

Food Security Coalition Quarterly Meeting Minutes

July 25th, 1:30-4:30PM

Mid Valley Elementary School Cafeteria

3686 Davis Dr. Odell, Oregon

Coalition Members Present:

Joel Pelayo, The Next Door Inc, Mercado del Valle

Kate Karlson, Gorge Grown Food Network

Hannah Ladwig, Gorge Grown Food Network

Debi Budnick, Skyline Hospital

Hannah Brouse, WSU Extension

Janeal Beoren, Washington Gorge Action

Programs/The Dalles Farmers Market

Bruce Bolme, Washington Gorge Action

Programs

Dottie Ray, North Wasco County School District

Anna Osborne, The Next Door Inc

Lauren Kraemer, OSU Extension

Justin Withem, Staff of Rep Anna Williams

Sarah Sullivan, Gorge Grown Food Network

Jenny Twohig, Gorge Grown Food Network

Jordan Bryant, Gorge Grown Food Network

Michelle Sager, OSU Extension - Masters
Gardeners

Sarah Kersten, OSU Extension RARE Americorps

Kiara Kashuba, Gorge Grown Food Network

Kristen Slatt, North Central Public Health District

Mimi McDonnell, North Central Public Health

District/Blue Zones

Avery Cardosi, North Central Public Health

District Intern

Sharon Thornberry, Columbia Gorge Food Bank

Marian Durkan, FISH Food Bank

Darla Johnston, Community Enrichment for

Klickitat and Skamania Counties

Betty Lou Yenne, FISH Food Bank

Meeting Minutes:

Sarah Sullivan introduced Jordan Bryant, the new Food Security Coalition Coordinator, to the group. Jordan is a registered dietitian and has experience working with local food procurement and in food access and agriculture projects with refugee and New American populations. Gorge Grown is very happy to have her on the team.

Lauren Kraemer started the meeting by providing an **orientation to the Food Security Coalition**. This presentation will be updated in the coming months to reflect the new structure of the Food Security Coalition. Briefly, in 2015 a Gorge-wide survey showed that 1 in 3 residents worried about running out of food and 1 in 5 had run out of food. As a result, the Food Security Coalition was formed. Accomplishments of the Coalition include: creating shared resources, new relationships and partnerships, collaborative projects, and amplifying the voices of underrepresented groups.

Next, Sarah Sullivan shared an overview of the proposed coalition structure and the evolution of the FSC over the past few years, starting with the updated Mission, Vision, and Equity Statements.

Mission Statement: We cultivate partnerships, build understanding and take action to create an equitable local food system in which all people have access to nutritious and culturally appropriate food.

Vision Statement: We envision a thriving community, where all people are nourished by a just and abundant local food system.

Equity Statement: We commit to creating a just, equitable local food system based on solidarity and dignity. We acknowledge that the current food system is built and dependent upon the oppression of historically excluded communities. We will confront the systemic injustices that create and perpetuate poverty and hunger.

Each group presented out on their most recent meetings and included discussion points for action teams that may be formed in the future.

Over the past year, **the Steering Committee** has made the following items priority areas:

- Finalizing mission and vision
- DEI process
- Fundraising to support work
- Food security screening and data compilation
- Recruiting new members
- Increasing knowledge of existing resources

The Steering Committee will continue in its current form and is recruiting new members. Interested? Email jordan@gorgegrown.com for an application.

Members of the Infrastructure and Direct Service/Engagement work groups shared brief updates on what spun out of their respective groups and what may continue on as project working groups.

Members of the **Infrastructure group** gave the following updates and identified potential ongoing projects:

From Hannah Brause: Farmers are either small or large, new or old, but no middle ground. Young producers need help with educational support. WSU and OSU Extension will be leading a new class series in the fall. Meat producers still need support, specifically a USDA inspected slaughter site options.

Members of the **Direct Service/Engagement group** gave the following updates and identified potential ongoing projects:

Sharon with Columbia Gorge Food Bank shared that they need larger space and to upgrade infrastructure. Over the next year they will be working on establishing new food pantries in schools, adult centers, and libraries. Anna Osborne and Joel Pelayo shared an update on the on-going FEAST project. They have been action planning around food system needs in Odell. Next step is to reconvene leadership team to discuss ideas brought forth by community. Community garden and community food storage were two main ideas.

Following these updates, Sarah Sullivan led a discussion on **restructuring the coalition**. The **proposed action groups discussed were tribal food sovereignty, policy, farmland preservation, food access, and farmer support**. Two **process groups, DEI and funding**, would advise the work of these action teams. This proposed structure would break the two current groups into smaller action teams and increase focus on tackling solvable problems, one at a time. This would allow more people plug into work groups and tap into partner talents.

Meeting attendees were given time to sign up to learn more about these groups from their chairs. **If you are interested in engaging in a structured and time-bound project in any of these content areas, please reach out to jordan@gorgegrown.com and she will connect you with the appropriate group chair.**

Potential additional project areas (without a chair or group at this point) include FDNP Outreach, Youth Summer Food Access, or [anything else?] Potential criteria for new work groups:

- Chair committed to lead
- 4+ orgs involved
- Specific goal
- Written reports
- Overlap with steering committee

Next, in an asset mapping exercise, attendees **share out existing summer food resources for youth** in communities around the region. North Wasco County School District served 11,791 meals from end of June to mid-July, and will be hosting a free summer meal program at Wahtonka until August 15th. Hood River County School District served 2,500 breakfasts, nearly 5,000 lunches at their summer meals sites in June and July White Salmon has a program as well. **WGAP, FISH, and CGFB are stepping in to meet some of the need for youth summer food access during the month of August at various sites.**

The group had a brainstorm session on how to fill gaps in youth food access during the summer in the future and **backpack meal programs** throughout summer, **mobile food pantry/food truck summer meal site** to rural places without other services, **busing kids to pools** for exercise and healthy snacks, **partnering with existing services** (like WIC) were all floated as potential ideas. There were reminders from the group that future program development should focus on areas that have never had programs, like the most rural areas in Klickitat and Sherman counties.

A few summer seasonal updates were shared by attendees. Lauren share that **food processing rentals**, including canners, dehydrators etc. are available for check out at the HR library and can be reserved online. Connect with Jenny Twohig at Gorge Grown for **upcoming gleaning opportunities** (apricots and plums!) on www.gorgegleaning.com or Facebook page or jenny@gorgegrown.com. **Mobile Farmers Markets** are happening in Odell, Hood River, The Dalles, Moro, Cascade Locks, Lyle, Klickitat, with a full schedule at (<http://www.gorgegrown.com/mobilemarket/>) Mobile markets accept cash, credit card, EBT, Veggie Rx, SNAP match,

To end the meeting, Coalition members were invited to check out the **Mercado del Valle** which is held

in Odell every other Thursday evening throughout the summer season (upcoming dates August 8, August 22, September 5, September 19)

MEETING OBJECTIVES:

- Connections and networking with others working on food access and infrastructure in the Gorge
- Introduce new proposed coalition structure and gather feedback
- Provide introduction and space for discussion around proposed work groups
- Share resources for summer food access for youth in the Gorge