kid

323 who gets the nerve to eat a carrot that still has dirt on it. That's a big deal and it's cool to

324 see that.

325 I remember last year we had a staff meeting-we would meet once a month and we'd

326 have to say one good thing- and I remember last year I would get so caught up in the

327 farming itself that I would sometimes forget about where the food is going and the kids

328 that are actually getting the food, or the families that are getting the food and things like

329 that. So we had a group from the city come out, like 45 young girls between the ages of

330 maybe 8 and 15 or something like that, and I think probably 95% African American- there

331 were a couple of Hispanic kids. I remember when we had that staff meeting that was my

332 event for the week because I happened to be the only one there that day and I was getting

333 to walk around with these girls, some of who had been at the farm before, but they start off

334 kind of like, "Eh I don't really want to be here," but then by the end they really like it and

335 they're excited and it's seeing that kind of transformation in people and realizing there's

336 something in all of us that kind of likes that kind of work. That we enjoy it, and even if it's

337 just for an hour every once in a while or something like that, there's something about it

338 that people seem to be drawn to. I don't know if it's just in our blood or makeup or what it

339 is, but seeing that come out is really cool for me. And it was a really great moment- a

340 really good two hour experience for me to be kind of a part of that again instead of just

341 being so connected to like, "Okay I've got to get this done, this done, and this done" or,

342 "Okay, I've got to make sure this group's doing this and this." It was kind of a nice thing.

343 Usually I'm not doing that. Usually it's me saying like, "Intern, whichever intern
344 we have, there's a group coming in 20 minutes, I want you to do the tour with them. When
345 they finish the tour we're going to have the digging potatoes, so go ahead get the tools out
346 get it ready. Over here those three rows." So my job usually is to make sure there's a
347 seamless transition so if they finish digging up the potatoes then I've got something ready
348 for them to go next and they can call me and be like, "What's next?" I guess that's
349 something that I really like doing and I think we do a pretty good job of that.
350 The people are probably the biggest challenge because you have different people
351 every day, and so you never know what you're going to get. You're constantly being
352 challenged to assess when a group arrives, and we do this almost every day in the
353 summertime. It's like okay a group arrives, you look at the group and you're like, "Alright
354 what can be accomplished? We have a list of jobs, what's this group going to be able to
355 do?" And that's really challenging. It's challenging to count on people who have never
356 done this kind of work before to get the work done. And that's hard. Sometimes for me
357 that's more of a challenge then all of the unknowns and the things that are out of your
358 control with regards to farming as far as the weather or insects, pests, disease, weeds, those
359 kinds of things that sometimes can be really challenging for farmers. Most farmers have
360 introverted personalities and so when you're just constantly inundated with people people
361 people who have lots of questions and who have never done this before, you're having to
362 train them on the spot and then they're there for two hours and they're gone and you never
363 see them again, and then you've got another group showing up, that for me is challenging.
364 There's lots of other challenges too- just the challenges of growing food But for me that's
365 the biggest one. It's people, and there's lots of times where I'm just like, "You know I

366 really just want to be out here by myself." But I don't get that opportunity very often
367 anymore.
368 For the first couple years it was a lot of just me out there, and it's very different
369 now. For 7-8 months out of the year there's somebody there every day, whether it's an
370 individual volunteer, or groups, and then for 4 months or so it's lots of people there every
371 day. Which is great. Again it's one of those things that I'm deeply grateful for but it also
372 wears you out. You've got to have people and you're appreciative of them but at times
373 you're like, "Man I don't know if I can take any more people here, I'm so ready for August
374 to come." Because August is when kids go back to school, it's when they slow down, and
375 so you start to feel like you can rest. I can remember if someone comes out again.
376 Sometimes I can even remember the job that they did, and I can get a feel, but a lot of
377 times it all blends and becomes this one organism. I guess over time you learn a lot about
378 yourself and what you're capable of.
379 In a lot of ways the cycle of the farm is like the weeks. Sort of like you get that
380 Sabbath. A lot of people will take that one day a week for rest, and in a lot of ways the
381 cycle of the year, the cycle of the farm especially in this particular geographic region, you
382 get that break. You get that rest period in the winter, and then things pick back up spring,
383 summer, fall. But there's this period of intensity where it builds, builds, builds, and then
384 just like levels off at this sort of insanity from May until August, and then you get to
385 August everything's planted and then you get to come down that mountain and you start to
386 feel like you get a little break. And then you ease into winter and it's like, "Whoo okay"
387 and then this time of year in the new year it's like, "Okay here it comes."

388 I'm not the kind of person that's great at doing things on the fly. That's not my like
389 personality. I struggle with that. I think that for me like I sometimes need time to reflect on
390 something and then maybe in three days I can call you and be like, "Got it" but so to be
391 able to deal with that stress level of the uncertainty of volunteers is hard. If it's a rainy day
392 people aren't going to show up, and the uncertainty of who you're going to get and the
393 skill level and age. Some of those things we know, but there's a lot of variables with every
394 group that comes out. And something I've learned is that a lot depends on the leaders of
395 the group. If there's really good leadership within the group then everything goes really
396 really smoothly. If you've got really good leaders the work gets done and the kids enjoy it.
397 People enjoy themselves. When you have disengaged leaders of the group who don't really
398 care and they're not going to do any work they're just sitting back, the kids aren't going to
399 do anything either. We encounter those situations a lot, and the best thing that I can do is
400 be prepared- be organized. I have my list of stuff ready to roll each morning, talk through
401 the day with the interns and with the volunteer coordinator, and we try to have any kind of
402 information that we can gather about the groups before they're there because I function
403 better when I know what's coming. I can prepare in my mind, "Alright I know that this
404 group is a group of kids that usually has this sort of attitude so we're going to put them
405 over here on this job because maybe they'll enjoy that a little bit more than spreading hay
406 mulch. We'll do that with a group of kids that has a little bit of a better attitude." So
407 preparation I think is the key for me- just having whatever knowledge I can have and put to
408 use I think is the most important thing.
409 I think part of my personality has always been to try to be organized, but it's
410 interesting because the way the farm has changed every year. We started with a half-acre

411 and then we moved to 2 ½ and then we went to 4 and to 6 or whatever we are now, and we
412 have plans to grow to 18. So every year is so different it's like you're constantly adapting
413 in a lot of ways. Like your whole farm plan has changed. We've been really fortunate in
414 that the number of volunteers has grown at the same rate as the farm has grown. And that's
415 why we're in the process of trying to get bigger is because we have so many more
416 volunteers now. I definitely think learning to adapt and being able to adapt is something
417 that I didn't do well because it is in my personality to want to be prepared and have set in
418 my mind, "This is what this group is going to do" and being willing let that go because
419 something changes. I mean you could get a little bit of rain and the soil just got a little bit
420 damp, and you've got to completely change what you're gonna do. I think for a long time
421 that's something that was really hard for me. And because I've had to deal with that with
422 how people change so much and how you can't ever be certain, it's helped me deal with
423 the things on the farm that are out of my control. There are so many variables with relation
424 to the people who are going to do the work, and there's probably the same number of
425 variables with relation to the actual farm itself, and so I think I've probably learned a lot
426 about how to adapt in both ways. And like on the farm if we lose a tomato crop because we
427 got early blight, being willing to be like, "Okay I can let that go" and in the same way that
428 we could do that with people. Like if someone harvests all of our green peppers and we
429 asked them not to harvest any green peppers, and being able to let that go.
430 The only feedback we get is anecdotal, and that's something that we're going to be
431 working on. One of the new volunteer coordinator's jobs is going to be to develop some
432 sort of system for evaluation so we can really ask things like, "Okay what did you like
433 about this experience? What could we do differently? What would you like to see out here

434 that you don't see?" Or, "Can you explain what you've learned? What do you know now

435 about access to healthy food that you didn't know before you came here? What do you

436 know about sustainable agriculture that you didn't know before you came? What do you

437 know now that you didn't know before you came?"

438 Sometimes the program coordinator will bring groups of people out to the farm

439 who are engaged or involved with the prescription produce plan and that's always really

440 cool for me because then I get the opportunity to talk with them and ask them, "What kind

441 of stuff do you get that you don't wan? What are we growing that you don't really like?

442 What can we grow more of next year that you don't got? What do you like?" I really like

443 that. I came from a working class family so we struggled to put food on the table in a lot of

444 ways. My dad didn't live with us, my mom had me and my four sisters, so we struggled,

445 and in a lot of ways I can identify with the struggles people have. Although it's very

446 different for people I realize that for me who had a house and stuff like that, and for people

447 who live in government subsidized housing it's very different. But in some ways I feel like

448 I know what that uncertainty that they experience is like around food and stuff.

449 A woman came out last fall- it was in the fall because I remember we gave her

450 some cauliflower- who lived in one of the neighborhoods and was talking to me about her

451 little boy who is about the age of one of my boys, and she was saying that they were

452 walking to the store or somewhere and that about a block down a guy pulled out a gun and

453 fired off a couple shots, and she and her boy have this word that she says to him and that

454 means run and get inside because if something like that happens in one of those

455 neighborhoods. And because she has problems in her feet, I don't know if it's diabetes

456 related, but I think that's what she told me, she can't run so she just had to walk. The guy

457 who was shooting ended up shooting a guy, and she said it's happened twice to them now.
458 But I was thinking about that because I have a little boy myself and I know what that
459 would feel like, and the way that she talked about was a way that was like this is something
460 that's a regular part of her life. I can't even imagine dealing with that kind of threat or be
461 scared like that where you live. You read stuff like that and I've talked to plenty of other
462 people in those situations, but it was something about her story that really made me think,
463 "Man…" It kind of made me feel like what we're doing is really small because the
464 problems are so huge, but she was so happy to be out there and so happy to bring home
465 this good food, and I was like, "Man it's really nice to just be able to provide people who
466 struggle with so much all the time." There are so many challenges. I mean I think good
467 food is a small thing but at least it's something good and something meaningful. If
468 someone gets to eat some fresh cauliflower that night or something like that, that's nice.
469 But I don't really get to do that often enough and that's one of the things I want to do
470 more.
471 At the end of last year, I went to one of the prescription farm stands and got to
472 actually interact with people and they came and asked questions and stuff, and I was
473 surprised by how uncomfortable I felt. There was a little African American boy sitting on
474 the porch. He was the age of one of my kids and I was so drawn to just go over to the
475 porch and be like, "Hey man what's going on?" and mess with him like I'd mess with one
476 of my kids, but I didn't do it. And I was thinking, "Would I have done that if that was like
477 a little white kid in the country? Definitely." But I didn't feel comfortable, and so there's a
478 part of me that recognizes that I'm not really that comfortable in that community, probably

479 because I’m not there often enough. I don’t know anybody. I haven’t formed those kinds of
480 relationships.
481 There’s a part of me that feel, in some ways that the work that I do is disconnected
482 from the larger picture. And so I need to find ways, and we all need to work on this, to find
483 ways for those of us who spend most of our time on the farm to get to the city to be able to
484 like experience that and experience that discomfort and have that experience in those
485 communities, and I’m sure you work through it. You get over that discomfort and probably
486 once you’ve been there five or six times that little boy has seen you and you have enough
487 comfort that you can go over there and play with him. So that’s a challenge for me and I
488 think it’s something I need to work on. I need to take that sort of risk to be in those areas
489 more. I mean our mission is to increase access to healthy food in the city, but I’m out in the
490 county 99% of the time. So in a lot of ways I’m growing the food but I’m not engaged and
491 I’m not interacting with the people who eat it. I need to be more connected. I think that’s
492 important to fully grasping and having a deeper and better understanding of the importance
493 of what I do out there. And maybe that would change some of my perspectives on it just
494 being about farming. For me right now it’s more about the farm and the volunteers and less
495 about who actually gets the food. It’s been compartmentalized a little bit whereas Eddie
496 and the Blaire that’s their kind of stuff. Eddie said to me one time, “You know I feel like
497 the food just kind of appears.” And that’s sort of indicative of the disconnect for them. It
498 doesn’t just appear, and he knows that, but that’s the feeling and for me it’s the feeling that
499 we grow the food and get it out of here and that’s it. So I think it would be important, it
500 would be good for all of us to engage ourselves more in what happens on the other side of
501 things. I don’t know how we’d do it.

