



November 1, 2018

## **Improving Access to Fresh Food through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Report 2**

### **2018 Program Goals**

In follow-up to Report 1 of 2018, the goal for the 2018 Partner Shares program was to foster relationships with key organizational partners in Dane County in order to magnify the reach and impact of the program. Our plan was to strengthen existing connections with community organizations, while forging new partnerships in areas of the county that have limited access to fresh produce. The formation of several pilot projects and the positive impacts that resulted from these initiatives exceeded our expectations. Following are the results of these pilot project, plans for project refinements and strategies for building on the successes that were realized.

### **Expanding Access through Strategic Partnerships**

#### Middleton Outreach Ministry – Segoe Terrace Pilot Project

FairShare partnered with MOM on a pilot program that provided CSA shares, at no cost, to 21 senior citizen residents of Segoe Terrace Apartments (near Hilldale Mall) for the 2018 growing season. All of the participants in the program live on fixed and/or limited incomes, and lack access to affordable options for fresh, organic, local produce. FairShare provided 50% of assistance toward the cost of the five CSA shares through the Partner Shares program, while MOM was awarded a grant from Endres Foundation to fund the remaining portion of the shares.

FairShare organized and led monthly meetings with program participants to explain the structure of CSA, introduce the farmer, and become acquainted with those involved in the project. We also designed and disseminated pre-season, mid-season and post-season evaluations to assess whether this project achieved our expected outcomes, including increased consumption of vegetables, increased knowledge of and interest in CSA, decrease in reported barriers for accessing fresh produce, and decrease in money spent on fresh produce.



*Farmer Chelsea of Plowshares & Prairie Farm introduces herself and the farm to Segoe Terrace residents. (credit: Sami Head)*



The evaluations will be aggregated and analyzed in mid-November, now that the season has ended, and the staff champion at Segoe Terrace has had time to collect all of the final evaluations. Results will be shared at the November Food Council meeting. Initial anecdotal accounts from residents themselves, the on-site champions at Segoe Terrace, MOM volunteers, and the farmers indicate that the participants appreciated the shares, enjoyed the freshness of the vegetables and cooking with new varieties of produce, and relished the opportunity to get to know their farmers.



*Veggie packs ready for distribution at Segoe Terrace.  
(credit: Laura Bloomenkranz)*

Although the hope was to continue this partnership with MOM into future years, and expand to new locations, MOM determined that they are unable to build these initiatives into their donor program. The portion of the shares that they would be responsible for in non-grant-funded years was ultimately deemed cost-prohibitive. They have a limited pool of funds and need to ensure that they reach as large a number of clients as they can with those resources. As a result, FairShare is looking into ways to continue to connect the Segoe Terrace residents to CSA.

In addition, FairShare has started conversations with several community organizations in the Elver Park neighborhood, a top priority area identified by MOM, to continue the positive momentum generated by the pilot project. FairShare learned a number of concrete ways to improve the Segoe Terrace program (and programs of that model), and are excited to make these improvements with a new partner.

We are in discussions with the **Elver Park Neighborhood Center, Theresa Terrace and the Meadowood Neighborhood Center** about various opportunities to bring CSA shares into the community. Cooking classes, youth meals, and veggie distribution to families will likely be included in the project. We are working to launch a project for the 2019 season, if all goes to plan.

#### Troy Farm – Partner Shares Plus Program

Troy Farm is a five-acre diversified urban vegetable farm located on the north side of Madison, offering CSA shares and a market stand to Madison-area residents. Troy Farm is a program of the non-profit Community Groundworks, and is a FairShare-endorsed farm. Farm Director, Garrett Peterson, identified that they have not been serving their northside community members as well as they would like, and realized that financial limitations for many of their neighbors may be one of the reasons.



FairShare and Troy Farm partnered in 2018 to provide a “Partner Shares Plus” program to eligible households. Partner Shares Plus provides an additional subsidy, beyond the standard 50% of assistance that the Partner Shares program provides, to households that meet 135% of poverty income guidelines (versus the 185% of poverty income guidelines that is the standard for PSP).

For example, a standard PSP member would be responsible for paying \$340 of a \$640 standard weekly share, while a Partner Shares Plus member would be responsible for only \$170 of the share. Troy Farm provides the additional subsidy through CSA member contributions and Community Groundworks donations. The program was quite successful, with 80% of Partner Shares members that signed up with Troy Farm in 2018 receiving the additional subsidy.

Included in the Partner Shares Plus members were two community organizations on the northside of Madison. The **Vera Court Neighborhood Center** received 5 CSA shares, at no cost, thanks to financial support provided by FairShare/Dane County, Troy Farm, and United Healthcare. Staff at Vera Court found having the shares to be quite success. The vegetables were handed out to families by youth volunteers through a farm stand-style set-up. Any leftover produce was used by the community center chef in meals that were cooked for kids at the center.

The second organization served by the Partner Shares Plus program was the **Packer Community Learning Center**, which is located in the Packer Townhouses on Northport Drive on the northside of Madison. The center received one regular size CSA share, which they utilized in a multitude of ways. An a semi-retired neighborhood resident chef, made weekly mini-meals from the share for the children’s summer program held at the center. The program coordinator at Packer would quiz kids in the program about their knowledge of the vegetables in the share and would initiative basic conversations about local and organic farming. Any unused vegetables were distributed to households within the townhouses, and the response from families was extremely positive.



