

# YOUTH EMPOWERMENT



# THROUGH FOOD



Global Food  
Initiative  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

**DORON COMERCHERO**  
IRENE O'CONNELL & ROANNA COOPER

# Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	3
About FoodWhat .....	3
Welcome .....	4
<b>1 YOUTH EMPOWERMENT</b> .....	5
ToolKit Users.....	5
Safe Space.....	7
The Four R’s + Context.....	9
Programming Tools .....	13
Youth Empowerment Appendix.....	17
<b>2 MODEL CONNECTION</b> .....	25
Overview .....	25
Testimonies .....	30
<b>3 FARM YOUTH ENGAGEMENT</b> .....	36
Nuts and Bolts (aka the “How”).....	36
General Tips for On-Farm Programming.....	37
One-Time Farm Visit Template.....	38
Spring Matrix .....	38
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	41
<b>4 EVENT PLANNING MANUAL</b> .....	42
Strawberry Blast & Harvest Festival.....	42
Table of Contents .....	43
Background.....	44
Student Experience .....	45
Weekly Planning Guide.....	47
Conclusion .....	59
Appendix.....	60

## AUTHORS

Principle: **Doron Comerchero**  
 Contributing: **Irene O’Connell and Roanna Cooper**

## PHOTO CREDITS

Shelley Alingas	Roanna Cooper	April Loeza
Yanelly Alonso	Melissa Eap	Greer Montgomery
Abby Bell	Patrick Evans	Irene O’Connell
Doron Comerchero	Anna Schlotz Koski	Elizabeth Sims

## Global Food Initiative

The University of California Global Food Initiative (GFI) addresses one of the critical issues of our time: how to sustainably and nutritiously feed a world population expected to reach eight billion by 2025. As part of this initial phase, UC Global Food Initiative has launched over twenty-five working groups addressing research, policy, operations, and public service that are developing best practices, and innovative toolkits to implement them. To find out more about the UC Global Food Initiative and the resources and toolkits available to the public, review the website at: [ucop.edu/global-food-initiative](http://ucop.edu/global-food-initiative).



## Thank You

We would like to express our appreciation to UC President Napolitano for this Global Food Initiative support to create this body of work. Thank you also to the GFI K-12 Subcommittee for partnering with us on this project, with special gratitude to Tim Galarnau. And of course, we couldn’t be sharing these best practices and insights without our stellar team at FoodWhat or the hundreds of FoodWhat alumni youth who have used agriculture and health as a tool to step into their power. Cheers!



# About FoodWhat

“Food, What?!” is a youth empowerment and food justice organization using food, through sustainable agriculture and health, as the vehicle for growing strong, healthy, and resilient teens. We partner with low-income and struggling youth to grow, cook, eat, and distribute healthy, sustainably raised food and address food justice issues in our community. FoodWhat (FW) creates a safe space for youth and supports teens in finding their voices and developing lasting confidence in themselves.

Established in 2007, FoodWhat runs dynamic programming, large events, and community education programs that reach over 1,000 youth and community members each year. We partner with high school aged youth, most of whom are in alternative education and continuation high schools, or are hand selected for need from mostly South Santa Cruz County traditional high schools. We prioritize youth who are struggling due to low family income, academic challenges, trauma, substance abuse, and/or in foster care. Recognizing the equity issues between north and south county resources, FW deliberately invests in further outreach and program elements in the Watsonville area.

Youth participating in FoodWhat programs generally report outcomes in three main areas: significant positive diet change, acquiring a tool kit of job training skills and experiences, and significant personal growth and transformation.

FoodWhat programs are held on our half-acre organic farm at UCSC and on our partner farm site in Watsonville, Live Earth Farm. Youth from all over the county join the FW crew through our Spring Internship, Summer Job Training Program, Fall Project Management Program, Winter Community Education Program, and through organizing large community events on the farm. Here’s the progression of our core programming:

The **Spring Internship Program** is the first step in our graduated leadership model, centered on leadership development and job training through sustainable agriculture. Fifty to 60 youth meet in small groups one day per week for 11 weeks for school credit and a stipend.

The full-time **Summer Job Training Program** employs 20 youth hired from the Spring Program for four days per



week for eight weeks, from 9am-3pm, as well as four Junior Staff youth from the previous year. The main focus is on professionalism—how to get and keep a job and thrive in that position. Program alumni also consistently report great personal growth.

Fifteen to 20 teens from the Summer Job are then hired for eight to ten weeks for the **Fall Project Management Program**. Youth co-manage farm-based businesses and community service projects such as two affordable farm stands.

Finally, a small number of FW youth lead the **Winter Community Education Program**, teaching workshops on a range of health and food justice topics in area high schools while modeling leadership. After this cycle, youth have the opportunity to be hired on as Junior Staff for the following year.

All FoodWhat programs include components of leadership training (focused on communication, responsibility, professionalism and transferable job skills), sustainable agriculture, cooking and nutrition, entrepreneurship, community service and social justice. These are meaningful job opportunities where teens earn a competitive wage, gain significant transferable job skills, professional experience and references for their resumes, and undergo significant personal transformation and growth.



# Welcome



**FIRST OFF, WELCOME.** If you are opening these pages, you are likely someone interested in, and working at, the intersection of food, justice, and youth. There is magic in combining these elements that encompass such a diversity of aspects: sustainable agriculture, youth development, equity, food system change, community economic development, empowerment. If your intention is to explore these chapters to support your efforts in any of the above, then you have come to the right place. Before you dive in, we want to thank you for taking the time to examine the youth empowerment approach offered here.

Understanding and integrating this framework, and incorporating the activities and elements in the chapters to follow, will allow you to weave a deep practice of equity, power generation, and resilience into the programming offered to youth and the community.

With respect,

*Doron Comerchero*

**Doron Comerchero & The “Food, What?!” Crew**





## TOOLKIT USERS

This toolkit was made with a broad range of potential users in mind. You may be a UC student or faculty member, run programs at a non-profit, be a new or longtime activist, a philanthropist, a teacher, or one of many other possibilities. Whoever you are and whatever your interest in this material, it is here for you.

The following chapters are laid out with the hope that you can use this material in whole or in part. It is offered in such a way, explaining the foundational theory while also sharing practical examples and curricular elements, so that you can translate the confluence of these many elements to your work and the people you serve. While FoodWhat does work exclusively with low-income and struggling teenage youth, this material can be used for many audiences.

**Note:** To ground and contextualize everything from here on in, let's start with some common language. First up, and center stage, let's dive into the concept of **youth empowerment**. If you gain a firm grasp of what this means, and how you may approach your efforts from a youth empowerment perspective, you will have deeper and more lasting outcomes in the project you are driving.

Many youth organizations speak of their efforts as youth empowerment work. There are many approaches to youth development, and youth empowerment is a very particular style and pedagogy to use. Sometimes when an organization or entity says they are doing youth empowerment work, they talk about how their program or their staff "empowers" youth. (Note: you can easily substitute the word "youth" with "student" at any time with equal relevance throughout this toolkit.)

At FoodWhat we have a different orientation, as we believe that empowerment is a very personal process that one must adopt and move into on one's own terms. An organization or staff may create all the conditions, support, scaffolding, invitation, challenge, for this young person (or student) to enter a process of empowerment, but ultimately an external entity cannot empower another without, at minimum, their partnership, and ultimately, the individual's decision to do so for themselves. That said, empowerment does not need to be plastered on a

billboard as the advertisement of your program or initiative as a person walks through the door. It can be subtle, it can build over time, it can be a component of a larger mission or goal for the individuals or populations you serve. And, it can be front and center and "advertised" if that's the approach you find most beneficial.

Now, when we talk about empowerment, what are we referring to? At FoodWhat we see tremendous growth in a number of areas in the youth in our programs. We view empowerment as growth, as transformation, as stepping into one's power, as gaining a voice and being able to speak up, as having agency to make change within oneself/family/social circle/community, as being able to break out of negative cycles, as "trying on" something that you're drawn toward but have been previously unable to access, as pulling down barriers to your path forward, as experiencing your own success ... and so on.

As an organization, we don't have one crisp definition of what empowerment will look like for any given youth. There is no doubt that we notice patterns in the development of the young people we serve. We are proud of the consistently high employment, high rates of high school graduation, and significant diet and health improvements of FoodWhat youth. Instead of expecting or aiming for a particular outcome for a particular individual, though, we create a safe space, offer a bountiful, relevant toolkit of skills and experiences, and engage together in meaningful work, meeting each young person exactly where they are.





What do youth say they get out of this mix? They talk to us about the many ways they are taking charge of their futures. Some youth step into their power as community leaders, some dig deep into the job training and successfully get the job they were looking for, some use the community of supportive youth and adults that we co-create to process and heal from significant traumas. Some youth learn communication skills to work things out with a parent, while others decide to commit to finish high school or go on to higher education. Some decide to go to rehab. Others get politically active and work towards real equity in the food system. Some find a career path in agriculture or the culinary arts. This list could be endless—what's key is that the goals of each individual's journey are their own—and that's where we begin.

Part of empowerment is about creating safe space. (We'll explore safe space in the content ahead.) Part is your dedication to continually listening. Part is in asking the youth/students or community what they see as pathways to resolve the personal or societal issues they want to address. There is a need to be both responsive and flexible in this approach. An openness to an ongoing evolution of your program/initiative and structure as an entity/organization will best support the people you are serving in building their own power. At FoodWhat we get to do all this through a delicious medium and one of the most basic of human necessities—food!

We can also explore the question of how you know when your efforts are being successful in supporting an individual's or community's empowerment. On this topic, I'd like to share a story:

Before my wife, Kirstin, gave birth, I invited a few close friends together in the spirit of sharing their wisdom and wishes. One friend shared a story about winning tickets to a concert when he was in high school 20 years ago. He won them off a radio show that he called in on while doing his homework. He lived an hour east of San Francisco and didn't drive, so he asked his Dad to take him. His Dad drove him an hour to the concert, dropped him off, waited two hours in the parking lot, then drove him back. It wasn't until many years later that he realized that his Dad was just waiting for him there—no agenda—nothing fun or exciting happening. His Dad never really mentioned it—he was just being a dad waiting there for his son for hours. The message that my friend, now a teacher in his 30s, pulled from this experience, is that when we are teachers or mentors, we don't often know when we are the most impactful. We are in a continual process of giving, creating opportunities, supporting from various approaches, and we don't know which moment is going to stick with the student or most affect the student over time.

There's a quality to this story that really resonates in taking a youth empowerment approach. The goal is not to seek some exact outcome. And the moments that lead toward empowerment may happen squarely during the program time or project, or it may be that a seed is planted and it will be another set of circumstances and opportunities that will germinate these early actions of one stepping into their own power and potential. In your role, you can keep creating the conditions for these growth-provoking experiences.

In seeking to create space for empowerment, it is important for us to be conscious of how power can sometimes develop an unbalanced dynamic, especially between adults and youth. As was mentioned above, FoodWhat does not view empowerment as something that is given to the youth from the adults. This implies a hierarchy of power that discounts the inherent capacity youth have to discover their personal power. While we are working to develop accountable leadership and relationships, we must do so in a way that does not replicate systems of oppression, including ageism, racism, sexism, homophobia, and discrimination in all its many forms. By creating safe space for youth identity and self-expression, and establishing an ongoing commitment to challenging historic patterns of marginalization, we are offering each other tools to construct more sustainable and just systems and communities.

# SAFE SPACE

Part of an empowerment approach you can focus on is creating and maintaining a safe space. This is done by inviting in all voices, recognizing the gifts of each individual, opening lines of direct and honest communication, and listening to each others' experiences and stories. This can be done in a fun and engaging way: in a way that offers relevance, builds relationships, calls for increasing levels of responsibility, has an element of rigor, and is meaningful.

How you build safe space is very dependent on your activities and your physical environment. There are some universal properties to safe space, as well. Before you read on, think of a safe space or safe spaces you have been a part of. How did they feel? What made them safe for you? What kept them safe over time? If it's useful, take a moment with a piece of paper to jot down your answers to the previous questions. These thoughts can serve as guiding principles in your work to create a safe space.

We have asked our alumni what made FoodWhat a safe space during their time in on-site programming (or even

when they return for alumni gatherings on the farm). Here are some of their responses:

**"Everyone trusted each other."**

**"I can talk about anything without being judged."**

**"By granting me a sense of belonging."**

**"I felt more comfortable to interact with people and myself."**

**"Provided a time where you can be yourself with friends who accept you for who you are."**

**"Giving me a place to call home."**

**"By creating a good program that supported me in many ways: learning how to eat healthy, how to work in a job, how to be part of a community, etc."**

**"The staff checked in on me and how I was doing."**

**"By doing positive activities."**



So this feedback could be grouped into a few rough categories:

- 1) how youth felt with each other and with staff;
- 2) how youth felt within themselves; and
- 3) both what activities were and how they were led.

Youth in FoodWhat know that they can both stretch themselves in sharing their thoughts or speaking up, AND that the staff will also maintain a safe space. This is done in part by creating the expectation that everyone will respect each other regardless of differences or disagreements.

For example, if we are in a workshop and someone says something that is or could be offensive or hurtful, a staff person might bring immediate attention to that comment publicly with the whole group. For example, “Jason, that seems like an offensive thing to say to Angela.” (If a comment has an unintentional negative effect, a similar but slightly softer process could be engaged. For example, “Jason, it seems like what you said may have unintentionally offended Angela.”)

By communicating in this way, but without shaming or blasting that young person, the group knows that the staff is committed to maintaining a safe space and is in the process of actively listening. The person saying it knows they need to be a part of maintaining a safe space, or in the instance of an unintentional effect, has the opportunity to explain their comment as such. And the person it may have affected knows that their safety in the group is being attended to. Afterwards, a staff person would also check in with Jason to ask him some questions to help him see the possible effect of his comment, and/or to explore what else is going on in his life that may have caused this type of comment. A staff person would also likely check in with Angela to be sure she’s ok and perhaps offer some mentorship on navigating offensive comments in a healthy way while creating clear boundaries regarding them.

Part of creating safe space is also in the ongoing relationship cultivation between the many people involved

with the project (staff, youth, community, etc.). This can be as straightforward as knowing about each participant’s story—not with the pressure on them to share every little detail of each challenging or wonderful moment—but just taking the time to ask some questions about their life, and to really listen. (Be careful in this exchange not to bring each of their comments or stories back to a comment/story about you and your life.) This is an opportunity to really hear about them, which often makes someone feel valued and seen (maybe even for the first time).

There are endless moments to build a relationship with people in your project/program, even with a huge group. Find the times when folks are all engaged in an activity (such as farming or cooking) and pop around to whoever you can to chat and enjoy a conversation with them while you are in that activity. If you are leading a group only once or over a minimal period of time, there are still opportunities to connect. You can lead an ice breaker (recommended no matter the group size or frequency!) that invites participants to share of themselves. (See Youth Empowerment Appendix on page 17 for example of a FoodWhat favorite: Toe to Toe.) You can also call on youth voice and build relationships, whether in the classroom or outside, with the opinion line (see Youth Empowerment Appendix page 18). This is a fantastic tool to gauge previous knowledge, interest, attitudes, post-activity impact, and more.





# THE FOUR RS + CONTEXT

In terms of linking content and delivery to empowerment, the special sauce will have an ingredient list of the Four Rs + Context. The Four Rs include:

- **Relevance**
- **Relationships**
- **Responsibility**
- **Rigor**

At FoodWhat, we aim to have each session of programming include these four elements. Let's look at them one at a time:

## Relevance

The conversation or activity or experience will have the most effect, and the most lasting impact, if it is relevant to the person participating. For example, building bridges towards health for high school-aged teens is a huge exercise in building relevance around a healthier diet. Teen culture dictates the hierarchy of Hot Cheetos and Soda being way above salad or a rainbow of veggies in a main dish. So in working with youth on diet, you can introduce foods that they are already eating, with the new addition of veggies. (This is also true for culturally appropriate foods.) Working with Latino teens, for example, you may

grow a variety of known vegetables on the farm and then move towards integrating them into a quesadilla. This is something that teens and Latinos are already eating, so it's more relevant. Also, (at FoodWhat) because the youth have been growing the vegetables, they have a different relationship to them—there can be pride stemming from the success of growing this food, there could be ownership over a piece of the farm knowing that they directly sowed seed in that area and harvested the product, or maybe even a relationship to the work from getting credit in school or earning pay from their work. Also, there is the added bonus of the experiential nature of these activities—not just talking about healthy food or diet, but growing the food, harvesting the veggies, cooking/preparing them in a food they are already familiar with and like, and then eating together, building community through food. All of a sudden when these factors are layered together, the quesadillas have substantial relevancy from multiple angles.

Relevance could also take the form of talking about farm labor within the context of food justice and starting by asking the youth (participants) to share stories of family members who work in the fields (or their own experience). They could also discuss food access in the context of diet-related diseases such as diabetes and obesity, sharing



stories of family members or friends who may be affected. Even if not every individual in the circle can offer a story (and thus direct connection) to the topic, hearing their peers speak on these topics provides a level of relevancy that is not often matched by adults speaking on these same topics.

At FoodWhat, when we're on the farm together growing food, we talk about where the fruits and vegetables are going to end up. We explain how some of the produce will go toward feeding ourselves, some will go toward a weekly share that summer youth will be growing and harvesting for their own families, and some will go toward our low-income farm stands. Once again there are multiple avenues to approach this concept of relevance. Maybe a youth is more fired up to weed a particular bed because they know they are going to harvest the peppers from that row to make lunch later that day in the program; or they're committed to working hard on weeding the carrot rows because their little brother loves the carrots they bring home each week in the summer share. Maybe they have personally experienced hunger and feel a connection to growing fresh, healthy, affordable food for the low-income people in their neighborhood. Perhaps it feels relevant to lay the irrigation line in that newly sown bed because they are interested in pursuing a career in agriculture. In some cases the relevance comes from nothing more than their joy of being outside, or from earning school credit and/or pay to do this work.

## Relationships

At FoodWhat, and in most projects, youth have the opportunity to build a web of relationships: amongst each other, between themselves and the staff, between themselves and the work, or the land, or community, or with healthy food, or with getting activated on food justice issues, or with the new information they are learning or experiences they are gaining, etc. These relationships create meaning that easily translates into deeper investment, care, engagement, and so on.

Additionally, these relationships are at the heart of one's identity as part of, or apart from, functional and loving social dynamics. It is not difficult to understand the human need to be connected, to be seen, to be validated, to be challenged, to be given constructive and supportive feedback when crossing boundaries, etc. In the process of grounding oneself in an understanding and acceptance of one's self worth, these are key elements and experiences that support or erode that critical lens for an individual. As food is nourishing and essential for survival and growth, so too is the intricate set of relationships around an individual, particularly as they are in the cognitive development phase of trying on many different personalities and actions in the world to help define who they are or will become.



## Responsibility

Whether it be on the farm, in the kitchen, in a workshop, running a farm stand in the community, and so on, there are endless opportunities for ever-increasing levels of responsibility. These serve to invite youth to experience their own success and to grow in their leadership. Especially at the developmental level where teens are old enough to make many of their own decisions (versus middle school and younger) but are still subject to the many power structures above them which may alter or dictate their decisions (parents, school, etc.), increasing levels of responsibility that call on a young person to continually step up can greatly serve them in their empowerment process.

For this to be a net gain for them, these levels of responsibility need to be attainable but still ambitious. Attainable doesn't mean to water down the next level or to coddle the youth—it can even be a great stretch for that young person to meet the goals or take leadership at that next level—but that their growth comes with the framework and support needed for success.

## Rigor

In this context, rigor is defined simply as sustained effort or hard work. No matter what a person ends up doing in life, there will often be times where rigor is required. This is a significant job skill that offers youth greater likelihood of success in their future jobs or goals. And it also strongly translates into their personal life. The ability to “push through” can be very relevant to young people who have experienced trauma and/or oppression in building and cultivating their resilience. (This is in no way to say that these folks should just “get over” their trauma, or simply “push past” their oppression, or that in doing so all will be well. This is mostly to say that it will take an endless supply of rigor to deal with the many potential or experienced difficulties in life, and there is a great



opportunity to “practice” this and to build this—versus just to hear or mentally understand this—on a farm or in a kitchen.)

How many times can you think of moments at school, as a parent, in sports, at work, where you just needed to get something done no matter how hard or tiring or difficult it was? It just needed to be done. Knowing you have the ability to step into that call to action in those moments is understanding your ability to employ rigor. Working with youth on a farm, particularly when we are doing a long hard block of work, we can often hear the expression, “I’m over it.” There are so many times in our lives when we want to give up, pull out, and be done, but we actually need to push through. This is the practice of applying rigor and knowing that we have that reserve to step up and get the job done.

## Context

As FoodWhat staff, we often hear from youth in our programs that we “give really good directions.” In peeling back the layers of that comment, what’s really happening is that the youth are responding to the way that our staff offers context constantly and consistently. Giving context for a particular task, or in a workshop, or even in a personal conversation sharing why we feel a certain way about something, has several effects. First, when youth get really clear directions, it’s easier for them to accomplish tasks, be well-oriented to tasks at hand, and ultimately succeed in those tasks. Experiencing their own success, as touched on earlier, then leads to a whole cascade of positive reinforcement and identity formation.

In addition, youth may feel more respected by both the style in which the context is offered and its transparency. Especially in a job program or situation where it would



not be unusual for a “boss” or other authority figure to just give a directive (“please weed that row of onions”), taking the time to give context and provide transparency in addition to the directive expresses respect for that “worker.”

From a productivity standpoint, this style often results in higher quality work. That said, it is also possible to imagine models where the amount of time invested in using context precludes optimizing output. But as a youth empowerment program, the work is about people and depth, and growth can often be a slow process.

Context can be woven throughout much of what’s done in any given project or activity. It can be understood as the process of clearly explaining the “why” behind the “what” you are about to do (or are doing). It can be verbal, or take other forms. For example, putting up a white board or handing out a list of the activities about to be engaged in offers a form of context. It offers access to information that is often part of the dividing line between those in power and authority and those not. (This justice lens of sharing information is also part of why young people feel more respected—because in many ways they are experiencing what it’s like to have power shared with them.)