502 I guess as a person with children now I think a lot about where kids can have the
503 safety to be kids. I feel like there is so much pressure now on kids not to be kids anymore
504 with schooling and things like that, but I want there to be that sort of freedom for children.
505 I think especially in communities where things are so unsafe that they try to have so much
506 structure. For me the ideal community would be a place where family is valued, where
507 good work is valued, where good food is valued, and by good food I don't mean healthy
508 food necessarily, I mean food that people like to eat and we can all enjoy it together, I
509 don't mean McDonald's but if you want to cook some collards in some bacon grease from
510 locally raised pigs, go for it.

511 To sort of touch back on something I said earlier, I think the importance of family
512 is the key. I don't mean family in the traditional sense like the man woman and two kids.
513 But whatever form that takes, the people who love each other and care for each other and
514 are willing to give of themselves for each other I think is the key to community. I don't
515 think you can have community without healthy families, and I don't mean that in what is
516 generally conceived of as a conservative way. Maybe it's a conservative way of
517 articulating it, but in some ways it is conservative. I think we need to conserve those kinds
518 of values because I think that without them community starts to fall apart. So for me the
519 kind of community I would like to be a part of is probably too idealistic to talk about. This
520 goes back to those values we talked about in the beginning. I think the kind of community
521 I would like to be a part of is a community where everyone is able to do good work in
522 whatever form that takes, and that people believe in what they're doing and they love what
523 they're doing and they're able to do what they're meant to do. I guess that's what I would
524 like to see- overly idealistic.

525 I think that if you value families and you value good work on a small scale then
526 that’s going to expand out where you start to care for the earth more and you start to care
527 for people who are not just close to you but people who are further away from you. I
528 always liked Wendell Berry. He wrote this essay called “Think little,” which I always liked
529 because people are always like, “Think big think big!” And his thing was like, “Well why
530 don’t we start thinking smaller? And if we start bringing it in and thinking a little bit
531 smaller then maybe that can expand out into something bigger.”

Appendix K: Onyx's Story

1 I am the board chair and I've been the board chair since January 2014. I've been on
2 the board for almost two years. Because I have my own nonprofit I'm pretty attuned to
3 what a board chair should do, and I'm not necessarily sure that I fill those roles. But we're
4 in an interesting situation because Eddie, our director, is so good at what he does, and our
5 board is so collegial there's not a lot to do. A board chair might organize, keep people on
6 track, keep things running smoothly, smooth over any challenges or difficulties among the
7 board members themselves, and we don't have any of that. We had somebody at the board
8 meeting yesterday ask a question, and it was like, "Whoa, really?" The question sounded
9 like he was questioning what the other person had said, and we were startled because that
10 just doesn't happen.
11 Normally a board chair would be really involved in fundraising and spearheading
12 fundraising, and again we've pretty much been money magnets over the years, and Eddie
13 does a really good job of forming relationships with funders and potential funders, and he's
14 really good at writing grants, so we haven't really had to do a big push for funds the way
15 most typical boards do. I see my role as it is right now, to be a sounding board for Eddie
16 and Taylor, the farm manager. To be supportive when they need support. Eddie might call
17 and say, "These are the things we're considering, what do you think? Do we have board
18 approval?" Which I can't imagine ever saying, "No." Maybe I would ask a question just to
19 be engaged. I try to just keep a sense that they're happy in their jobs, because we really
20 can't function without them.
21 Since I'm not taking the lead on fundraising, I'm running the meetings and being a
22 good ambassador for the organization. I'm really involved in the church so I do a lot of

23 that. I've done some conference level work where I probably mentioned my role in the
24 organization or talked about what it does, but I don't go out and do speaking on behalf of
25 us. Eddie really does most of that. I'm most interested in the work that they do in the
26 community. The farm is beautiful and vegetables are great, but I'm not in it because of the
27 farming.

28 At one point I was volunteering for some things at our church. We did something
29 called a Lovefeast where we worked with a local pottery place and we painted like 100
30 ceramic bowls and then we served soup, and the money we raised for that went to our
31 organization. Then one night Eddie was doing a presentation and there were the
32 photographs of the farm stand in the community that really spoke to me, and that it wasn't
33 just about what we think of as typical charity, you know just giving people things; it was
34 more along the lines of sustainable change, it was more about relationships. I think that's
35 probably the most important thing. Eddie and his staff and the interns all have relationships
36 with people in these neighborhoods. They have relationships with these corporations, they
37 have relationships with the volunteers. I'm sure that there are other nonprofits that have
38 that as well, but I think the link in the community is really important, and it's very
39 democratic. Anybody can be engaged with the vegetables either by buying them or
40 working at the farm stand selling them. I think really that's my answer in a nutshell that
41 it's the relationships in the communities.

42 When Eddie was showing the slides, and there was a picture of a little kid at the
43 farm stand, and there was an adult there shopping, and one of the volunteers from
44 Organization A it just kind of epitomized the relationship piece, and that it was a respectful
45 relationship. It wasn't the charity thing. People buy the vegetables. Obviously the price is

46 low, but still it's not like with the food pantry where you fill out all these forms, and you
47 stand in line and you get your free cans of icky vegetables. So I suppose the "aha" moment
48 was that this is a really successful organization because it's based in relationships, and it's
49 respectful. And not just relationships- but *good* relationships. Obviously there are bad
50 relationships, but these are grounded in good, respectful relationships. And so there's a
51 culture in Organization A. Say you started working for us in July, you would know how to
52 behave and how to treat people- the volunteers or the community partners just because
53 that's how we do it. It's part of the fabric of the organization. We wouldn't have to tell you
54 how to do it, and if you didn't do it obviously it's not a good fit. Eddie hires people based
55 on their understanding of our role and the relationships that we have. And that's something
56 we should carry into all our relationships with people we are trying to help, and it's hard
57 sometimes. Sometimes it's a lot easier to write a check or open a food pantry.
58 Relationships are hard. They take time, they take a lot of time.

59 I think there's a dignity issue; there's a, "We have and you don't" issue. It's a
60 respect issue. To say that I have something and you don't and the only way you can get it
61 is for me to give it to you just doesn't really get at the underlying issues of justice and
62 fairness, and racism and just systemic injustice. While our organization probably doesn't
63 go far enough in my mind, and not because they're doing anything wrong, it's just the way
64 that I'm going with my nonprofit, working with homeless youth, is to be so unlike a
65 charity. I think ideally we all envision, and I'm sure we have different visions, but it
66 involves neighborhoods that have enough to eat; communities that everybody has enough
67 to eat. Everybody has good food to eat, and it's not brought in on a food bank truck and
68 given away and people don't have to go stand in line and fill out paperwork. They don't

69 have to do degrading things just to get good food, or just to get food, period. Sustainable
70 change would somehow turn all of that upside-down, and it's all wrapped up in poverty,
71 it's all wrapped up in racism, and those things are not solved by a food stand unfortunately.
72 As wonderful as what we're doing is, it's a long way from making real systemic change,
73 which is eliminating poverty, which is making the playing field fair, which is having a
74 quality education not dependent on your zip code, having a safe place to live. I'm not sure
75 that food and agriculture can make that change, but I think we can partner with enough
76 other groups and enough other people and citizens and neighbors who together maybe we
77 could start to turn those things around.

78 I think that people have to get angry. I work with a lot of teenagers from the
79 Southside and Northside from the housing projects, and they're not angry. They don't
80 realize how unfair it is. Some of them do. Actually some of them *really* do, but they're a
81 small number that. I'm taking a student to a private boy's school tomorrow, and she and I
82 are going to do a talk to 600 students. She graduated from high school not even knowing
83 proper grammar. She had never read a great book. She's been to this private school before,
84 and she leaves furious. "Why is it that I couldn't go to a school that at least had teachers
85 who cared, at least had administrators who cared?" She's angry, and not in a bad way. In a
86 really good way actually. She's talking to high school students in our program saying,
87 "You know what, you've got to get a better education than what they're giving you.
88 You've got to take it upon yourself to get ready for college." She's got this fire in her
89 belly. And she can say things that I can't say. I mean I've been saying for years now, "You
90 need to clean up your grammar, you need to get this stupid stuff off your Facebook page"
91 and they smile and nod. But she can come in and say it and it has a little bit more weight,

92 and so I think part of it has to come from the community itself, but again it goes back to
93 relationships. It's partnering with other people in the community. You can't do it alone.
94 If you had asked me two years ago if anyone from church would've cared about
95 public transportation in this region I would have said, "No." And if you asked me if
96 anybody in my church would've cared about affordable housing I would have said, "No."
97 My church is a very white suburban upper middle class church. They got to know all of
98 these students through our program with the nonprofit I started. They drove them places
99 because the students didn't have transportation. They'd say, "Oh Onyx, they're hiring out
100 at the Wal-Mart" and I'd say, "Well how do you expect them to get there?" So when they
101 would either realize the limits to the student's employment opportunities, or when they
102 themselves would have to drive kids to jobs when the buses didn't run on Sundays or
103 Saturdays or whenever, they started to realize these really systemic issues affect not just
104 other people out there, but they affect students that they really care about. So those
105 relationships have to form because until we realize that poverty, crappy education, and
106 ridiculously unhelpful public transportation affect real people, real families, real children
107 who are not *other* then I think we'll be more motivated to stand up for them and our
108 community. And we'll start to realize how much stronger our whole community will be if
109 it's fair for everybody. It's relationships. That's my answer to everything. And maybe a
110 little bit of miracles- a few miracles thrown in.
111 I think my motivation starts with my Christian values. There was a time maybe
112 seven years ago and my Sunday school class was one of those studies on all the hard
113 topics, and there was a discussion on the death penalty. One of the members of my class,
114 who I didn't really like very much anyway, said something like, "I know it's not very

115 Christian but…” and then he went off to say how he was in favor of the death penalty. And
116 then I noticed that people said that all of the time: “It’s not very Christian but…” and then
117 they would go on to espouse something that seemed to me to be radically un-Christian. So
118 I said to a friend who was sort of my spiritual mentor, “I want to do the hard stuff. I’m
119 tired of just sitting around in our Sunday school class just talking about this shit, let’s go
120 do something. It has to be hard.” Because it does- it just has to be hard. We have to get out
121 of our comfort zone, and I guess I can’t make anybody else change, but I have to figure it
122 out for myself. And then the path just started opening. I can’t say that I specifically sought
123 anything out or did anything, I just said “Yes” to things that got put in my path, and so this
124 organization was sort of my baby step in that direction. They were dealing with those hard
125 issues, and it wasn’t too scary, you know? I didn’t have to go alone into the housing
126 projects, I didn’t have to get to know people too intimately, but it was a step in the right
127 direction and it gave me a little bit of awareness that I didn’t have before. It just helped me
128 start learning.

129 People really don’t understand poverty. People really don’t understand
130 homelessness. They don’t really understand what the day-to-day is like. We just have no
131 idea- until you really expose yourself and learn and ask questions. You know when you
132 visit a friend or a student in a homeless shelter, or drop them off at their apartment, or you
133 have students who have murders on their front porch, or whatever, you just know it’s not
134 the world that you’re growing up in or living in and you need to figure this out. And it’s
135 got to stop. It’s just not fair. I suppose this applies to us in a way too, but I always think
136 about it in terms of teenagers: I don’t believe that God has a plan for any of us. That just
137 seems so bogus and weird to me. Like He’s got this book and there’s a plan? But I do

138 believe that when we're born or at some point He has a dream for every one of us. And it's
139 probably this pretty magnificent dream, and He has a dream for all these kids, and all these
140 people living in poverty, and they're not able to live out that dream through no fault of
141 their own. So it's incumbent on us as Christians to help them realize this dream that God
142 holds for them. It's a big order, I realize. But I figure if we can help one, two, three, four or
143 20. And it ties in with Organization A too. It's just really to help them live up to this
144 dream. It's like when parents have a child. Their child is born and they have all these
145 dreams not just about what that child will be, but about the relationship that they'll have
146 with it. And they always talk about being in relation with God and that God wants to be in
147 relationship with us. Well, when my daughter was born I dreamed about what we'd do
148 when she was a teenager, or what we'd do when she was a young adult, or what we would
149 do when she was five. But then the other piece of, "Will she be smart, will she be talented,
150 will she be kind, what will she give back to the world?" So if we always use the metaphor
151 of a parent's love for a child, it works very nicely for me to think that God feels that way
152 about everybody.

153 People really need to go to the farm. I remember going to the farm with a group of
154 volunteers. I think it was volunteers from my church and I think it was a multigenerational
155 mission trip, so there were a whole bunch of us out there and it was really beautiful. I'm
156 not even into farming. I don't like dirt, I don't like country, I don't like bugs, but this is
157 really beautiful and this is a really special place.

