

Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) Final Performance Report

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your LFPP award objectives. As stated in the LFPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future LFPP or Farmers Market Promotion Program grant funding unless all close-out procedures are completed, including satisfactory submission of this final performance report.

This final report will be made available to the public once it is approved by LFPP staff. Write the report in a way that promotes your project's accomplishments, as this document will serve as not only a learning tool, but a promotional tool to support local and regional food programs. Particularly, recipients are expected to provide both qualitative and quantitative results to convey the activities and accomplishments of the work.

The report is limited to 10 pages and is due **within 90 days** of the project's performance period end date, or sooner if the project is complete. Provide answers to each question, or answer "not applicable" where necessary. It is recommended that you email or fax your completed performance report to LFPP staff to avoid delays:

LFPP Phone: 202-720-2731; Email: USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov; Fax: 202-720-0300

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact LFPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	September 30, 2015-December 31, 2015
Authorized Representative Name:	Nancy A. Young, Ph.D.
Authorized Representative Phone:	209/489-8499
Authorized Representative Email:	nyoungcomp@aol.com
Recipient Organization Name:	Make Someone Happy
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Attacking Poverty and Food Deserts in Merced County, California
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-LFPPX-CA-0027
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Merced/California
Total Awarded Budget:	\$100,000 (2014-2015=\$50,000; 2015-2016=\$50,000)

LFPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?

Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).

Different individual: Name: _____; Email: _____; Phone: _____

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1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by LFPP staff. If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.

- i. Goal/Objective 1: Increase the daily average number of customers from 30 to 150.

- a. Progress Made: During the 9 months of operation prior to the discontinuation of Produce on the Go services as of January 1, 2016, Produce on the Go experienced broad changes in the daily average number of customers served, with the following averages recorded: April, 2015: 98; May: 55; June: 36; July: 36; August: 43; September: 58; October: 94; November: 71; and December: 69. One of the major factors that caused the lower number of customers was the unexpected loss of our primary funding source, i.e., the Merced County Human Services Agency, during the second year of operations. Following publicity of this loss of funding, many of our customers assumed that Produce on the Go would terminate its services. However, after careful study, we determined that with the assistance of USDA funding we could continue to serve residents of food deserts where the volumes of sales and customers were higher. Additionally, since UC Merced met the criteria as a “food desert” and is located over 4 miles from a supermarket, we included UC Merced as one of our regular sites and visited the campus each week. Since many of the students reside on campus and are primarily low income and Hispanic, we were very pleased that we were able to provide healthy affordable fresh produce to this population with limited access. The addition of UC Merced provided a very positive impact on our operations. It has been notable that the average number of customers varied substantially each month throughout the operations of Produce on the Go. From August through October, we collaborated with multiple health and governmental agencies to design and conduct an innovative event to promote both health and nutrition as well as the visibility of Produce on the Go and Make Someone Happy. This creative event encouraged our residents to become more aware of the importance of healthy eating habits by involving them in a Sweet Potato Recipe Contest held in association with the Livingston CA Sweet Potato Festival on October 3 2015. Publicity for this major event allowed us to distribute positive information regarding healthy eating habits among elected officials, public and private organizations, and throughout our elementary schools and Head Start programs. Despite the changes and challenges we faced, we continued to seek new and creative methods of building our customers and spreading the word regarding the value of a nutritious diet focusing on fresh fruits and vegetables. Without exception, both our community leaders and our customers have been delighted that we continued to provide the affordable produce and services that they required.

- b. Impact on Community: Throughout the operations of Make Someone Happy and Produce on the Go, our focus continued to be on meeting the needs and exceeding the expectations of our communities, despite the unexpected reduction of sites. Partnering with major agencies to conduct the Sweet Potato Recipe Contest offered a critical opportunity to publicize the importance of healthy eating and the availability of Produce on the Go to travel to underserved areas and food deserts without access to fresh fruits and vegetables. The

inclusion of UC Merced as one of our sites positively impacted both the volume of customers we serve and our sales. Additionally, we have worked closely with the UC Merced Health Services Research Institute and the Public Health Department to improve the awareness of the impact of poor eating habits on the health of the population. Our positive partnership with UC Merced has been advertised continually on campus and is described both in major UC Merced publications, as well as on several UC Merced websites. The President of the University of California system, Janet Napolitano, also visited Produce on the Go and was impressed with the innovation of this project.