At FoodWhat we put up a white board at the beginning of every internship day, work day, volunteer day, workshop, cooking activity, farm activity, etc. It provides a basic outline of what the youth or others can expect to be doing. Having access to that information is empowering, as it allows one to know how their time is going to be

spent, what’s expected of them, and also gives them the ability to take more responsibility over their schedule and tasks (versus being in the position of constantly asking someone what to do next or what’s coming up next). In effect, it gives them more agency over themselves and their efforts. Just as a well-facilitated meeting often has a visible agenda, the white board serves the same role.

There are countless examples of how context can be used in farming or gardening programming. Let’s say you’re leading a group into a weeding task. Let’s use onions for this scenario. You could easily just say, even encouragingly, “All right everyone...let’s go pull out all the weeds around the onions in this bed!” That took four seconds. OR, adding 20 seconds more of speech, you can include a few words of context that will likely add extra energy to and investment in the task: “All right everyone...let’s jump into this bed and pull out all the weeds around the onions. In case you didn’t know, onions are shallow rooters, which means we can either have weeds or successful onions, but not both. The weeds will be competing with the onions for water and nutrients. So if we want big fatty onions (in our CSA box in a few weeks—\*or\*—to cook with in the next few weeks—etc.), let’s get in there and knock out this weed job.” Just this small addition of words gives context and keeps your communication in alignment with your other empowerment elements.

Reflecting back on the utility of relevance for a minute, there is great overlap with context. Relevance and context can be understood as close “cousins.” Sometimes they actually play the same role, and sometimes you could swap one in for the other with equally great effect.

# PROGRAMMING TOOLS

In this section, we will touch on a few tools to have at your fingertips in running programming with youth and especially when using an empowerment approach.

## Ice Breakers

Ice breakers, as is discussed throughout this toolkit, are an invaluable element to integrate in programming. They serve to wake up sleepy youth; they help break through any funk that a participant may be in; they set the tone; they confirm safe space (if facilitated well); they can help introduce youth/participants to each other, bringing down any superficial social barriers people may be experiencing; they build energy; and they can be super fun! There is a conversation in youth development about how critical play is for children. But what if there are youth in programs that did not have the opportunity to have that play time in their younger years? What if they needed to take on roles such as childcare or working to bring in family income in such a way that they were precluded from having the space in their life for basic play? There's a certain freedom and innocence in play. And ice breakers are a small way to present that opportunity to all. In our FoodWhat



Summer Job Training Program, two days a week we start with 20-30 minutes of “play.” We do big, energetic games that serve as our ice breakers for the day. Some common ones like Capture the Flag, or others like Blob Tag (where those tagged link arms with the first person who was “it” until there is a big blob of people who are essentially “it”), are incredibly fun! But additionally, they create opportunities for personal or professional growth. Depressed or withdrawn youth, for example, are swept up by the momentum of these games and of the full group’s participation and end up meeting others, smiling, letting go of their troubles for a minute as they engage. There are team building components to many of these games, some require great communication, and there’s problem solving. Some help youth reach out and make new friends, some help youth find out what they have in common, and some facilitate one-on-one time that builds relationship. By the FoodWhat Summer Job, Junior Staff (youth leaders from the previous year) are leading each of these ice breakers which serves to model leadership by peer youth around the same age. Starting the day with these activities further incentivizes youth to come to work on time. The benefits of these types of activities are endless, as well as the content development potential.

## Real Talk

One of the many tools you can use to bolster your youth empowerment approach as well as to create safe space is Real Talk (RT). RT is a way of giving each other (youth and adults alike) real authentic feedback in an empowering way. The feedback takes the form of “positives” and “improvables.” At FoodWhat we engage in a “Real Talk



session” once a week in our intensive summer program with half the crew (12 youth + one staff) sitting in a quiet space offering each other feedback on how we’re all doing in the job and as a community/team. We start by taking personal reflection time to think of our own positives and improvables for the week, and offer those to the group. In a way this serves as a warm up, and it is incredibly instructive to have this self-reflection time. Saying one’s positives and improvables publicly in some way invites greater personal accountability on the points made, as well as calls in support from the other members of the crew and staff. For many youth (and really, many adults), good, honest, direct communication can be difficult. Some youth have trouble giving feedback—particularly in offering improvables -at all or in a productive way. Stemming from low self-esteem, some youth will have a hard time acknowledging their own positives, or hearing them from another. Often they will only want to focus on their improvables, as that has been their orientation in life. Some may have trouble hearing the improvables that others offer them because all too often they have experienced receiving feedback as negatives or in a hostile/aggressive way. (It should be noted that negatives are radically different from improvables. An improvable is something that you can improve on, do better, stronger, differently, smarter, etc. A negative is simply the equivalent of saying: “You suck” or “You suck at XXX.” There is



nothing to do with that information other than to feel bad within yourself or feel anger toward the person giving you that feedback.) In the RT model, positives and improvables are understood as mini “gifts”—moments of real connection and authenticity that offer both validation for one’s positives and insight into things one could improve on. There are ground rules that further help create safe space and bonding through engagement with RT that help define how to “Say it” and how to “Hear it.” Of utmost importance in offering RT is being kind and speaking the details. On the receiving side, one’s power lies in deciding if the feedback offered resonates, has some truth to it, and/or is useful to the receiver. In the summer, after we warm up with personal RT, we then invite youth to pair up with someone with whom they have specific feedback to offer from the previous week of work. After a few weeks, we move toward a model where we start with a round of self real talk (everyone sharing with the group the RT for themselves) and then go to one big group-style RT. In that iteration, we start with an individual to receive RT, and a few people in the circle offer that person positives and improvables. Occasionally no one has feedback for a given person, and then the staff is expected to be sure to give that person RT. Then we go to the next person around the circle and repeat the same process, and so on until each person in the group has received RT. Usually, for the sake of time, each person receiving RT gets feedback from two to three people, and then we go on to the next person to receive. This process for a group of roughly a dozen folks takes about an hour.



Building a culture of direct communication done honestly, respectfully, and lovingly, is incredibly empowering. Also, as staff fully participating in this process and receiving RT, we are challenging standard youth-adult, and potentially other, power dynamics which result in further building trust in these adult-youth relationships, honors youth thoughts and feedback through receiving RT from them, and also

helps us do our job better as we are getting real time direct feedback. (See the next section on evaluation for more on this.) There is a very healthy culture of community that this practice supports. For many youth who come from challenging home lives, RT is also a way for them to practice dealing with any potential conflict in a non-violent way (whether from a verbal, social-emotional, or physical standpoint) as well as get positive reinforcement that helps build and bolster self-esteem.

It is worth noting that RT is universal in its application. At FW, we use it between staff, we have done trainings for other instructors and small groups in how to use this technique, and have also implemented trainings in the corporate sector with great results.

## Evaluation

This could clearly be its own entire manual or toolkit. What will be touched on here is the role of youth in direct evaluation of both program implementation and of the leadership (staff) of the program. Youth culture changes, shifts, grows, and moves at a remarkable pace. That's part of the brilliance and the magic of working with, and being in relationship with, young people. Given that, what was implemented as a program or workshop or component five or ten years ago may not be as relevant or effective now. So how would a program team know? Very simple—just ask the young people you are serving. As you may well know, teens certainly will tell it like it is—or at least how they are experiencing it—if you have a safe space for them to do so. At the end of each of our seasons of programming at FoodWhat, we do a more standard evaluation, gauging impact and growth. We also do an in-depth Real Talk session on the program and staff. At the end of the summer program, our most core youth development opportunity, we may spend up to an hour or two inviting youth to give positives and improvables to each program component, even down to the level of detail of each individual meal and workshop. That means at the end of each season of programming, we have direct youth voice and feedback to help us innovate and update that body of work for the following year or for the next session. We can attest to the fact that there are changes that youth have suggested that formed significant structural or programmatic changes (improvements) within our organization that we would not have come to had they not offered them or been given the chance to share their thoughts. Even when leading a short farm tour, or a two hour visit of a school group, there is the opportunity to implement a three minute quick and dirty RT session by having a piece of butcher block paper, drawing a plus sign at the top left for positives and a triangle at the top right for improvables, and by diving in with the youth

on their experience. Then remember not to just file that information away in a literal or electronic folder—come back to this key information when you are about to lead your next program or activity to make this piece of the program stronger, more relevant, more fun, etc.



## Workshops

You may notice in the Spring Matrix Appendix pages 38–40 that there are a number of workshops offered in the FoodWhat Spring Internship that might seem slightly outside the scope of a food and farm based youth empowerment program—workshops such as Financial Literacy, Resume Writing, Public Speaking, How to Get a Job and Keep a Job, etc. These are workshops to build a tool kit of various skills that the youth we serve have shared would support them in their personal and professional growth. Even Public Speaking, for example, while it could be seen as a hard skill for one's professional growth, has a deep empowerment root to foster the confidence and sense of self-worth to speak up. As discussed earlier, youth empowerment takes a very holistic approach, so there is always the invitation to create space in program design and implementation to touch on a broader range of content, if possible, to more fully support youth in this fashion.

Also, in regards to workshops, there is a way to pivot a more traditional approach to a body of subject matter into an empowerment approach. Here is an example we have seen be very effective:

Traditional health curriculums often talk about healthy and unhealthy foods. This might be grounded through scientific explanation. Sometimes the instructor may introduce the bias of what is “good” or “bad” food. Society certainly



has its lens on what to eat or not to eat along many lines (health, body image, etc.). While this may be an effective way to deliver a health curriculum for some youth, others may have resistance for a number of reasons. Maybe they don't want another adult voice in their life telling them what to do (or eat/drink); maybe they're "hooked" on junk food or sugary foods and this approach doesn't speak to their complex social-emotional relationship with food; maybe they don't have access to healthier food, or even sufficient quantities of food to eat each day, either because of family finances or proximity to outlets to purchase such food; maybe they don't have say in the family purchase of food and are thus subject to whatever food is selected ... and so on. One question to think about in delivering a curriculum around healthy food can be: "Where is a young person's power in this equation?"

A very fun and popular workshop at FW is called "What You Think, What You Drink, Youth Dollar Power!" This is basically the traditional "how to" on reading nutrition fact labels and understanding how much sugar is in most commonly consumed beverages. BUT, and this is a big but, there is a different approach to the punchline. Often, after discussing how to read the nutrition fact label, or scooping out the number of teaspoons of sugar in a soda or energy drink, a traditional instructor may emphasize why these drinks are bad for the student and perhaps suggest not drinking them, or suggest drinking water or another alternative. At the end of the FW version of this workshop, the facilitator (often a youth from our crew in a leadership role) will ask if any of the youth vote and to raise their hands if they do. As we serve high school aged teens mostly under 18, very few will raise their hands. Then the facilitator invites everyone to raise their hand.

They share how "every time you spend a dollar on a drink, you are voting for something, and your vote is your power." In the case of a sugary drink, that vote may be for a list of the effects of processed sugar in your body (brainstormed earlier in the workshop). And even to this point, when, at the beginning of the workshop, youth/students brainstorm a very comprehensive list, their doing so reinforces that they already know the potential health effects of processed sugar. So the emphasis is more on their power to choose, which ultimately gets to behavior and patterns of consumption. The facilitator will point back to the brainstorm list and say something about "when consuming sugary drinks, you are voting for this" (and gesture to that brainstorm). They might add "when you consume fruit juice, or water, (etc.), you are voting for sustained energy in your body. So the next time you go to the store or you're out at a restaurant or food place, ask yourself what you're voting for." This workshop alone will not likely cause a young person to completely give up sugary beverages and sustain that behavioral shift, although many youth are affected by seeing the amount of sugar in their most commonly consumed beverages. It will, however, begin to reframe the conversation about their diet and health into a conversation about their power of choice—a heavy hitting and very accessible framework for many teens. Then in concert with other programmatic aspects like growing food, cooking and eating food, building community around food, job skills training around food like running a farm stand, having a safe space for all youth, etc., this workshop ties into this galaxy of knowledge and experiences that will support this youth in real, lasting positive diet change. (See page 22 for a full outline of this workshop.)



# YOUTH EMPOWERMENT APPENDIX

## Toe to Toe

**Group size:** Unlimited

**Time required:** 5-10 minutes

**Risk:** Low-High (depending on question asked)

The facilitator calls out a body part (i.e., “toe-to-toe” or “hip-to-hip”). Participants find a partner, link those body parts together (your toe touching my toe), and introduce themselves. (You can ask or encourage participants to “connect” with folks they don’t know as a way to further make introductions with one another.) The facilitator then calls out a question that the partners answer to each other. These questions can be silly or fun, with the goal of just being an ice breaker (e.g., “If you could have any super power what would it be and why?”; “Would you rather live on the moon or under the sea?”). Or, the questions may involve content linked to your program or activity (e.g., “If you could change one thing in the food system, what would that be?” “If you could create a brand new class for students on food justice, what would be the most important nugget or learning you would want your students to walk away knowing?”). Or, the questions could be personal to go deeper with relationship building within a crew that will be together on site over a few sessions (e.g., “What’s the best gift you’ve ever received?” “What has been the most growth-provoking moment of your life?”).

When the facilitator calls out a new body part, participants find new partners, introduce themselves, and then answer the next question. These steps repeat for as long as the icebreaker is facilitated.

**Note:** the questions can change from fun to personal to topical, or however you’d like as you go, or stay only in one category the entire time. We recommend starting with the light and fun ones first and as folks get comfortable with the activity, gradually increasing the “risk” with deeper or more complicated questions.



## My Biggest Fan—Rocks, Paper, Scissors

**Group size:** Unlimited (the bigger the better)

**Time required:** 5-10 minutes

**Risk:** Low

Invite youth to get in a circle. Stand in the middle of the circle and give the directions. Ask if everyone is familiar with “rocks, paper, scissors” and then give a quick refresher—rock wins over scissors, scissors win over paper, and paper wins over rock. (Working with youth who may have physical abuse in their past, it may be preferable to use the phrase “wins over” instead of the more typical “beats.”) Tell participants that immediately following the directions, they will be asked to line up in two rows facing each other. They will have the opportunity to play a “best of one” round with the person facing them. The winner will go on to play another winner. The person who is not the winner gets to be the winner’s “biggest fan” and gets behind them and roots them on as they play the next person. (Then model this with someone around the circle.) The winner of that round will go on to find the winner of another pair and play again. As people move through the rounds, they gather more and more fans from previous rounds. By the end of the game there will be two people playing against each other and the rest of the participants cheering for one of them. Explain that each time someone wins, they get all those “biggest fans” to cheer them on until finally there should be two folks with huge “fans” behind them getting real loud until there’s one final winner! Then invite them to line up in two long lines with their partner on either side of you. Give the old “ready, set, GO!” and once this is in motion, stay in the role of facilitator and keep encouraging folks to root on their partner and get hyped up!

## Opinion Line

**Group size:** Unlimited (but ideally smaller than 35)

**Time required:** 10-20 minutes

**Risk:** Medium

The Opinion Line is part activity, part ice breaker. In general, it's a great tool to invite youth voice and to warm into a bigger or deeper conversation or workshop to follow. The Opinion Line has great utility in inviting youth to think critically about certain topics through the medium of a physical activity.

Designate an invisible line from one side of a room to the other or in a specific area outside. (You can also use an extension cord or a piece of tape to physically mark this line if so desired.) Show everyone (or mark) where the middle of the line is and tell them that this middle means either that you are undecided about your opinion, or you have an opinion that is neutral. Then show (or mark) the group that one end of the line is "Strongly Agree" and the opposite end of the line is "Strongly Disagree." The line that then connects these two poles becomes a gradient between agree and disagree. Pose a question and ask the group to physically put themselves on the place of the line that marks their opinion. Call on one or two folks at each of the strongly agree/disagree poles, as well as people in the middle area and "invite" them to share why they have placed themselves in these spots. Let the whole group know that they can move if their opinions change from listening to the other's responses.

**Note:** to make this a medium level risk, versus high level risk, it is key to "invite" folks to share why they are located in any particular area on the line. It could be high risk if you just called on them and forced them to answer. Some potential language to "invite" their thoughts would be to



point to someone or to call them by name if you know their name or if they have a nametag, and say, "Juan, would you be willing to share why you are on the strongly agree side?"; "Deonte, could I invite you to share why you are in the middle?"; or, "Jennifer, could you share with us why you're on the strongly disagree side?" After they speak, you can say, "Thanks for sharing your thoughts." Or, "Great to hear what you think."

As the facilitator you build the most trust if you don't agree or disagree or give your opinion on what people share about why they have chosen that particular position. Just offer them acknowledgement for sharing. If there is a shy person in the group, you might want to give them some extra encouragement when you invite them to share, such as: "Hi, Christina, would you be willing to share with us why you're in the middle? It would be great to hear your thoughts!"

**Possible Questions/Prompts:** I believe that what I eat impacts my health. I believe that knowing where my food comes from is important. I believe that the world will be a better place in future years. I believe that I can make a difference. I believe that eating organically is important. I believe all farm workers should be treated with respect.

**Alternate Version:** You can also use each of the far edges as a pole with a different element of a topic that people have to choose between in terms of importance. For example, you can label one pole "organic" and the other "local" and ask folks to physically locate themselves on the opinion line between organic and local based on what they feel is the most important to them as a consumer. Another example could be to assign one side "health" and the other "justice." This could open a conversation on issues surrounding both of these topics.



## Real Talk

Adapted from The Food Project's, *Growing Together*.<sup>1</sup>

**Description:** Real Talk is a method of listening and speaking. It is a mechanism for giving and receiving feedback, and a way of communicating in a productive and respectful way. This workshop introduces the techniques of Real Talk and invites participants to practice it.

**Objective:** To practice giving and receiving feedback in a productive and respectful way. (You could add more qualifiers at the end of the previous sentence, such as: to build a greater skill set and comfort in giving and hearing feedback, etc.)

### Ground Rules or Guidelines:

#### How to "Say It":

Be kind  
Call it as YOU see it  
Speak the details  
Balance the scales  
Pick and choose  
Read the listener

#### How to "Hear it":

Open up  
Look up  
Listen up  
Store it up  
You decide

**Materials:** White board or butcher paper, colorful markers, ground rules posted, paper and pen and clipboard for each participant.

**Preparation:** Write the "guidelines" on the white board or paper.

### Discussion/Activity:

#### 1. Explain what Real Talk is and the goals of the workshop:

"Thank you for coming. I'm excited to share with you a style of communication called Real Talk. It's actually right in the name—it's a style and process of direct, effective communication done with respect and connection between parties. Real Talk is a technique of offering and receiving feedback."

**2. How Real Talk works:** On a flip chart or white board write the word "Positive" on the right side and the word "Improvable" on the left. Draw a line down the middle. Under "positive" write a plus sign. Explain these are things that you are doing a great job in—places or activities or styles that you want to continue and that you are being acknowledged for. Under "improvable" draw a triangle. Ask your team, "What does this sign mean in science? It's a delta and it signifies "change." What is the difference between an **Improvable** and a **Negative**? A negative is basically saying, "You suck at XXX." This is totally different than an improvable and not at all productive...it's just hurtful. An improvable,



on the other hand, is information that will serve you in increasing a skill you are working on, changing a way of doing that will help you with your goal or function better in the team, or add a new skill or style to your tool box. When someone offers you an improvable, it is a gift and a sign of respect.

**3. Go over the Real Talk guidelines** that are written in a place where everyone can see them. Have a volunteer(s) read each one out loud. Go over each one with the group as they are read. (For example, someone reads "Be Kind." Ask the group why is this important? "Balance the scales," what does this mean? Etc.). Take the time to make sure that everyone understands each one. (Alternatively, as the facilitator with a group of folks, you can also share each guideline with context and ask for questions. At the end, to get buy in, you can ask if anyone has any additional pieces that feel necessary to complete these guidelines.)

#### Let's start with how to "Say it."

**a. Be kind**—straightforward ... we're building and engaging in a culture of respect and celebration, so offer your feedback from a place of kindness.

<sup>1</sup> Gale, G. (2000). *Growing Together*. Lincoln, MA: The Food Project.

**b. Call it as YOU see it**—have you had the experience in high school when someone you know says “EVERYONE thinks this or that about you...or about someone else?” Remember how annoying that was and ultimately untrue. You don’t really know what everyone thinks, so just speak from your experience. What do YOU think. Use “I” statements. “I think that you did a fantastic job on the farm last week when you ... etc., etc.”

**c. Speak the details.** This is critical. Use real examples to give feedback. If I said to you, “You did a great job in the kitchen yesterday,” do you have any idea what you did that was great? Or how to do that again next time? Nope. But if I said, “You did a fantastic job in the kitchen yesterday when you stepped up to lead the group in reading the recipe and you kept everyone very engaged to get lunch done on time for the rest of the crew...nice work.” Now do you have something to sink your teeth into in terms of real feedback? Absolutely.

**d. Balance the scales.** Feedback is both a necessity to get our jobs done well in partnership with others and it is also a gift—it’s like free ongoing professional development if you open yourself up to it. It’s also a gift for us to keep it real with each other and be able to share what’s going well and when there are challenges rather than keep that to ourselves. Real Talk deepens our relationships with each other. So if you’re going to give a positive, push yourself to offer an improvable as well—if you are coming with an improvable, then open with a positive to reflect on your partner’s good work first, to show them that you really see them.

**e. Pick and Choose.** If I offered you 15 different positives, how would you feel? It might just be too much information, even if it all sounds good—you might not

process them all. Same with improvable. Better, pick and choose a few key positives and improvable and stay focused for greater effect.

**f. Read the listener.** Would it make sense for me to come up to one of our staff to engage in Real Talk when they are under a tight deadline? Not really. Maybe they would hear me, but it would be more productive and supportive to have that conversation after they have finished. Reading the listener means both thinking about WHEN to have the conversation, and then once you’re in it, HOW you are having it. If they start to tense up, take a quick moment and check in with yourself to see if you are being kind ... or if they are just worried you are going to offer an improvable, make sure to open with positives to validate what they are doing well.