158 We don't really have a strategic plan- if we had one it was very old and very
159 incomplete so it was clear that we needed to do that. Eddie had gotten a grant, an
160 unsolicited grant actually, to do an organizational assessment. And so they picked four

161 nonprofits in the city and we all went through this organizational assessment process. We
162 selected a consultant to do the assessment with us, and part of it was Eddie and I both got
163 to attend some workshops at the community foundation. I went to one on marketing and
164 one on strategic finance. It was very good actually. It was a little out of my comfort zone
165 for sure. At the end of the process their recommendation was that we actually do a strategic
166 plan. Part of the strategic plan was that hopefully in that process we would be identifying
167 other people who could serve on the board because we have a very small board considering
168 how much work there is to do.

169 So we are doing strategic planning and as a board chair I'm theoretically supposed
170 to be shepherding the separate subcommittees. We had a strategic Mark and sent out the
171 initiations to get the venue. Mark really facilitated the whole retreat, but I welcomed
172 everybody and thanked everybody for coming and doing whatever needed to be done in
173 that role. And then there were follow-up meetings with Eddie and Mark about how to
174 move forward, and we had actually pre-assigned work groups before the retreat, and those
175 three or four work groups are meeting now. At the end of March we will have a draft
176 document of the strategic plan based on those areas. There's church outreach, and I'm on
177 that committee. There's one on communications and fund development because we really
178 needed the communication message to dovetail with our fundraising strategy. There's a
179 farm policy work group because we have a lot of farm policy to discuss including changing
180 locations and figuring things out like how much food we want to grow. And then the fourth
181 is programs, which is really looking at the programs in the communities. And we do have a
182 finance committee, but I think they're waiting. We have a 2015 budget, but I think they're
183 waiting to really finalize that when they hear from the work groups to see how much

184 money we think we're going to raise and how much money we need for some of these
185 programs and things like that. Mark has given us a template for each committee and it sets
186 a goal, and then strategies, and then tactics for each strategy. So each committee has a goal,
187 and then multiple strategies and then multiple tactics.

188 I think there are a lot of opportunities where something gets thrown our way and
189 we're like, "Oh my God that sounds like a great idea" and then we do it. And usually with
190 success. I can't think of an opportunity that wasn't a good idea, but I did notice as I've
191 started moving in the nonprofit world and hanging out in some of these parts of town- like
192 there was one particular person who kept bugging me all the time about, "You should grow
193 a garden here or you should put a garden there." And you've got to be nice right? So I
194 think this will keep us really focused and we'll winnow what we commit to. Somebody
195 literally wanted us to have an Organization A beer. I mean we actually have an idea about
196 baby food, which isn't far off the mark if our goal is really healthy food and developing
197 palates for healthy food. So focus is the most important. And Eddie and I are just both
198 people who love a great idea, and get really excited about something new. It's like, "Oh
199 shiny objects!" So focus is the main thing.

200 The goal ultimately will be able to measure our success. To be able to say to
201 people, "This is what we do and this is what we've done really well" and that will kind of
202 feed on itself. It will attract more funders and then we can do more things. So measuring
203 our success will come out of this process as well. I think it will also help us utilize our staff
204 better. Right now they're just really working crazy hard. It's probably the personalities
205 involved- that they just get gung-ho about things. But they could and should work fewer
206 hours. It would be better and less likely to burn them out if we had more staff that could

207 carry the load. I mean we're replacing our old program coordinator with two people, so
208 that tells you how hard she was working. I think reducing staff burnout and then allowing
209 the staff to do what they do best would be a really good thing, and I think it will add to our
210 financial security. I think right now we really are in a good place financially, but you just
211 never know from year to year. We haven't done anything on the individual donor level.
212 We have a lot of individual donors, but we don't follow up with them, we don't ask them
213 for more money. We do everything wrong when it comes to that, but we just don't have the
214 resources. It's not something that we have the capacity to do right now but hopefully the
215 strategic plan will allow us to do that. I think ultimately the plan will help us realize our
216 goal of bringing healthy food to parts of the city that don't have access to it, and hopefully
217 in a big way, and that we'll grow more vegetables because the farm part is really important
218 too.

219 I think the most rewarding thing from this year has been working with Eddie and
220 Taylor. I don't get to see Taylor very much, but I really really like him. Probably my
221 favorite experience ever was going on a reverse site visit with them. We had applied for a
222 grant with the community foundation, and they invite you to present. Usually for a site
223 visit they come to your location, right? But this was a reverse site visit where we went to
224 them. They had all these little old ladies sitting around a U-shaped table and Eddie and
225 Taylor and I were lined up at the other end, and Eddie and Taylor both did presentations.
226 Taylor first, then Eddie, and I just sat there because they needed a female. I just remember
227 thinking first of all I feel so sorry for the person who comes after them because they were
228 so great, and I also thought that there are no two better people to have in these two
229 positions than these people. Taylor has a Divinity degree and he's an organic farmer. I

230 mean really? And he's just a freakishly nice guy. And Eddie obviously is really really good
231 at what he does. So I just thought, "We are so blessed to have these people in this space
232 right now." And I was laughing because they were going to get everything they've asked
233 for and then some because there's just nobody who's going to have done a better
234 presentation than they did. So that part was fun. So working with both of them is really
235 great, and this year working with Mark has been really rewarding. Because I have a full
236 time job, and I run a nonprofit, and I'm the board chair; I'm kind of at the end of my rope
237 in terms of time and energy. Anything I can do that serves two purposes is a really good
238 thing. So getting to take some of these workshops at the community foundation and just
239 getting to spend time with Mark gave me a lot of helpful information. And the people on
240 the board are really wonderful. It's a really nice nice group of people. There are nine board
241 members. Somebody just stepped off and we're about to recruit some new ones, but we're
242 kind of waiting to see what our strategic plan looks like to help us select who would be a
243 good board member. I think twelve is a good number. If it gets too big maybe there will be
244 personality issues or whatever, so twelve nice people I what I think would be good.
245 The time that I do spend is fine, but it's the time that I should be spending that's
246 freaking me out. I should be spending more time. So it's a feeling that I'm not doing a
247 good job, and I don't like to do things badly. In fact I really hate to do things badly. So I
248 feel like I'm being really inadequate which is a hard thing to carry all day long, so that's
249 the hardest. Also my strength is not finances; not my strong suit at all. And I have frankly
250 no interest in finances so it's not something I'm motivated to get out there and learn even
251 though I really need to learn it. My husband works in a nonprofit and he's really good at

252 finances, so if I have questions I just ask him, "What does this spreadsheet mean?" And
253 he's a really good teacher. But everything else has been really pleasant. It's a good group.
254 Eddie has definitely been a key partner for me, and I think in an ideal organization
255 the board chair and the executive director should work really well together. I think if
256 they're not working well together it could be really detrimental. I would say that this year
257 also Mark. For me personally those are the two.
258 From where I'm sitting the biggest impact we've had has been on awareness. I
259 don't think we can speak to the impacts that we've had on individual eaters in the
260 communities, but I know that we've really created some visibility around food deserts and
261 food justice; "Why is it that you live in this part of town and you have no access to fresh
262 food, and why is it that somebody living in the west end can get all the organic produce
263 they can possibly pay for, carry home, and that's just not something that's available to
264 somebody who's below a certain income?" So I think we've really increased awareness
265 about that, and I think in some ways we've modeled partnership and relationship building
266 with other nonprofits. Eddie is always being asked to go to meetings or go to be on
267 committees or task forces around food justice issues, and I think he does it really
268 gracefully and graciously and so that builds fabric; it's really weaving a fabric of the
269 community together. People want to come to meetings where Eddie and Taylor are because
270 they're just fun and cool and you know it's going to be a good meeting. That's really
271 important because if you don't get people together around the table nothing's going to
272 happen.
273 We also partner with a wonderful man who's really transformed one of the school's
274 with walking trails, and environmental education stuff. My daughter's cello teacher was

275 the music teacher there, and it was so funny because Eddie had just talked about him to
276 me, and then I was talking to the cello teacher about how to get some instruments for her
277 orchestra, and she said, “Well you should talk to this guy because if he sees on EBay or
278 something that a music program is closing he’ll just buy all their instruments for us.” I’m
279 like, “Whoa small world!” So I think partnering with people like him who get it and are
280 willing to work really hard to get things done and bring people along and educate them.
281 And sometimes it’s making partners; it’s not just finding partners. It’s finding somebody
282 who maybe has a seed planted that this is important, and then you just bring them along.
283 I’m probably an example of that. I didn’t really care so much about food issues, but I did
284 listen to Eddie enough when he was talking that it started to make sense to me. So it’s an
285 education piece, but that education process can bring people along to be partners.
286 My ideal community would be diverse. I would have to be honest and say it would
287 have to be diverse both racially and economically, but I don’t want to be worrying about
288 safety; for my kids or my neighbors. I would want other people to know students, people
289 like my students, who even though they are labeled homeless and they are labeled poor
290 that if you have them in a room together and you didn’t know anything about them you
291 would just find them as amusing and funny and charming as you would find my daughter
292 and her friends. In fact funnier, and actually a lot less whiney. So some opportunities
293 where we would just know each other. There would be relationships. If my students and
294 their family were living next door, I would want to be able to appreciate and know them
295 the way that I know some of my other neighbors. Actually I don’t know as many of my
296 neighbors as I should. And ideally it would be physically beautiful. I love old buildings
297 and restored buildings, I like open spaces and safe places to walk and I love water. There

298 would be open spaces, and water, and more of a sense of community even than what I have
299 here. And there would be a grocery store really close by because I always forget things
300 when I'm cooking, and that's why we don't live in the country. I would have to drive ten
301 miles to go get a thing of cilantro and that would just be way inefficient. I don't know how
302 you describe a fair and just community but we would all be going to the same school. I
303 mean my family lives in the city, and we've sent our daughter to public school but it's
304 been hard. We did it because we thought it was important, but it was hard. And my kid
305 suffered for it. She insists that she's glad she did it and she doesn't want to have gone to
306 the suburbs and she doesn't want to go to a private school, but she didn't get as good of an
307 education as we would have liked at least from the academic standpoint. So I would like
308 for every kid living on my street to go to a good public school. Emphasis on good.

309 We're in the city, but I bet there is one child on this block who goes to city's public
310 schools and the rest go to private schools. Or they grow up until they're in kindergarten
311 and then they move. There aren't very many kids over the age of six on this street because
312 they move, so there isn't that sense of stability. A multigenerational community would be
313 wonderful. For example when my neighbor's husband falls down, which he does a lot, she
314 can call another neighbor and they come and pick him back up. Older people could stay in
315 their homes a lot longer. Everybody would feel safe. I would say the word family. This is
316 hard, but I think that's all.

317 Well maybe with our work there is some awareness when as a family from the
318 communities we serve goes to the farm stand and meets these white volunteers and the
319 staff from Organization A they start to say, "Oh these white people aren't so bad. Maybe I
320 could live in a neighborhood with them. It wouldn't be so bad." And they might say,

321 “Dang I love eating fresh corn, why don’t I get fresh corn? Why can’t I go to the store and
322 buy fresh corn?” So maybe they’ll start to question some of the status quo, because it can’t
323 just be us bringing food from the farm for the next twenty years. It really has to be more
324 systemic. Now one of the things that we’ve done, and I don’t really know all of the details,
325 is set up selling fresh produce near where the big Hispanic community is in the city. The
326 idea was that we would show that there was a demand for this fresh produce, which then
327 might serve as an enticement or data for a real grocer to come in. So that’s work that we do
328 always have in our brain. Because people say, “Oh poor people they don’t want to eat fresh
329 vegetables.” “Well really? How would you know that? Because they don’t go to
330 McDonald’s and order fresh vegetables? Or the WaWa on the corner?” Actually it’s not
331 even as nice as a WaWa. So I think creating awareness all around is what we need to do.

Appendix L: Terry's Story

1 I'm a community advocate at one of the public housing communities, and I've been
2 here for almost four years. I refer people to different organizations that have educational
3 classes, and I assist with any and everything that a person will probably need- any type of
4 resource. Initially I was unemployed before I started here, and the job was stuff that I
5 already do. People always look to me for resources so even before I started working I'd try
6 to find resources and try to tell people about them. So I like that. With Organization A I'm
7 kind of the outreach person mixed with whatever programmer it would be. There are other
8 pieces that I'm starting to do right now as far as the focus group on cultural competency
9 and working with Casey. Right now it's mainly the prescription produce program and just
10 gathering people who want to participate in it in the class and all that stuff.