- ii. Goal/Objective 2: Increase the daily average dollar volume of sales from \$180 to \$600.
 - a. Progress Made: Although the daily average dollar volume of sales has fluctuated markedly since this project was initiated, in October, 2015, we actually exceeded our target of a daily average dollar volume of sales of \$600, with an average of \$640 in sales per day. The primary contributor to attaining this goal was most certainly UC Merced students. The daily average volume of sales was as follows: April: \$576; May: \$371; June: \$193; July: \$265; August: \$269; September: \$466; October: \$640; November: \$480; and December: \$500. Although UC Merced was not in session during the summer and much of December, we continued to experience a higher dollar volume of sales than we expected.
 - b. Impact on Community: Numerous changes to the operations of Produce on the Go occurred during this period, including the loss of funding and a subsequent decrease in both the number of sites visited and the frequency of visits made. We determined that it was not financially feasible to operate Produce on the Go seven days a week, and we were required to eliminate several sites from our weekly schedule as a result of inadequate sales and a lower number of customers. In each site where we discontinued services, the residents were very disappointed. Unfortunately, we were only able to continue services to the locations which were able to be sustained financially.
- iii. Goal/Objective 3: Increase outreach and nutritional education events attended from 0 to 5 per month.
 - a. Progress Made: Attendance at outreach and nutritional education events is as follows: April: 1; May: 1 ; June: 1; July: 1; August: 2; September: 2; October: 3; November: 2; and December: 0. The decrease resulted from schools being out of session and limited number of events that were held. Additionally, Make Someone Happy may not have been contacted to participate as a result of the downsizing of our services and publicity. During the events we attended, we routinely distributed educational flyers to all participants at local health-related fairs and other events. The Sweet Potato Recipe Contest provided an important opportunity to revisit many of the community, civic and governmental meetings that originally provided Make Someone Happy with very enthusiastic support. We continued to be very involved throughout the community and participated in outreach and nutritional education events wherever possible.
 - b. Impact on Community: Due to the loss of funding, there was continual confusion among the residents and communities we served regarding the sites we were continuing to visit, our availability to attend events and whether or not they were imposing on us by requesting our participation. We continually received warm and enthusiastic support from not only residents but governmental and

private organizations throughout the county. Whenever possible, we have continued to participate at the major outreach and nutritional education events that are held in Merced County.

- iv. Goal/Objective 4: Expand the number of local growers from 7 to 20.
 - a. Progress Made: Although we did not meet our goal of expanding the number of local growers to 20, today we work with 15 local growers. We continued to build very positive relationships among our farming community and to identify local growers who may have benefited from our purchases and who met our standards for dependability and quality.
 - b. Impact on Community: We believe that Make Someone Happy and Produce on the Go offered many positive opportunities, not only to our residents as consumers of healthy produce, but to our local growers. As a major agricultural center, many Merced County farmers focus their sales and distribute their produce directly to large external markets. These growers may inadvertently overlook the residents who would benefit greatly from the fresh fruits and vegetables that they produce locally. Conversely, Merced County also has many farmers who have few or no connections with distribution channels and who struggle financially. These farmers are more confined and cannot afford to distribute their produce outside of their own environment. Make Someone Happy has focused our marketing efforts on connecting the residents in need with the local farmers who also require assistance in finding buyers. We have successfully “connected the dots” by ensuring the produce we sell is not only fresh, but that it is affordable for our low income residents. In all of our relationships with our growers, we have developed positive relationships of trust by remaining consistent, dependable and fair among all growers.
- v. Goal/Objective 5: Expand the number of sites for delivery from 10 to 18 per week.
 - a. Progress Made: Due to decreased funding we were required to eliminate the majority of our sites. At the conclusion of our operations as of January 1, 2016, we were visiting seven (7) sites weekly which we believe provided accessibility to the majority of residents of the sites which were eliminated. After careful study, we recognized that the residents of three of our food deserts (i.e., Winton, Franklin-Beachwood and South Merced) utilize either Castle Health Center or Golden Valley Health Center for their primary health care. Therefore, the elimination of visits to these sites would hopefully not be harmful to these residents. Additionally, Produce on the Go eliminated services on Mondays and on weekends thereby conserving scarce financial resources.
 - b. Impact on Community: Although we continued to receive requests either to return to our original sites or to begin visiting new sites to provide fresh produce, we were confident that residents of our food deserts continued to receive affordable fresh produce in the sites we maintained. The UC Merced students created a very positive market and provided us much hope regarding the interest that our youth have in pursuing a healthy lifestyle.
- vi. Goal/Objective 6: Increase the number of direct and indirect jobs created from the current staff of 5 to 27.
 - a. Progress Made: Although we did not attain our goal of creating 27 direct and indirect jobs, we created a total of 25 direct and indirect jobs since our project began. During the second year, we recruited six new Community Liaisons to