### Now let’s go over how to “Hear It.”

**a. Open up, Look up, and Listen up**—these are all related. (Model closed body posture—head down, arms crossed, etc.) If my body looks like this, what message am I sending you if you are offering me Real Talk? Yes, clearly I’m closed for business. Not hearing you. Not having it. No dice. (Model opening up, looking up and listening.) Now what if I look like this? I’m open to you, I’m looking at you, I’m listening ... basically, you know from my body language that I’m engaged.

**b.** The last two (**Store It Up and You Decide**) are the most important. They are where you stand in your personal power and have the opportunity for great growth. Store It Up means to hold off from responding or reacting—just listen—soak in the feedback—store it up for later—and then You Decide means you get to assess if you feel like the feedback is instructive or not.



Clearly there may be some moments where someone gives you feedback that is imperative that you adjust to ... but even in those moments, it's not to control you, it's to bring you in as a more effective member of the team.

**4. Practice!** Give everyone a piece of blank paper, a pen, and a clipboard (if needed) and arrange them into a circle. Best if there aren't desks or anything between each person and the group. Ask everyone to draw a line down the middle of their paper lengthwise. On the top of one side write "Positives" and on the other side write "Improvable." Invite each member of your group to take a few minutes to write two or three positives and two or three improvable for themselves on their performance at the job or in the group this past week (or day). Remind them to Speak the Details! Let them know they will not have to share these but you will hold space if anyone would like to. This is practice. When they are done writing, open up the space by sharing your positives and improvable to model. Invite anyone who would like to, to share. You can call on people to put a little pressure on them, but be sure not to force anyone to share if they aren't ready to. (This part takes great finesse, and makes all the difference if you have created a safe space or not.) If that goes well, you could even ask people to pair up with someone they have worked with recently to practice offering each other RealTalk. For this opening round, you can let them know that positives are imperative but if they don't have any improvable that's ok for now. Make sure that participants use the RealTalk term of improvable instead of negative. Remind participants that this is not about what they are doing wrong, but how they can be doing things better. An easy way to share is by saying, "my positive is XXX, and my improvable is XXX." Validate each person's sharing but not their content for this first round—it's about commending them for engaging with RealTalk.

- If the group does pair up to practice, make sure to then come back to the full group and ask for feedback. How did it feel to say what you said? Were you able to use "I" statements? Were you able to be kind? Were you able to speak the details? Do you think that you can use this to talk to others?
- Gauge group's interest in using RealTalk in the future—and their comfort using it. Use the thumbs up, sideways, or down gauge.
- Ask participants if they can think of a time they truly felt heard. How did it feel? How did you know you were being heard?



- Ask participants to think of someone in the group they would like to give a positive to but haven't. What's stopping them? RealTalk could be a tool to ease the way into that sharing. How about someone they would like to give an improvable to? Why haven't they offered that feedback yet? It's usually because that type of feedback isn't considered safe. But with common language and understanding of the style to offer this feedback, through RealTalk, now they have a shared tool to effectively deliver that information.

### Wrap-up

RealTalk works because we now have a shared language and guidelines on how to give each other feedback. Additionally, even if people are not familiar with the RealTalk style, you can still use these guidelines to communicate. RealTalk is about effective and respectful communication in any setting.

### Digging Deeper:

Ways to build trust in the group to get to a very fluid place of utilizing this tool.

1. Practice self RealTalk as the openers in a regularly scheduled time. Be sure all participants share out over time to demonstrate their comfort with this technique. Also continually add more challenge of both positives AND improvable.
2. Do it in pairs, with each participant giving the other RealTalk.
3. Do it in a small group—highlight one person at a time to receive real talk from at least two people, and then eventually from everyone in the group over time.
4. Do RealTalk in a One-to-All format. The leader gives each person in the group real talk.

## “What You Think, What You Drink— Youth Dollar Power”

**Description:** In this workshop students will learn how their voice can be heard and about the power they hold by choosing how they spend their money. This will be demonstrated through measuring the amount of sugar contained in popular beverages.

**Objective:** Students will learn how to read food labels, the basic impacts of sugar in the body, and the power that each person has with their dollar.

**Materials:** White board, dry erase markers, popular beverage containers, a beverage container from a drink with 100% natural sugar from fruit, a beverage container with no sugar (flavored sparkling water), a blown up poster of a food label, a teaspoon, calculator, white sugar, a clear cup.

**Preparation/ Background:** One teaspoon is equal to four grams of sugar (1 tsp = 4g). Therefore, to measure the teaspoons of sugar in a beverage, multiply the grams of sugar on the food label by (x) the number of serving per container and divide that number by four (g of sugar x number of servings / 4).

The Four C’s chart below references some of the effects of drinking soda.

Caffeine	Calories	Cavities	Calcium loss
Cranky	Causes weight gain and fills your stomach up	The acid in soda eats away your teeth	Phosphorus in soda makes you lose calcium and weakens your bones
Trouble sleeping			
Headache			

### Discussion/ Activity:

#### LABEL READING:

1. Hold up the poster of the food label. (You can photocopy and then blow up to large paper the back of a popular drink—we use Arizona Iced Tea and save Coke, energy drinks, etc. for the hands on component.) Ask the group: “What is this?” (It is a food or nutrition label.) “Where do you find it?” (On food products and packaging.) “What does it tell you?” (It tells you the nutrition information about what is in your food.)
2. Tell the group that today we are going to focus on only one of the components of the nutrition label: sugar.
3. Ask, “Where do you find how much sugar is in this food?” Have someone point to the sugar line.

4. Ask, “How many grams of sugar are in this product?” Make sure that you use this opportunity to talk about servings per container by showing the serving size and servings per container on the top of the label. Ask the group to tell you what this means. (It means that the information given on the label is only a portion of what is in the whole container. You must multiply the grams of sugar by how many servings per container to find out how many grams of sugar are in the whole container.) Ask, “Why do companies do this? Why don’t they tell you the full amount on the label? How many people buy this soda, drink half or a quarter of it and save the rest for another time?”

#### SUGAR: Switch gears to sugar.

1. On a white board, write “sugar” at the top.
2. Ask the group, “What is the difference between the sugar in a Coke and the sugar in a strawberry?” (The sugars in a strawberry are naturally occurring and the sugar in a soda is processed.)
3. Ask/brainstorm with the class: “What does processed sugar do to you and your body?” Write the responses on the white board: energy peak and crash, acne, decay of teeth (cavities), brittle bones, gain weight, can lead to obesity or diabetes, sugar blocks the vitamin receptors in the body from absorbing vitamins. Ask, “If we know that the sugars in soda can do all this to us and our bodies, why do we drink it?” Don’t comment on the answers.

#### MEASURING SUGAR:

1. Share the teaspoon-to-gram equation with the group: grams of sugar/4=teaspoons of sugar.
2. Ask for two volunteers. Give them (or have them choose) a beverage container and a calculator and tell them to secretly do the math to figure out how many teaspoons of sugar are in the beverage. While they are doing the math, ask the class to guess how many teaspoons they think are in the container. When the volunteers have figured it out, have them begin, counting out loud, to measure out the sugar into a clear cup so that the class can see. Have them stop at different points and ask for the class’s opinion if that’s the final number of scoops. When they have reached the final number, hold up the clear cup next to the beverage container so that everyone can see how much sugar is in that drink.
3. Ask for different types of sugars that are common in ingredients (sucrose, fructose, glucose, high fructose corn syrup, etc.). Have someone read the ingredients of the beverage out loud. Make sure to emphasize that the ingredients are listed in the order of the largest amount to the smallest.

- Repeat this activity with other beverages and other pairs of volunteers. Use beverages that are high in processed sugar as well as others that use only natural sugar or no sugar at all. When measuring the sugar in beverages containing natural sugars (100% juice), make sure to bring the conversation back to how processed sugars affect the body in different ways than unprocessed sugar. (Note—consumption of beverages with a high sugar content, even if in the form of “naturally occurring sugars,” can still be dangerous to those with diabetes. Important to share this in the context of the workshop.)

### YOUTH VOICE/ YOUTH DOLLAR POWER

- Ask, “How many of you voted in the last election?” Then ask, “How many of you voted in the last week?” (Most people will probably not raise their hands).
- Ask everyone to raise their hands and then tell them that they actually did vote in the last week—they voted with their dollar. “Actually each of you vote EVERY DAY! Every time you spend a dollar on a Rockstar or an Arizona or a XXX you are voting for this (point to the sugar brainstorm). Many people say youth don’t have any power but that’s not true. You have tons of power, and one way you exercise your power is through your dollar. Every time you spend a dollar you are voting for something. Whether it’s drinks, or food, or clothes, or music—you are casting your vote—you are exercising your power.”
- Brainstorm: “What would happen if you decide that you no longer want to drink Rockstar and only wanted to drink Monster. And then you convince all of your friends to do the same. What happens to Roskstar and Monster as companies? What would happen to that product if all youth across the country stopped buying it?”

#### Wrap-up:

This workshop has two main goals: to give youth the tools to understand how much sugar is in their most popularly consumed drinks and then to inspire them to use these tools when making purchases through the understanding of the power they have as consumers and with the choices that they make in spending their dollars. The bottom line is that they can gain a new angle on their power through an economic lens while also supporting their health.

#### Digging Deeper:

This activity can also be done with fats instead of sugar. Use Crisco to mimic the fats that are in different foods. The equation of grams to teaspoons can stay the same.

The conversation about youth dollar power can be taken a step further through discussion of historical boycotts or political protests around food.

Also, here is a script that a youth in our Winter Community Educators program recently wrote for herself as a guide to lead this workshop. You can see a few of the items are in a different order that she deemed to be more effective for content delivery.

### What You Drink What You Think—Youth Dollar Power Workshop Script and Overview

- Introduce yourself and rep FoodWhat and this is a workshop called—What You Drink What You Think—Youth Dollar Power
- Start with brainstorm on white board of “what does PROCESSED sugar do to your body?”
- Pull out nutrition label—what is this? Where do you find this?
- How many grams of sugar are in this drink? (no, no, no, etc.)
- You also need to look at the servings per container
- How many of you would drink half this Arizona and then put it back in the fridge for tomorrow? So then why would a company only put half its nutrition info on the label? Tricky...
- So if we multiply the grams of sugar times the servings, we know how many total grams...show me with your fingers how many grams is (give example). How do you know? I can’t tell either from the number.
- So let me give you an easy equation to figure this out.
- 4 grams of sugar = 1 teaspoon (a scoop or spoonful like when you eat cereal!)
- So—grams of sugar x servings = total grams of sugar....then divide by 4 to know how many teaspoons or scoops it is...
- Demo yourself with the Arizona
- Let’s do this with some popular drinks
- Can I have a volunteer or two to come up?
- Give them the calculator and the Monster (energy drink)—ask them to do the math on the calculator but not to say the numbers out loud.
- Tell the audience he/she is multiplying the grams of sugar x servings and then dividing by 4
- (Do the scoops part—playing with the audience)
- (Hold up the clear plastic cup and the drink)
- So this Monster is by volume 1/3 sugar!
- Let me read the first three ingredients—carbonated water (no problem), glucose, and sucrose—sugar... so this drink is basically water, this much sugar and a whole bunch of chemicals I don’t know (read a few)
- What are other names for sugar? (List them)

21. If you don't want to do the math, there is an easy way to know if there's a lot of sugar in your drink. If you see these words, you can bet it's packed with sugar
22. Do other drinks in the same way with scoops
23. Do Juice Squeeze last but then pour out the sugar
24. Yes, this drink has sugar—says it right here on the ingredient list. But when I read the label, I don't see any of the names for sugar from the board. That means the sugar is coming from fruit—so it gives you the type of sustained energy your body needs. Our body needs sugars in some form, right? Sugar from fruits and veggies support our body.
25. Last piece—how many of you vote?
26. Everyone please put your hand up. You all vote. Every day. Each time you spend a dollar you are voting for something. That's your power and you're using it. When you spend money on a Monster or Arizona or Coke you're voting for this (point to the board with what sugar does to your body). When you buy a Juice Squeeze you're voting to give your body the energy it needs. Anytime you buy anything, you are using your power to make a statement—you are voting. That's real.
27. ***Thank you, have a great day.***







# Model Connection

## OVERVIEW

This section explores the benefits that FoodWhat and UC Santa Cruz have realized by having a youth empowerment and food justice non-profit headquartered at UCSC. The hope here is to inspire further development of such relationships across the UC system and at other universities and colleges across the state and nation.

When FoodWhat was first forming, we faced a critical decision: where do we locate and what's the reasoning behind our decision? The short version is that we were debating between an invitation to site our headquarters on the UCSC Farm and a few different potential land-based options on local farms or on land that could be developed into a farm.

We chose to site our opening operation (which has since grown to a second site in the county in Watsonville) at the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems (CASFS) at the UCSC Farm and Garden. In part, there was a structural motive in that an already well-established non-profit, Life Lab, is located at the UCSC Farm and offered to serve as our fiscal sponsor as we were developing into

our own non-profit. (We feel incredible gratitude toward Life Lab (lifelab.org) for their initial role and helping to incubate our program over time.) It was also clear from the beginning that the phenomenal infrastructure of the University and the UCSC Farm could serve as foundational support to realize our vision of a robust land-based youth program in many ways. That could not have been more accurate, and looking back, both FoodWhat and UCSC have benefited in ways we couldn't have then imagined.

There are several key areas where our partnership with UCSC and the UCSC Farm has been instrumental in benefitting FoodWhat youth. First, the most physically obvious benefit is that the program's participants are coming onto a university campus. This comes back to our earlier discussion on empowerment for the young people, especially the predominantly low-income and struggling youth that we serve. To come onto this piece of land demystifies the University as an institution, and it may, for some, further break down perceived barriers of the University as an inaccessible institution. When we're transporting youth and approaching the UCSC campus



during the summer job or spring internship, FW staff will often get questions about what it's like to go to college, or live in the dorms, or how to get financial aid. Most of the young people we serve begin their college years at community college, but the engagement on this land plays a positive role in their ability to see themselves attending an institution of higher learning.

Second, as FoodWhat annually hires UCSC interns, youth in FW get access to college students who are just a few years ahead of them in their life path. Stories are shared about what inspired them to choose to go to college, about their struggles and successes at UCSC, about an idea they are inspired by or the people they've met. This happens organically through unplanned moments of interaction, and it happens through intentional programming of college panels of UCSC students and local community college students sharing their experiences with FW youth throughout the year.

The UCSC Farm is also the site of one of the nation's top organic farmer and gardener training programs. The six-month residential Apprenticeship in Ecological Horticulture offered annually by CASFS brings ~40 adults from around the country (and some from around the world) each April-October to learn and work at the UCSC Farm and Alan Chadwick Garden. Thanks to this program, FoodWhat youth gain access to a rich pool of potential mentors, adult friends, and educators. As this population of apprentices has diversified to what it is today, with participants coming from rural and urban areas, from all across the U.S., and who are interested in every aspect of the food system both personally and professionally, there are countless ways that in interacting with these folks, a young person may be able to see themselves. They may be able to see their own trajectory into a career, or an environment in which to live, or an opportunity to make a certain change in their life that they see modeled. There is research showing that young people, particularly teens, need at least five positive adult role models in their life for strong development. Interactions with the apprentices provide another place to find these positive adults. Further, during our Summer Job Training Program, FoodWhat youth work alongside and in partnership with apprentices for one morning each week. The benefits are a two way street. Apprentices interested in working with youth as a career, or incorporating a youth component into their farm or project, or deeply invested in movements for justice and equity, have the opportunity to practice and build relationships, and get real feedback on their ideas from youth themselves. (This is a core principle yet again of empowerment—that the individuals of a community, in this case the youth community, or a specific neighborhood

where youth live—will have a voice in the visioning of solutions to the struggles they face.) Youth are seen and invited into great conversation that reaffirms their worth, gives them a chance to try on different identities and thoughts and ways of being, and offers a chance to connect with someone whose life story or identity may resonate with their own.

As mentioned, FoodWhat hosts an internship program for five UCSC interns, and we are seeing very similar interactions and benefits for both FW youth with UCSC students as we've seen with the apprentices. One of the many benefits for the UCSC interns and Apprentices is also witnessing FW Youth, especially our second year youth in Junior Staff roles, modeling their leadership. This may look like leading an ice breaker when we first connect with these apprentices or interns. It may be how they get the FW youth crew organized in work projects with the apprentices or interns, and then how they check in on them and stay present to the youth they are leading.

Many of the same outcomes for youth in FW programming could be said of their relationships with the permanent staff of the UC Farm. In fact, at our annual final dinner of



the summer job program, FW youth have the space to give any “shout outs” (appreciations) to folks who have worked with them over the summer to whom they want to express gratitude. Recently, one young woman from the crew gave the UCSC Farm Manager (Kirstin Yogg) a shout out for being her “inspiration as a strong woman farmer in a leadership role.” This comment was made by a young woman from Watsonville with a low-income background who is excited about a career in agriculture and is pursuing that path. The fact that we operate on the UCSC Farm, and that the Farm Manager played an active role in this young person’s life, had a significant impact that she can carry with her in her education and into her career goals. Also, she now has access to a professional in the field as she is developing her career and training trajectory—someone who would take the time to answer a question from a young farmer as she transitions from teen to college student and then into her career.

This professional access is part of what builds the social and political capital that also plays such a key role in one’s success. All of the UCSC students, interns, farm staff, and others that FoodWhat youth intersect with, have the potential of building out their network. Networking is understood to help advance an individual’s goals in many potential ways, so developing these networks increases a low-income or struggling youth’s momentum forward

to reach their goals. Additionally, this helps level the playing field for youth with different levels of access to resources and privilege in terms of greater equity and diminishing competitive disadvantage. For an organization like FoodWhat to be located on a UC campus, and with the level of interaction between program youth and UCSC related folks, adds value and richness to a young person’s participation in programming.

Finally, on a practical level, FoodWhat as a growing non-profit has had the privilege of leveraging the University’s economy of scale. In real terms that translates into FW production and FW youth getting access to state-of-the-art greenhouses, for example, that are located on the UCSC Farm, without FW needing to use fundraising and administrative capacity. This puts more resource allocation into youth program and organizational development, which then further supports youth in their growth trajectories. Because of the infrastructure of the UCSC Farm, FW is able to host significant public events for students countywide on a scale reaching 300 students per event, and there is a wealth of UCSC Farm Staff, UCSC Farm and other interns, and apprentices to support these events when needed. Being located at the UCSC Farm means that FW has the ability to go bigger, deeper, and with greater effect than if we were to have to create all of this infrastructure and people power on our own.



## Connection

### PROCESS

locate program on college or university campus and forge strong relationship/partnership

### MULTIPLE OUTCOMES

#### for the organization

- access to already established infrastructure allows organizational resources to be greater directed toward programming or organizational capacity building instead of capital projects which may, in turn, allow for faster pace in program/organizational development. The increased pace in these developments pays an ever increasing return in confirming more resources for the organization, greater opportunity to build further partnerships, and more street cred with the population being served (assuming a high quality of program delivery).
- leverages the institution's economy of scale, affording access to infrastructure for youth programming that might otherwise be out of reach or too far in the future to realize. This can translate into further opportunities for youth, and potentially advance their college or professional goals. An example of this might be a state-of-the-art university greenhouse versus the organization's small passive hoop house or buying in plants.
- ability of organization to host larger events/groups due to this infrastructure, land base, and potential additional staffing through the institution's students or staff.

#### for the institution

- provides a critical recruitment opportunity to underrepresented youth and "hosting" and partnering with such an organization can lead to a fuller embodiment of the institution's mission.
- further connects the institution with the immediate surrounding community as well as advances the institution's public service goals

### PROCESS

local youth engaging in a program sited at, and in collaboration with, a college or university campus

### OUTCOME

- demystifies higher education, breaks down perceived social or accessibility barriers through exposure, and creates opportunity to visualize themselves in such spaces

### PROCESS

integrate college/university interns into programming

### DUAL BENEFITS

- offers real-life, hands-on training for university students in their field of study or interest (youth development, sociology, documentation, nutrition, agriculture, etc.) while also connecting them to the community outside of the university setting
- youth gain access to college students who can become mentors and friends, answer questions and share stories, and—particularly for students with similar life stories or shared identities—serve as role models.

## PROCESS

integrate apprentice or other non-student groups engaging on the same piece of land into programming

## DUAL BENEFITS

- offers these individuals the space to build relationships with youth and practice a skill set they are cultivating, introduces a successful program's template, as well as provides feedback on any ideas they may be exploring on how to effectively engage youth in their current/future project.
- youth gain access to potentially more positive older youth/adults who can become mentors and friends, share stories, and—particularly for those with similar life stories or shared identities—serve as role models.

## PROCESS

build strong relationships with the constellation of relevant college or university staff

## OUTCOME

- these people may have a profound impact on a youth's educational or career pathway, offer youth additional opportunities outside of the organization's programming, and may serve to increase these young people's networks and building of social capital through these connections. (This further levels the playing field for low-income or struggling youth to have access to these connections and related social capital and opportunities.)



# TESTIMONIES

The staff of the UCSC Farm have often explained the benefit of having FoodWhat on site in many ways. The following are quotes from UCSC staff from the Center of Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems.

## Audries Blake

Assistant Director, CASFS  
University of California,  
Santa Cruz



**FoodWhat links food and empowerment incredibly effectively through content, and by prioritizing our local low-income youth population in who they serve.**

CASFS enjoys many benefits from having FoodWhat programming here on the UCSC Farm. We are able to introduce agricultural practices that connect food and justice. For many of the students and apprentices who come to CASFS' Farm and Garden, empowerment through food may not be on their radar, but through exposure to FoodWhat's programming, that brings this front and center; they have a clear model of how these pieces are connected. FoodWhat links food and empowerment incredibly effectively through content, and by prioritizing our local low-income youth population in who they serve.

