

Merrimack College

Merrimack ScholarWorks

Librarian Publications

McQuade Library

5-13-2016

Don't Panic, It's Organic*: Supporting Sustainable Agriculture and Hunger Relief Efforts at McQuade Library

Catherine Wong

Merrimack College, wongc@merrimack.edu

Kathryn Geoffrion Scannell

Merrimack College, kgeoffrionscannell@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.merrimack.edu/lib_pub



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Wong, C., & Geoffrion Scannell, K. (2016). Don't Panic, It's Organic*: Supporting Sustainable Agriculture and Hunger Relief Efforts at McQuade Library. *2016 ACRL/NEC Annual Conference- Holistic Librarianship: Broad Thinking for Diverse and Creative Solutions*

Available at: https://scholarworks.merrimack.edu/lib_pub/3

This Poster Session is brought to you for free and open access by the McQuade Library at Merrimack ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Librarian Publications by an authorized administrator of Merrimack ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@merrimack.edu.

Don't Panic, It's Organic*: Supporting Sustainable Agriculture and Hunger Relief Efforts at McQuade Library



Catherine Wong and Kathryn Geoffrion Scannell

McQuade Library at Merrimack College partnered with a community-supported agriculture (CSA) operation to provide fresh, local foods to the College and surrounding community.

Why Start a CSA Pick Up at Your Library?

- ❖ Supports sustainable agriculture and local foods movement
- ❖ Community Supported Agriculture is good for the environment (less packaging, less fuel to move food, less toxic chemicals, increased species diversity on small farms)
- ❖ Healthy option which supports wellness of campus community
- ❖ Opportunity for outreach with faculty, staff, students, and surrounding community



Promotion

Signs

- ❖ Farm provided color signs with tear off strips
- ❖ Put up signs all over the library, the campus, and the local community including coffee shops and local churches

Email

- ❖ To faculty in Science and Engineering (Catherine's liaison area) to gauge interest
- ❖ To the entire College
- ❖ To some local churches to get blurb into church newsletters
- ❖ Put in Science and Engineering Library News (email newsletter that goes to Science and Engineering departments)

Blog and Social Media

- ❖ Promoted on social media (Twitter and Facebook)
- ❖ Created blog postings with recipes
- ❖ Promoted in McQuade Messenger (the library's newsletter)

Logistics of Operation

Staff and Hours Required

- ❖ 2 Distribution Managers and other staff pitched in to help with set up and takedown
- ❖ Weekly commitment of approximately 5 hours for 20 weeks
- ❖ Duties performed: setup the distribution area, check in farm members, help identify vegetables, and discuss cooking methods/recipes

Materials

- ❖ Materials required: table, two chairs, clipboard, highlighters

Location

- ❖ A permanently shaded area is ideal to protect delicate vegetables from the sun and to provide cover from rain



Abstract

How can libraries support sustainability, wellness, and social justice? Concern for health and the environment has increased interest in sustainable agriculture and the local foods movement. McQuade Library at Merrimack College became a distributor of local foods by partnering with a community supported agriculture (CSA) operation to provide fresh foods to the college and surrounding community. CSAs are a way to directly support local agriculture with sustainable growing practices. Joining a CSA is entering into a relationship with a farm and farmer whereby members are directly supporting the farm by purchasing a farm share. In exchange for providing monetary or labor support up front and/or during the growing season, farm members are provided with a share of the crops harvested.

McQuade Library partnered with Farmer Dave's CSA, a farm just eleven miles from the college. Farmer Dave's utilizes sustainable growing practices and was willing to drop off the food at the library once a week for twenty weeks if we could recruit fifty members. Through our promotional efforts, we surpassed the number of shares needed to form the partnership. Weekly pick-ups commenced with two library staff volunteering as the distribution managers. As some shares of food were not picked up each week, the volunteers were able to distribute a considerable amount of local, fresh food to a nearby food pantry and senior center in the summer months. Once our semester began, students from Merrimack's Campus Kitchens Project (a hunger-relief effort supported by the Sodexo Foundation) collected the food each week to make meals they delivered to an emergency shelter. This poster describes our process and best practices along with our positive results in faculty and community outreach.



Merrimack College was the recipient of a grant from the Sodexo Foundation to create a Campus Kitchen. Students are given food from Sodexo, which they combined with the leftover CSA food to create meals for the Lazarus House, a food relief and emergency shelter in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Student volunteers would pick up the food after share-out.



Food Relief

- ❖ Farmer Dave's accepts SNAP/EBT/Food Stamps
- ❖ Leftover food each week due to forgetfulness or vacation
- ❖ Need a food relief effort that will take fresh produce (large refrigeration unit) at the time you need to drop it off
- ✓ Beverly Bootstraps
- ✓ North Reading Senior Center
- ✓ Campus Kitchens Project



Faculty/Community Outreach

- ❖ Share out is a social event
- ❖ People love to talk about food
- ❖ Opportunity to talk with faculty, staff, and administrators about food
- ❖ **AND** to promote and discuss library resources



Evolving Program

- ❖ Surveyed members with Google Form
- ❖ Recruited community member to do weekly share-out next year
- ❖ Farm took over more of the marketing as we had more time to recruit
- ❖ Farm found a food relief effort that will pick up in the summer before the Campus Kitchens starts



*Farmer Dave's is not a certified organic farm, but utilizes sustainable growing practices and is located just 11 miles from McQuade Library.



Getting Started

- ❖ First we found a local farm to partner with, secured permission, and created partnerships on campus
- ❖ Meeting with stakeholders
- ❖ Hamel Health and Counseling: focus on wellness of community
- ❖ Welcome Center: share our building and parking (We didn't want to be in the way of their activities.)
- ❖ Police services: location, additional cars on campus, best day of week



*I loved having the fresh vegetables and fruit each week, and sharing vegetable and fruit shares with a colleague worked perfectly for my household.
-Feedback from Merrimack Community Member*

