

# Neighborhood-based Farmers' Markets: A Tool for Promoting Community Food Security

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# Presentation Outline

- Genesis of this project
- Participatory Research process
- Results
- Lessons learned



# Genesis of this Project

Participatory Action Research

Democratization of research

Goal of research is social change

Researcher as facilitator or co-learner *not* expert





# Genesis of this Project



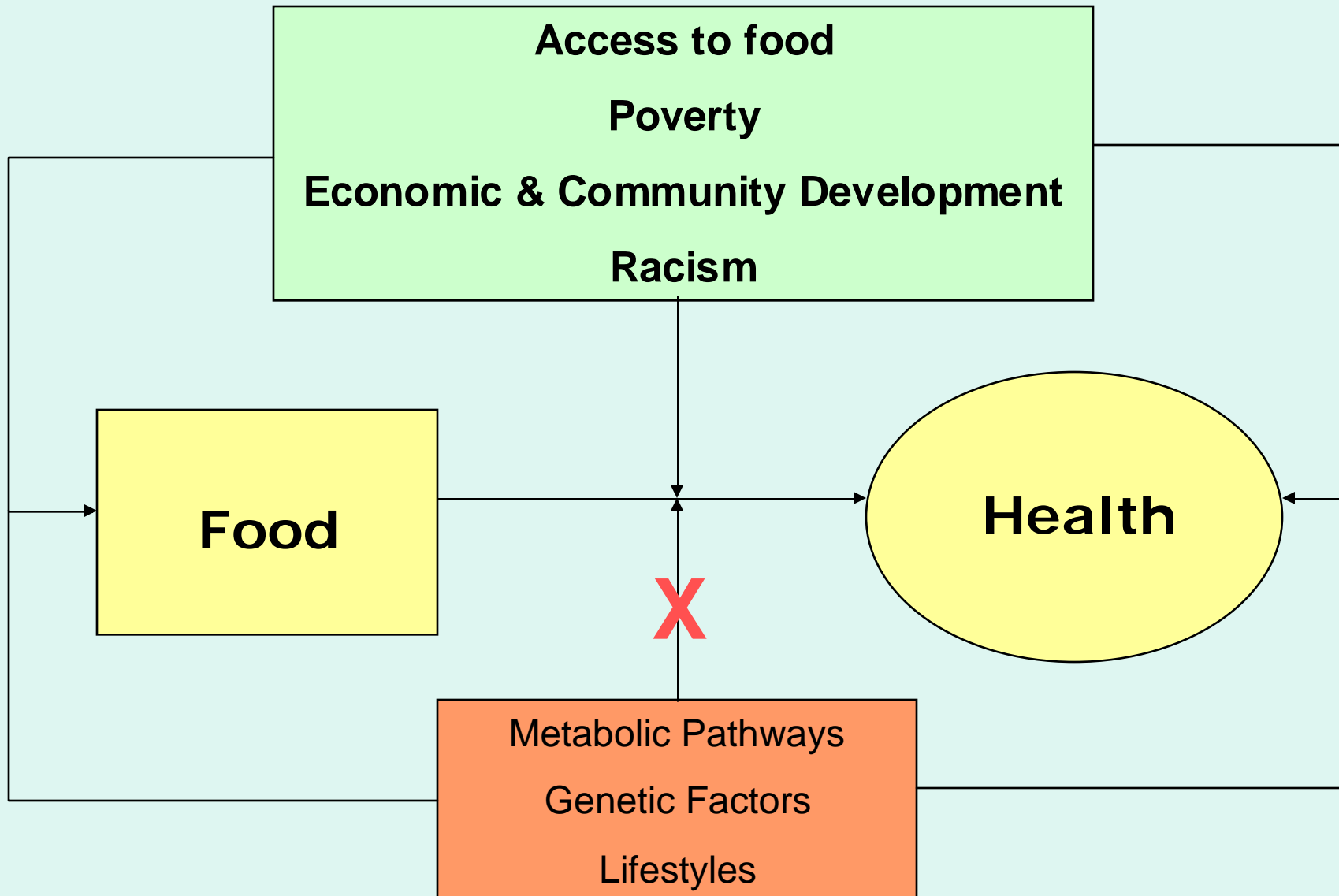
# Genesis of this Project

## Community Food Security

A condition 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**.