Coming to the university, our students and apprentices are introduced to FoodWhat youth who have a social and economic reality that can be very different from many of our folks of privilege. From casual conversations to times when the youth work side by side with university students and apprentices, hearing stories and learning about what is happening in these young peoples' lives has a deep impact. This breaks down barriers between our students and the youth in novel, authentic ways.

CASFS students and apprentices often go on to be educators both in traditional settings and in farms/gardens that they lead, and after being here with FoodWhat youth, they have a template of a successful program effectively engaging youth, while also fully grasping how a farm and garden can be utilized to change young people's lives.

Taking FoodWhat youth empowerment program components and incorporating them into educational programs is instructive in ways that our students and apprentices benefit from both in their experience here on the farm and in engaging with young folks in the future. Words—spoken or read—are great; however, the imprint on our students and apprentices that occurs because they have the opportunity to interact with FoodWhat youth has a lasting impact that then spreads across the states, and beyond, as they leave UCSC or the Apprenticeship.

## Damian Parr

Research & Education Coordinator, CASFS  
University of California Santa Cruz



The University of California, Santa Cruz campus is home to the Environmental Studies Department and Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems. As part of our facilities, we manage

30 acres of farm and gardens for teaching and researching the practical and theoretical foundations of ecological agriculture and horticulture.

Robust farm and garden facilities provide layers of opportunities where on-campus and off-campus community members can be served through joint educational programming and co-facilitated activities. At times these activities run parallel, and at others times they are woven together, co-mingling participant communities.

These ways of joining community members provide a profound additive effect by bringing otherwise segregated people from a diversity of backgrounds into the same learning environment where their personal and professional development is fostered through intentional educational activities. In other ways, this co-mingling of people supports participants that are of the same background, but are at differing ages or stages in their educational trajectory. In all cases, the opportunity for powerful sharing, learning, and development is made possible by this joint educational programming, occurring in the same location at the same time.

FoodWhat program contributions are unique and varied in the way they complement the University mission of education, research, and public service. Among the top educational priorities of the University of California and the Santa Cruz campus is to achieve a student body that fully reflects the demographics of our State. Efforts to address underrepresentation include active recruitment of youth from communities with demographics that have been historically absent from enrollments at UC. Recruitment necessitates sustained engagement in these communities and the development of programming that truly reflects the specific needs and interests of these communities and their youth.

FoodWhat provides a youth empowerment and youth leadership model that addresses critical human and community development challenges and opportunities that these underrepresented youth face.

**The authenticity and strength of the program is evident in the healing, growth and maturity witnessed in the youth, as they demonstrate their empowerment to themselves, each other, and their community.**

By having this empowerment and leadership development occur on the University campus, these youth develop connection and ownership of the campus as a space of learning, a space that is committed and delivers on their personal and professional development. Positioning a youth empowerment and leadership development program on a campus does in fact provide a critical recruitment opportunity, but as important, it provides youth prolonged exposure to the campus community. Co-mingling with the campus community enables the youth to be more informed about what the University is about and what they may expect from their experience in higher education.

These prolonged interactions between youth and campus community are equally valuable for undergraduate students who gain perspective on the privileges and the challenges in their own lives. As the campus is successful in becoming more fully representative, FoodWhat serves as an important affirmation of belonging for under-represented students. University enrolled under-represented students then have a role to play in mentoring and role modeling to youth in FoodWhat.

The mission of the University of California is to educate, research, and serve the public. FoodWhat, and hopefully similar youth empowerment programs in the future, are powerful partners in this work, as they reach, bridge, and extend the campus community and in particular, underrepresented communities, with the vision that these segregations in privileges are reduced or eliminated as we begin to see and experience our communities not as separate, but as one community growing through life's phases and stages, all helping California make the most of its University institutions to truly empower and provide leadership development for all of the State of California.

## Tim Galarneau

Food Systems Education and  
Research Program Specialist, CASFS  
University of California, Santa Cruz



FoodWhat has provided a toolkit of best practices and resources that campus and community organizations across the country can draw from.

The public service efforts of UC Santa Cruz seek to ensure the community is engaged, motivated, and benefits from our presence. In particular, high school adolescents are at a unique and vulnerable point in their lives as they weigh decisions for pursuing higher education or other career paths amidst demands and needs at home. Extending beyond traditional methods of recruitment and educational enrichment for high school students, we have a unique non-profit partnership with FoodWhat, focusing on developing youth empowerment and leadership through social justice, agriculture, and community engagement. Through the UC Global Food Initiative (GFI), FoodWhat has provided a toolkit of best practices and resources that campus and community organizations across the country can draw from.

As a high school focused non-profit, FoodWhat provides a space for young people to ask deeper questions on structural inequality and oppression, develop practical life skills, and establish a youth-driven model with inter-generational mentorship, building power and place for future leaders. Through the integration of UCSC undergraduate interns, faculty, and staff, the model introduces multiple ways that campuses can actively support a growing network of high school youth empowerment and food justice organizations serving their region and communities. It is the hope of GFI and those of us at CASFS who recognize the work of FoodWhat to increase relationships through land and facility use as well as education and faculty engagement in order to uplift voices often silenced or made invisible, and to understand their importance in building a more just and sustainable society for all.

There are just under 5,000 institutions of higher learning across the United States. There is a clear case to be made that these institutions can be instrumental and effective vehicles for youth in their communities. In partnering with local non-profits and schools, these institutions can leverage their resources in ways that elevate and empower youth. And as we've seen, this partnership pays huge dividends to the institution itself, its goals, and the students it serves. There is a synergy and a symbiosis that is invaluable and needed. **The FoodWhat–UCSC collaboration thus serves as a proven model of not only what is possible, but of an effort to bring about real, lasting justice and equity for youth in our communities.**





# Farm Youth Engagement

## NUTS AND BOLTS (AKA THE “HOW”)

In this chapter of the toolkit, we roll up our sleeves and talk nuts and bolts about “how” to effectively engage youth (using an empowerment model) in a farm/garden space for ongoing programming or shorter school/group visits. This chapter will start with an overview of FoodWhat’s major seasons of programming with an emphasis on the Spring Internship as a potential model to pull from. This will be followed by some practical tips on working with youth on a farm/garden and conclude with a template for a one-time or multi-session school or group visit.

FoodWhat operates three major seasons of programming. While we are working with students who follow the academic year (Sept.-June), FoodWhat programming is oriented along the growing cycle of spring to summer to fall. This is a conscious structural decision so that students in our graduated leadership model develop deep roots in the farm aspects of programming as they take responsibility for the full life cycle of the farm: skimming cover crops and digging beds in the early Spring, building compost piles, setting up irrigation, greenhouse work, direct sowing and transplanting, all the way through early



harvests and post-harvest handling, ongoing cultivation, to the fall when the farm is cleared and cover crops resown. Youth continuing in each program get to experience the farm along its natural chronological and seasonal rhythm. Structurally that gives the program the opportunity to build up in hours from the Spring Internship, which takes place one day per week for three hours, to the Summer Job Training Program taking place four days per week from 9am-3pm totaling 24 hours each of the eight weeks. Then in the fall, youth take on an advanced leadership position, putting their recently acquired skills and growth into action in Fall Management Positions.

Many programs similar to FoodWhat around the country actually start with the Summer Job and then follow that with an academic year program. The advantage to that model would be that it starts off immediately with the intensive job training component in the summer and then those students are in a position to be engaged for their following academic year. Another common model has students come for a one-day workshop or activity. Even in this model, which is usually limited to more introductory experiences and outcomes, there can be great value for the student if there is a strategic and well-planned set of activities.

To take one outcome from FoodWhat as an example, and as was explained in the youth empowerment section above, youth have had significant and lasting diet changes stemming from having their hands in every aspect of their food system throughout FoodWhat programming. While that level of deep and ongoing diet change is most likely to come from ongoing and cumulative experiences, there are opportunities to create the foundation for this transformative diet shift even in one-time visits.

The Appendix on pages 38-40 is an overall sketch of activities for each week of a given year of the FoodWhat Spring Internship. Each February, we initiate outreach in schools across the county, and, working with teachers and administrators, select 50-70 students for the Spring Internship. They come in groups of roughly 12-14 (which is a number reflective of the maximum number of youth we can effectively work with in our kitchen area at one time). There are four or five groups total. Monday is a planning day, and then there is a Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

and Friday group. Those youth come on their given day each week for 11 of 12 weeks (not on their spring break). They come for three hours and each week has the same content outline: Welcome (collect phones and bags, offer a healthy fruit snack, and go over the schedule for the day posted on a white board); opening ice breaker; one hour of farm work; one hour of leadership development or youth empowerment workshop; one hour of cooking and eating together; close with “triumphs” (each youth shares one thing they are proud of for themselves from their internship experience that day). We are thus operating the same program four or five times per week, with a different program each successive week.

**ICE BREAKERS** These were discussed in the previous chapter. Ice breakers are your best friends when working with teens. It is recommended that you always start your time with the students you are hosting or working with continually, with an ice breaker/game. They are as magical as the idea of a tiny seed growing into a great big plant dripping in fruit.

**GROUNDING** It’s very helpful to share with the students a short few lines on where they physically are—who uses

the land—what your program or project is. It is strongly recommended that you watch your audience to gauge when to cut this piece short, or dive in deeper in response to lots of interest and questions. In many ways this is part of your initial tone setting that will determine the “vibe” of their experience. If the youth just feel talked “at” without an awareness of their intake (or your duration of speech), it can be an initial turn off. Oppositely, if there is great interest in the story of the space, go for it!

At FoodWhat we have a board at the front edge of our main field with photos of each and every youth that is a part of the Spring Internship. There is also very basic bullet point style information on our seasonal programs. Creating an information presentation of this type very effectively serves to educate the general public, college students, etc., about the program. Additionally, these types of displays help foster further identity creation with the program for the students you are serving by seeing themselves and their team/cohort/group, as well as offering one-time students a connection to their experience on site by seeing this visual collection of other youth with whom they may identify.

## General Tips For On-Farm Programming Success

1. Have all the materials prepped to go. For example, if you’re doing a plant out, have the transplants close to the bed, hand trowels if needed, hoses set up to water in the plants, t-tape and all the attachments on the field, etc. Minimizing down time or waiting around time really helps with keeping attention, excitement and energy levels up for the task at hand.
2. Have some back up projects that will be easy to transition to. If you finish early you will want to be prepared with the next farm activity (versus scrambling to get something together on the fly).
3. If the group is coming for a one-off, share a bit about tool safety and maintenance, and build in some time to have them clean soil off the tools and hang them back up in your tool shed or place them back in the wheelbarrows. If the group is coming for a series or over a longer period of time, start your time together with talk about tool safety and also help create pattern habits of taking care of tools, putting them away, etc. Reinforce these farm norms each week.
4. **CONTEXT CONTEXT CONTEXT.** See Section One for the chapter on context. (Context is key to

increasing student engagement, interest, sense of responsibility within tasks, and for their own personal and professional growth, etc.)

5. Teachable moments—something may happen that you did not plan such as a hawk flying overhead or even a farm cat strolling through the bed. Take a moment to follow the interest of the students you are working with and then roll that interest back into the task at hand (if possible and relevant).
6. Staff to student ratio. Always a good thing to think about. If you are short staffed, you can get a group started on a task and then ask one of the students who may have experience in this activity, or who is willing to step into a leadership role, to take responsibility for that farm task as you’re getting another group going. You can also ask another adult who came with the students to play this role. Clearly if you have enough staff of your own, you can divide up the students into appropriate sized groups based on the given activity.
7. Teach through questions. A great way to engage students is to ask them questions about the content you want them to learn or experience.

## One-Time Farm Visit Template

If your programming is oriented towards more one-time visits, or you want to be able to incorporate some one-time visits in a more ongoing set of programs, it's useful to have a template from which to work. Here is a potential outline for a one-time visit of teens. You can choose elements to add or subtract from this outline based on your program duration, your site, the intention of the tour or visit, etc.

### I. Welcome

- Invite the students and their teachers into a circle
- Ask them about themselves:
  - What school they're coming from
  - Have they ever been on a farm before and where
  - What are they most interested in checking out/ exploring
- Nametags are a good idea so as you're proceeding through the visit you can address youth by first name
  - Sometimes in the opening circle we joke with the youth by saying: "It's important that we learn all of your names, so on the count of three, please shout out your name nice and loud all together...one, two, three! (They shout out their names all at once). OK, got it!" (Usually laughter...)
- White board and/or verbal run down of the day/session/ hour visit
- Short intro to the farm, and a personal piece about why you are involved (whether you're a staff member, youth, college student, volunteer—it offers connection)

### II. Ice Breaker

- Critical, ESPECIALLY if they are just getting off a long bus ride or it's early in the day (or right after lunch). These are known "sleepy student times," and it's good to shake them up and get them energized for the rest of your time together.
- My Biggest Fan is a good one to get them moving and excited in no time! (See Appendix in Section One)
- Toe to Toe is a good transition ice breaker that you can start with just fun or silly questions and then inject questions that may touch on their purpose for visiting or on content you intend to deliver. (For example, for a group that is coming to the farm to learn more about organic agriculture or healthy food, you can ask: "If you were to own your own organic farm, what would be the most important crops that you would grow for your community?" or "What food do you think that every child should eat growing up so they start their lives strong and healthy?") See Section One Appendix.

### III. Farm Tour

- Whether you're at a site such as the UCSC Farm which has 30 acres within the fence line, or you're standing at the edge of a smaller piece of land like the FoodWhat Farm field, there are infinite opportunities to engage students in a farm tour. Walking around a farm or even a small school garden, there are innumerable stops one can make. To illustrate this point, we will share about the farm tours we lead on the UCSC Farm:
- We often stop at the solar showers and explain the passive solar technology, then show the students the outdoor showers and invite them to imagine taking a shower under the sun or stars after a hard day's work. We point out the apple trees and ask them to guess how many varieties of apple trees we have on the farm. That leads to a conversation about how many varieties of apples they typically see in the store. That in turn can open up a larger conversation about the incredible richness and diversity in flavor of food. We might contrast this by discussing the Red Delicious apple and touch on commercial prioritization of shelf life over flavor. (We may share that the Red Delicious is red but certainly not delicious in comparison with the hundreds of other varieties of apples in existence). Now we're in a conversation about taste and how we can check out an apple's sweetness, or how crisp or mushy they are, or whether the flavor is immediate or comes to our taste buds a second or two after...and then all the different colors of apples. We can talk science about how the flower gets pollinated, and then the ovary swells, and then we get the "fruit" which is what we eat—then contrast that with asking what part of the plant we consume when eating carrots or beets (root), or lettuce (leaf), or broccoli (flower), etc. We can point out the mating disruption technology for the codling moth and talk about how we prevent insects from destroying a crop. (That's a great story to share about how the female pheromone, which is in the hanging dispenser on the tree, creates a cloud of the female scent above the tree and then the male codling moths, in their quest to mate, fly around and around in this cloud that is invisible to the human eye until they finally die of exhaustion. "How's that for preventing this particular production pest from reproducing?!") What this one "stop" on the tour illustrates is how many different conversations can come from just pausing at a single fruit tree (let alone the blocks of fruit trees on the UCSC Farm).
- We can stop at the CSA packing shed and look at the chalkboard that has the harvest plan laid out for that week and talk about what a CSA share is (Community Supported Agriculture), the business of running a farm, about local food, and what a food system is. We can

walk through the strawberry fields and ask everyone to bend over to touch the strawberry plants ten times as an experiential way to open up a conversation about farm labor, or we can ask them to hold up a strawberry to the light of the sun to describe where the seeds are (outside of the fruit—very unique).

- The UCSC Farm has an apprenticeship program, so we often invite an apprentice to come over to explain what an apprenticeship is (one other great option for life and career training besides the more commonly known pathways of college or job) as well as share a personal story of why they are studying agriculture. This could be an incredible point of inspiration or mind mapping expansion for a student's sense of possibilities for their future. Also, if there is an identity or set of identities within the group of students you are serving, inviting an apprentice (or UC student intern or worker on the farm, etc.) who shares one or more of those identities will strengthen the connection between speaker and youth. An example could be an all female group of students being spoken to by a female apprentice; students from an urban environment in conversation

with a speaker who also comes from a city; connecting a predominantly Latino group of students to a speaker who is Latino/a; students from their school's science club hearing from someone on the farm who you know is really excited and knowledgeable on the science of farming; linking an activist group of students with someone whose identity on the farm is clearly centered around their activism.

**Note:** The difference between just covering the basics for a good tour or a good session with the students with whom you are working, versus thinking through and then acting on the infinite of ways to bring further depth, relevance, and relationship to the students you are serving, will be incredibly significant in terms of impact.

If the tour portion of your time with the students needs to be short, you can always ask them to line up at the edge of your field (no matter how big or small that piece of land is) and ask them to shout out what they recognize growing. You can introduce some crops they might not know, offer them samples of crops in the field/garden, or invite them to imagine what they would grow if that was their farm.

#### IV. Farm Work

- Getting their hands dirty and experiencing the farm and garden in this way will create many opportunities for impact. It could be a big project or a small one. That will depend on your time. Make it something more interesting than just weeding unless the weeding job will have a significant visual impact (like weeding a bed of cabbage or flowers that, when they're done, you will have this pristine bed of crops that you can now see clearly). Find a project that you can paint the "before and after" to visually illustrate the impact of their efforts: making or flipping a compost pile, transplanting (or direct seeding), laying out irrigation lines or setting pipe, skimming cover crop, prepping beds, woodchipping an area, clearing an overgrown area (yes, this is weeding), harvest and post harvest handling, planting fruit trees, pulling a bed of crops that have gone to seed or are through, etc. Each of these will offer the students a sense of completion, of accomplishment. At the end of your work, bring all of the students together at the head/foot of the bed or area just worked in, and celebrate what was just accomplished. Invite the students to offer, popcorn style (meaning, in no particular order), any short reflections. If none of them offer their thoughts, you can ask a quick guiding question like: "Did you think we would finish that big task?" or "What do you think we should do with all of



those sunflowers now that the weeds are gone, thanks to you all, as these flowers grow beautifully big and tall?" Any question that splices in an acknowledgement of their efforts and potentially links those efforts to a later outcome, will do.

#### V. Next Relevant Activity (Workshop, Cooking, Opinion Line, etc.)

- There are infinite choices here. Often when we have a group for a limited amount of time, we focus on connecting the farm work component to a cooking/eating piece. Strawberry smoothies are a quick and relevant (to our local California agricultural production) way to go that is always a hit. We have a bike-powered blender, and we also put out electric ones. Depending on the size of the group, we try to link up students in small ratios around each blender. All the materials (bananas, strawberries, milk or Rice Dream, yogurt, and sometimes almond butter) are out on the table. The students are asked to get in their small groups around the table, check out the materials available, and then go to town! This is a nice activity that does not require any significant adult management which serves as an empowering moment for youth in the kitchen. Encourage them to work as a team, to talk through their plan, and to be conscious that the ingredients need to serve all the groups, so to take their portion accordingly. Then encourage them to have fun and just go for it. Sometimes different groups may want to taste each other's smoothie for comparison which can be fun.
- Once again, there are countless additional elements that could be woven into this piece of the day. You can talk about food miles and freshness, or farm labor, or health (no sugar added to your smoothie = healthy food can taste good!), or the local agricultural economy (if applicable), or food justice, or about CSAs (in which a you-pick strawberry field might be part of the model), and so on. OR, you can let their stomach be the educator or the inspiration or the activist or the totality of the experience. Sometimes less is more.

#### VI. Walk the students back to their bus.

This often gives the students (or teachers or chaperones) who have questions, or are excited to talk to you further, the chance to connect in a personal way as you're walking. Sometimes the pace or thickness of content precludes some students or adults from being able to connect or get their question answered, so walking back to their transportation is a great way to create this opportunity.



# SPRING MATRIX

Week/ Date	Opening/ Ice-breaker	Farm Activity	Needs: Tools/Farm	Workshop	Cooking	Needs	Closing Kitchen
1 3/1	Welcome! Overview of day (always on white board). Name game: Citrus Toss. Liability forms collection	FARM TOUR + collect herbs for salve (calendula, plantain, comfrey, mallow, lavender etc). Flip compost on compost row.  (Big project completed in one day.)	Compost Heap or other big project for 12-14 youth, 2 adults, 1 hour. Goal to feel activity completion, team work, engage in physical activity.  12 forks/spades, 4 shovels, 4 wheel barrows Pre-flag which piles to combine	Opening tone setting and team building:  Most important word activity, community & individual goals brainstorm, expectations/consequences, and signing of contract.	Citrus snack Strawberry smoothies, Pumpkin bran muffins	2 Blenders, 2 muffin tins 2 mixing bowls, measuring cups/spoons  20 cups for smoothies, ingredients	“Triumphs”
2 3/8	Overview of day on white board (start with this each week).  Toe-to-Toe + introductions.	(Rain) At UCSC: Propagation week—intro to greenhouses, containers, potting up, sowing sunflowers  At LEF: (W) spread manure around trees, (Th) thinning chard	Potting up: 3 Wheelbarrows of potting soil, gallons, labels, pencils, potting mix, plants  Sunflowers: 3-packs, popsicle sticks, sharpies, seeds	Salve making (with herbs collected on last week’s introductory farm walk)  Fast Food Jeopardy	Veggie Quesadillas (kale, chard, broccoli, cabbage, 2 carrots 1 onion, garlic, cheese, salsa)	3 cast iron pans or skillets, 2 cheese graters, 2 large bowls, 12 knives, 12 cutting boards, ingredients	Collect any remaining forms  Triumphs Letters to selves (to be opened last day)  Pass back signed contracts
3 3/15	All Aboard! Hands and feet on a life raft.	(Soil too wet from last week’s rain): UCSC: (Tu) Potting up. (Fri) Flip Compost on compost row LEF: (W) Mulching strawberry paths (TH): Cutting strawberry runners and woodchips	Potting up: 3 Wheelbarrows of potting soil, gallons, labels, pencils, potting mix, plants  Berries: wheelbarrows, pitch forks, clippers, mulch	Youth Dollar Power: “What You Think, What You Drink”	Stone Soup and corn bread (tell story of stone soup)	Large soup pot, cutting boards, knives, muffin tins, mixing bowls, ingredients	Triumphs
4 3/22	Finger Grab	Tues: Skim FW field and make compost  Wed: wood chip new circle area for field trips  Thurs: Clearing beds  Fri: Skim FW field and make compost	Sharpened spades, 2 farm carts, wheelbarrows, manure, straw, hose with spray head, white board, markers, compost lesson, compost worksheet, clipboard, pens	Trace your Taco (Vicky or Uriel—FW Alumni—as guest instructors.)	Meat and Veggie Tacos	Knives, cutting boards, mixing bowls, rice cooker, tortilla press, can opener (?), cast iron or tortilla pan, wok, cheese graters, ingredients	Brainstorm t-shirt colors Triumphs “Have a great break next week!”

