

Participating Institution: Gettysburg College

Project Title: grEAT : Gettysburg Campus Kitchen

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Summary

Gettysburg College (GC) is proposing a project in which extra food from the campus Dining Center will be re-packaged, assembled into meals and distributed to community members. This will reduce the amount of waste by redirecting quality food to those who need it, while simultaneously providing an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the town and college and offering valuable volunteer experience for students. One approach to peace, which can be defined as a state of harmony between people or groups, is through creating social change; and we want to start by bridging the current divide between our campus and the surrounding town. Peace at a local level is integral, as changes from within have the potential to be extended outwards. Benefiting our less-fortunate community members nourishes their needs and empowers them, while also bringing attention to local issues and deconstructing stereotypes on both sides.

Organizational Information

Several reputable organizations will be partnering towards the success of this project. Students from the GC Center for Public Service (CPS) and the Peace Club aim to work with the largest community action organization in town, the South Central Community Action Program (SCCAP), which has supported our plans. SCCAP has links to local business partners and viable restaurants which are willing to contribute food during the summer months, when the quantity of food produced at the college decreases. We are in the final stages of assessing our campus Dining Center to be used as the central location for re-packaging and re-distributing through the summer and after this period. The existing town soup kitchen, located at the Gettysburg Prince of Peace Church, has also agreed to serve as a secondary distribution point for meals sent from the campus.

Description of Need/Situation

Although a large percentage of the student body at Gettysburg College is relatively affluent, there is a striking division between the campus and much of the surrounding community. Although Gettysburg currently has both a homeless shelter and a soup kitchen, the kitchen only provides mid-day meals six times a week; which is no service to those who work or go to school during the day. This fact led to the development of our project; coupled with the knowledge of the quantity of food that goes to waste at our own dining center each day, and the strained or non-existent relationship between many students and the community. We also found inspiration in the success of similar-minded, already established programs. In addition, our historic town's influx of over one million visitors over the summer months alone offers the potential for food to be collected and provided year round. On account of the Good Samaritan Law, if any problems do arise, both non-profit organizations and those who donate food to non-profit organizations cannot be held liable; which also offers added protection and incentive for this project.

Students at CPS have been researching this issue, and we felt that using an established program that worked and had the potential for sustainability in the long-run would be the best approach. This grant would cover the initiation of our project and removes the financial burden, therefore allowing us to focus upon other issues of effective implementation. Our goal is to establish this project in the next semester, regardless of where our generous funding may come from.

Our plan will be based on an affiliation with the Campus Kitchens Project (CKP), started in 2001. This venture was a nation-wide derivative of Robert Egger's DC Central Kitchen, an extremely successful model of a local community kitchen in Washington DC. The CKP is founded on the dual principle of

formulating an organization of students cooking and distributing food in the community, as well as providing an opportunity to share a meal and conversation with someone.

Plan/Specific Activities

The process of food collection and redistribution is as follows. GC students will collect the leftover foods from participating sponsors, local restaurants and businesses, and bring it back to our Dining Center on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. We will then assess the need to purchase additional items that are necessary for completing the cooking process. Cooking will be done on those three days, as well as on Sundays. Meals cooked must contain at least one serving of protein, starch, vegetables, and fruit or a dessert to cater to each person's nutritional need. Strict measures and checks are in place to ensure proper hygiene and safety. Prepared food will then be delivered on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays to a central distribution location, such as the Gettysburg Prince of Peace Church. When the fall semester commences, we shall integrate the campus food into our meal preparation.

Timeline:

March: Promotion of project on campus to publicize cause and recruit volunteers.

March 23: Finalize feasibility assessment of campus Dining Center. Finalize contracts and training with the Campus Kitchens Project.

March - April: Finalizing sponsor restaurants and businesses together with SCCAP.

May: Purchase necessary start-up materials for food preparation and distribution.

June 4: Kick-off of project - first food pick-up.

June 25: Assess functioning of implementation.

August: 10 weeks of grEAT : Gettysburg Campus Kitchen, completed.

August-September: Transfer emphasis from restaurant food to campus-produced food as semester begins and students return.

September: In conjunction with community partners, assess areas of greatest need. Publicize project both on campus and in town to raise awareness and recruit volunteers.

Short-Term & Long-Term Goals

The Gettysburg Prince of Peace Church currently serves approximately 40 meals a day, suggesting that the need is present in our community. In addition, there are many community members who share this need but are unable to access what is currently available. Our initial aim is to provide 50 to 100 additional hot and cold meals each week while providing volunteer opportunities for students and a chance for campus members and town members to have positive interactions, thus fostering a stronger community. On top of the actual service rendered, we aim to raise awareness of the town's need and our project by publishing a brochure that would work to recruit more restaurants and serve as publicity for our participating sponsors. We also aim to have a bi-monthly contribution to our town's local newspaper; sharing with the town our vision and progress in achieving our aims and possibly attracting further publicity to our cause.

As the program expands and becomes more established, we hope to better identify specific areas of our community with the greatest need. For example, we may send a portion of the meals we assemble to a central distribution point and the remainder would be delivered to individuals identified by a community action organization such as SCCAP.

A goal for even farther into the future is the possibility of creating a job training program at our Dining Center, enabling community members to receive valuable culinary skills, which can then be put into practice in a job setting.

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