11 I love equality; I think people need equality. I just love people. I think especially in
12 this neighborhood a lot of people are overlooked just because I guess they are poor and
13 they're here. When Organization A first came I liked them because they've always been
14 genuine. I never see a lot of fakeness. They seem like they genuinely care and I don't feel
15 like they treat the clients any differently than they would anyone else. So I go out and I do
16 outreach. When you tell people that it's a fruit and vegetable program, they tend to want to
17 do it for the fruit and some of the vegetables and not so much for the educational part. And
18 so just getting them to feel trust with the people that work here and start taking their advice
19 and doing that kind of stuff really helps. Getting them to trust people and to be able to try
20 new things. A lot of people out here get most of their vegetables from the can. I bet 99% of
21 their vegetables come from the can, and the ones they do have fresh they don't eat
22 properly. So just getting them to understand that by building trust so they try new things. I

23 love that we do that with them. And we meet them where they are and don't say, "Hey you
24 ate some sweet potatoes but you destroyed them with all this sugar and butter" and stuff
25 like that. The educators will say, "Okay well that's a good start that you are trying the
26 potatoes. Let's use half the sugar or half the butter." I like that they do that.

27 There was the principal at my school, and I thought she was very resourceful for
28 me. I was a young mom; I had a child as a teen and I didn't have very many people to help
29 me or to tell me where resources were that could help me. I remember one day I needed
30 something- I can't remember what it was, but I just opened the phone book and started
31 calling and just talking to people. I called one of the funeral homes and somebody talked to
32 me and was giving me all this information about Healthy Start, and they have this program
33 you can go to, and they got classes that are free, and you can get WIC, and just giving me
34 all this information. And I was like, "Wow that's cool that I have somebody." So whenever
35 I found information I would just tell people because most people were like, "How did you
36 know where to look?" I didn't know where to look. I mean I got that information from a
37 funeral home. But I didn't know. So the idea of having a resource center where someone
38 could come and get all these resources is a perfect fit for me. I enjoy it. In my own life
39 situation as far as doing this type of work that experience it's been helpful.

40 I was in the prescription produce program. The only way I've ever eaten zucchini
41 as far as I liked it was really really thin; it had to be paper thin and in spaghetti sauce.
42 That's it. Other than that I'd never tried it. I didn't give it to my children because I felt like
43 it was something that they would probably never eat. But we made some zucchini fries,
44 and usually when my children see something that doesn't look so good they're like, "Ew!"
45 but they ate it and they enjoyed it. Them eating it really helped me out as far as with that

46 problem. Another time we had a participant who had had a stroke. This was our last
47 program. She had a stroke and she was telling me, “The doctor said because I have these
48 vegetables and I’m eating these vegetables that that’s helping me” and she was really
49 proud of herself like, “Hey I ate my collards the same way they eat them. All I did was put
50 a dash of salt and a dash of pepper and that’s it. I did it with no butter.” She was telling
51 everybody that came in. She had even brought some for another one of the participants and
52 they were sharing their little doctoring secrets. She was just like, “Let me tell you how to
53 make them taste better. Just put the dash in the water before.” So that made me feel good.
54 She also said, “I used the onions they gave me, I didn’t know onions were vegetables.” “If
55 you eat tomatoes you probably won’t have as much chance of having cancer.” They were
56 just sharing that with other people and that really touched me. It wasn’t even on a
57 prescription produce day. They’re learning.
58 I can tell you about the community I work in and the community I live in. The
59 community I live in is I guess what you would call a low-income mixed community. I
60 don’t know what that would be. I know Organization A’s got a farm stand there. I can tell
61 you more specifically about the community I work in. There are 504 housing units and I
62 think 502 housing units are filled with families. There is low-income. It would be
63 considered very very very low-income. I have a family that I know of with just one single
64 family in the house, but there are 13 people. That’s a single family, a mother and her
65 children and her mate. But some of the housing units are doubled up. I got another family
66 who it’s a lady and her three kids and another lady and her 4 kids all in one house. So
67 that’s basically it. And then there are no real grocery stores that are in distance. Most
68 people don’t drive and catching the bus to a grocery store as you can imagine is very hard.

69 Catching a bus to a grocery store when you barely have money to make groceries and
70 you're using an EBT card is harder. Some people who live out here actually- although
71 they're not supposed to- use their benefits to pay someone to take them to the grocery
72 store. So, "Hey I'll make you $50 worth of groceries if you take me to the grocery store,
73 which means now I'm really going to have to stretch my benefits because I had to give
74 away $50 just to get a ride to a grocery store that's cheaper." And then if you go up to
75 Food Circus there's not very much produce, not very much fresh stuff. Most of the stuff
76 you're going to get is going to be in cans and boxes and it's very expensive. It's probably
77 worse than going to a Whole Foods store, but you're paying for it.

78 In my work my faith does and doesn't play a role. I don't know. I won't really say,
79 "Hey let's pray," but there are some people who come to me and are like, "Hey let's pray
80 about this situation," and I do it. And so even here in our work setting that's one thing I
81 like. And I know we shouldn't do it, but in our work setting at the community everybody is
82 faith-based so we bring it to work with us. We don't discriminate against those who don't.
83 But just having that for somebody who can come in and they know that and they'll just talk
84 to you about something random. I have people come in and talk to me about stuff that
85 you're like, "You came in here for milk and we're on your childhood?" Just having it here
86 helps I think. I know Organization A doesn't want their name to be completely focused
87 that they're faith-based, but the people coming here just knowing that they are faith-based
88 believe that Organization A is going to be solid so I think it plays a good role. I don't know
89 what they think, but I think it does.

90 The rewarding part with Organization A is knowing that people are getting what
91 they need, even though sometimes it's very frustrating when people don't come. But just

92 knowing that they're getting the basic things they need. They're getting an education they
93 need. Seeing people take what they've learned and use it afterwards- that's really
94 rewarding to me. To have somebody say, "Hey you know you can make coleslaw yourself.
95 You don't have to have all that stuff." Another time we were in a store and somebody told
96 them, "Hey don't use the iceberg lettuce because they're not vegetables. We learned that in
97 class. That's just a waste of your money. You're only buying water." So although we
98 didn't tell them that in that way, they knew they could get more nutrients from using
99 spinach. I enjoyed that. I was like, "Gosh they really paid attention," and even if it's just
100 that one person you're thinking, "Hey okay we've got 15 families out of 504 so we're
101 really not making a dent," but those 15 families might talk to 15 families a piece and then
102 knowledge spreads, so that really touched me. I was like, "Oh she listened!"
103 I go to the education classes but I don't do them myself. I'm there with them when
104 they do it, so hearing that just touched me. Some education classes we do here. Some
105 things that I learned from that I take other places like with my Biggest Loser group. I take
106 it with me so can I teach others. I need to be a role model more.
107 I have a good group that I work with. Eddie is good; he's so sweet. He really is.
108 Like just now he offered me like, "If you need to come to the office I can come pick you
109 up." And I work with a good group of people who will go above and beyond what they
110 have to do to help me. They do. Eddie has even volunteered to come take my boyfriend
111 and me to the doctor. He'll say, "I'll take you to the doctor and do this." They really really
112 do go above and beyond what they have to. Even some of my coworkers do the same.
113 What's challenging with this job is the exact opposite of what is rewarding. Or
114 probably could be the same; the hours, and being able to say, "No" and not letting it bother

115 me. Also telling someone something for their own good and them not doing it. That's very
116 bothersome to me. Because sometimes I feel like, "Hey is this making a difference?" With
117 the food situation someone will be like, "Hey I fry my cabbage," and I'm like, "Why are
118 you frying it? You're taking everything out of it," and they're like, "No I'm not." So that's
119 very frustrating for me.

120 When I was in the program I learned a lot about serving sizes. I know this sounds
121 crazy. But for example with an apple, I was just considering an apple as one serving, but
122 really if it's a larger sized apple it could be two. I also thought that frozen vegetables
123 would have the same nutritional value as fresh vegetables. I'm like, "What's the difference
124 if they freeze them?" But hey, fresh is better, so I didn't know that. I always thought that
125 fresh vegetables are going to be more expensive than canned or frozen, but actually if
126 they're in season they're a lot cheaper. I never thought of it that way until we looked at it
127 per ounce and stuff and I'm like, "Yeah that's true." So that was a big "aha" moment for
128 me.

129 We do an assessment with each participant before the program starts. In our
130 assessment I ask things like, "How many people are in your house, what have you ate
131 before, what don't you eat before, how do you like your food, what have you tried what,
132 have you not tried?" There's a bunch of questions. It's a survey but I ask them the
133 questions instead of them filling it out because a lot of people have trouble filling it out.

134 I always ask participants how they learn best. And when they tell me how they
135 learn best I just use that. I'll ask, "Okay do you like people to talk to you or do you like to
136 do hands on or would you rather just see pictures?" And once they tell me then that's it. I
137 also tell them, "Hey can you give us three weeks straight and if you don't like it you can

138 stop," and I think that helps. Not two because the first one might have been really boring
139 and they'll think, "I really don't want to be here", but if they just commit to the three then
140 they seem to enjoy the program. I would give the assessment to the program coordinator,
141 and she analyzed it.

142 Something that hasn't worked well was one approach where we just got 15 families
143 and begged and pleaded, and if they didn't come we dragged them in. It was just a lot.
144 Even though I still do a lot of dragging them in and stuff like that, I kind of hold them
145 accountable now. So now if someone misses more than two pick-ups they're out of the
146 program. That has been successful, but it didn't work well with me just saying, "Oh ok you
147 missed it. Oh okay come back. Oh okay." Because then they're missing out on valuable
148 parts and that's not good.

149 At the end of the program we give them a little survey. It's a sheet or two and they
150 can say what they liked, what they didn't like, how well they think things went, what they
151 learned, what they already knew, it was a waste of time, anything. And it's anonymous just
152 so that we can get feedback of how our program went.

153 People have been asking about the program. And at the store they're looking at the
154 prices and they always compare the way the vegetables look at the store. That makes me
155 really proud. I'm serious because I can be in there and they'll be like, "The farm stand stuff
156 don't look like this. Look at this!" Just hearing people say, "Hey their potatoes taste
157 better." Or somebody swears that their collards are way better. My mom loves them. She's
158 like, "You know those organic collards are better. I don't know what they do with them but
159 for some reason they taste better." And so just hearing people say that brings joy to me;
160 that I'm a part of something that's really helping them.

161 The need to have this program is great. Just the children; I did really enjoy that
162 piece too with the last program coordinator. When she was here she always involved the
163 children, the kids. And Eddie involves some older kids- even pays some of the teens a little
164 stipend to help out. The little children really enjoy it. They're like, "Those people are
165 rich!" "Do you know that she has a house?" Even though the program is mainly about
166 vegetables, just to see people from other places is great for them. Whenever she went home
167 for a break they were like, "You know she's taking a trip? That's a whole lot of gas
168 money." So just them knowing that there are other things that you can do I think is great. I
169 enjoy that they took time out to kind of mentor the kids. It was only two or three hours and
170 the little kids got paid with a carrot or tomato, but they were so happy to help and just
171 seeing and using math skills with them.

172 I've seen relationships develop. Some of our clients didn't know anybody. A
173 couple of them didn't come outside- they didn't get with anybody. And now they have a
174 couple friends that they deal with. So I enjoy seeing that. So Miss Lisa has become a
175 babysitter for Ruby's children. And beforehand they lived about four doors down and
176 didn't know each other, so that's been great. I like to see that. And Miss Lisa doesn't have
177 any income, and Ruby had income but didn't have steady or reliable childcare that she
178 could afford, and so Miss Lisa and Ruby were able to work something out. Miss Lisa loves
179 kids anyway, and she will keep Ruby's kids overnight for cheaper. She'll just come to her
180 house and sleep on the pullout sofa and get the kids up for school. And for Miss Lisa it's
181 the best because she's struggling with food so she cooks breakfast there and she's able to
182 eat there and go home, and she gets income for doing it. Yeah, it worked out. And they
183 would have never met each other without Organization A.