Mike Hamm and Anne Bellows

Source: Community Food Security Coalition, <http://www.foodsecurity.org>



# Participatory Planning Process

## Step 1: September-October 2005

- Informal focus groups at 3 neighborhood association meetings
  - Understand community interest in farmers' market
  - Determine fruit and vegetable preferences
  - Recruit people to engage in planning process

## Factors that would make the market successful...

- Convenience, both in terms of hours of operation and location
- Fair prices for food
- High quality produce
- Successful advertising





# Participatory Planning Process

## Step 1: September-October 2005

- Informal focus groups at 3 neighborhood association meetings
  - Understand community interest in farmers' market
  - Recruit people to join in planning process
- Brief questionnaire (N=30):
  - 93% of residents “very interested” in a farmers' market in the community

# Participatory Planning Process

## Step 2: November 2005-August 2006

### Community Advisory Committee

- Bi-monthly meetings held at a church in the community (5 meetings)
- 5-14 people attended meetings
- Core team of 7
  - 2 community members
  - 3 leaders from the Tennessee State University Cooperative Extension Program
  - 1 community-based nutritionist (REACH 2010)
  - Me

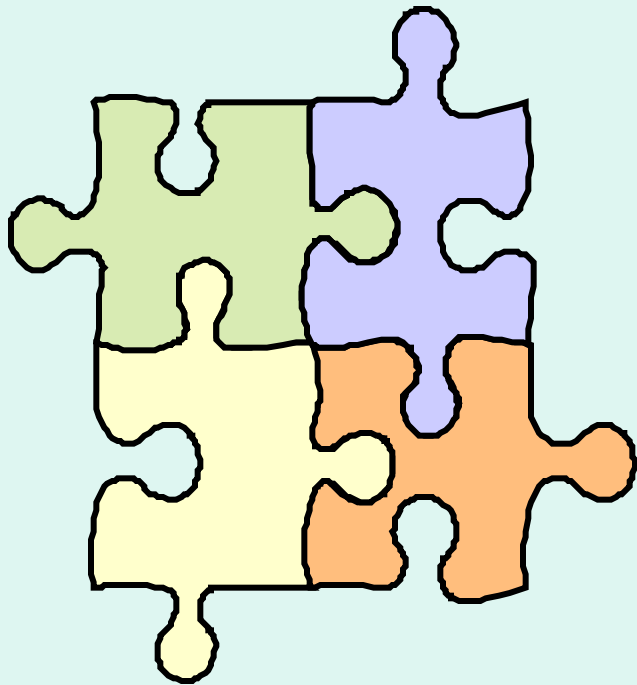
# Participatory Planning Process

- Decisions
  - Dates/location/time of market
  - EBT accessibility
  - Promotional materials
  - Market management
    - Youth interns
  - Research process



# Participatory Planning Process

## Step 3: Ongoing Develop Partnerships



### Partners

Delvin Farms  
Hadley Park Neighborhood Association  
Nashville Farmers' Market  
Preston Taylor Community Center  
Preston Taylor Neighborhood Association  
REACH 2010 Nashville  
RiverWest Community Development Corporation  
RUN Neighborhood Association  
Society of Saint Andrew  
Tennessee State University Agricultural Extension Program  
Tomorrow's Hope Neighborhood Association  
Truth and Reconciliation Project  
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church  
St. Luke's Church  
St. Luke's Community House  
61st United Methodist Church  
Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies  
Vanderbilt University Center for Health Services

# Evaluation Plan

Attention to **supply factors**

*How much food was made available to community residents as a result of the farmers' market?*

and **demand factors**

*What happened when residents availed themselves to the fruits and vegetables sold at the market?*



# Evaluation Tools

- Tracking
  - Volume and types of food (start/end)
  - # customers
- Brief Survey
  - Anonymous (waiver of consent)
  - 3 time points: baseline (Time 1), midway (Time 2), & end (Time 3)
  - Cross sectional
  - Demographics, shopping patterns, changes in fruit and vegetable consumption
- Field Notes/Observations

# Results: Supply Factors

- 1600+ pounds of fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables, representing 20 different types of produce, were sold at the farmers' market
- 74% of the produce that entered the community as a result of the farmers' market was sold at the market
- 100% of produce entering the community stayed in the community



# Results: Supply Factors

Most popular items:

- corn (447 ears)
- tomatoes (213 lbs)
- peaches (146 lbs)
- turnip greens (114 lbs)
- yellow squash (96 lbs)
- cucumbers (75 lbs)
- cantaloupe (71 melons)
- watermelon (71 melons)



