

MIFMA BOOT CAMP II
COMMUNITY COLLABORATION
March 10, 2009

NORTHVILLE'S MARKET BASKET

(This information was originally presented as a skit, so just the highlights are bulleted here.)

In order to effectively think about Community Collaboration in regards to the Farmers' Market, we first must define "community". Is "community" the actual small town or area served by the market? Or is "community" a regional area, the state, country, international, or the planet?

Northville's Market Basket contains several ideas that we have found successful in creating interaction with various "communities". Perhaps some will work for you.

MEDIA:

- **Local newspaper:** We buy advertising several times during the season. In return, the paper runs features and pictures from the Market.
- **MIFMA** in collaboration with our Market, has been working with the Detroit Free Press FOOD editors to feature more farmers' market articles. During 2008, the Free Press doubled the number of features and featured destination markets all over the state.

CHILDREN:

Many markets have special children's days and events during the season, and have great ideas. Our Market Basket contains:

- **Weekly trivia questions** are posted for children, although our senior citizens enjoy them, too. Some days it's just a question, other days it could be quest for a specific plant or vegetable, or to taste something.
- **Top Banana** is a banana with google eyes that "hides" in plain sight in a different stall at our Market each week. There is no prize for finding it, only cheers when a child discovers it.

- **Coloring pictures** are always available from the Market Manager. We have an art gallery bulletin board which displays finished pictures that are returned. We also display photos and letters from adults.
- **Local schools** prepare informational booklets for parents on “what to do this summer”. We collaborate with several school systems to publish information about the Market.
- **Class tours and scavenger hunts** can always be booked.
- **Community service hours** are available for National Honor Society, and Scouts.
- **KIDZ BIZ** is a business opportunity for kids aged 9 to 15 to have a stall and a business at the Market. They must submit a business plan, advertising & marketing ideas, do their own accounting and submit a profit/loss statement. Participants are supervised by an adult over age 30.

DESTINATION:

- We contacted local independent living communities that have bus services and set up days that they come to the Market.
- Several travel agencies in Indiana and Ohio have contacted us, and we have become a tour stop on their senior bus trips.

BOOK WORMS:

- Once per season we partner with a local bookstore, and have a book signing at the Market - Michigan authors, of course!

GOOD FOR YOU!

- When a large new hospital opened in our area, we collaborated with their staff to provide a small farmers’ market as part of their Grand Opening Celebration.
- The hospital provided a bi-weekly program at the Market, GOOD FOR YOU, which showcased something different each session; healthy foods, recipes and samples, displays, active participation in yoga, stretching or aerobics.

CHEFS AT THE MARKET:

- Once a month a local chef presents a program including a walkthrough of the Market to discuss selecting fresh ingredients, a demonstration of preparing the recipe, pre-made samples, and recipe cards featuring the restaurant, the chef, and the vendors who carry produce for the recipe.

DIG IT!

- This program is in response to customer requests. It's a monthly garden program featuring a variety of topics and hands-on projects. Our Master Gardeners are assisting with this, as well as vendors and local businesses.

HUNGER:

- Regionally, our vendors donate to Forgotten Harvest Food Bank
- Locally, our Master Gardeners have set up a collection station at the Market for fresh produce to go to the local Civic Concern Food Bank in Northville. Customers at the Market can buy extra to donate, and community gardeners are encouraged to plant and contribute extras.

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

- Locally, we provide separate containers for soda can recycling in our Food Court. The tabs on the cans are donated to a Ronald McDonald House, and the cans have been donated to local Scouts, and the high school band fund-raising efforts.
- We partnered with one of our vendors to produce reusable fabric shopping bags for Market use.
- A collection area has been set up for the large yellow lemonade cups used by our vendor. The cups are sanitized and used for a craft project featuring recycled objects.

PEACE, LOVE AND PLANET

- To help preserve and protect our global community, our Market pioneered a garden pot recycling project that is expanding daily. In the first year, with minimal advertising, we recycled over 650 pounds of plastic pots and flat trays that our local recycling company is unable to handle at this time. More than half of those plastics were returned to their growers for re-use. A non-profit organization PEACE, LOVE & PLANET developed from this venture, and this year has four pot recycling stations in the area. For more information: www.peaceloveandplanet.com.

Community Collaboration efforts can be both large and small, and the rewards to the Market are invaluable.

What kind of community collaboration is your Farmers' Market involved in?

If you have questions or would like to discuss ideas, please contact me:

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