184 My perfect community? I'd have the biggest house on the block- no I'm kidding. I
185 would want to live in a very diverse community if I could afford to. I want my children to
186 see all different types of cultures- all different types of everything. So it would be very
187 mixed; very low-income all the way up to really really wealthy people. I would love a
188 mixed community if it could flow that way perfectly. So in a perfect world, that's where I
189 would love to live and work at; where everybody can get something from the community.
190 I try to teach people different resources or find resources within themselves that
191 they didn't know they had. So hopefully that's putting a little dot in the big picture. I won't
192 know how much I'm doing, but maybe just a speck. But I'm trying. The big picture would
193 be getting everybody to where they have everything they need and understand what they
194 need to live, instead of just surviving. Or to actually really be able to live instead of, "Hey I
195 get up, I eat whatever because it's what I have, and I use the bathroom and I go to sleep
196 because that's all I have." I want them to be able to *live*.

Appendix M: Casey's Story

1 I am the coalition coordinator for a healthy children initiative here in the city, and I
2 have been here for about a year and a half. I work for a nonprofit organization called
3 Organization B. Organization B was started a few years ago when the community realized
4 that childhood obesity is a challenge here, like it is in communities all across the country
5 and all across the world, and the community wanted to have one specific organization that
6 was tackling this. There are lots of great organizations doing work with food and with
7 physical activity across the city, but a group of concerned citizens wanted one organization
8 specifically focused on children and obesity prevention. And so Organization B was born
9 and it does lots of great programming in schools- mostly low-income Title 1 schools. But
10 then we realized you can't tackle childhood obesity with one approach or one setting or
11 with one population; that we needed a broader more cohesive approach so we started a
12 coalition of likeminded partners who cared about these issues. That's how the coalition
13 was formed and that's what I do. I sort of coordinate the members. We have about 20
14 members who care about children's health and wellness and already do some type of
15 programming in health so we partner with them to bring a childhood obesity angle to their
16 work, and to add new elements of thinking about this epidemic and trying to increase our
17 attention and emphasis on tackling it.

18 I have three young children of my own. I have an eight, six, and three year old, and
19 my background is in public health so I've worked on lots of different health issues in the
20 past. When my oldest daughter started public school I was blown away with the challenge
21 of feeding kids well. The school where we attend, the public neighborhood school, has 40
22 different countries represented. A lot of these kids aren't getting healthy food at home and

23 I was astounded at the amount of candy and highly processed foods and junk food that kids
24 were getting at school. And so I though, "Wow!" And this just isn't about individual
25 children's health but it's about the kind of collective learning environment. If these kids
26 are eating non-nourishing food, how can they focus and thrive and really experience and
27 do what they need to in the classrooms? So I had just moved to this city and just started
28 being a mother in a public school, and I decided to start a wellness movement at our
29 school. And so I thought you know, I could go in and complain to the principal and get
30 mad at the cafeteria staff, maybe file a complaint against the teachers who are using all this
31 candy to teach lessons and to incentivize, but I decided instead to have a positive affirming
32 approach- let's make friends not enemies. So I started a committee on the PTA to focus on
33 wellness and that kind of generated the interest in childhood obesity and children's health,
34 and so that's been going for the year and a half we've been here.
35 We planted a beautiful 12 raised bed garden and all 600 kids get out into the garden
36 every week with a farmer, and they're learning about real food and being exposed to new
37 vegetables and herbs and trying things and tasting things, kind of challenging their own
38 perception that they don't like vegetables and they're having fun. And we do health events
39 throughout the year. The principal took our theme of growing healthy minds at the school,
40 and now tomorrow we're having a no-candy Valentine's Day celebration. So we're playing
41 games and having active parties instead of treats. It's been a fun beautiful thing to kind of
42 watch the school transform to thinking about wellness in all aspects of what we do at the
43 school. So I was doing that work when I learned about Organization B. I just kind of
44 reached out to know what's going on in the community, who can I learn from? Who can
45 we partner with? That's how we heard about Organization B, and then this position came

46 up and I felt like it really tapped into things I cared deeply about as a mother, as a PTA
47 member, as a community member who cares about children's current health and their
48 future health, and I think childhood obesity is really at the core of that.
49 The value of the sanctity of human life drives me to do this work. I feel like every
50 person, especially every child, should be nourished and nurtured and I feel like it's so
51 important to give children a great start for life and I think food is a crucial part of that.
52 What they nourish their bodies with impacts their intellect and their spirituality. I think all
53 of the components of a life are impacted by what children are eating.
54 I have a master's in public health and I've done a lot of different health initiatives. I
55 worked overseas for a long time doing infectious disease, family planning and HIV-AIDS
56 prevention and a lot of work around that. I worked in India and did a feeding program with
57 preschool children in the slums. And then I wanted to come back to the United States. I
58 have this evolution of feeling like the most impact you can have is in your own home and
59 your own communities, so I wanted to work domestically again. I moved home and I
60 started providing health care for refugees and helping resettle refugees, and I was struck by
61 the access to food that these refugees had. They lived in low-income housing in areas of
62 the city where there was no grocery store and as we spent time with them on the ground
63 and tried to help them with their health needs and all sorts of needs, realized that they were
64 all buying their food at the 7-Eleven, and it was expensive and it was food that wasn't
65 helping them feel well and be their best selves. So that was really my first kind of insight
66 into, "Wow accessing food and being able to enjoy nourishing food is a challenge,
67 particularly for low-income families." That was my first aha moment of like, "Wow, not
68 only is the selection horrible but the price tag is terrible, and with your limited limited

69 budget how are you guys doing this?" So how do we expand access so that people can
70 want to enjoy good food and be able to enjoy good food?

71 Working with the refugees and seeing how challenging it was for them to access
72 food was eye opening and illuminating and really sparked an interest in food. And then
73 moving forward food has been a big element of my work. I worked in Washington DC for
74 several years and led an inner city mentoring program where we helped children graduate
75 from high school, and food was a big part of that. We gathered people weekly for what we
76 called Dinner and Diplomas. We felt like food would bring people together, and we met
77 and we'd mentor and they would learn and work on homework and learn study skills and
78 try to overcome obstacles towards their education over dinner. Getting these kids to do
79 homework and improve their study skills was so hard until we started providing really
80 good dinners. I think people yearn to be nourished and want good food and want to enjoy
81 that, and I think the magic of good food really hit home. How many youth we were able to
82 gather on a weeknight and who were willing to be involved in a program where there was
83 good healthy nourishing food and fellowship. So I've done lots of different activities
84 around food.

85 As I was leading this movement at our school I started doing research on what was
86 going on in the community and what are some organizations that we could learn from or
87 draw from or partner with, so I found out about Organization B and I just felt like this was
88 exactly what we need for our school, and then the opening came up and I thought, "Oh I'd
89 love to do this professionally." It's part time, which is perfect for me right now. I feel like
90 for me spending most of my time as a mother of young children is wonderful for me, but I
91 also feel like it really informs my work. I feel like I'm in the trenches every day of trying

92 to feed kids healthy food and trying to come up with fast, easy, likable, filling, affordable
93 meals. That's what I do full time, and then I feel like I bring a lot of that experience to my
94 work too. I feel like when we go into these communities or public housing sites their
95 culture is a lot different than mine, but I feel like the culture of motherhood and caregiving
96 transcends a lot of other boundaries and I feel like we can relate because as parents you're
97 all trying to do basically the same thing. So I love working part time. I love being a
98 mother. I love being engaged in these issues on the ground in real life and bringing all of
99 that experience to help other caregivers in the community do the same.

100 I'm from a Christian faith tradition and my faith has always informed my desire to
101 be involved in making the world a better place, and specifically my own community a
102 better place. I think the idea of God loving all of His children and always wanting the best
103 for all of His children is a motivating factor of not only taking care of ourselves, but
104 everyone. Seeing everyone as a human family, part of God's family. I love the example of
105 Christ feeding his followers. I love his commitment to justice and to reaching out to the
106 marginalized and the downtrodden and the needy and the poor and the weak. So my faith
107 has kind of been an instigator to the things that I care about whether it's social justice and
108 community building generally, and even food specifically. I think there's a very strong
109 spiritual component to food with caring for our bodies and caring for our spirits- it's the
110 nourishing aspect. So I think my faith is intertwined in all that I do.

111 I spend a good chunk of my time working on the prescription produce program
112 with Organization A, but I've also developed a program called Food Investigators. When I
113 started this position I felt like there were lots of great initiatives going on in the
114 community. I thought there were lots of gardens where kids are getting hands on and

115 growing and tasting their own food, which I think is beautiful. I felt like there were lots of
116 cooking classes where kids were learning how to create food. But there wasn't a course
117 that I knew of that helped kids examine what they currently eat; what they're eating on a
118 day-to-day basis, and trying to investigate what they eat and why. So I developed Food
119 Investigators, and it's a five-session afterschool class where kids investigate what they eat
120 and why, and they try to become detectives in looking at all kinds of food issues- whether
121 that is food marketing to children, portion distortion, looking at highly processed foods, or
122 looking at how companies try to market food to look like it's healthy but it's really not. So
123 making them savvier eaters and understanding what they drink, what they eat, what they
124 snack on, what they eat for breakfast, what they eat for lunch, what they eat for dinner, fast
125 food- and then having them be smart about this so they can be better decision makers when
126 they get to choose what they eat. And then also giving them skills on how to eat healthier
127 snacks, beverages, breakfast, lunch, and dinner. So it's been really fun. We're currently
128 doing our fifth session of it. We're partnering with after school programs like the YMCA
129 and the Boys & Girls Club for the program. It's been really fun to see. We do these eye-
130 popping activities where we measure out how much sugar is in a Big Gulp, or how much
131 fat is in a McDonald's Happy Meal to really get kids to visually see like, "Wow this is
132 what I'm consuming and wow this is the impact it has on me. Wow this would be a lot
133 better option. I would feel better, I could learn better, I could be more active if I'm eating
134 this food." And it's been just great to see light bulbs go off in kids heads and the most fun
135 part is to bump into kids months later and they see me and they're like, "Oh I'm drinking
136 less soda, I'm drinking more water, and oh I'm eating more fruits and vegetables," or, "Oh
137 I remember you told us to look out for the asterisk on the packages because it means

138 something they don't want you to know, and now I look and I see," and, "Oh if it has
139 superheroes on the cover and no pictures of food then I know it's probably not going to be
140 a good food for me, and now I remember highly processed food- these Rice Krispies are
141 really corn, and eating corn on the cob is good but eating these Rice Krispy treats is not so
142 good." It's just been fun to run into these kids and see how we were able to create a
143 program that really stuck with them.

144 I thought I was going to start a PhD in nutrition and I started taking classes and I
145 was like "Oh this is dreadful, oh this is so boring, painfully boring" you know? It isn't as
146 compelling to me as the bigger larger community food issues. So I think nutrition
147 education can be boring, and it can be really dry, and it can be even preachy and
148 condescending about what you should eat and shouldn't eat, so we try to work hard to let
149 the kids discover these things on their own and have experiences that are memorable and
150 really help them think in deep and profound ways about what they eat and how they can
151 eat better. I ran into a girl recently who had been in the program and I learned that she
152 doesn't have a mother in the home and so she lives with her father and several siblings.
153 She's 11 years old and has taken on the role of organizing the food for her family, even at
154 that young age. She told me how much this course has impacted what she eats and what
155 she wants her family to eat, and it's those beautiful moments of feeling like, "Wow
156 investing in, giving these kids new ideas, new understanding, new capacities can really
157 make a difference in their lives and in their family's lives." It's helped transform how they
158 eat and think of themselves and food. It's been beautiful and inspiring and motivating to
159 see.

160 It's been a lot of fun. It's been really creative and fun. We try to be an innovative
161 fresh approach to talking about nutrition and food. We focus on 10 and 11 year olds. We
162 found that that was a prime target population because they're old enough to understand
163 some complicated topics. When we're talking about food marketing they need to be old
164 enough to understand these complex ideas, but we felt like it's not too old that their taste
165 buds are set and kind of fixed. We tried it once with a little bit older kids and they were
166 like, "No we don't want to try that, no no" and they were too cool to try some of the
167 activities. So we feel like 10- and 11-year olds- fourth and fifth graders- are at the prime
168 age where they're smart but they're still curious and they're still eager and they're still
169 open to doing new things. So I feel like that's a really key age in influencing kids and
170 helping them set good patterns and good kinds of eating habits.
171 We try to do the Food Investigators program where Organization B is doing
172 programming too so the kids are either already doing gardening or some of our other
173 programs around physical activity so that we're having a collective impact. We're like,
174 "Let's try to influence these children in every dimension. In their school, in their after
175 school, in their faith-based community, in their housing community. Let's try to get them
176 from all different angles so these messages are really driving home." It's all in low-income
177 neighborhoods, and we try to be really thoughtful too. We recognize children usually are
178 not the main decision-makers of what they buy and what they eat. They're eating a lot of
179 their meals at school and their parents buy things, but we've tried to empower them saying,
180 "When you can choose, let's try to choose the best you can."
181 We received a grant from the CarMax Foundation. They give grants to community
182 organizations who are improving children's lives, so they gave the initial funding to design

183 and start the program. That's what built our little stash of equipment that we can take, so
184 there does not have to be a kitchen where we do this programming. We can take everything
185 we need from ovens to everything. It's nice because we do it in really under-resourced
186 settings too. Then we've reached out to YMCA, the Boys & Girls Club, and other after
187 school programs and there's been more demand than we could even fill. I think people
188 recognize food is so crucial, so important to these children's wellbeing and that kids love
189 to get hands-on and to have interactive activities especially in the kitchen. Everyone loves
190 to eat. So we've had a lot of support from organizations that would like to host the Food
191 Investigators course. And then we had support in running it from the health district. We've
192 trained a lot of trainers on how to run the course and we have interns from a university, so
193 it's been a great collective effort. We kind of led the program but we draw on lots of
194 community members to help lead the programs and lots of community agencies to help
195 host it.