# SPRING MATRIX

Week/ Date	Opening/ Ice-breaker	Farm Activity:	Needs: Tools/Farm	Workshop	Cooking	Needs	Closing Kitchen
<b>5</b> <b>3/29</b> <b>and 4/5</b> Spring break for PV 3/28–4/1  Spring Break SC 4/4–4/8	Get t-shirt orders (size and color). Pass egg on a spoon—timed	Tues: prep 2 beds in FW field and plant out beans. Wed: TBD Thurs: TBD Fri: Prep and sow spinach in east garden	12 forks, 2 farm carts, jigs, string, 2 rakes, 2 long- handled shovels, seeds, compost in wheelbarrows, buckets for spreading compost	Eat A Rainbow	Veggie Fried Rice	Rice cooker, knives, cutting boards, wok, large frying pan, large bowls, ingredients	Triumphs
<b>6</b> <b>4/12</b> Reminder calls/text for this week— post break!	Welcome back! Look Down, Look Up Sarah’s Game— Do You Have a Job for Me?	Skim, Dig beds and plant out FW field Plant out onions, DS summer squash, beans, cukes	Sharpened Spades, 2 farm carts, wheel barrows, 12 forks, jigs, string, 2 long- handled shovels, 2 rakes, seeds, compost, buckets for spreading compost, plants	How to Get and Keep a Job	Pasta with veggies and pesto/tomato sauce	Pot, lid, strainer, cutting boards, knives, wok or saute pan, ingredients	Announce jobs and give out apps Pass back nutrition cards from Eat a Rainbow Triumphs
<b>7</b> <b>4/19</b>	Where the Wind Blows/ Common Ground	Finish skimming beds. Dig/prepare beds: broccoli, leeks, kohlrabi, kale, chard, cilantro, flowers, Plant out solanums (fri)	Sharpened Spades, 2 farm carts, wheel barrows, 12 forks, jigs, string, 2 long- handled shovels, 2 rakes, seeds, compost, buckets for spreading compost, plants	Public Speaking Intro to Chickens	Omelets	3-4 small omelet pans, cheese graters, 1 mixing bowl, 6 small bowls, cutting boards, knives, ingredients	Collect job apps and Week 1 interviews Triumphs Give back sunflowers
<b>8</b> <b>4/26</b> switch sites	Circle tag	Plant out pumpkins at LEF Wheat threshing, winnowing, grinding, whole grains	Grain grinders (electric & manual), cob oven	Real Talk	Pretzels	Mixing bowls, baking sheet, wok, ingredients	Triumphs Week 2 interviews
<b>9</b> <b>5/3</b>	Lighthouse (blind obstacle course)	Plant out	Sharpened Spades, 2 farm carts, wheel barrows, 12 forks, jigs, string, 2 long-handled shovels, 2 rakes, seeds, compost, buckets for spreading compost, plants	DeStress your Mess	Latkas (potato pancakes) and apple or strawberry salsa	4-5 graters, colander, frying pans, larger bowls, knives, cutting boards, graters, ingredients	Triumphs Summer Job letters

# SPRING MATRIX

Week/ Date	Opening/ Ice-breaker	Farm Activity:	Needs: Tools/Farm	Workshop	Cooking	Needs	Closing Kitchen
10 5/10	Human Knot	Plant out	Sharpened Spades, 2 farm carts, wheel barrows, 12 forks, jigs, string, 2 long-handled shovels, 2 rakes, seeds, compost, buckets for spreading compost, plants	Financial Literacy	Spanikopita	Baking sheets, 5+ basting brushes, wok or large pan, mixing bowls, ingredients	Triumphs Hand out parent orientation invites for summer job youth
11 5/17	Last day— Farm Olympics! Three-legged race and wheelbarrow race	Plant out	Sharpened Spades, 2 farm carts, wheel barrows, 12 forks, jigs, string, 2 long-handled shovels, 2 rakes, seeds, compost, buckets for spreading compost, plants	Resumes	Pizza	Cob oven, pizza peel, cutting boards, knives, cheese grater, ingredients	Final evals, give back letters to self, cookbooks, stipend checks, t-shirts, group photo, high 5 line, summer job reminders, closing triumphs







# CONCLUSION

In the previous sections, you have been able to dive deep into youth empowerment, its many elements, and techniques for application. We explored the model connection between FoodWhat and UCSC with the hopes of providing a template for other such potential relationships. And the previous chapter shared tips and approaches for how to successfully and meaningfully engage youth on your farm or garden.

Supporting this pedagogy and methodology is a constellation of strong partnerships. There are a number of other great relationships that make an organization like ours thrive. In addition to our connection with UCSC, FoodWhat has grown to best serve Watsonville youth close to home through our partnership with Discovery at Live Earth Farm. Our collaboration with the Pajaro Valley Unified School District, Santa Cruz City Schools, and Santa Cruz County Office of Education has been invaluable for our outreach to students in connecting their success at FW with their educational goals, and in relation to our major events. We also have agricultural partners, other non-profits, funders, politicians, and so on, all part of our FoodWhat Family who, each in their own way, contribute to the magic and the impact FoodWhat offers to local youth.

Below is a list of a few key local and national organizations that FoodWhat aligns with and/or collaborates with. Check them out!

## Nationally

The Rooted in Community National Network (RIC) is a national grassroots collective that empowers young people to take leadership in their own communities. RIC is a diverse movement of youth and adults working together and committed to fostering healthy communities and food justice through urban and rural agriculture, community gardening, food security, and related environmental justice work. [Rootedincommunity.org](http://Rootedincommunity.org)

A few powerful examples of RIC groups:

- Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative [urbannutrition.org](http://urbannutrition.org)
- GRuB [goodgrub.org](http://goodgrub.org)
- Ma'o Organic Farms [maoorganicfarms.org](http://maoorganicfarms.org)
- Sembrando Semillas [lasacequias.org](http://lasacequias.org)
- The Food Project [thefoodproject.org](http://thefoodproject.org)



Detroit Black Food Security Network (DBCFSN) works to build self-reliance, food security and justice in Detroit's Black community by influencing public policy, engaging in urban agriculture, promoting healthy eating, encouraging cooperative buying and directing youth towards careers in food-related fields. [Detroitblackfoodsecurity.org](http://Detroitblackfoodsecurity.org)

The Real Food Challenge (RFC) leverages the power of youth and universities to create a healthy, fair and green food system. RFC's primary campaign is to shift \$1 billion of existing university food budgets away from industrial farms and junk food and towards local/community-based, fair, ecologically sound and humane food sources—what is called “real food”—by 2020. [Realfoodchallenge.org](http://Realfoodchallenge.org)

## Regionally + Locally

- Digital NEST [digitalnest.org](http://digitalnest.org)
- Jovenes Sanos [unitedwaysc.org/jovenes-sanos](http://unitedwaysc.org/jovenes-sanos)
- Phat Beets [phatbeetsproduce.org](http://phatbeetsproduce.org)
- Pie Ranch [pieranch.org](http://pieranch.org)
- Planting Justice [plantingjustice.org](http://plantingjustice.org)
- Urban Arts Collaborative [facebook.com/Urban-Arts-Collaborative-Nature-is-Art-Art-is-Healing-523409701110066/](http://facebook.com/Urban-Arts-Collaborative-Nature-is-Art-Art-is-Healing-523409701110066/)
- Urban Tilth [urbantilth.org](http://urbantilth.org)
- Vida Verde [vveducation.org](http://vveducation.org)

To be in touch with any questions, comments, or shout outs, feel free to contact FoodWhat at [Partnership@foodwhat.org](mailto:Partnership@foodwhat.org), or check out our web site at [www.foodwhat.org](http://www.foodwhat.org).



## EVENT PLANNING MANUAL

# STRAWBERRY BLAST & HARVEST FESTIVAL

Prepared for  
the University of California  
Global Food Initiative

Co-authors  
Doron Comerchero &  
Roanna Cooper



# Event Planning Manual

## Table of Contents

About FoodWhat + User Guide .....	42
Background Event Overview and Genesis .....	44
Student Experience .....	45
Weekly Planning Guide .....	47
<b>Week 1:</b> Vision and Intro .....	47
<b>Week 2:</b> Content and Initial Outreach.....	49
<b>Week 3:</b> Flyer and Press Release .....	50
<b>Week 4:</b> Stations and Volunteers .....	51
<b>Week 5:</b> Student Assignment, Teacher Instructions, and Festival Map .....	52
<b>Week 6:</b> Supplies, Volunteer Assignments, and Final Outreach .....	54
<b>Day Before Event:</b> Station Kits and Youth Prep .....	56
<b>Event Day:</b> Set Up, Signage, and Event Timing and Roles.....	57
<b>Post-Event:</b> Recap, Evaluations, & Thank Yous.....	58
Conclusion.....	59
Appendix .....	60
Strawberry Blast .....	60
Harvest Festival.....	76



**FOODWHAT?!** is a youth empowerment and food justice organization using food, through sustainable agriculture and health, as the vehicle for growing strong, healthy, and resilient teens. We partner with low-income and struggling youth to grow, cook, eat, and distribute healthy, sustainably raised food and address food justice issues in our community.

Youth from Watsonville to Santa Cruz join the FoodWhat Crew through spring internships, summer jobs, fall business management positions, and leading big community events on the farm. We create a safe space where youth engage in leadership development, personal growth, and job training. At FoodWhat, we inspire personal transformation by supporting teens in finding their voices and developing lasting confidence in themselves.

# Background: Event Overview & Genesis

FoodWhat is a youth empowerment and food justice non-profit organization (operating on the UCSC Farm) serving low-income and struggling youth.

**Overview:** FoodWhat hosts two significant events each farming season: The Strawberry Blast in May and the Harvest Festival in October. Both events are planned and implemented by a team of two FoodWhat Youth Event Planners who host between 250-300 students per event. The students come from middle and high schools from throughout Santa Cruz County. The events take place during the school day from 10am-12noon.

The overall goals of both events are:

- to provide an experiential, educational, and fun field trip on a farm to connect students to their local food system;
- to inspire them to explore their personal health and diet;
- to learn and/or dig deeper into food justice issues.

These events are held on the UCSC Farm, partly on the Farm and Garden land, and partly on the FoodWhat land (which is within the 30 acres of the UCSC Farm as well).

**Genesis:** FoodWhat initiated its first big event in the fall of 2007, its first year in operation. Twenty-five youth attended and the event was a moderate success. The following year, FoodWhat Director, Doron Comerchero, joined the Wellness Committee of Santa Cruz City Schools (SCCS). While the Wellness Committee was initially focused on health and wellness initiatives at the elementary school level, there was a commitment toward supporting middle and high school students in these areas as well. A partnership was formed between the SCCS District and FoodWhat to put on two large farm-based events each year for SCCS students. The district would provide the bussing, arrange for teacher coverage in the classroom, and handle all logistics around student participation. FoodWhat would manage all production elements of each event as well as implement day-of. As FoodWhat had an already established relationship with the Alternative Education High Schools of the Santa Cruz County Office of Education, those schools were invited into the same relationship to participate in these events. As relationships were built with the Pajaro Valley Unified School District, they, too, became participants in the same style as SCCS. Within the first few years of these events, the SCCS Superintendent partnered with FoodWhat staff to support further content development. And within the past few

years, more local non-profits and UCSC partners have been invited to lead stations.

It is a clear benefit to host these events on the UCSC Farm.

1. Middle and high school students get exposed to an institution of higher education through attending these events
2. UCSC students serve as volunteers supporting FoodWhat in putting on this event as well as exploring youth empowerment programming as part of their course of study or as a potential career path
3. The infrastructure and acreage of the UCSC Farm, as well as the UCSC student volunteers, allows for the significant scale and scope of these events

FoodWhat hires two Youth Event Managers to plan and implement each of these two events. These two youth come to the farm once a week for two hours for roughly six weeks to plan the event. Almost 100% of all event preparation happens in this time with the two youth responsible for all details and communications. This manual includes the nuts and bolts of working with these two youth to put on these events. FoodWhat staff play a scaffolding role, supporting the youth to take full ownership over all aspects in the time leading up to the event, and during the event itself.



# Student Experience

Here's a general picture of the participating students' experience: They load onto busses or vans arranged by the district or their local school and head up to the farm. The teachers have been prepped with a student assignment and teacher instructions sent out beforehand. All 250-300 middle and high school students arrive at the main gate of the farm, usually all within 20 minutes, so it's quite a big group converging at the same time. FoodWhat staff and youth jump on busses before they unload and give the students a little pep rally asking questions like "Who's been to the farm before?" and sharing a list of some of the most exciting and tasty elements of the day (cider press, apple pie making station, pumpkin or strawberry harvest, strawberry smoothie making, etc.). Students are also encouraged to go to every station and teachers are reminded to implement the student assignment and usher their students through each station. Students then head to the front gate to a series of tables where they are invited to make themselves a nametag. (This is a key element in maintaining safety and for the station leaders to connect with students by using their names.) They then proceed to the entrance of the farm and as they pass through the gate they are offered a paper with a map on one side and a list of stations on the other.

They use the map to navigate to the first of two main areas to either harvest red ripe delicious strawberries to get that farm-to-mouth experience, or to the pumpkin patch to harvest a pumpkin to take home with them after the event. In both cases, this is an essential element for

the students to connect directly with the land to begin to understand what a food system is and to create a relationship with the farm. (As in many communities, this is a big moment for youth to connect their food to land versus just coming from a store.)

After their "harvest" they navigate down to the FoodWhat fields and learning areas to dive into the stations. Each event has a mix of stations divided into different categories to approach health and educational goals from a variety of angles. In the spring event, the stations revolve around the strawberry, and in the fall event, the stations revolve around the harvest season. Students have 1.5 hours from the time they get off the bus to move through the harvest area and go through all the stations. The final 30 minutes (of this two hour event) is reserved for teachers to huddle with their students and review the student assignment while on the farm. FoodWhat staff and volunteers are available for any questions or discussion during this time.

To better understand the "station" model, here is a list of the 2015 Fall Harvest Festival Stations divided by category:

## Health/Healthy Food Stations

These are for students to make or taste something "healthy" that they will find tastes delicious and does not have any added sugar. So often the word "healthy" is synonymous with "bland or tasteless" in youth culture. These stations give students an opportunity to make something themselves or to do a tasting that serves to



inspire rethinking this bias. There is also further connection and context of these foods being grown on the farm:

- Popcorn (shucking, popping, adding toppings, and eating)
- Apple Pie Making (students peeling and coring apples and cooking them down with spices on the stove then adding to a pre-made crust)
- Apple Tasting (three varieties with signage and conversation about the incredible diversity of apple types, colors, flavors, uses, etc.)
- Apple Cider Pressing (just incredibly fun and sweet!)
- Youth-led Workshop: “What You Drink, What You Think—Youth Dollar Power” (peer-to-peer workshop teaching label reading, showing youth that they already know the effects of processed sugar in their diets, uncovering the amount of sugar in most popular beverages with youth, and ending with the punch-line that youth are powerful as every dollar they spend is a “vote” and their vote is their power)

### Food Justice/Food Systems Stations

These are a wide selection of approaches at baseline education on concepts around food justice and food systems as well as opportunities to take action (which is critical for this age group that is so fired up and passionate):

- Youth-led Workshop: “Fast Food Jeopardy” (looks at fast food, food systems, and farming in a fun and competitive peer-to-peer workshop modeled after the show Jeopardy)
- Youth-led workshop: “Trace Your Taco” (follows the ingredients in a Taco Bell Taco to unpack different elements of the food system and the accompanying potential justice issues: conventional versus organic, GMOs, food miles and global warming, CAFOs, farm labor justice, local vs global food systems, health)
- Fair Trade workshop led by the Community Agroecology Network (UCSC) using bananas
- Thank a Farmer (students can express themselves by writing messages to local farm laborers on brown paper lunch bags which are then given to a local non-profit working with farm laborers to fill with holiday treats and delivered. Given that South Santa Cruz County (Watsonville) is a significant agricultural production area, many students, particularly South County Latino students, know people working in the fields and this is an opportunity to break the silence and speak out about what they know/see/feel in relation to farm labor.

- Food Day Photo Booth (students can hold up chalk boards with messages they want transmitted to the greater world about food/ag/health/justice and can dress up or add props while taking a photo for National Food Day, connecting them to the larger movement around food and justice)
- Watsonville Wetlands Watch (interactive display about the ecology of our local wetlands and their relationship with conventional agriculture)
- Museum of Art and History (button making for self-expression on food justice themes)

### Additional Stations

- Goats and Chickens (general farm knowledge acquisition and, as exciting as fruits and veggies may be, nothing beats a living animal in terms of youth interest)
- Hayride (given the very short timeframe of this event, the hayride gives students the opportunity to take in the entire farm and notice the great diversity of crops grown)
- UCSC and Cabrillo College Booths (support students in getting any questions answered about their higher educational goals or pathways and perhaps to serve as a first touch for the younger students)

There is no pre-scripted path to going to each of these stations—they are spread out around a small enough area to keep everyone centralized, but big enough so there’s room to move about.

This day is constructed with a youth empowerment pedagogy at its core. The youth-led workshops aim less to teach, and certainly not to “correct” youth in their diet or beliefs, but to inspire/invite youth into a relationship of greater health/awareness/action that they may choose for themselves.

This day is exciting, energizing, educational, experiential, and well executed. Many of the teachers who have a garden at their school or who teach a health or ag or social science curriculum have shared that bringing their students to these events serves to bring to life the content they are delivering in the classroom; to motivate their students to find access points of interest and relevance with health, food systems, and food justice; and to connect them to their local food system by participating and harvesting on the farm.

# Weekly Planning Guide

## Week 1: Vision and Intro

This day is an overview. A time to introduce materials, talk about the event and offer youth a chance to begin creating a vision.

**Materials:** timecards, folders, pads, calendars, map of the farm/event

### 1. Overview of Job Description and Expectations

Start with a conversation with youth event planners: “You are responsible for this job and, at the same time, you will be supported in doing this job and learning how to bring your skills to execute the job successfully.” (see Appendix page 61 for Job Description and Expectations sheet)

- a. Introduce timesheets and have youth sign in. Explain process for signing in and out, and for pay checks. (see Appendix page 62 for sample timesheet)
- b. “Nuts and Bolts”—Introduce Festival planning folder
  - i. Step one for planning: need to be able to picture the event, then reflect on last year’s event and bring new ideas
  - ii. Step two: have organizational tools so you’re not just holding things mainly in your head and potentially forgetting/missing steps—give youth an empty folder and small pad with pen
    - Share that the folder can serve as a place to hold all the documents that we go over as a team, and the pad can be a centralized place to keep notes
    - Emphasize the importance of having these materials in a place they will have each week without a doubt: Should they be stored at FW? If you take them with you, how will you remember to bring them back each week? “You’re an organizer, so it’s critical to be organized.”
  - iii. Step three: printed calendar
    - Begin writing in important dates, such as meeting times and day-of schedule

### 2. Overview of Event

- a. Farm Walk and Visioning
  - i. Hand out previous year’s map of UCSC Farm/event route and station listing for farm walk
    - Go on a walk around the farm from the place where the students first arrive to the place they harvest to the area where the stations will be held, and imagine the entire event

- A “visualization” can make for a better planner; get in the shoes of your attendees and think about their needs and experience—welcome area, signage, staff needed for stations, etc.
- Explain the flow of stations; where certain stations were previously located and why (i.e., college station situated in the center to encourage more traffic; more enclosed spaces like the circle bench and amphitheater used for workshops for more intimate engagement)
- ii. Emphasize the importance of students walking through fields and harvesting their own strawberry or pumpkin to make the farm to fork connection

### b. Discuss Station and Station Categories

- i. Health/healthy food
- ii. Food justice/food systems
- iii. Farm and other

– Goal to have every attendee participate in every station, but likely will plan to have more stations than each person can attend for better station-attendee ratios.

Students will leave wishing they had more time to go to more stations while having the right amount of other students at each station they do attend. Helps them leave with a positive feeling. (Talk about how corporations do this—making people feel happy and safe so they feel good and want to come back; we want to use this event to do this in a positive way for real food/healthy food)

### 3. Brainstorm

Once back at the meeting space, brainstorm all the elements that need to be considered to put this event together. Ask the youth planners some guiding questions. It’s likely that they will mix elements (like outreach) with actions (like creating a flyer). Help group them to attach actions to elements.