provide outreach and six contract workers who assisted with the development of marketing and educational materials.

b. Impact on Community: Although our original goal was to recruit unemployed residents of our Merced County communities as new staff members for Produce on the Go, this was very challenging. Positions as Community Liaisons required bilingual staff who were dependable and who were interested and excited about nutritional education. Because the public health and policy students at UC Merced were very ambitious, flexible and eager to promote nutritional health education, we turned primarily to these students to fill the positions as Community Liaisons. We carefully selected UC Merced students who were Spanish-speaking and passionate regarding the importance of good nutrition. We trained them in customer service and nutritional education. These Community Liaisons were motivated and invaluable in our efforts to provide essential information regarding the nutritional value of the produce and how healthy eating habits will improve the health of Merced County residents who were plagued with obesity and life-threatening diseases.

vii. Goal/Objective 7: Increase the outreach provided to stakeholders to monthly.

a. Progress Made: Despite new challenges that Make Someone Happy experienced, we provided continual outreach and kept our stakeholders well informed regarding our activities and developments. All new developments (e.g., the Sweet Potato Recipe Contest) were shared widely with not only key stakeholders, but with community leaders and elected officials. We also kept our stakeholders informed monthly by email or on our website.

b. Impact on Community: Make Someone Happy continued to publicize our efforts to provide essential healthy fresh fruits and vegetables to the communities we served. We also continued to receive extremely positive feedback from all key stakeholders even following the discontinuation of county funding. This would not have been possible at all without the continuing assistance and outstanding support from the USDA.

2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 2014). Include further explanation if necessary.

i. Number of direct jobs created: 15 in this period

ii. Number of jobs retained: Ten (10) total

iii. Number of indirect jobs created: Six (6) total

iv. Number of markets expanded: None (0)

v. Number of new markets established: One (1)

vi. Market sales increased by an average of \$296 dollars per day from \$204 to \$500 per day and increased by 145.1%.

vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: Fifteen (15)

a. Percent Increase: Increase from 10 to 15 farmers, or 50.0%

3. Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? If so, how?

Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? If so, how?

Through the development of a strong partnership with the University of California, we have expanded our customer base by adding weekly visits to approximately 8000 University of California-Merced students who reside four miles from a supermarket and who are

predominantly low income and Hispanic. We also developed contracts with local health centers serving our more impoverished populations to provide produce for educational events.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.
 - i. Who are your community partners? We have very positive relationships with all of our partners, including UC Merced, Mercy Medical Center, Golden Valley Health, Merced County Public Health, Merced County Office of Education, UC Merced and Castle Health.
 - ii. How have they contributed to the results you've already achieved? The Merced County Public Health Department provided nutritional education, including cook books and nutritional training. UC Merced conducted focus groups and interviews with customers.
 - iii. How will they contribute to future results? The UC Merced study was presented to the American Public Health Association and provided important recommendations to assist in improving the viability and positive impact of a mobile grocery service.
5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project?