196 I would love to teach them all but we want to spread it more. I designed it and I get
197 to teach it often but then I have other people spread the love. We are just waiting to hear
198 back on another grant about really ramping it up and doing 15 more programs over the
199 next year. It's really exciting to see a little idea or a little insight you have grow into a
200 program that's impacting lives and spreading. And I think even more than food, I love and
201 am committed to the idea that everyone should view themselves as changes makers. If
202 there's something lacking- if there's something missing create it. Make it happen. Initiate
203 it. Bring it to life. That's been really fun to do here. I felt like this was missing in the
204 landscape of food education and so let's make it happen. Let's create it and it's been
205 wonderful to see all the resources and support come together to make it possible.

206 So as a coalition we do activities in the community. We started working with the
207 health system and they come around to different community sites, and we're going to start
208 partnering with them. At the end of every Food Investigators program we have a
209 celebration event where the kids cook a meal and family and friends come and they
210 graduate and so they're going to come and help us do that. We're going to be partnering
211 with a university to do some evaluation. We done kind of basic pre- and post-tests to see
212 the impact, but I think it's hard to get valid information from kids when they're busy and
213 with their friends, so we're trying to make a more rigorous evaluation of the program to
214 see how is it in reducing the amount of sugar sweetened beverages kids are drinking, or
215 how is it increasing the amount of fruits and vegetables kids are eating, or how much is it
216 impacting their diet. We've gotten lots of anecdotal and it's lots of positive feedback and
217 great commentary and we're trying to work with researchers to strengthen that.
218 We actually had Organization A come in and do a session with us. It was a session
219 where we were looking at lunches and they brought in fresh produce from the farm for our
220 veggie wraps that we made, which was great. I love being part of a coalition where there's
221 all these organizations doing important things and to be able to bring them together, and to
222 use each other's skills and expertise to make them happen has been really great.
223 I think there's so much to learn about nutrition and eating. Trying to know what to
224 most focus on in a 5-week session is very challenging. There's always new resources and
225 new ideas and to try to really focus and hone in on five key things we want to learn- that's
226 been challenging. I think also you do this five-week course with the kids and it really
227 impacts them, but then what's the follow up? I wish there was a program where we could
228 have them come back again for another round, and that's one of the things that we're sort

229 of brainstorming; how it's great that we have this five-week intensive experience, but then
230 what? Eddie is really good with helping me think about, "How do you make kids feel
231 empowered and not discouraged when the food that they are given might not match up to
232 the type of food that we're encouraging them to eat?" We teach kids these ideas, but then if
233 the food that they're served at school or the food that they're served at home or if they're
234 taken out for fast food every night because that's what their family eats- I think that's a
235 challenge. And working with children in general I think. You want to give kids the desire
236 and the ability to choose healthy foods, but there are the obstacles and the challenges of
237 systems in place and neighborhoods that sometimes limit that. I think that's probably the
238 biggest challenge.

239 That's why we're working with the school system, we are doing something called
240 the smarter lunch room movement where we are helping all 42 public schools do what's
241 called choice architecture. So we're working with the school systems trying to do low cost
242 or no cost interventions to try to improve the healthy choices that kids make. And so we
243 are busy doing that in schools. We are trying to increase the healthy food that kids can get
244 at school. And that's why we decided to partner with Organization A to do the prescription
245 produce program, where we felt like we could teach kids these messages but if the parents
246 aren't getting them too then there will be a disconnect. So that's why we're trying to come
247 up with more programs to educate parents and inspire and motivate parents to invest the
248 time and energy it takes to have better, more nourishing food at home. The food access
249 task force that I'm part of is trying to tackle that too- how can we make neighborhoods
250 places that have more nourishing food? So those are big, big challenges but we're trying to

251 address them as well. And change comes slowly and you start small, but at least we're
252 starting somewhere.
253 I think having small groups of kids with an adult so that they get lots of focus
254 works well. I think that a lot of these kids spend most of their lives in big group settings.
255 It's a bunch of kids in a classroom, it's a bunch of kids in after-school, it's a bunch of kids
256 wherever they go and I feel like kids really crave and really need more one-on-one time
257 ideally, but at least an adult for the small group of kids. Really giving them a lot of focus
258 and attention and one-on-one mentoring, so we do that. That's why we get a lot of
259 volunteers to help us run the programs so that just a handful of kids are with an adult and
260 they're doing these activities together and they're learning together and their processing
261 these ideas together. We really try to make it intimate. We feel like the more intimate it can
262 be the more impactful it will be. We also try to make it visual and interactive and fun and
263 getting kids seeing for themselves food issues I think really pops and sticks with kids more
264 than just the traditional health promotion messages and stuff.
265 We started with a wider range and did it with some kids that were too young. They
266 weren't able to focus long enough or engage in the more complicated topics. And then
267 there were kids that were too old that didn't want to try anything and were too cool. We're
268 always tweaking recipes too. We try to strike a balance of giving kids recipes that are
269 really accessible that they can do at home- really simple things versus more complicated
270 recipes- that are fun for them to try. Stuff that they would never do at home but it's really
271 great to be exposed to. So we are continually tweaking between what food we should make
272 with them that is fun and exciting and novice and enticing but at the same time is
273 accessible and replicable. So we're constantly tweaking what we do.

274 I think it's hard to really get people to be accurate in reporting what they eat, and
275 especially young kids. One of the beautiful things about kids is they live in the present. It's
276 all about the present, and what happened yesterday or ten minutes ago, it'll be like who
277 knows? Who remembers? So I think it's hard to ask kids "How many sodas did you drink
278 last week?" because it could be a shot in the dark. So collecting accurate data on health
279 behavior is tricky. And then of course this is the case in any evaluation in a post-survey of
280 are they telling you what you want to hear? Is it really accurate information or is it just
281 thrown off the cuff? And then it's also just hard to know how to evaluate success. Is it just
282 by change of diet? Is it by their new interest or new commitments? It's hard to define
283 concretely what we're trying to evaluate. And that's not my expertise so that's why I'm
284 reaching out to some groups to help us process that more so we can have a better sense
285 how to do it better.

286 We want to be sensitive. I think we've seen in the past some organizations come in
287 and do food programming with kids in low-income communities and have talked about
288 how it's important to eat organic or it's important to only have free range so-and-so; kind
289 of promoting ideals that are inaccessible and I think that's discouraging instead of helpful.
290 So I think the socioeconomic status of the community impacts the way we deliver and we
291 want to be sensitive. We want to be sensitive to those factors and we want to be realistic.
292 For us getting kids to eat more vegetables, organic or not, is a huge success. Getting kids to
293 drink water instead of soda is a beautiful thing. So being sensitive to the needs, the
294 limitations, the barriers, and tailoring our messages to make sure that it fits and it makes
295 sense and it's doable.

296 We realize that children are not the main decision makers when it comes to food
297 and so we need to be reaching parents. How do we reach parents? So we knew about
298 Organization A and we knew about this great model prescription produce program, and we
299 thought this is an excellent way to target parents and caregivers of children. And so we
300 approached them and said, “You have these awesome programs and this small but
301 influential groups of caregivers, could we come and partner with you and can we add kind
302 of a focus on getting these parents to think about the impact the food they choose and make
303 has on their children?” And so it’s really fun. We’ve just partnered on one together. We’re
304 going to be doing four over the next two years. One each season. I loved working with
305 them. It’s a really amazing this program they’ve put together, and I really came in and
306 helped with doing the cooking demonstrations. We did lots of workshops on what are easy
307 ways to get more fresh produce into kids? We had the participants come up with, “What
308 are your five meals you serve your kids the most?” And then we brainstormed, “So what
309 are easy ways to get vegetables in those easy meals?” Not having some complicated recipe
310 that you’ve never tried before that you have to go out and shop for and you might not
311 know if your kids are going to like it, but what are five things that you eat on a regular
312 basis, and let’s start with that. We really tried hard to meet people with where they’re at.
313 So we kind of did an assessment with, “What are the five most common dinners, what are
314 the five most common lunches, breakfasts?” And then we have fun workshops, “What are
315 quick and easy ways to get this beautiful produce that you’re getting into those existing
316 meals?” We just had lots of conversation about why more fresh produce matters for kids.
317 We had lots of conversations around, “What are the obstacles around getting kids to eat
318 fruits and vegetables?” and trying to troubleshoot those. And then at the farm stand we did

319 taste tests. And we did them right at the time when kids got home off the bus. It was fun
320 because parents were coming to get their prescriptions filled and get their produce and the
321 kids were getting off the bus so we had samples and taste tests and little demos for the kids
322 to enjoy, and the parents and the kids got to be there together. We feel like it was a
323 successful partnership by bringing their existing program that worked so well and trying to
324 bring kind of a childhood obesity focus to it.

325 Whatever community I live in, I want to live in a community where everyone is
326 nourished in food, learning, in friendships and relationships; where everyone feels
327 nourished and healthy and whole and that they have the building blocks to create the life
328 that they want. I know that's kind of abstract but to me that's kind of the ideal community
329 where no one is lacking in nourishment.

330 I hope my small limited contributions impact children and their families and
331 communities by helping people think about what will nourish them and how they can
332 nourish themselves and each other. Sometimes I think, "Oh gosh we've only done this five
333 times and there's 5,000…500,000 kids that could use this." So sometimes I'm like, "Man I
334 wish we could scale so much more" but I think as a community worker you think "Okay
335 I'm starting something, we're getting started and we're going to help it spread and grow
336 and expand and we have to believe that even investments in small changes can lead to big
337 things."

338 I would say some of my guiding values are just this idea that the body is a gift and I
339 think just the simple idea that the greater our health the greater our ability to experience
340 joy. I think that definitely motivates me to work in health and nutrition and to help people
341 be able to enjoy their body more as a gift from God. It has that spiritual dimension to me,

342 and I just think that food is so essential to our health and happiness. I've worked with a lot
343 of different health programs, and those are all important but I feel like food is really at the
344 core of our human experience and is something that impacts all of us on a daily basis,
345 multiple times a day. The body is a gift and food is really central to our body and our
346 existence and that's why I wanted to work in this area. I like this idea too that we're all part
347 of the human family and that each one of us are all called to make the human family and
348 our own communities a better more vibrant place to live. In Mormonism there's the
349 concept of Zion. Zion being defined as one heart one mind. A community where people are
350 of one heart and one mind and there are no poor among us, and I really like that. That's
351 sort of a theme for me in a lot of my work is working toward that place. And it certainly is
352 a far off place, but working toward where people have one mind and one heart and there's
353 no poor, there's no suffering in our midst. And again, that's an ideal but I feel compelled to
354 work in that in the sphere that I can. I think maybe in this mortal life it will always be an
355 ideal that we're striving for. I think maybe in a fallen world there will always be
356 imperfection, there will always be pain, there will always be suffering, but I think in my
357 view I feel we're in this less than ideal, imperfect place, but God wants us to make it as
358 beautiful and as lovely as we can, even though we're limited and even though it will never
359 be perfect. And I think we all grow so much as we're trying. I think we grow and develop
360 through trying. I think our involvement is not just to help others, but to help ourselves
361 become compassionate and more patient and more aware and conscious. I don't see this
362 work just to help others. I feel like I'm also helping myself and my family- all of us be
363 better.