#### a. Outreach:

- i. Attendees—flyer, facebook/social media, email with school districts; advertise to schools we are inviting to participate
- ii. Press/media—send a press release to local media through email

- Send to as many outlets as possible; who, what, why, when, where; narrative (details) and photos
- If they came last year, send them their article as a way of thanking them and requesting their presence again

**b. Program**

- What’s the goal of this event?
- What stations do we want to cut, keep, add?
- Supply lists/shopping lists:
  - i.e. tables, blenders, strawberries, pens, nametags, maps, big welcome sign, signs with arrows to lead people through farm, etc.
- Farm relations:
  - Ask Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems (CASFS) Farm Manager for use of the field (strawberry or pumpkin patch) for event
  - Tell all Farm and Garden Apprentices that this is happening to respect their space
  - Inform staff of other programs at the farm, i.e. CASFS and Life Lab staff, and any UCSC instructors

**c. Staffing/volunteers:**

- How many people do we need and for what tasks?
  - Front gate
  - Station leaders
  - Documentation—photographer



**4. Timeline All Tasks and Activities**

- Use calendar —“We have six weeks, what is the most logical order that we work on things? What do I need to do first to get the other things done? When should we achieve what?”
- Decide with youth what needs to get done each week:
  - Week two: program and outreach
  - Week three: flier and press release
  - Week four: student assignment/teacher instructions
  - Week five: map; press release out; create supply/ shopping list
  - Week six: signs and supplies
  - Week seven: event!

**5. Conclude**

Conclude with youth planners by sending email to UCSC Farm Manager, introducing themselves and requesting the use of the UC Farm for the event:

- Strawberry Blast: Locate the strawberry rows for this year (as they rotate throughout the farm). Ask for permission to harvest berries from those rows during the event.
- Harvest Festival: Ask for permission to use the pumpkin rows but with FoodWhat-grown pumpkins.

**6. Post event info on internal UC-CASFS google calendar.**

Be sure there is nothing scheduled at instructional facilities on the farm as the 250–300 student visitors would be disruptive to those spaces.

**Additional Notes**

- Ask guiding questions—help youth critically think through and come up with answers for themselves.
- Meetings are set for 2 hours and are paid in full regardless if finished early—this is the contract that honors youth time (especially as travel time to the farm can equal hours worked). Explain to youth to clock in at the time the job starts (versus when they arrive on the farm). If late, then put the actual time arrived. Review the expectation of 100% timeliness—being late twice will result in termination—this is the only way to get this body of work done as a team.
- Revisit last year’s event review—“positives and improvables”— early in the planning stages so these can be incorporated into the current year’s event conversations.



## Week 2: Content and Initial Outreach

**Materials:** previous year’s station list and list of important contacts for outreach (teachers and administrators, community partners, etc.)

### 1. “Save-the-Date”

- a. Youth planners to draft a save-the-date email—may include photos from the previous year
- b. Send “save-the-date” email to all County Alternative Education schools, Pajaro Valley schools and directly to the Director of Student Services at Santa Cruz City Schools

**Note:** Santa Cruz City Schools (SCCS) has a yearly commitment built into their work plan to arrange transportation, teacher coverage, and student field trip participation logistics for the Strawberry Blast and Harvest Festival; County Office of Education (COE) and Pajaro Valley School District (PVUSD) do not and therefore require a yearly invitation direct to individual school administrative heads

### 2. Content

- a. Go through last year’s stations—what should be removed/added/amended?  
(see Appendix page 73 for sample station check lists)

### 3. Request for Workshop/Station Leaders

- a. After reviewing previous year’s stations and deciding which to keep, which to cut (if any), and what else may be added to strengthen the event goals, create a clean list of stations indicating which stations/workshops FoodWhat will lead, and which ones partners will lead
- b. Send invitation emails to new and past partners for non-FoodWhat led stations/workshops

### 4. Other Outreach

- a. For the Harvest Festival, youth send an email to CASFS Land Manager introducing themselves, sharing the event date/time and requesting Land Manager to drive the tractor for the hay ride at the event
- b. Send email to all CASFS staff (including 2nd year Apprentices) announcing the event
- c. Send email to staff of other relevant UC Farm users announcing the event

### 5. Begin to gather supplies

Talk to FoodWhat Farm Manager about getting apples for the cider press and apple pie making station for the Harvest Festival or additional flats of strawberries for the Strawberry Blast and quantities needed

### 6. Flyer

Review last year’s flyer and begin updating and re-designing (if necessary)

### Additional Notes:

- Important starting at this point that each week the youth planners monitor email responses. This includes sending follow up emails for non responses. In general, the youth planners send emails from a FoodWhat email account for recognition by the recipients (versus their own private emails).
- Examples of 2015 “save-the-date” email from youth planners:

*Hello school teachers,*

We are inviting you and your students to this year’s FoodWhat Harvest Festival. We are this year’s event managers and our names are Briana (Pajaro Valley High School) and Olvaerr (Ponderosa graduate). This email is to invite you to save the date, which is Oct. 29th from 10 am–12pm. This is a free event and we hope to see you and your students here on the farm.

We will send more information next week.

*Sincerely, Briana and Olvaerr*



## Week 3: Flyer and Press Release

**Materials:** copies of previous year's flyer and press release; media contacts list

### 1. Update Flyer

- a. Finish updating flyer using previous year's template (see Appendix page 60 for sample event flyer)
- b. Highlight some exciting new activities/stations/elements
- c. Be sure to save as "pdf" to be emailed out

### 2. Press Release

- a. Discuss what a press release is for: It's an advertisement of sorts to entice the media to come to the farm to create a piece about the event. It can showcase the positive work youth are doing in our community as well as bring light to these important issues
- b. Youth organizers brainstorm what's unique about this event (i.e., bringing youth to the farm to talk about local food, food justice, health, etc.). The idea is to create a pitch for the event: What is the event? What's special about it?
- c. Ask youth planners if it will interrupt their creative juices to look at last year's press release prior to drafting their own or if that would be helpful? (Usually it's very helpful as this is a new skill being developed.)
- d. Plug new pitch and updated event details into last year's press release template (see Appendix page 67 for sample press release)

- e. Save as pdf and discuss press release email plan of sending the same press release to the same press contacts three times leading up to the event (in week 3, week 6, and a reminder email the day before)
- f. Email press release to all media contacts and update media contact list, if necessary

### 3. Outreach

- a. Follow-up on workshop/station leader outreach emails- Who responded? Who didn't?
  - i. Thank you and formal confirmation for those that did; second attempt for those who didn't
  - ii. Respond to email for college invites (Cabrillo, UCSC) and in confirmation, emphasize the importance of these stations being interactive to compete with other food and hands-on activities
- b. Official invite to the same teachers/school admin folks as previous week. This time in the body of the email include important info/language from press release and attach the press release and flyer to the invites. Include a "reply by" date and request for approximate number of students attending

Encourage youth to draft all emails, including subject line (what are we talking about?). Be sure to invite them to rotate who is typing to be sure that both youth practice their communication skills.



## Week 4: Stations and Volunteers

**Materials:** copies of previous year’s station checklist and supplies list; volunteer contact information

### 1. Station partners

Continue to monitor progress on station partner invites and ongoing communication

### 2. Brainstorm Needed Materials for Stations

Youth brainstorm what’s needed for every aspect of event, beginning with front gate by talking through the event (including each station) so youth can visualize what’s needed.

**a.** Ask youth planners to visualize the full event again, and as they walk through it (from the welcome area to the harvest area to each individual station), to list out every possible needed supply. It’s best to do supply lists by



area or station as this will later serve as the station or area “kit list” for event set up. Start with an example so they see the level of detail being sought. This activity may take 30-60 minutes of them working together as a team. Staff may ask guiding questions to ensure the youth planners get a comprehensive list.

- b.** Once they are done, share with them last year’s supply list to compare the supplies and see if they need to add/subtract anything from their lists
- c.** Create a new finalized list reflecting this year’s changes (see Appendix pages 64 and 80 for supply lists)
- d.** Determine what supplies are already in possession and what needs to go on a shopping list to be purchased. Create this shopping list
- e.** Signage—often it’s best to walk the event again with the map making notes on where signage would be key for visiting students
  - i.** CASFS’ sandwich board signs (used for their farm stand) are particularly helpful to post initial directional supports from the front gate to the harvest area to the main station area
  - ii.** FoodWhat white boards are useful for directional signs to stations within the main event area

### 3. Determine Staffing/Volunteers Needed

- a.** Review stations and other areas of staffing
  - i.** Create list of staffing areas: front gate, strawberry or pumpkin harvest area, documentation person, and FoodWhat managed stations
  - ii.** Youth event planners assign a number of staff/volunteers needed per station/area, and then tally up the number of volunteers needed to staff the entire event

**Note:** Creating a range for a few of the stations may be best practice to give some flexibility for varying numbers of volunteers.

Example:

- Front gate: two youth planners and 1 volunteer
- Strawberry harvest area: 1-2 people
- Apple pie making: 3 people
- Documentation: 1-2 people

Total volunteers needed: XX-XX

Youth planners and staff then make a detailed list of how many partners are leading stations, FoodWhat staff roles,

youth planner roles, FoodWhat youth roles (from other parts of the program), and then the balance equates with how many volunteers are needed to plug in to the other areas/stations.

#### 4. Outreach for staffing and volunteers

- a. Create a list of potential FW youth and volunteers to outreach to: Current FW youth and Jr. Staff; FW Alumni; Current/past FW UCSC Interns; other UCSC students through partners who lead instruction on the farm (i.e., UC Food Systems Working Group); Life Lab Staff; CASFS Apprentices; local organizations
- b. Send invitation emails to potential volunteers
  - i. Be sure to include “respond by” date (likely by following week’s meeting) and youth write a note on their calendars to confirm with those people the following week
  - ii. Can ask/invite volunteers to fill specific role at the event (if you know what that is) or let them know you’ll be in touch before the event with assigned role
  - iii. Attach press release and flyer to all out-going emails

#### Additional Notes:

- Emphasize to youth Event Planners their role as organizers—“It’s On You” approach in communication.

While it’s ideal that once an email is sent, it will elicit a response, it is understood that organizing means shouldering the responsibility of getting a response (in the sender). Therefore, youth planners should not wait endlessly for responses, but should email again the following week to anyone from whom they have not received a response.

- Youth event planners and youth volunteers may need letters to their school administrators requesting an excused absence the morning of the event or to be prioritized into the field trip pool. As youth are invited to staff the event, it is first critical to check in with them if missing a morning in school would in any way negatively affect their academics. If so, share with them there will be other opportunities to take leadership roles. If not, then ask them to still check with their counselor in school to get cleared to miss the morning. To support them in this conversation, it is important to provide absence request letters for their school administration detailing their role for the day (see Appendix page 63 for sample absence request letter).

**Once again:** Always check with youth that they are in strong enough academic standing to miss half a day. If not, share with them your support of their academic success and that you will look for other leadership opportunities for them in the future.



# Week 5: Student Assignment, Teacher Instructions

**Materials:** copies of previous year’s student assignment and teacher instructions; last year’s festival map template

## 1. Student Assignment

There are two goals for this event component: first, to lock in learning through reflection; second, as leverage to encourage students to go to each station (not just the tasty food stations), as this is a required part of their participation by their teacher

- a. Review previous year’s student assignment and update to ensure questions correspond with current year’s stations. (See Appendix pages 68 and 84 for sample student assignments.)
  - i. Communicate with community partners to determine relevant questions to include for workshops/stations they are leading
  - ii. Ensure that the assignment is not more than one double-sided page
  - iii. Save as Word doc so teachers can edit, if desired

## 2. Teacher Instructions

- a. Review previous year’s teacher instructions and ensure all content is accurate. Update as necessary (see Appendix pages 70 and 86 for sample teacher instructions).
- b. Save as PDF

## 3. Outreach to Schools

- a. Send completed student assignment, teacher instructions, flyer, and press release to all confirmed school sites or district contact people to disseminate. Attach press release to all emails and be sure to include relevant details again (date/time/location)
- b. Ask SCCS contact to “cc” you on teacher instructions and student assignment emails to teachers to ensure it was sent and to track teacher leads at each school. Send directly to all County Office of Education and Pajaro Valley Unified School District High Schools

## 4. Festival Map

- a. Review last year’s map template and redesign to reflect location of current event’s strawberry harvest (Strawberry Blast) or pumpkin patch (Harvest Festival), as these locations vary from year-to-year. (See Appendix pages 72 and 88 for sample maps)

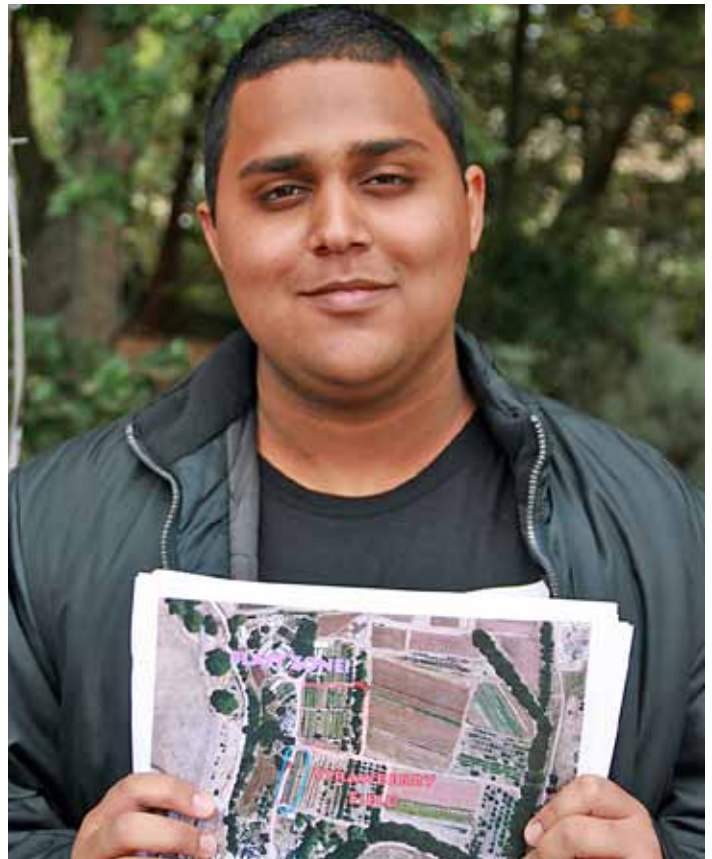
- b. A map can be created using Google Earth and then drawn over to trace the desired participant route using a variety of programs. It is important to orient the map from the vantage point of the students walking in (which may require the Google Earth image to be rotated to meet that goal)

## 5. Other Outreach

- a. Follow-up with potential volunteers
  - i. Thank you and confirmation to those who responded
  - ii. Tally number of volunteers—are there enough or is there a need to find more? If looking low, brainstorm more potential volunteers and contact them. Always have a few extras in case of no shows.

## Additional Notes:

- If Harvest Festival, important to schedule putting out pumpkins in designated pumpkin harvest area (if coming from elsewhere).



## Week 6: Supplies, Volunteer Assignments & Final Outreach

**Materials:** supplies list, “setup plan” event blueprint

Open the day by asking youth planners what still needs to be accomplished in this final planning day. Make a shared list.

**1. Supplies** (see Appendix pages 64 and 80 for supply lists)

- a. Revisit supply list started week four, go through all stations, determine what is still needed, and update
- b. Add any missing supplies to shopping list and determine who will shop for needed materials
- c. If there are materials that may be needed for a station led by a partner, contact that station leader to clarify (i.e., Fair Trade station requests one case of bananas)
- d. Inventory all signage and make more signs, as needed
- e. Count number of whiteboards needed and amount available
- f. Count number of tables needed and amount available
- g. Create a basic station location/farm layout map for setup based on station needs

For example:

- i. Big group interactive workshop (i.e., Fast Food Jeopardy) at area with ample seating
- ii. More content heavy workshop (i.e., “What You Drink, What You Think”) at quieter area

iii. Cabrillo/UCSC station centrally located under pop-up to attract attention

iv. Smoothie station near power outlet

### 2. Volunteer Assignments

- a. Revisit staffing areas and needed volunteers tally sheet created week four
- b. Plug confirmed volunteers into event positions
- c. Create hard copy roster and make copies for planners to carry day of. Confirm who will be responsible for checking in and orienting volunteers day of. (See Appendix page 66 for sample volunteer roster.)

**Note:** It’s very important to have someone at the main gate of the farm the morning of the event by the time station leaders and volunteers are asked to be onsite to ensure proper vehicle parking. The bus turn around area needs to be clear, station leaders and volunteers receive a free parking pass, and visiting students coming by car/van with their schools need a parking pass that this volunteer will hand out and collect the cost of the pass. It’s important to have someone assigned to and confirmed for this specific role. If this event were being held at another site, it would still be key to think through the interplay of the large school busses and the smaller cars/vans in getting 250-300 students all on site at the same time.



### 3. Final Outreach/Confirmations

- a. Send emails to ALL staff, workshop leaders, volunteers, youth, and school contacts.
  - i. Confirm bus timing with schools
  - ii. For workshop leaders (community partners), include something to the effect of “looking forward to seeing you” and give them critical info (date, time to show up and event time, directions). Let them know parking passes will be provided at no cost and where to park
  - iii. CASFS and Life Lab Staff
    - Give final courtesy reminder of event and ask all staff and Apprentices not to park at the farm entrance the night before the event or the day of, via email and posted sign in Farm Center
    - Check in with 2nd Year Apprentices or CASFS staff to make sure UCSC Farm areas planned to be used for the event are still available and clear
    - Remind CASFS Field Manager of event and reconfirm event route from front gate to field harvest to station area; for Strawberry Blast, confirm how many strawberries are available for students to harvest (1 or 2 per student based on yields)

*This is really important so Field Manager can ensure ample supply of berries on the plants the week of the event!*

**Note:** Attach flyer and press release to ALL outgoing email.

### 4. What's Left (day before and day of the event)?

- a. Discuss and make list with youth planners of what needs to be accomplished in these final days
- b. Confirm that they are excused from school the morning of the event

### 5. Resend press release to all media contacts



# Day Before Event: Station Kits & Youth Prep

**Materials:** “Prepping Youth on Speaking with the Press” document (see Appendix page 75 for document)

## 1. Print festival map and station check-list

Print onto one double-sided sheet; produce enough copies for expected attendees

It is important to print the map and station checklist before the day of the event in case there are any issues with printing

## 2. Station Kits

**a.** Go through supplies and station checklist and assemble supply boxes (“kits”) to be dropped at each station site the morning of the event—use plastic tubs, crates, or veg boxes from field. Include in each kit a list of materials

**b.** Assign whiteboards to each station needing one

## 3. Infrastructure

**a.** Gather all tables

**b.** Walk through the farm and do final visualization of station setup, then set tables out accordingly

**c.** Setup pop-up tents as needed

**d.** If Harvest Festival, ensure pumpkins are in designated field site

## 4. Final Press Release

**a.** Send out final press release to all media contacts, inviting or confirming them to join “tomorrow’s event”

**b.** Offer press direct contact information (cell/email), and let them know the two youth planners and a staff person will be available to them day of

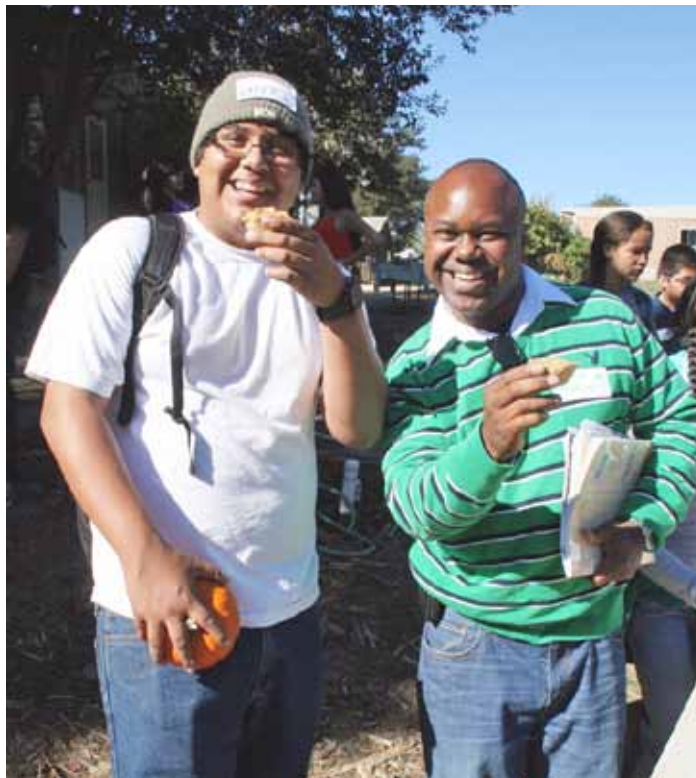
## 5. Final reminders

Final reminder to all station leaders and volunteers, as feels necessary; it’s generally a good idea to send reminders to volunteers/station leaders

## 6. Prep Youth Event Planners on Speaking with the Press

**a.** Print out press release and build off that

**b.** Ask potential interview questions, such as: What is this event about? What did you do to plan it? What



do you want students to get from this event? What is FoodWhat? How did you get involved with FoodWhat? What does “food justice” mean to you?