# Results: Supply Factors

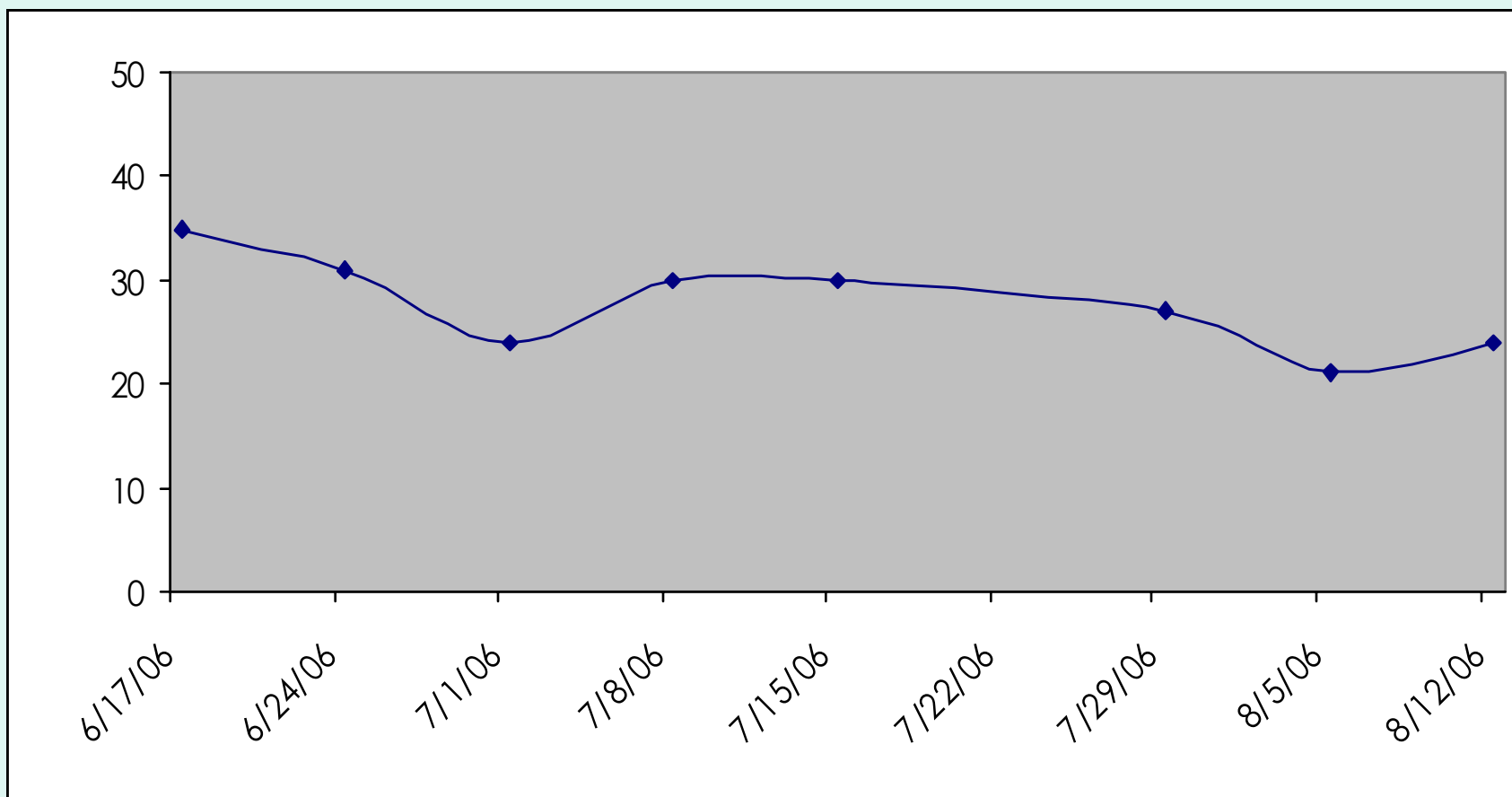
- Cost:  $\approx$  \$120/week to stock market
- Fair prices: all but 5% of the FV sold at the market were the same price or cheaper than produce sold at the nearest chain supermarket or at a larger farmers' market in the city.
- Market was profitable on 6 of the 9 days of operation
  - Total profit = \$131.21 (does not include staff costs)
  - All profits returned to the community for future community-based endeavors

# Results: Demand Factors

247 people shopped at the neighborhood farmers' market

mean, 28 per week

range, 21 - 35 per week





# Results: Survey Results

Sample size

- Time 1=29
- Time 2=15
- Time 3=16

65% female

80% African American

Mean age=52 years  
(range, 26-84 years)