364 My first year of college I spent 6 months in Jerusalem. It actually was a spiritual
365 pilgrimage. I spent six months at a center in Jerusalem studying not only Christianity, but
366 studying Islam and Judaism and studying the Bible and other religious texts and studying
367 Hebrew and Arabic, and it was really great. It was there that I recognized what a vibrant
368 food culture that people had. And I also recognized the lack of a food culture that I grew
369 up in. I recognized that my family ate out of cans and frozen food. I didn't grow up eating
370 fresh vegetables and didn't grow up cooking in my home. It was a real "aha" moment like,
371 "Wow there's these beautiful food traditions and cultures around the world that have
372 shaped people and are a big beautiful part of life and I didn't have that." It was a big "aha"
373 moment recognizing that for myself but also recognizing that in America I think that's one
374 of our biggest challenges is that we don't have a deep rich food culture that grounds us and
375 helps us stay healthy. You know like Michael Pollan says how American's don't have a
376 food culture so we're swayed by any fad or any trend and we're kind of all over the place,
377 and we don't have traditions that have been passed down about cooking.
378 Becoming a mother myself I recognized how toxic a food environment kids live in
379 and just how they're bombarded with messages for junk food. I mean I didn't even have a
380 television but my kids through school and neighborhood friends are just inundated with
381 messaging about unhealthy food; everything from the Children's Museum to the grocery
382 store to sporting events. It's just everywhere we go. Anything we do they're just
383 surrounded by unhealthy food. I realized how limiting that is for kids and how frustrating it
384 is as a parent. You try to instill in children the beauty and the value of good food when
385 everything around them looks different than that. I think that really becoming a mother and
386 having my own children and grappling with these issues was kind of an "aha" moment of

387 how important it is to change the food environment that we live in. Actually just this
388 morning I met with a really cool guy who started a franchise of healthy vending in
389 Richmond and it's a really cool program where all their sales donate proceeds to tackle
390 childhood obesity, and for every purchase they donate a nutrition pack to a child in a
391 developing country to help them survive the first couple days of life. So I was helping him
392 connect with, "How can we improve the food environment? Can we surround kids with
393 healthier choices in the places that they frequent instead of just having Cheetos and Coke
394 and Snickers?" Like that's all we offer kids and we can do better and there can be a better
395 environment to help kids and their families enjoy nourishing food.

396 There are so many people that have shaped me, but choosing the main people I had
397 two professors in college who really opened my eyes to the inequities in the world. I had
398 traveled a lot and seen a lot, but I think as a student in college two professors really shaped
399 my awareness of inequities and really inspired me to be engaged in addressing inequities.
400 One professor in particular who kind of brought the world of public health to the forefront
401 for me, and another professor who really specialized in community development. Most of
402 my work has kind of been a blending of public health and community development. I
403 would say Alice Waters not on a personal level but just encountering her work and being
404 inspired by her work and her ideas of real food awakens your senses and makes you feel
405 more alive, and just loving that idea that eating good food is good for everybody and will
406 make us all more full human beings. So I think she was really influential in my interest in
407 food. And then colleagues along the way who have helped me understand how to blend the
408 balance between programs and policy. Some people just work in building programs and
409 other people are really good at policy, but I think an effective person who really wants to

410 make change tries to find the balance of doing both. So I've had important colleagues
411 along the way who have taught me how to try to do both well if you really want to impact
412 change.
413 In addition to healthy eating Organization B tries to promote physical activity so
414 we have programs that are called "Recess Coaches" where we have coaches out on the
415 playground during recess. A lot of schools that we work with, a lot of low-income schools,
416 don't even hold recess because there's so much academic pressure to get these low
417 performing kids doing better on tests that they don't let them go to recess so they can
418 spend more time preparing for tests. There is also a lot of conflict and a lot of behavior
419 problems in these schools and also kids going to these schools live in unsafe
420 neighborhoods and so they don't play outside and they're not used to unstructured play.
421 But we're trying to say to them, "Recess is so important for these kids health. They can't
422 concentrate on the test and learn if they're fidgety and squirmy and haven't been able to
423 play and it's so so important for your goals to let kids move and be active and play
424 together." So we've had coaches on the ground ready to do all of these fun interactive
425 physical activities with kids. We built the program, but then we still couldn't get any
426 teachers to send their kids out for recess. So now we're looking at, "Okay so we need to
427 work on the policy side." We're just starting to lobby the school board and meet with and
428 kind of advocate with the superintendents and people who are making decisions over PE
429 and recess and those kinds of things in the school district to mandate recess. And to not
430 only mandate it, but how do we enforce it? We started a program and it was a great
431 program, but no one was taking advantage of it. So then we need to come back to the

432 policy side and see how do we change policies and enforce policies so that people can take

433 advantage of the programs. So that's just one example.

434 If you're just stuck in programs sometimes you forget about these larger level

435 decisions and these larger things that shape us, versus if you're just stuck in that arena of

436 making policy, you're kind of out of touch with what they really look like on the ground

437 and what the real issues are and what people are struggling with and what some of the

438 barriers are. I don't always do this well, but I try to be in both worlds; on the ground doing

439 programs, but then try to be in touch with some of the bigger policy issues that are in

440 place.

Appendix N: Blaire's Story

1 I am in the process of becoming the program coordinator for Organization A. I
2 unofficially started the middle of February and will officially start in May. It's a process. I
3 found the job through interning here before and now kind of have been picking up some of
4 the pieces that had ended with in my internship, so I've been focusing on some
5 organizational documents. We're in the middle of a strategic change process so I've been
6 helping do theory of change stuff and making some logic models, which has been really
7 fun. And then I'm moving into some more program planning stuff and looking at fund
8 development and how we can integrate those two things together, and then I'll be
9 eventually implementing and coordinating programs.
10 I was drawn to non-profit, social services, and that kind of thing in general from
11 growing up in strong communities and really wanting to find that and getting involved in
12 service through college. I really found a passion for being with people in a bunch of
13 different ways, whether that was providing a service or just being with them through a
14 program or something, it's really important to me. So when I was talking to Eddie about
15 this position it really felt like a natural fit because I really love the approach they take to
16 their work and I love the integration of people into the programs and into every step of the
17 program. From planning to implementation the core values of the program are always
18 about dignity and respect and making sure that we're building an equitable and sustainable
19 food system. So it's not just, "Oh let's make sure they get the services we think they need"
20 but really kind of working with people to find out, "What do people need? What do they
21 think they need? What do we think they need?" And trying to deliver that in a sensitive
22 fashion.

23 My values are probably kind of a really tangled intersection of a whole bunch of
24 different things. My faith is definitely a core one. Also valuing relationships with people.
25 I've had some strong relationships in my life so I really feel that that's an important value.
26 I think everyone should have access to strong relationships and a supportive community.
27 I'm also motivated to do this work because I think that the results matter, and so why I'm
28 specifically drawn to program coordination is just looking at the way we interact with
29 people and thinking that's really important. So the value of sharing love among people is
30 really important.
31 I think I really find a lot of meaning in the cliché, "Called to serve others," and that
32 kind of thing because I've been involved in a couple different ministries and faith
33 opportunities that were really intentional about reflecting on how I as a person am called to
34 be in relationship with other people, so if I am called to be a child of God what does that
35 mean for how I live my life and what that looks like with other people? I find motivation in
36 the fact that I'm not any different than anyone else; seeing everyone as equal and able to
37 fulfill the same vision that we all are entitled to.
38 Organization A is small and it's growing, so there's of opportunities to do really
39 cool things. I felt like my skill set and the position really overlapped, so I was excited to
40 use those in a new way. When I left my internship here I wouldn't say I was glad that I was
41 leaving, but by the end of it I was like, "Okay I'm ready for something new." But then
42 going out and getting something new I thought, "Gosh I really want to go back" and so I
43 think having the realization of how you fit within an organization and the approach the
44 organization takes and how that is personified really matters. I think that realization really
45 came to me after thinking about all of the work that we did and how different the Shalom

46 Farms approach is from a lot of organizations. I was interning at another organization- it
47 was a great organization- but as a really huge statewide group I felt like I was pushing
48 myself into, “This is the box and these are the services we provide” and so I was trying to
49 mold myself to an organization. But with Organization A it’s such an open kind of
50 organization and flat structure that it’s a great place to come and just feel like you can be
51 yourself and that really attracted me to the position because I think that it’s hard to do
52 programming right if you can’t feel like you’re bringing your authentic person. If you
53 don’t see yourself as part of the organization and a key part of defining the organization
54 then it’s hard to say, “This program is authentic to the core values of me and the
55 organization.”

56 I grew up on military bases, and the ones I lived at were really strong communities,
57 so it was important to me to get involved in community stuff after I graduated high school.
58 I was finding myself and that kind of thing, so at college I found a living and learning
59 community, and I was part of the pilot program. There were ten of us and I think among
60 the ten of us there were probably a core group of five or six that got really tight and really
61 started wrestling with the bigger questions of why we were doing what we were doing,
62 which I think really helped me kind of see the connections between what I believe and why
63 I was there and helped me understand, “Oh I came from strong communities so that’s why
64 this is important to me” instead of just saying, “I want to volunteer.” Having that core
65 group of five friends and also our mentor was really formative in my learning how to
66 reflect and then getting into doing that as a continual process.

67 I try to intentionally reflect. As a freshman I was looking for housing and I was
68 coming to a school with 60,000 people and so I was like, “I don’t even know!” So I chose

69 this living-learning community because I thought, “Well I can live with people that share
70 some of the same values about community and volunteering” and ended up getting
71 involved in this program and the program was really focused on encouraging students to
72 branch out from the perspective of like, “Oh I’m here to serve people” and not think about
73 what that means. So they really started asking a lot of hard questions and kind of walking
74 us through this process and teaching us that it was reflection. Thinking about, “What am I
75 doing here? How am I doing what I’m doing, what’s the result of that, and how do I feel
76 about the result?” So kind of working through different cognitive levels of trying to
77 identify, “Well it’s not just that I’m helping out Feeding America, but it’s that I am part of
78 a change agent in the food system that I may or may not own my part in” or something like
79 that. To try to name not only what you’re physically doing, but how what you’re doing
80 connects to other themes, trends, and that kind of thing.

81 The faculty member that was in charge of all of that was really great about starting
82 wherever we were. So sometimes that was, “I don’t know!” and moving us through
83 learning what feels most natural for reflection. Some people really got into journaling, I’m
84 an external processor so I talk a lot. So I learned when I talk to other people can I start
85 thinking about what I’m doing and communicate that effectively. And then just looking at
86 that from a programmatic standpoint.

87 After I was in the program for a year I stuck around as an older student to kind of
88 help out in some different roles and so reflecting on that and seeing, “How is what I’m
89 doing as a program manager influencing other people’s experiences?” So it’s adding
90 another layer of reflection of, “I’m serving these younger students, but then how am I as a
91 leader or a mentor then changing their experience which then in turn changes the

92 outcome?" It's something I never really understood, never felt comfortable with. I was
93 involved in Young Life when I was in high school and so was really familiar with the
94 whole, "Oh you should think about what you're doing" and had a lot of really great adult
95 mentors and that kind of thing but never until college kind of thought, "Oh this process
96 matters. It matters what I think about what I'm doing" in addition to trying to fit it into "Oh
97 I'm serving in this capacity for this reason," but then thinking about *how* I'm serving in
98 this capacity and why.
99 I think that was really the grounding experience. I've stayed really close with those
100 people so they've been really core people that have encouraged me to think more about
101 what I'm doing. So originally I wanted to take that job after I graduated from undergrad, so
102 my dream job was staying there and doing higher education. But then I needed a master's
103 degree and so I was like, "Well I'll just go and get a master's degree," and then I was like,
104 "I don't know what I want to get it in" and I ended up falling into social work and then
105 from there I've had some really great mentors. Eddie's been a huge one of just being a
106 really great professional that I've had the privilege to work with and really encouraging me
107 to think beyond, "Oh I'm used to reflecting on higher education" so then thinking about,
108 "What does it mean to personally reflect when no one's telling you to do it or when no
109 one's reflecting with me?" So it's been really great to be encouraged to think outside of,
110 "Oh this is the way to reflect."
111 The prescription produce program has probably been the most influential program
112 for me. I was interning here as a Master of Social Work student; I was here fourteen hours
113 a week and it was the first time they did the program. My first day was meeting Eddie and
114 the past program coordinator at the farm stand in one of the communities. I attempted to

115 just jump in and they were like, “Well this is where we’re going to be.” So that was
116 actually my first day jumping in and seeing the farm stand and that kind of stuff. In the
117 first couple weeks I was just helping put together and learn how to have a farm stand and
118 stuff like that. In the beginning the program coordinator would show me, “This is what
119 we’ve been doing” and that kind of stuff, and then I would say towards the end especially
120 when weather started interfering we started getting creative like, “Do we want to switch
121 how we do the check-ins?” Especially because it was the two of us and we knew all of the
122 participants by that point so we had a lot more flexibility in saying things like, “Okay you
123 can go in and meet with them and then I’ll stay at the farm stand” or vice versa. We
124 worked together to have the farm stand happen towards the beginning, and then towards
125 the end she would do the farm stand part and I would meet with participants one-on-one in
126 the resource center to get their stats down and then talk through the vegetables and what
127 they’ve been cooking and stuff like that.