**c.** Practice through role-playing

## 7. Go Over Morning Expectations with Youth Planners

**a.** Formulate setup and cleanup plan/roles

**b.** Remind youth to wear FoodWhat shirts

**c.** Briefly discuss what the morning will look like regarding set-up in terms of pulses of work

**d.** Make sure they’re able to get to the farm by the designated time (talk through public transit plan, etc.)

**e.** Check in about how they’re feeling and acknowledge all the hard work they have put in to get to this point!

## 8. Hang Note

Hang note in the Farm Center reminding Apprentices of the event, inviting them to stop by and check it out, and requesting that they not park in the lot



# Event Day: Set-Up, Signage and Event Timing and Roles

**1. Set-Up** (see Appendix page 65 for set-up plan document)

**a. Station kits/tables**

- i.** Wipe down tables and bring kits to each station position. Some partner-led stations just need a table and they will set up their area—some stations just need the kit—some need extra set up support before the station leader arrives so they are prepared on time.
- ii.** Set up all necessary chairs
- iii.** Put out extension cords, as needed
- iv.** Ensure there are enough trash/recycling/compost bins labeled and located strategically throughout the festival

**b. Signage**

- i.** Hang large “WELCOME to XX EVENT” front entrance sign from gate with zip ties and “Grab a Map” and “Make a Nametag” signs on the fence behind the tables for nametags
- ii.** Load wooden sandwich boards into vehicle. Attach laminated arrow signs and place signs strategically to guide students from entrance to strawberry field (Strawberry Blast) or pumpkin patch (Harvest Festival) and then to main event area
- iii.** Strategically place white boards with directional information to the outlier workshops/stations

**c. Strawberry Field (Strawberry Festival only)**

- i.** Place “strawberry facts” throughout strawberry field; keep same questions grouped together across parallel aisles (see Appendix page 74 for strawberry facts)
- ii.** Give Apprentices and youth volunteers clear harvest instructions to offer students at the strawberry field/pumpkin patch

**2. Orientation**

**a.** Have a copy of the map, station checklist and volunteer roster ready for Youth Planners and ALL organizational staff

**b.** Check in and ensure everyone is aware of their roles

- i.** Youth event planners and staff act as “Flow Masters” for the event, starting at the front gate to welcome students and chaperones as they arrive, and then moving into the main event area
- ii.** During the event, youth event planners float and are available to speak to any press that attends;

organizational staff guide press to Youth Planners and fill in any remaining questions after

**3. Event Timing**

- a.** 7–8 am: Set up at the front entrance, strawberry fields (Strawberry Blast), and directional signage for farm walk
- b.** 8–9 am: Set up in main event area. Put out kits and label tables (with station name)
- c.** 9–9:30 am: Youth planners and staff welcome and orient volunteers and community partners
- d.** 9:45 am: Youth planners and staff are present at the front gate to hop onto busses as they arrive, pump students up, and welcome them
  - i.** As students arrive at the front gate, invite them to make a name tag and take an event map before entering the farm
- e.** Once all students have arrived and are on the farm, youth event planners and staff head to main event area and float; one volunteer should remain at the front gate for any late arrivals
  - i.** Before remaining volunteer leaves the front gate area, request that they break down all supplies and bring kit to organization office before leaving
- f.** The last 30 minutes of the event are designated for completion of student assignments. Give station leaders a 5-10 minute heads up to wrap up their stations/ workshops prior to this time block

**4. Clean Up**

**a.** Work backwards through set up plan:

- i.** All station/workshop materials put back in “kits” and returned to the office
- ii.** All signs, tables, trash cans, etc. returned to the appropriate places
- iii.** All kits disassembled and put away

**Additional Notes:**

- Make sure there is someone at the main gate the morning of the event by 8:30 am to direct parking and to hand out parking passes/collecting parking fee as previously noted. (Press and partners get free parking pass and are directed down to main event area.)
- Be sure before youth planners leave to take a moment to celebrate their huge accomplishment.
- Same with FoodWhat staff, and offer appreciations to any volunteers and partners before they leave if possible.

# Post-Event Day: Recap, Evaluations, and Thank Yous

## 1. Recap and Evaluations

- a. Schedule time with youth planners to debrief the day and offer positives and improvables on the event itself and their performance/implementation as lead organizers. Be sure their feedback and yours includes details (versus just general sweeping comments). Celebrate their success and achievements! Record this evaluation to serve as planning information for next year's event
- b. Meet with organizational staff to debrief the day and offer positives and improvables
- c. Put all feedback in server/files for following year

## 2. Thank You's—can be email or written note cards

- a. CASFS Staff and Apprentices
  - i. Send out email with detailed note to those who specifically contributed
    - Attach any press coverage
    - Add a couple highlights from the day
    - Farm Manager: Thank you for use of strawberry field (Strawberry Festival) or pumpkin patch (Harvest Festival)

## b. Donations

- c. Station leaders, volunteers, and youth
  - i. Add pictures from the day and any press coverage
- d. Press
  - i. For coming and sharing our work and food justice efforts with the larger community
- e. School Contacts
  - i. Thank you for the partnership
  - ii. Send press coverage and highlights

## 3. Other

- a. Post covering the event on FoodWhat website and through social media
- b. Make sure all relevant documents are updated and placed on the server/in files
- c. Document final event numbers and itemize expenses, etc.
- d. Appreciate yourself and the mentorship role you played with the youth organizers and the impact this event had on the students and teachers in attendance!



# Conclusion

**This manual can serve as a template for you to work from in creating large land-based events.** The two events we've used this manual for at FoodWhat are specifically for middle and high school students with a focus on connecting youth to their food source, while exploring health and food justice. That said, this material can be adapted to create events for a broad

variety of participants and content goals. If you have any further questions or would like to access any modifiable appendices, contact our FoodWhat Programs Manager at **Partnership@foodwhat.org** and of course, check out our web site at **www.foodwhat.org** and social media to see photos and videos of these major events as we post them.

**Have a great event!**



# APPENDIX

## STRAWBERRY BLAST Flyer

# STRAWBERRY



**Friday, May 27th, 2016  
10am to 12pm**

**By Teens -- For Teens**

**Brought to You by  
"Food, What?!"**

**At the FoodWhat Farm--  
Base of UCSC**



**WHAT TO BRING:**  
1) YOUR APPETITE  
2) YOUR OUTDOOR VOICE  
3) YOUR OPINIONS

### ACTIVITIES:

\*EAT A RAINBOW FOOD TRUCK!

\*EAT STRAWBERRY TARTS FOR HEALTHY HEARTS!

\*FOOD JUSTICE WALL

\*DRINK STRAWBERRY SMOOTHIES-BIG UPS AND BIG CUPS!

\*WHAT YOU DRINK/WHAT YOU THINK- YOUTH DOLLAR POWER!

\*STRAWBERRY HARVEST-KICKIN' IT AND PICKIN' IT!

\*FAST FOOD JEOPARDY!

\*SEED BOMBS!

**THIS EVENT IS FREE!**



**The FoodWhat Farm is located on the UCSC farm.**

Check us out at [www.foodwhat.org](http://www.foodwhat.org)  
or call us at (831) 459-5476



## Strawberry Blast Event Planner Job Description & Expectations

**Congratulations! You are officially embarking on a journey to become a professional Event Planner.**

**An Event Planner is a lucrative, challenging, and exciting position. You are responsible for ensuring hundreds (and maybe someday, thousands) of people have an AWESOME experience at your event. Event Planners are responsible for putting together weddings, music festivals, concerts, street fairs, benefit dinners, and more. You are able to be a “visionary” and then watch your ideas come to life.**

**An Event Planner should be highly organized, flexible, have strong leadership skills and most importantly an ability to pay attention to detail. You are the one responsible for ensuring everything is in place when the doors open.**

**The average Event Planner makes \$46,000/annually. Most Event Planners receive a Bachelor’s Degree in Communications or Public Relations.**

---

**Together, we will be planning the annual Strawberry Blast for 300 local youth on May 28th, 2015. This event will spread awareness of Food Justice in our community.**

**You are responsible for everything from the visioning, to outreach, to press, to materials, to day-of execution. We will get more into what all of that means later.**

---

You are now an official employee of FoodWhat. You have proven yourself through your internship and Summer Job. This is the real deal. There are just a few rules for this position:

- 1. Good communication**
- 2. Strong work ethic**
- 3. Timely and present**

No standards movements on this job—just regular job style. The expectations are above—if you fall short you get a warning and then the next time you are let go. Over the summer you built all the job skills you need to succeed greatly in this position—time to put them to work!

## "Food, What?!" Employee Timesheet

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Month: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Week	TIME IN	TIME OUT	TOTAL HOURS	EXCUSED	UNEXCUSED
<b>Total Hours:</b>					

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor Signature Date



May 26, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to formally request an excused absence for **Uriel Reyes** to take a leadership role in putting on the “Food, What?!” Strawberry Blast.

On Thursday, May 28th, 2015, from 10am -12pm, “Food, What?!” is hosting the annual **Strawberry Blast: Youth Empowerment, Health, and Food Justice** event at the FoodWhat Farm at UCSC. This event was created to help tackle some of the serious health and justice issues facing teens. Organized by teens from the “Food What?!” program for Santa Cruz County middle and high school students, the event has two primary goals. The first is to open students’ awareness about where food comes from and to have a positive farm experience. The second goal is to learn about food justice and their personal health.

Uriel Reyes is currently a youth employee with “Food, What?!” and is helping to host this event for 200-300 Santa Cruz County students. As a youth empowerment program, “Food, What?!” strongly supports youth in their education. If participating in the Strawberry Blast would not negatively impact his school standing, please excuse Uriel from school on the morning of May 28<sup>th</sup> so that he can build his leadership skills and assist in hosting the Strawberry Blast.

The Strawberry Blast is hosted by "Food, What?!" in partnership with the Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems at UCSC, the Santa Cruz City Schools’ Wellness Committee, and the Santa Cruz County Office of Education.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 831.459.5476.

Thank you,

Doron Comerchero  
“Food, What?!” Director

## STRAWBERRY BLAST SUPPLIES AND STATIONS

**1. Front Gate:** sign for gate/ nametags/ garbage can/ table/ pens-markers/ parking permits/ map/ zips

- Attach sign on gate with white zips/set up table with maps and nametags and pens and recycling bin for nametag waste/parking passes in yellow envelope—\$3 each—write A pass and the date in black ink
- EVERYONE MAKES NAME TAG, GETS A MAP, AND THEN IN.

**2. Strawberry Area:** instructions sign/strawberry justicesigns

- put up sign/put strawberry justice signs in field—same sign in each row straight across, then next set 20' up/ take down ribbon keeping folks out of berries/\*\*when youth come, orient them first then send in "welcome—please pick 3 berries and eat them in the field...read the signs as you go... organic...enjoy eating a farm fresh berry...etc

**3. Food Justice Wall:** wood/paper/markers/duct tape/ facts—laminated

- set up wood against GH/tape sign to GH/ on wood tape green or white blank paper to entire board—then put fj definition at top—side by side justice issues (Oakland-SC, Miguel-Jose) and sprinkle with smaller laminated issues—write questions below laminated area/\*\*as youth step up—guide them thru the definition, the scenarios and then ENCOURAGE them to write their responses (This will be difficult—so really encourage them to write)—be sure to recollect markers

**4. Goats:** picnic table

**5. School Lunch:** napkins/white board or on truck saying "EAT A RAINBOW OF COLORS IN YOUR MEALS FOR OPTIMAL HEALTH!"

- Fran's truck parked in back. Needs Keyah, and Deonte, and one volunteer to start prepping veg at 8:30 am. Making veggie quesadillas. Cut into pieces, put on napkins, serve, and remind folks that they are "eating a rainbow"

**6. Grow Your Own Food:** pots/ potting mix/ lettuce starts/ water/ markers/ white stickers/ attach instructions

- process: try to get youth to come to your station!!—once there, they fill up a 4" pot with

soil, transplant a lettuce (or chard), put a directions sticker on, and water—they could put a white sticker on the other side with their name and pick theirs up on the way out (if they don't want to hold it)—please go over the how to care for your plant instructions in an engaging way

**7. Smoothies:** bike blender/ blenders/strawberries/ milk/honey/rice dream/ yogurt/ cups/spoons/power cords

- all your dairy and berries are in the kiwi cooler and the LL kitchen—please let youth know that when they're done with their cup to dispose of in the recycling container (Not to compost)/ try to prevent folks from getting seconds so there's enough for all

**8. Healthy Food Station:** strawberries/ yogurt/ crust in tin/spoons/towels/knives/bowls/cutting boards/ compost bucket

- set up your station as you see fit—have youth cut their berries, add yogurt, and then eat. Please encourage them to put their tins in the TIN recycling container next to the compost bin!!!

**9. What you drink what you think Workshop:** white board/markers/sugar/tsp/clear cup/drinks/calculator/ small table/drinks to taste?

**10. Fast Food Jeopardy:** board/ white board/ markers/ 2 stands/ strawberry prize—1 flat

**11. UCSC/Hartnell/Cabrillo Admissions:** table and pop tent

**12. Photobooth:** hay bails & pop tent

**13. MAH Pop UP:** table

**14. Watsonville Wetlands Watch:** table

**15. CAN Fair Trade:** table & 100 bananas

**16. Restroom Signage:** Put recycling signs on bins

**17. Signs with Arrows**—tape arrows to sandwich boards and place at turns from front to berries—add Body Funnel: info signs (laminated)—post along arrows

**18. Real Food Challenge**

**19. Trace Your Taco**



## Set-Up Plan

### Day of: (arrive at 7 am)

1. set up front gate—put up signs on fence, put up tables and markers
2. rope off strawberry field on both sides to prevent students from walking thru the field—need mallet/6 stakes/rope or twine
3. put arrows and laminated signs on picnic signs
4. put out tables and kits
5. set up workshops (FFJ-board/tripods/etc,—set up board for TYT, pin up all laminated pieces, and duct tape up questions)
6. put up pop tent for UCSC/Cabrillo stand

### Complete the above by 8:30am

7. Abby set up smoothie station & tart station, set out chairs for Uriel near greenhouse
8. Sig nage—goal is to have a white board or some sign indicating each station

### Volunteers come at 9 am

Orient volunteers

### Complete all the above by 9:30 am

### All stations ready and front gate staffed by 9:45 am

Event begins at 10 am

*All stations close at 11:30 am for students to do assignment with their schools. Please make sure to let station leaders know this during set up in the morning as well as give everyone a 10 minute heads up at 11:20 am if possible.*

## **VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENTS:**

**ENTRANCE:** Doron, Irene, Manny + Randolph

**STRAWBERRY HARVEST:** Tracy+ Bree

**TRACE YOUR TACO:** Uriel

**SMOOTHIES:** Leigh, Thaire, Miguel

**WHAT YOU DRINK, WHAT YOU THINK:** Aaliyah

**CAN FAIR TRADE:** [they will staff]

**UCSC AND CABRILLO ADMISSIONS:** Jennifer, Leah

**HEALTHY FOODS:** Abby + Gabby + Antonio

**FAST FOOD JEOPARDY:** Shin and Ollie

**CHICKENS:** Hannah + Warren

**WATSONVILLE WETLANDS WATCH:** (they will staff)

**POP UP-MAH:** (Emily and crew)

**RISING ROOT WELLNESS:** Rubi

**SEED BOMBS:** Nathan, Vicky

**PHOTOGRAPHER:** Nellie

**APPRENTICE FOLKS:** Leigh, Tracy, and Warren

### **FW ALUMS:**

Miguel

Antonio

Thairie

Gabby

Vicky

Bree?



**\*\*STRAWBERRY BLAST\*\*** A health and food justice experience for teens. Hosted by: "Food, What?!"

- ❖ **Where:** "Food,What?!" Farm at Life Lab on the UCSC Farm
- ❖ **When:** Friday, May 27th 10:00am-12:00pm
- ❖ **Who:** 300 students from public middle + high schools from across Santa Cruz County
- ❖ **Why:** So students make the connection between the farm and their food

What's up Santa Cruz County?! Ready for another great FoodWhat event?!! As the 2016 FoodWhat Youth Event Planners, we are excited to invite you to our annual Strawberry Blast!

The FoodWhat Strawberry Blast is an event for middle and high school students from across Santa Cruz County to come to the farm and join us for an unforgettable experience filled with hands-on activities, fresh fruit and ripe strawberries, and informative workshops.

Organized by youth for youth, this free event will feature bike-powered smoothies, Fast Food Jeopardy, strawberry tart making and much more! We hope these students will learn about our local food system and what goes into producing our food. We'll be joined by some of our community partners -- Watsonville Wetlands Watch, Greenways to School, Subjects to Change (from the Museum of Art and History) and more!

Come check out the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Strawberry Blast!

The Strawberry Blast is hosted by the FoodWhat Crew in partnership with the UCSC Farm and Garden, the Santa Cruz City Schools' Wellness Committee, the Santa Cruz County Office of Education, and the University of California's Global Food Initiative. Generous material support for this event donated by Straus Family Creamery, UCSC Farm, and Live Earth Farm.

We hope you will join us at the Strawberry Blast!

Youth Organizers: Manuel (17) and Grace (19)

Doron Comerchero Director-- "Food, What?!"

1156 High St. Santa Cruz CA 95064 -- [www.foodwhat.org](http://www.foodwhat.org) -- (831) 459-5476

SCAVENGER HUNT

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: Fill out each question below completely. There will be many stations at the Strawberry Blast for you to visit. Each one will help you answer one of the questions below, so be sure to visit EVERY station! Some will feed your stomach, some will feed your mind. Good Luck!!

1. **Farm Question:** What do you picture when you think of a farm? (Answer this one on your way to the farm.)

---

---

---

2. Think of what you ate for dinner last night. List which items in your meal came from a farm:

3. **Strawberry Harvest:** Imagine how hard farm workers work picking berries every day, 10 hours or more a day, for months...how much should they get paid to work that hard?

4. **Watsonville Wetlands Watch:** How can wetlands help clean up water pollution as it runs to the ocean?

5. **Watsonville Wetlands Watch:** What can aquatic insects tell us about the health of our waterways?

6. **Fair Trade:** What food or drink items do you buy that could be fair trade?

How does the farmer benefit, and how do you benefit, if you buy those fair trade foods or drinks?

---

---

---

7. **Wellness:** What does “self-care” mean? What are some ways you can practice self-care?

8. **Smoothies:** Describe how you made your smoothie without adding processed sugar (include the ingredients). Rate it on a scale from 1-10!

---

---

9. **Strawberry Tarts:** What did you expect when we said “Healthy Food” station? What did you actually experience?

---

---

10. **School lunch:** If you eat off campus, what are your lunch options that fuel your body in a healthy way? If you eat in the cafeteria, what are your favorite meals served?

---

---

11. **School lunch:** What do you think it means to “Eat A Rainbow”? Why is it important?

---

---

**12. Cabrillo/UCSC:** Do you want to go to college? If so, where?

---

**13. Cabrillo/UCSC:** What do you want to study?

**14. Cabrillo/UCSC:** Circle what you need to get in to your first choice college (circle as many as you need).

financial aid, good grades, volunteer work, get a recommendation, talk to a guidance counselor, fill out the application, take the SAT, get involved in extra curricular activities (like sports, arts, etc)

**15. Fast Food Jeopardy:** Name 2 facts you learned about fast food from the game.

---

**16. What You Drink/What You Think:** How can you tell how much sugar is in a drink?

---

**17. What You Drink/What You Think:** Name 3 effects of processed sugar on your body.

---

**18. What You Drink/What You Think:** What drinks do you spend your money on—and what are you voting for when you buy them?

---

**19. Seed Bombs:** Where will you throw your seed bomb?

---

**20. Seed Bombs:** How do seed bombs contribute to helping the environment?

---

**21. Trace Your Taco:** What are the issues around a Taco Bell taco?

---

---

---

**22. Trace Your Taco:** What's the difference between a Taco Bell taco and the FoodWhat taco?

---

---

---

**23. Speak Your Mind:** What new thing did you learn today and how will you use it to make a change in your life after this farm visit?

---

---

---

You're done. Great Job!)



**Instructions for Teachers**  
**Strawberry Blast 2016**  
**Friday May 27th, 10:00am-12:00pm**

Hello Educators! We welcome you and your students to the farm. We have an exciting, experiential and educational day prepared for you.

**There are two important details to know for this year's Strawberry Blast.**

1. Teachers/chaperones are asked to move with their designated group of ~5 to 15 students through each station (versus letting the students disperse). Our goal is to help ensure that the students visit each station to help solidify the learning objectives of the day. Please supply each student with a pen and the assignment before coming to the farm.
2. We will end the stations at 11:30 AM for teachers to "huddle up" with their group of students, find a comfortable place to sit, and review the assignment and their learning. You will have 30 minutes to do so and then head back to the front gate to get picked up. We hope this will further solidify each student's learning and experience from the event.

**Background:**

Using fun activities and the delicious red ripe organic strawberry, we will be tackling some serious health and justice issues for teens. This event is created by "Food What?!" teens for Santa Cruz County middle and high school students. This event has three goals: **To give students a positive farm experience, a personal connection with organic farming and healthy food, and educate them about food justice.**

Here are a few guidelines to help direct your students' experience while on this field trip:

1. **Assignment: Attached. The questions will require students to visit each "station" and will help them integrate the key learnings.**
2. **Event Flow:** Students will start by navigating from the front gate to the strawberry rows where they will harvest a strawberry. They will then follow the signs to the main event area. Once at the "Food, What?!" area there will be a number of stations for them to visit. They include:

Healthy Food Stations: strawberry smoothie making/eating, strawberry tart making/eating, and food truck (school lunch)

Food Justice and Health Stations: Trace Your Taco, Fair Trade, Fast Food Jeopardy, What You Drink What You Think (about label reading, drinks, and sugars), Button-Making & Food Stories, Watsonville Wetlands Watch, and Wellness Workshop.

