



Food Shift: Maximizing Value from Food

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Problem:

Nearly 50% of all the food produced in the United States is wasted each year. In addition to costing the United States \$160 billion dollars each year, food waste squanders water, depletes soil, wastes fossil fuels and adds greatly to the world's carbon footprint. When the resources used to grow, process, and transport are considered; 25% of freshwater use, 4% of oil use and 23% of all methane emissions in the United States are a result of wasted food. Food is the single largest component of solid waste in municipal landfills and incinerators in the United States. Rotting food creates methane which is twenty five times more harmful to the environment than carbon dioxide. Additionally, the United States is losing topsoil ten times faster than it can be replenished and arable land is quickly becoming unfit for farming. In a time of increasing consciousness around the importance of food and environment protection, activating around our national food waste habit is an enormous opportunity. By trimming our waste and recovering food we can feed the hungry, create jobs, combat global warming, conserve natural resources and improve the ethical conscience of our society. That is where Food Shift comes in.

Solution:

Food Shift seeks to create a new urban service sector which benefits the community and the environment through maximizing value of otherwise wasted food. Food Shift will collect unwanted good quality food from local food establishments and deliver it to local agencies that feed low-income and food insecure populations. As a key part of this collection and distribution process, Food Shift will have an educational job training program available for unemployed low-income individuals.

Food Shift Will:

Reduce Food Waste

Only ten percent of discarded food is currently recovered in the United States. If just 20% of wasted food were captured, it would be enough to feed 25 million Americans. There is a growing trend in America around environmental awareness and making sustainable food choices. Yet, food waste is still being left out of the conversation. Groups are talking about the importance of the soil, production, processing, localizing, investing and the distribution of food but are not yet examining what is happening to 50% of the food that is produced. Bringing the issue of food waste into the forefront of this robust network of food, social justice and environmental organizations will add depth to the dialog and strengthen the growing movements.

Shift Consciousness and Cultivate a Food Waste Free Culture

Environmental and social consciousness is on the rise in America and people are craving a more just, healthful and sustainable food system. People on both the supply and demand side of food are recognizing that the ecological limits of nature are real and they are adjusting their decisions and purchasing habits accordingly. Food Shift fits firmly within this changing culture and is a tangible way for both consumers and businesses to invest in the environment and their community. Food Shift will work in partnership with leaders across the food industry to help them understand that reducing food waste is in their best interest. Food Shift will work with food industry businesses to help transform their DNA to include community, social and environmental well being. As part of this process, Food Shift will inspire increased consciousness in the food industry and help create a deeper meaning and purpose for everyone in the food chain.



Establish Food Recovery as Replicable Urban Service Sector

The unique design of Food Shift establishes food recovery as a valuable component of a just and sustainable food system. By requiring businesses to pay for the service, Food Shift is legitimizing food recovery and building a model for a sustainable and professional food recovery sector. Currently food recovery in the United States is run by volunteers on a very low budget or by non-profit organizations that are dependent on grants for their existence. These current restraints limit possibilities to expand food recovery and deliver more food to those in need. Food Shift's food recovery system will be similar to the nationwide recycling collection programs and will have the ability to be easily replicated across the country.

Address the Issues of Hunger and Unemployment

49 million Americans are unsure where their next meal will come from and 9% of Americans are unemployed. Food Shift will address both these issues simultaneously by increasing access to healthful food and providing job training to low-income residents. With daily deliveries to some of the most food insecure populations in the region, Food Shift will help agencies reduce their spending on food costs and increase their ability to meet demand. Additionally, selected unemployed clients will be invited to join the Food Shift job training program.

Leadership:

Dana Frasz is the founder and visionary behind Food Shift. She graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in 2006 with a B.A. in social justice and non-fiction writing. In college, she worked with administrators, students, local businesses and organizations as the founder and director of the Empty Bellies and Swap Box programs. By her senior year she coordinated 12 businesses, recruited and managed 45 volunteers and had created a new system and mindset around food waste in and around campus. In 2006 Dana was honored by the International Youth Foundation as one of twenty exceptional social entrepreneurs from around the world. Most recently, Dana spent three years as a Project Manager at Ashoka. She planned, managed and executed competitions aimed at expanding and supporting social entrepreneurship worldwide. Dana has proven herself as a force among the entrepreneurial community. She was selected as a Starting Bloc Fellow in 2009 and an Emerging Voices Scholarship Recipient for the Slow Money National Gathering in 2011. Dana is natural leader and connector, with a keen ability to leverage networks and develop strong partnerships across sectors. She joyfully lives a passionate and committed life, determined to create a more just and sustainable world.

Advisory Committee:

Robert Egger, President, DC Central Kitchen/Campus Kitchens

Michael R. Dimock, President, Roots of Change

Brahm Ahmadi, CEO, People's Community Market

Dana Gunders, Sustainable Agriculture Specialist, Natural Resources Defense Council

Jonathan Bloom, Journalist and Food Waste Expert

Alexis Frasz, Cultural Anthropologist and Consultant, Helicon

Gabriel Cole, Chef and Food Consultant, Fare Resources

Rob Thomas, Founder and Director, Social(K)