We used our contractors to develop creative nutritional information, improve and update our website, produceonthego.us, and to increase our publicity.
6. Have you publicized any results yet?*

 - i. If yes, how did you publicize the results? As a result of the elimination of critical funding, many of our original projections are no longer meaningful. Our contest gained positive media coverage, and results of the UC Merced study have been published and shared among public health professionals throughout the United States.
 - ii. To whom did you publicize the results? We shared all relevant findings with our Make Someone Happy Board of Directors to ensure that they understand the impact of the challenges we have faced. The findings of the UC Merced Public Health evaluation and studies regarding Produce on the Go have been shared with all stakeholders.
 - iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? The publicity regarding Produce on the Go has been extensive throughout Merced County. Results of the operations of Produce on the Go have been shared directly with our 11 Board members and with over 40 members of our Produce on the Go Advisory Council.

*Send any publicity information (brochures, announcements, newsletters, etc.) electronically along with this report. Non-electronic promotional items should be digitally photographed and emailed with this report (do not send the actual item).

7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and added stakeholders about your work?
 - i. If so, how did you collect the information? Make Someone Happy conducted customer satisfaction surveys and implemented corrective actions where possible. Information for the UC Merced study was collected through both personal interviews and conducting focus groups. The UC study was published and shared with stakeholders.
 - ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

Our customer satisfaction surveys indicated that over 95% of our customers were pleased or very pleased with our services. Despite downsizing, we continued to receive enthusiastic support for the mission of Make Someone Happy to improve the health of residents who reside in food deserts. The UC Merced study to assess our success, feasibility and opportunities provided positive feedback.
8. Budget Summary:
 - i. As part of the LFPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report:

- ii. Did the project generate any income? We have not generated any income.
 - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

9. Lessons Learned:

- i. State the issue(s) and the reasoning behind its/their occurrence: The unforeseen problems included: a) elimination of funding; b) the impact of severe weather on the availability of fresh produce; c) mechanical problems in the truck which delayed services for ten days; and d) the misconception by customers that we had terminated services.
- ii. How did the issues affect timelines? Each issue presented major challenges and many of our original timelines were no longer feasible to attain.
- iii. How did the issues affect the measureable results? The measurable results we hoped to attain were adversely impacted by the loss of funding, and as a result, several of our extremely optimistic goals were not attained.
- iv. How did the issues affect the budget? The budget was not affected.
- v. How did your organization resolve the issue(s)? Many of the issues were not within our control (e.g., loss of funding and mechanical problems). We reassessed the sites and carefully made changes that would provide better service and future profitability.

10. Future Work:

- i. How will you continue the work of this project beyond the performance period? In other words, how will you parlay the results of your project's work to benefit future community goals and initiatives? Include information about community impact and outreach, anticipated increases in markets and/or sales, estimated number of jobs retained/created, and any other information you'd like to share about the future of your project.

This project is being continued on a limited basis. Make Someone Happy has built a strong rapport with our community leaders and with the University of California. We have been very encouraged by working with young, motivated and primarily Hispanic students who are first generation college students. Many of these students emigrated from Mexico as children, and they are very concerned about improving lifestyles of their families. Providing weekly access to the healthy produce that we offer has not only assisted students, but we believe that these students will be instrumental in opening the eyes of their communities to the extreme importance of healthy and nutritional eating habits.

- ii. Do you have any recommendations for future activities and, if applicable, an outline of next steps or additional research that might advance the project goals?

The positive feedback we receive from our customers substantiates the need and value of a project that delivers affordable fresh fruits and vegetables to underserved and inaccessible populations in need of a healthy diet. However, we are convinced that simply delivering affordable produce to underserved communities is merely the first step. To be successful, we must focus on health education and on developing and implementing strategies that will motivate our residents to eat healthier food, with an ultimate goal of changing their lifestyle.