Strength to Love II: Enhancing program operations and outcomes of a community-based urban farm

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Strength to Love II

Intersectio of Change is a community-based nonprofit focused on community development in west Baltimore. The organization is dedicated to providing programs that enrich the economic, social and spiritual lives of those dealing with poverty related issues in the Sandtown-Winchester, Upton and surrounding communities.

In 2016, Intersection of Change incorporated the Strength to Love II program which operates an urban farm and serves ex-offenders returning to the community from incarceration. The farm entails 14 greenhouses totaling 1.5 acres, addresses community food apartheid issues, and offers employment to ex-offenders.

Strength to Love II's primary customers are Baltimore restaurants and the residents of Sandtown-Winchester. They are a local urban farm that serves the west Baltimore area and Baltimore City in general. They also have numerous restaurant partnerships between Baltimore to Washington DC. The farm attempts to reduce the food apartheid issue in the area by supplying fresh produce to local communities.

Scholar Activities and Accomplishments

Aims 1 & 2:

A farm manual and handbook were created with the help of the farm manager in order to provide easily accessible information to volunteers and workers on the farm. The manual contains detailed information about the farm, the equipment used and the harvesting procedures, while the handbook takes a bigger-picture stance and provides a condensed overview of the farm and the main Q&As. Volunteers reviewed and edited both.

Aim 3:

Harvesting Excel sheets were analyzed by month

Profitability and productivity suggestions based on findings

Lessons Learned

- Active and open communication is key to efficiency and trust.
- Everyone is busy, so it is important to be flexible and adapt to changing circumstances.
- It is very important to review and analyze the past in order to streamline and optimize current operations.
- Having different people review something can really help ensure consistency, accuracy, and can provide different ideas and perspectives not previously thought of.

Moving Forward

- Implementation of recommendations for greater profitability of the farm.
- Increased community engagement to enhance awareness of the farm and decrease vandalism.
- Weekly farm stand to sell produce directly to community members.

Acknowledgements & Contact Information

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