College Admissions: UCSC and Cabrillo info tables

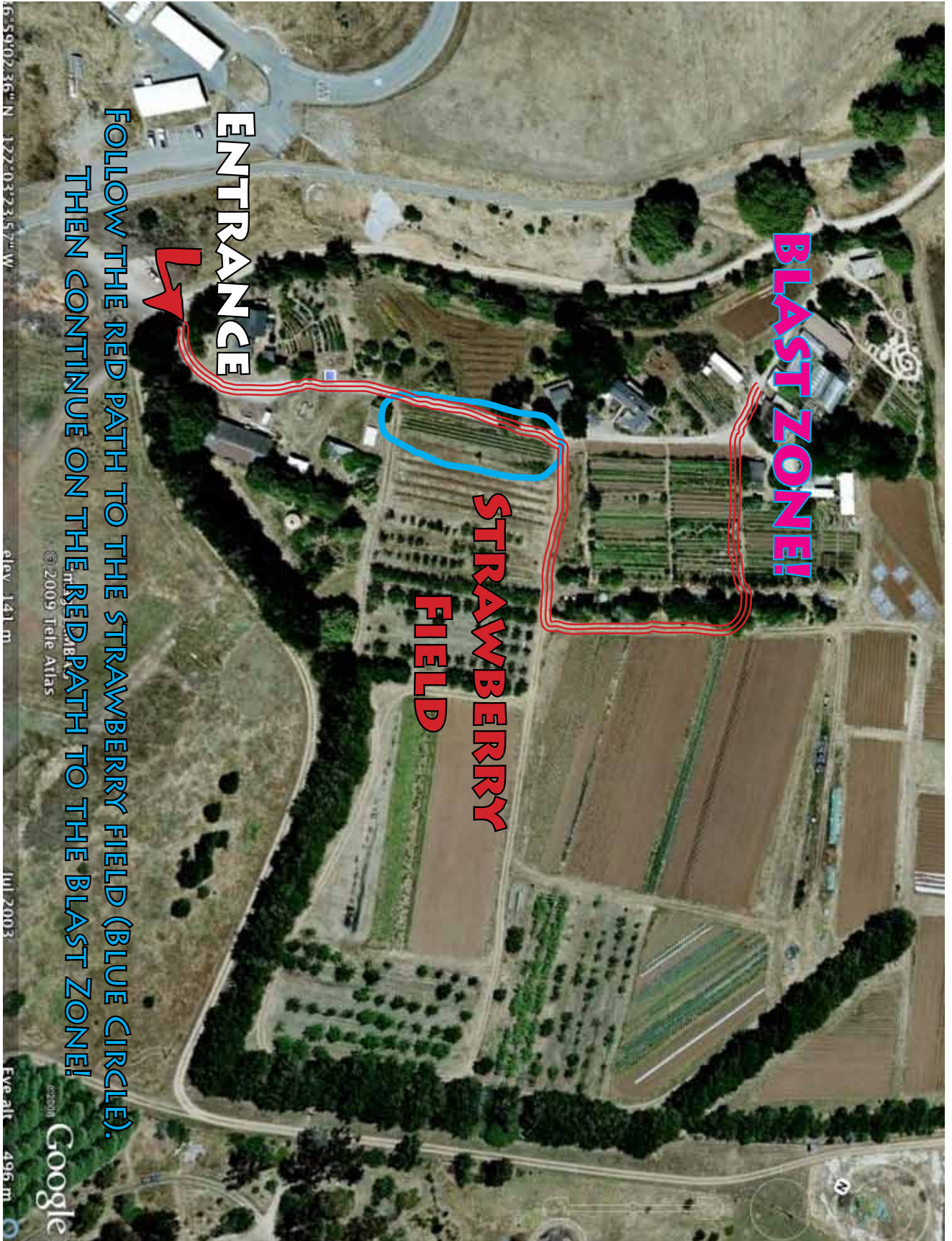
Other: Seed Bombs, Chickens, Photo Booth

3. Please stay with your group of students and help guide them to each station. There is no particular order. It is usually best to follow the interest of the group while ensuring that each station is visited.
4. Bathrooms will be labeled. There will be bathrooms in the wooden chalet along the main road and next to the Fast Food Jeopardy workshop.
5. Safety and First Aid: Please alert any of the station leaders if first aid is needed. Also, if there are any safety or behavior issues, please deal with them directly and/or notify a FoodWhat staff member (we will be wearing FoodWhat t-shirts).
6. Composting and Recycling: Please instruct students, when done, to recycle their cups in the recycling bin next to the smoothie station. There will also be a bin for used tins from the strawberry tarts.
7. Parking: Buses will drop off at the front gate and will park at the barn on the corner of Bay and High. Individual vehicles will be able to purchase a parking permit at the front gate of the farm for \$4 (please bring exact change) and can park on the dirt landing in front of the gate. (Bay becomes Coolidge on campus once High St. is crossed. Go to the second light and turn left on Hagar St. Shortly, turn left on Village Rd. Bear left and drive out of the opposite end of the parking lot. Cross the bike path and park on the dirt landing on the left side.)

We are very excited to host you! If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at [Partnership@foodwhat.org](mailto:Partnership@foodwhat.org) or call Irene (FoodWhat Program Manager) at 831.459.5476. Also, if your students want to submit any writing, photos, video, etc. to our blog after the event, please send it to us and we will happily post it on the web.

See you soon,  
Irene O'Connell  
Programs Manager—"Food, What?!"  
[www.foodwhat.org](http://www.foodwhat.org)  
831.459.5476

**FOOD WHAT?! is a youth empowerment and food justice program using food, through sustainable agriculture and health, as the vehicle for growing strong, healthy, and inspired teens. We partner with low-income and struggling youth to grow, cook, eat, and distribute healthy, sustainably raised food and address food justice issues in our community.**





DIRECTIONS: Go to each of the stations listed below – make something tasty or learn something interesting—and then check off the station on this list. Make sure you go to ALL the stations and check off each one!

**Trace Your Taco**

**WHAT YOU DRINK  
WHAT YOU THINK**

 **FAIR TRADE**

 **WWW**

 **Cabrillo College**

**Smoothies**

**SEED BOMBS** 

 **CHICKENS**

 **Healthy Foods**

 **RISING ROOT  
WELLNESS**

**FAST FOOD**  


**S2C MAH  
SUBJECTS2CHANGE**

This is an organic farm. There are no pesticides or chemicals sprayed on our strawberries (or any other crops).

Pop a strawberry in your mouth. How does it taste? How do you feel eating a fresh fruit right from the earth?

Most strawberries are grown using toxic chemicals like Methyl Bromide—how does this affect the environment? How does this affect the farm workers picking strawberries?

Imagine these strawberries were trucked to the other side of the country. How does shipping food across the country (or around the world) contribute to global warming?

How does your body feel bending over to pick a berry? Imagine how hard farm laborers work picking berries every day, 10 hours or more a day, for months...how much should they get paid to work that hard?

**DID YOU KNOW?**—California is the largest producer of strawberries grown in the United States

**DID YOU KNOW?**--Red fruits are good for your heart and memory

## Prepping Youth On Speaking With the Press:

Discuss with them the main questions to expect:

1. What is FoodWhat?
  - a. Avoid jargon → express the spirit of what we do in overview (emphasize justice & empowerment pieces)
  - b. What do *you* do specifically?
    - i. Can explain various program components → Spring, Summer, Fall
    - ii. Include info on diet – we cook fresh produce every day in summer, take home CSA shares, etc.
2. What's this event?
  - a. Explain what you want youth to get from attending your event
  - b. Personal stories add a lot
3. What does food justice mean?
  - a. Fair pay and treatment for farmworkers
  - b. Justice for producers and the Earth (growing organic on our farm)
  - c. Access to fresh and affordable food
4. What's your story?
  - a. Answer based on the context they provide – do they ask specifically about school, FoodWhat, home, etc?
  - b. Default: focus on how you got involved in FoodWhat and how you've grown from this experience
5. What is your role in this event?
  - a. Explain your job (Event Planner) and what you've done
6. General
  - a. Avoid being judgement-laden → no good/bad; don't just focus on organic, etc. – instead focus on access to healthy food for all people in our community
  - b. If you don't know the answer to something, say so
  - c. Feel free to take time to think about things; you don't have to respond immediately
  - d. The best stories are personal and speak the details → why is this important work to you?
7. Contextualize the importance of sharing with the press
  - a. Offers an opportunity for us (FoodWhat) to explain what we do in the community, and connects the community to the work we're doing → opportunity to grow our work/movement!
  - b. Also good on resumes, college applications, etc.

# Harvest Festival



- IN CONNECTION WITH -



**Thursday, October 29th, 2015  
10 AM - 12 PM**

**By Teens and For Teens**

**Brought to you by the "Food, What?!" Crew  
At the FoodWhat Farm--Base of UCSC**

**ACTIVITIES:  
FAST FOOD JEOPARDY!**

**PUMPKIN PAINTING!**

**APPLE PIE MAKING!**

**HAY RIDES!**

**APPLE TASTING WITH A SIDE  
OF JUSTICE!**

**POPCORN POPPING!**

**FOOD JUSTICE WORKSHOPS!**

**AND MUCH MORE!**

*This event is* **FREE**

CHECK US OUT AT  
[WWW.FOODWHAT.ORG](http://WWW.FOODWHAT.ORG) OR  
CALL 831-459-5476 FOR  
MORE INFORMATION AND  
FOR DIRECTIONS.



# *Harvest Festival Event Planner*

## **Job Description & Expectations**

**Congratulations! You are officially embarking on a journey to become a professional Event Planner.**

**An Event Planner is a lucrative, challenging, and exciting position. You are responsible for ensuring hundreds (and maybe someday, thousands) of people have an AWESOME experience at your event. Event Planners are responsible for putting together weddings music festivals, concerts, street fairs, benefit dinners, and more. You are able to be a “visionary” and then watch your ideas come to life.**

**An Event Planner should be highly organized, flexible, have strong leadership skills and most importantly an ability to pay attention to detail. You are the one responsible for ensuring everything is in place when the doors open.**

**The average Event Planner makes \$46,000/annually. Most Event Planners receive a Bachelor’s Degree in Communications or Public Relations.**

---

**Together, we will be planning the annual Harvest Festival for 300 countywide youth on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015. This event will spread awareness of Food Justice in our community.**

**You are responsible for everything from the visioning, to outreach, to press, to material to day-of execution. We will get more into what all of that means later.**

---

You are now an official employee of FoodWhat. You have proven yourself through your internship and Summer Job. This is the real deal. There are just a few rules for this position:

- 1. Good communication**
- 2. Strong work ethic**
- 3. Timely and present**

No standards movements on this job—just regular job style. The expectations are above—if you fall short you get a warning and then the next time you are let go. Over the summer you built all the job skills you need to succeed greatly in this position—time to put them to work!

## "Food, What?!" Employee Timesheet

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Month: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Week	TIME IN	TIME OUT	TOTAL HOURS	EXCUSED	UNEXCUSED
<b>Total Hours:</b>					

Employee Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



RE: Harvest Festival  
Thursday October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
Student Participation

Dear School Administration,

This Thursday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, from 10am-12noon, FoodWhat will be hosting our annual Harvest Festival in conjunction with National Food Day for 250 Santa Cruz County middle and high school students. FoodWhat is a youth empowerment, job training, and food justice program for teens countywide. One of your students, \_\_\_\_\_, is currently part of our program and has been asked to take a leadership role for this event. This letter is to request their participation that morning to put on the event and offer peer-to-peer education. If permitted, they would be asked to come directly to the farm by 9am that morning and would return with their fellow students attending the event after the Harvest Festival concludes.

If this is in any way a conflict with their academics, we will not expect them that day and will work to find a replacement to take on those given responsibilities. If it is possible to attend, this event and their role in it, will prove to be a great learning tool and experience.

Please feel free to call on me with any questions or concerns.

Doron Comerchero

Director—“Food, What?!”  
Partnership@foodwhat.org  
831.459.5476  
[www.foodwhat.org](http://www.foodwhat.org)



### Front Entrance

- maps/name tags/markers/long table
- big sign—duct tape corners and attach to fence with zipties

### Cider

- set up press
- cups/pitchers/strainer
- boxes of apples in apprentice cooler
- 2 wheelbarrows there for apple mush

### Apple Pie

- crusts/apple filling
- bucket of water for washing apples
- set up 2-3 peeler cores
- 2 bowls and scooping devices needed
- 2 pots, wooden spoon
- tin recycling bin (please announce to students)
- get apples from apprentice and kiwi cooler
- check propane
- move stove to new location and 3 tables from GateHouse
- hand washing station/hand sanitizer
- compost bucket
- bucket/bin for washing apples with vinegar
- cutting boards
- 1 sharp knife
- towels

### Pumpkin Harvest

- signs that say this is an organic farm....etc



### **Pumpkin Painting**

- pin tablecloths down (pin underside of tables)
- brushes
- water in bowls
- paints in bowls

### **Popcorn**

- extension cords—from brown trailer next to kiwi cooler
- 2 poppers from LL kitchen/extension cords
- 2 big bowls/ladle
- brown bags
- toppings (nutritional yeast, salt, dill, lavender salt, cayenne)
- Popcorn from FW or Farm
- table

### **Apple Tasting**

- apples from up (confirm with Up 2<sup>nd</sup>)
- toothpicks
- paper to make sign
- table
- apple corers
- cutting boards
- wheelbarrow for compost
- sign with apple facts

**Bees/Honey**

- very informal station with folks dropping in to chat about bees
- offer honey tasting on the finger
- 3 honey bears
- laminated bee cards and other props

**Hay Ride**

- get 2 hay bales for the cart
- put sign on big board
- try to keep line organized and safe
- encourage line folks to get a bag a popcorn for the ride

**Goats****Chickens**

- very informal chat about chickens and holding them

**CAN Fair Trade**

- Bananas
- Table

**UCSC/ Cabrillo**

- Flyers for UCSC
- Flyers for Cabrillo



Press-Release:™™™

- **What: “Food, What?!” Harvest Festival**
- **Where: “Food, What?!” Farm on UCSC campus**
- **When: Thursday, October 29<sup>th</sup> 10:00am-12:00pm**
- **Who: 300 students from public middle + high schools from all of Santa Cruz County**
- **Goal: To teach students about their Local Food System, how food brings people together, teach them how to eat healthier, and increase their knowledge of food justice.**

It's going to be totally radical and incredibly well planned of an event this year! This fun and educational event will be filled with activities and plenty of delicious food to lick off your fingers! Students will have plenty of unique opportunity to visit a local farm and learn about healthy eating, where food comes from, bringing people together with healthy food, and food justice.

In connection with nationwide Food Day, this year will be more focused on community revolved around food and justice for food and farmworkers. We're excited to offer a multitude of awesome and engaging workshops, such as: Apple Tasting With a Side of Justice, button-making workshop led by youth from Subjects to Change Teen Program, Apple Pie Making, Food Justice Wall, and Fast Food Jeopardy.

This event is organized and led by “Food, What?!” (youth empowerment organization) in close partnership with the Wellness Committee of Santa Cruz City Schools and the UCSC Farm and Garden.

We're excited for this year's event!

Olvaerr Apodaca (Ponderosa High School graduate) & Briana Tapia (Pajaro Valley High School)

“Food, What?!” Event Planners

(For more information, please contact Doron Comerchero, FoodWhat Director at 831-459-5476 or [doron@foodwhat.org](mailto:doron@foodwhat.org))



SCAVENGER HUNT

Name \_\_\_\_\_

YO, STUDENT! YOU CAN COME TO THE FARM AND HAVE FUN, OR YOU COULD HAVE FUN AND LEARN SOMETHING FROM THIS OPPORTUNITY THAT COULD TEACH YOU HELPFUL INFORMATION. I CHALLENGE YOU TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE AND GO TO EACH STATION AND LEARN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN AND HAVE FUN. LET'S SEE HOW MANY QUESTIONS YOU CAN ANSWER!!!

**-BRIANA AND OLVAERR (FOODWHAT YOUTH EVENT PLANNERS)**

Instructions: Fill out each question below completely. There will be many stations at the Harvest Festival for you to visit. Each one will help you answer one of the questions below, so **be sure to visit EVERY station!** Some will feed your stomach; some will feed your mind. Good Luck!!

1. Farm Question: What do you picture when you think of a farm? (Answer this one on your way to the farm.)

---



---

2. Think of what you ate for dinner last night. List which items in your meal came from a farm:

---

3. Where did your pumpkin come from today? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What does it mean for a farm to be organic? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Fast Food Jeopardy: Name 2 facts you learned about fast food from the game.

---

6. Food Justice Wall: what is food justice?

---

7. Trace Your Taco: What are the many issues in a Taco Bell taco?

---



---

8. What You Drink/What You Think: How can you tell how much sugar is in a drink?

---

9. What You Drink/What You Think: Name 3 effects of processed sugar on your body.

---

10. What You Drink/What You Think: What drinks do you spend your money on—and what are you voting for when you buy them?

---

11. Apple Cider Pressing: How much added sugar did you put in the apple cider to make it sweet? \_\_\_\_\_



12. Thank Your Farmer Campaign: What are some of the challenges farmers face?

---

13. Thank Your Farmer Campaign: What can you do to support your local farmer?

---

14. Fair Trade: What food or drink items do you buy that could be fair trade? \_\_\_\_\_ How does the farmer benefit, and how do you benefit, if you buy those fair trade foods or drinks?

---

15. School Lunch: If you eat off campus, what are your lunch options that fuel your body in a healthy way? If you eat in the cafeteria, what are your favorite meals served?

---

16. UCSC/Cabrillo: Do you want to go to college? Where?

17. UCSC/Cabrillo: What do you want to study? \_\_\_\_\_

18. UCSC/Cabrillo: Circle what you need to get in to your first choice college (circle as many as you need)?

Financial aid, good grades, volunteer work, get a recommendation, talk to a guidance counselor, fill out the application, take the SAT, get involved in extra curricular activities (like sports, arts, etc)

19. Apple Pie Making: What's the difference between a FoodWhat Apple Pie, and a Burger King or McDonald's Apple Pie? \_\_\_\_\_

20. What are threats to our local Watsonville wetlands? \_\_\_\_\_

21. Apple Tasting: How many apple varieties are grown in the US? \_\_\_\_\_

22. Why do most people only know about the Red Delicious apple? \_\_\_\_\_

23. Does a hen (female) need a rooster (male) to lay eggs? \_\_\_\_\_

24. What's one change you want to make to be sure you have a successful and happy life? \_\_\_\_\_

25. Before today's festival, did you know anything about nationwide Food Day? What do you think it means to be part of a movement? Are you part of one?

---

26. 2015 Food Day is focused on food access and justice for food and farm workers. How can we as youth make positive changes in our communities around these issues?

---

27. Speak Your Mind: What new thing did you learn today and how will you use it to make a change in your life after this farm visit?

---

---

(You're done. Great Job!)



## Instructions for Teachers

### Harvest Festival 2015

Thursday October 29th, 10:00am-12:00pm

Hello Educators! We welcome you and your students to the farm. We have an exciting, experiential and educational day prepared for you.

#### **There are two important details to know about for this year's Harvest Festival.**

1. Teachers/chaperones are asked to move with their designated group of ~15 students through each station (versus letting the students disperse). Our goal is to help ensure that the students visit each station to help solidify the learning objectives of the day. Please supply each student with a pen and the assignment.
2. We will end the stations at 11:30 AM for teachers to “huddle up” with their 15 students, find a comfortable place to sit, and review the assignment and their learning. You will have 30 minutes to do so and then head back to the front gate to get picked up.

#### Background:

Using fun activities and the bounty of the harvest, we will be tackling some serious health and justice issues for teens. This event is created by “Food What?!” teens for Santa Cruz County middle and high school students. This event has four goals: **To teach students about their local food system, how food brings people together, how to eat healthier, and increase their knowledge of food justice.**

Here are a few guidelines to help direct your students' experience while on this field trip:

1. **Assignment: Attached. The questions will require students to visit each “station” and will help them integrate the key learning’s.**
2. **Event Flow:** Students will start by navigating from the front gate to the pumpkin patch where they will select a pumpkin. They will then follow the signs to the main event area. Once at the “Food, What?!” area there will be a number of stations for them to visit. They include:
  - Healthy Food Stations: cider pressing, apple pie making, bees/honey, apple tasting, popcorn
  - Food Justice and Health Stations: Food Justice Wall, Fair Trade, Fast Food Jeopardy, What You Drink What You Think, Thank Your Farmer Campaign, Button-Making & Food Stories, Food Day Photo Booth
  - College Admissions: info table by UCSC and Cabrillo
  - Other Activities: Fruit Salad game, Goats, Watsonville Wetlands Watch,
  - Seasonal Activities: pumpkin painting, chickens, hayride

[www.foodwhat.org](http://www.foodwhat.org)



3. Please stay with your group of students and help guide them to each station. There is no particular order. It is usually best to follow the interest of the group while ensuring that each station is visited.
4. Bathrooms will be labeled. There will be a bathroom behind the gatehouse building.
5. Safety and First Aid: Please alert any of the station leaders if first aid is needed. Also, if there are any safety or behavior issues, please deal with them directly and/or notify a FoodWhat staff member (we will be wearing FoodWhat tee-shirts).
6. Composting and Recycling: Please instruct students, when done, to rip up their paper cup and leave in the grey compost unit next to the chickens. There will also be a bin for used tins from the apple pies.
7. Parking: Buses will drop off at the front gate and will park at the barn on the corner of Bay and High. Individual vehicles will be able to purchase a parking permit at the front gate of the farm for \$3 (please bring exact change) and can park on the dirt landing in front of the gate. (Bay becomes Coolidge on campus once High St. is crossed. Go to the second light and turn left on Hagar St. Shortly, turn left on Village Rd. Bear left and drive out of the opposite end of the parking lot. Cross the bike path and park on the dirt landing on the left side.)

We are very excited to host you. If you have any questions, please feel free to email at [doron@foodwhat.org](mailto:doron@foodwhat.org) or call 831.459.5476. Also, if your students want to submit any writing, photos, video, etc. to our blog after the event, please send it to us and we will happily post it on the web.

See you soon,  
Doron Comerchero  
Director—"Food, What?!"  
[www.foodwhat.org](http://www.foodwhat.org)  
831.459.5476

FOODWHAT is a youth empowerment and food justice organization using food, through sustainable agriculture and health, as the vehicle for growing strong, healthy, and resilient teens. We partner with low-income and struggling youth to grow, cook, eat, and distribute healthy, sustainably raised food and address food justice issues in our community.





DIRECTIONS: Go to each of the stations listed below – make something tasty or learn something interesting—and then check off the station on this list. Make sure you go to ALL the stations and check off each one!

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> popcorn   | <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR TRADE         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOATS   | <input type="checkbox"/> WHAT YOU DRINK<br>WHAT YOU THINK  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/> Thank A Farmer  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apple Pie Making  | <input type="checkbox"/>                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> WATSONVILLE WETLANDS WATCH  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trace Your Taco   | <input type="checkbox"/> APPLE CIDER PRESSING  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAST FOOD  | <input type="checkbox"/> <br>Button Making |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apple TASTING   | <input type="checkbox"/>  CHICKENS and BEES |