*Summer program meal prep; example veggie mini-meal; lunch-time enjoyment of the CSA share vegetables. (credit: Justin Markofski, Packer Community Learning Center)*





Garrett, the farm director at Troy Farm, has been working with **Lori Bakken, an evaluation specialist** from UW-Madison, to develop a framework for assessing the impact of the Partner Shares Plus program, as well as other initiatives that Community Groundworks has carried out this year. We will hopefully have results to share by the November Food Council meeting.

We expect to build upon this partnership in future years, by expanding the reach of the Partner Shares Plus program into more neighborhood centers and households in and around the northside.

#### Extending Community Engagement Capacity through Train-the-Trainer Sessions

FairShare developed a formal PSP train-the-trainer presentation this year, in order to expand awareness of the PSP beyond what our somewhat limited staff capacity can accomplish, and strengthen the existing connections between community members and organizations they already work with and trust for information. The presentation included an in-person PowerPoint presentation and Q&A session for attendees. Train-the-trainer sessions were provided to UW-Extension FoodWise Nutrition Educators, WIC clinic supervisors, and Middleton Outreach Ministry (MOM) staff.

#### A Snapshot of Dane County Households Served in 2018

- Number of CSA shares provided to Dane County residents – 93
  - Number of households - 78
  - Number of organizations - 15 shares to 6 organizations
  - Total number of people reached - 628
- Household figures for Dane County Partner Shares members
  - Average household income - \$24,654
  - Median household income - \$20,000
  - Average household size - X people
- 28% of households served paid with SNAP benefits (a 9% decrease since 2017, attributed largely to more strict eligibility requirements)
- 46% were first-time Partner Shares members
- 10% of households are located in a low-income and/or limited food access census tract, as determined by the USDA Food Access Research Atlas (as compared to <5% in 2017). See images below conclusion on the last page to visualize this data.
- Participants are members of 21 different local farms



*CSA share photos sent by Partner Shares members to FairShare staff.*





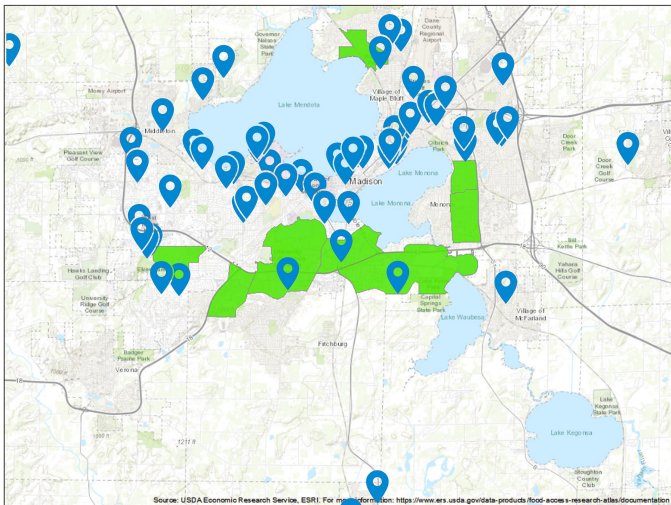
## In Conclusion

We are thrilled about the strong partnerships and pilot projects that were implemented in 2018, and believe that we are forming a solid framework upon which to continue extending the demographic and geographic reach of the Partner Shares program. By working closely with partners that are already serving the communities that we hope to connect with, via train-the-trainer sessions and CSA initiatives at neighborhood centers, we are finding ways to get fresh vegetables into areas of need without over-extending our staff capacity. We have also been able to reach more economically vulnerable households through creative partnerships with grant funders, healthcare organizations, and coalition farms.

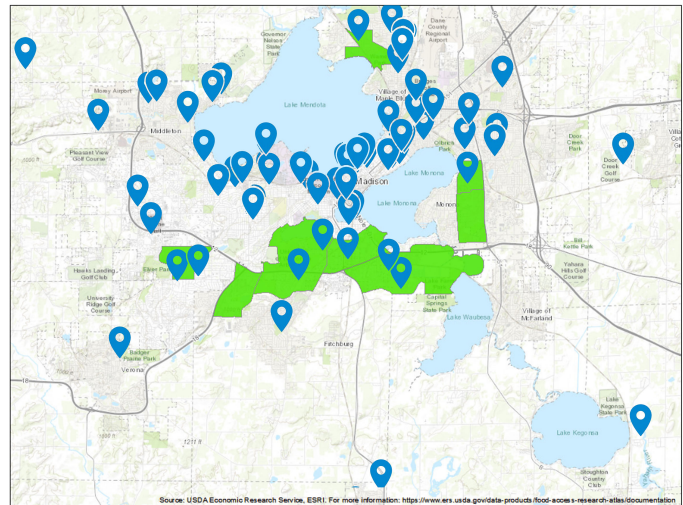
The partnership formation of 2018 bodes well for an even more robust year in 2019. We are meeting with a number of organizations and individuals, including the Elver Park community centers, Badger Rock Neighborhood Center, Bayview Foundation, Troy Farm, United Healthcare, Chef Lily (a kids healthy snacks chef), and more, to discuss ways to partner around fresh vegetables and CSA in 2019.

It is also particularly exciting to know that 600+ people in Dane County have been connected to the people and story behind the production of their vegetables. The agricultural education, cooking classes and youth/family meals that were part of the organizational CSA shares this year embody the essence of a holistic and healthy food experience and it keeps us motivated to continue working on making fresh food available to all!

2017 PSP Participants



2018 PSP Participants



*The Partner Shares program is increasingly serving individuals residing in limited food access / low-income areas in Dane County. (credit: Sheena Tesch, FairShare CSA Coalition)*