72% from RiverWest  
neighborhood

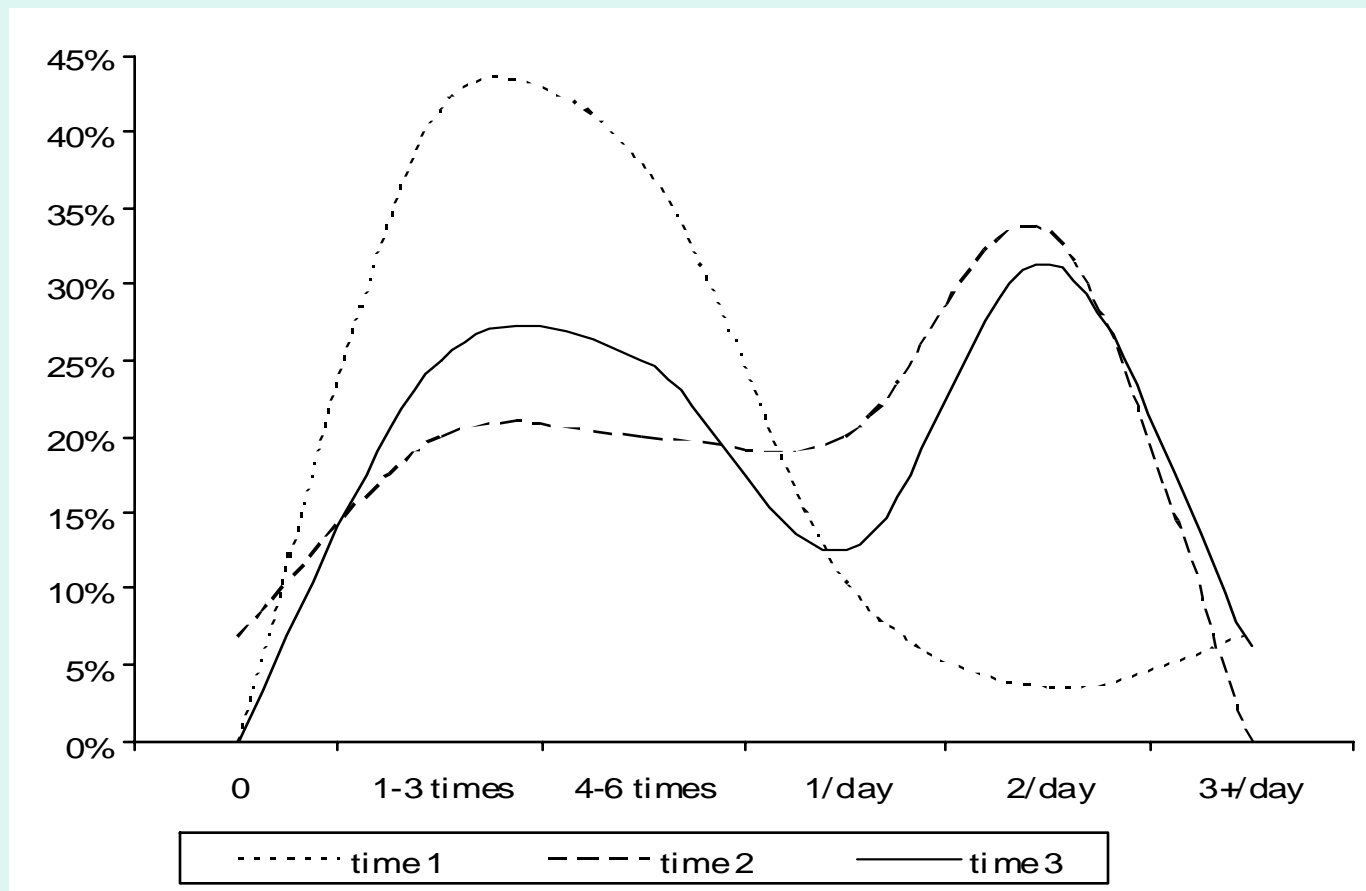
30% reported 2+ visits to  
the market



# Results: Demand Factors

## Survey Results

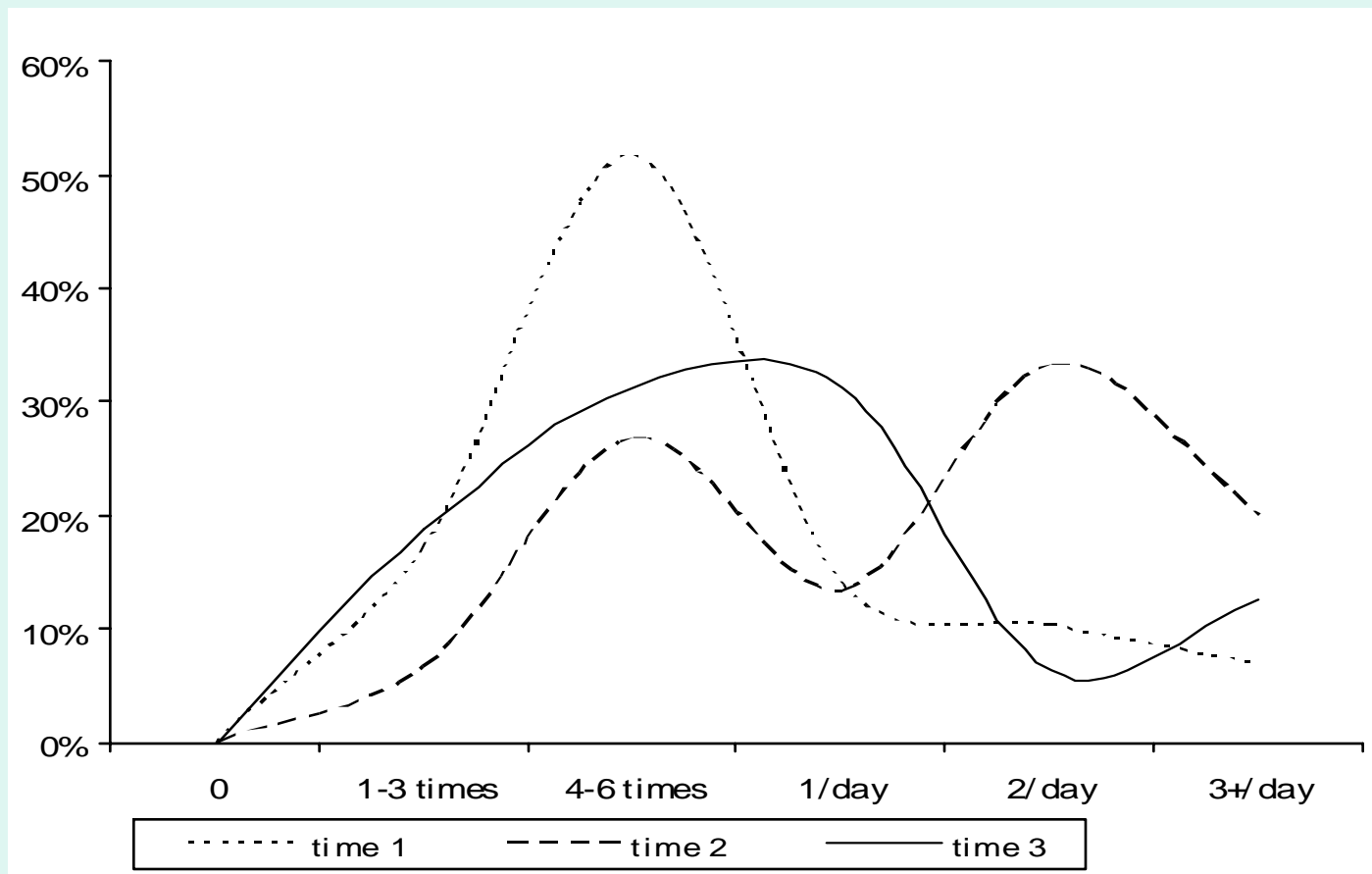
During the past 7 days, how often did you eat fruit?



# Results: Demand Factors

## Survey Results

During the past 7 days, how often did you eat vegetables?



# Results: Observations

- People were thankful for the produce stand – tips!
- Lots of social interaction
- Majority of customers travel by car
- Myths about “organic” and farm fresh food
- Not every car stopped
- Customers liked to be served, rather than choose their own produce
- Great experiential learning opportunity
- Reflection is key
- It’s HOT!!



# Lessons Learned

- Lack of access to food is a social injustice
  - Without access even the best public health campaigns are unsuccessful
- Markets increase supply and demand for fruits and vegetables
  - Facilitated community participation
- Farmers' markets alone are insufficient responses to “food deserts”
  - Need strategies to address injustices of food system



# Thanks!

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