128 The better conversations I would have would be outside at the farm stand. Say no
129 one was in the resource center getting their weight and whatever done then I would be
130 standing outside and just talking to people. It was interesting because it wasn’t a
131 community I was familiar with and so seeing how to face my privilege in that and also
132 learning about the community in a non-judgmental way was sometimes difficult. The one
133 community is like 97.8% African American, and contrary to popular belief a lot of people
134 stay in public housing for a long time so it’s not really doing what it’s designed for. Public
135 housing is designed for the year or two that you need something until you can pick
136 yourself up by your bootstraps or something dumb. It infuriates me because people think,
137 “Who needs affordable housing?” Right? So it was a matter of getting to know families

138 that have evolved in that setting and then learning different cultural norms and stuff like
139 that. Because in the communities I grew up in you didn't yell- like it just wasn't a thing. So
140 even though it was funny because I would draw a lot of comparisons between these two
141 communities- it didn't look like the neighborhoods I grew up in, but we're kind of similar
142 because all military bases are pretty standard as far as all the houses looking the same- but
143 I just remember standing at the farm stand once and people were yelling and there were
144 kids everywhere and like no moms are outside so I think I'm responsible for these kids. I
145 didn't really know. And then one participant had a really rough past and was coming up
146 and telling me about all of these things and I'm like, "What am I doing here?" I forget why
147 we were talking about it but it came up and she's telling me how she had been raped in the
148 past and her mom wasn't a great mom and all these things. And she ended the conversation
149 with, "Well if you ever want to talk…" and I'm thinking, "I feel like I should be offering
150 that to you! I don't need to talk."

151 I really learned from that part of the prescription produce program as well, just
152 having to step back and say, "Okay if I really believe that I need to authentically show up
153 in these communities, then what does that look like? Does that look like saying, "No more
154 yelling," or does that look like learning, "Okay what's bad yelling, what's good yelling and
155 how do I operate in that and not cast judgment or anything like that?" It's one of those
156 things that once you get to know the community it's a really vibrant community and you
157 can tell that there are networks, but it's hard because at the same time when you'll talk to
158 people and they'll say, "Well you know, I don't feel safe in my community." And it's hard
159 because you want everyone to feel safe but then you understand the different forces that
160 are at work there. It's just really hard. But it's kind of overwhelming when you first go

161 you’re just like, “Ah! There’s a lot of people!” Especially when it gets warmer outside
162 because then everyone’s outside it’s just like, “Oh my gosh.”
163 I think on the surface there’s the whole, “I get to be a part of doing something good
164 for someone” because it obviously feels good to hand someone a bag of produce and say,
165 “Here you go!” I think the most rewarding part was getting to know people and seeing
166 them week after week and getting to talk to them about what’s going well and what’s not.
167 We were doing a grocery store tour once and it was kind of funny because I don’t eat very
168 healthy on my own. This job has actually been great for that because it’s convincing me I
169 need to be better about it, but it was funny because we were in the grocery store and it was
170 just little things like, “You can cut the juice in half with water if you’re giving it to a kid”
171 or, “You can make your own spice mix.” We were talking about the premixed spices and
172 how they have way more sodium in them. I said, “Yeah you can actually just look on the
173 side on the ingredient list and just make your own spice mix. That way if you want it
174 spicier or not as spicy you can just kind of adapt it” and I was talking to this one woman
175 and she was just like, “Really!?” I was like, “Yeah!” So I think getting to know each other
176 so you’re at that level where they can say, “What are you talking about?” or I can say,
177 “You eat chicken feet? Like what?!” and where it’s not something like, “Oh I have to be
178 super culturally competent” and, “Oh they’re going to take it offensively.” Just being able
179 to get to know each other and having those relationships build was probably the most
180 rewarding part.
181 I think definitely the privilege part of having to come to terms with, “I’m a
182 privileged white girl that’s trying to do good things at the right communities” is really
183 challenging. I mean in this city no matter what underserved community you’re part of it’s

184 probably not a white community, which was really challenging because coming from a
185 more rural place I identified with a lot of the communities I was serving. My family is
186 from a rural area so going into low-income white rural communities it's like, "Okay I feel
187 at home there. It's not obvious." Obviously if I wore different clothes or whatever it would
188 be, but depending on how I show up, I may not be noticed as someone who's not from
189 there. But then coming to here it's kind of like all of that goes out the window. So the most
190 challenging part for me was learning how to identify as someone who cares about doing
191 good, but then still doesn't shy away from doing something just because I do have more
192 privilege, and coming to terms with how do I carry that and know at the same time that
193 there's a lot of work that needs to be done, and knowing what I can and can't do.
194 I think I'm still coming to terms with that. It definitely changes from situation to
195 situation. I was talking to a colleague once and he was talking about having a Linus
196 complex of not wanting to do anything and kind of having this security blanket of, "If I
197 don't talk about it we won't have to talk about it." But I'm realizing that coming to terms
198 with the fact that I'm never going to look like I fit in in here, but if I bring who I really am
199 and I do build those relationships then I can start to navigate that in a sensitive fashion. I
200 think it's just a continual process of thinking, "Am I doing this because I feel bad, or am I
201 doing this because this is an identified need or this is something that they've said is
202 important to them or this is something we've agreed on that's valuable?" So going through
203 that checklist of, "Okay, if I'm just bringing something because I feel bad that I have it and
204 they don't then like that's not helpful, but if it's working at a core competency then I think
205 it's valuable."

206 So in my program we have a field placement, which is the internship I was here for,
207 and as a part of that we have to write weekly process recordings, which I basically just
208 turned into reflections. And so I would meet my supervisor at Organization B, and she and
209 I would meet once a week and talk over things and talk about our process recording. I
210 remember writing a process recording about all of the yelling and just kind of working
211 through that with her of what it looks like to go into a community and be uncomfortable
212 and navigate feelings of, "Do I feel unsafe because there's a threat or do I feel unsafe
213 because I'm just out of my comfort zone?" And then how do you react to that and then
214 kind of unpacking when is it a good time to deal with your own stuff and when is a good
215 time to say, "Okay I'll be back in a couple minutes" and go deal with it somewhere else.
216 My friend John is a big support. He's just a great person in general and he's
217 introverted too, which helps because I'll come at something and be like, "Ahhhh!" and talk
218 for five minutes, and he's like, "Okay I'm gonna need you to take a breath." And everyone
219 at Organization A is great. Eddie and I worked together closely with the last program
220 coordinator, who's not here anymore. The two of them I would say are great partners and
221 role models professionally for how this work gets done. And then socially having a great
222 group of friends; it's nice having people around you that share similar faith backgrounds
223 and values and then also have a value for social justice and how that plays out in the work.
224 I feel like I keep repeating myself but I feel like it works really well to just be
225 authentic and know what you know and know what you don't know and be okay with that.
226 I would say a lot of times, especially with coming into the internship two years ago, I
227 would think, "Oh my gosh I need to know everything" and just kind of that mentality of,
228 "Well I'm educated" or, "I've done this for a long time" or something like that, and that

229 you need to have the answers. But I think going to group meeting and saying, “Here’s how
230 to eat healthy” doesn’t work, so instead having that approach of humility and saying, “Hey
231 we really want to work together on this over the next twelve weeks to see what we can
232 identify as ways to eat healthier together.” So taking that collaborative group approach and
233 then also being really humble in saying that some things aren’t going to work for everyone
234 and what I like to do is not the same as what you like to do and recognizing that.

235 This sounds like “duh” but making assumptions doesn’t work. Especially making
236 assumptions like, “Oh they’ll know it’s every week” or, “They’ll know that if the resource
237 center is closed then we won’t have the program” or something like that. I think sometimes
238 there were miscommunications and so just seeing that just a lot of those were due to
239 assuming that people would think one way or the other, or that we were just not being
240 clear. Stuff like that. Just seeing the importance of really talking things out and being on
241 the same page.

242 We do surveys to evaluate the program. We’re still kind of in the process of trying
243 to develop a good evaluation, especially because you’re not going to see what the fruit of
244 the program is until years later at some point. We played around with trying to collect
245 health data and things like that, which hasn’t been the most telling statistics. Our surveys
246 are always really positive so people really seem to like the program; they talk about
247 wanting to eat healthier as a result. So we have anecdotal information, and we’re trying to
248 get quantitative data, but it’s not super solid yet. I’d say there’s definitely a greater
249 familiarity with produce and that kind of thing so that’s been a huge impact I’ve seen. And
250 then also I think there is more ownership. We have more name recognition because people

251 will say, "Oh you guys are the vegetable people." So at least from what I can see there's
252 some community adopting of us, which is good.
253 Throughout doing the program I think community members who may not have
254 necessarily known each other before have a greater familiarity with each other now. What
255 would be funny is they would know each other but they would just not talk. I'm like, "You
256 guys are being silly." So I think throughout meeting once a week and seeing each other and
257 that kind of thing there was a little more familiarity and recognition. I wouldn't say there
258 was a team at the end, but there was at least a greater sense of, "Oh she did the same
259 program I did." And then I think this program has been really important for our
260 organization in that it's one of our most recognizable programs. It's gotten a lot of press
261 and stuff like that so it's cool to be able to explain to partners, "This is what we do." I feel
262 like it's a program that really captures a lot of what we believe in so it's a cool way to
263 communicate our values by saying, "This is what we believe in, we know it works, we've
264 done it." We know there are still places to improve it for sure, but being able to show
265 partners we're dedicated to this and this is how we try and program has been important.
266 I think I want to live in a community that is supportive and is opportunity rich and
267 the opportunities are there and you can also take advantage of them. And I think healthy in
268 the big holistic sense of mental, emotional, and physical health. I think the ideal
269 community, if you were to walk into it, would feel like people are operating in a way that
270 feels natural and that doesn't seem like there are divisions in the community. Also being
271 able to see that people are taking advantage of resources. I think not being able to directly
272 assess the socioeconomic status of a community by walking into it would be a big one too.
273 I think communities are always going to look different just because people are different, so

274 communities are bound to take different forms, but I think in any healthy community you
275 see community relationships, you feel that people are excited and can and are taking
276 advantage of opportunities to either be physically healthy by being outside, eating food
277 that is good, but then also just that they're supporting one another and that there's a
278 community conversation happening about being together.

279 I hope my work gets people out talking and then gets people having a positive
280 experience with food. That's one of the core elements that all of our programs try to
281 incorporate in some way is, "How can we make this a positive experience with
282 vegetables?" Because a lot of times there's always that slimy squash story or the Brussels
283 sprouts you didn't want to eat, so we think about, "How we can help coordinate healthy
284 experiences that are also really positive in the community?" So personally that probably
285 makes a person feel good because you're eating better food so it's kind of changing how
286 you physically feel, but also you're with community members that are doing this alongside
287 you. Our farm stand is out in the middle of the community; you're outside, you have to
288 walk there. We try to pull some different elements in that we probably don't program for.
289 We probably wouldn't say, "We're going to be right outside because it's going to
290 encourage walking or it's going to encourage community cohesion," but I'd say our
291 program brings that out, so I think whether implicitly or explicitly getting people together
292 is important.

293 The logic models I'm doing are building off of some things I did when I was here
294 as an intern. A lot of it has been more of looking at our physical resources of, "What do we
295 bring into the program, what do we need?" Also what's our mentality with it of, "What can
296 we cut out?" I think that the core elements that we've identified as needing is staffing,

297 transportation, the produce, and resources and supplies. Now we're looking at, "What do
298 those four components require, how do we balance those with programming, and then what
299 are the outcomes that they have?" It's a work in progress. It's been really cool because the
300 organization is five years old and we've kind of hit this balancing point where to move
301 forward we have to kind of formalize what we do, but at the same time at least from my
302 perspective, it's going to be hard to do that because everything is changing all of the time.
303 For example, our staff has doubled since I was here a year ago so it's kind of like "Whoa."