



Recipes for Successful Partnerships: Cook the Kit



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Description: Have you ever had a program evolve from something good into something great? The Chippewa River District Library did when they partnered with Mt. Pleasant Farmers' Market to offer their patrons a free monthly cooking kit and supported sustainable foods. Each Cook the Kit included everything needed to make a featured dish: recipe, pantry ingredients, and a voucher to purchase farm-fresh produce ingredients while at the farmers market. Cook the Kit was also sponsored in part by McLaren Health Plan.

What is Cook the Kit?

- Recipe
- Ingredients
- Vouchers
- Registration

The screenshot shows the website interface for 'Cook the Kit: Brussels Sprouts'. At the top, there are navigation links: 'HOURS & LOCATIONS', 'SUPPORT THE LIBRARY', and 'MY ACCOUNT'. Below these are 'READ & WATCH', 'ATTEND', 'EXPLORE', 'RESEARCH', and 'CONNECT'. A search bar is also present. The main content area features the title 'COOK THE KIT: BRUSSELS SPROUTS' and the date 'OCT 6 Thursday, October 6, 2022' with the time '7:30am - 2:00pm'. It includes a 'PROGRAM TYPE: Health & Wellness' and 'AGE GROUP: Adults, Everyone, Kids, Teens, High School'. A note states 'Please note you are looking at an event that has already happened.' and 'Registration for this event is no longer open.' There is a 'PROGRAM DESCRIPTION' section and a 'LOCATION DETAILS' section with a map showing the location at Mt. Pleasant. The background of the page features a collage of images related to the program, including a 'Cook the Kit' logo, a 'McLaren HEALTH PLAN' logo, and various food items like 'Syrup' and 'INGREDIENTS'.



The logo for Chippewa River District Library features three stylized green trees above wavy blue lines representing water. Below the logo, the text reads 'CHIPPEWA RIVER DISTRICT LIBRARY'. Underneath, the location 'Mt. Pleasant' is written in a large, blue, cursive font, with a green box containing the text 'meet here' positioned below it.

Share sample kit: Recipe, Ingredient List, Sign-Up, Ingredients, Stickers, Vouchers

How did Cook the Kit come to be?

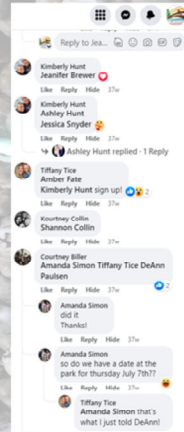
- **COVID-19 Impacts In-Person Programming**
- **Family Bake Night Kits**
- **Fresh Ingredient Option**
- **Cost Savings**



Family Bake Night
Cost Savings – Partnering with Certified Kitchen

Market Perspective

- Broaden Audience
- Eating Local
- Vendor Support



Diverse Audience

- Promoting beyond our individual user groups
- Enjoyed by all socio-economic groups
- Food security
- Multi-generational participation
- New participants each kit



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While the number of kits distributed to individuals/families was 550, we had an even greater reach by sharing the recipe with all market shoppers and offering upwards of 120 samples of each Cook the Kit Recipe through the cooking demonstration at both Thursday and Saturday markets.

Success – Tasted So Good

- Positive feedback
- Vendor stories
- Sponsor satisfaction
- Supported eating local & sustainable foods



Cook the Kit – 2022 Event Summary

Month	Cook the Kit	Pre-Registered	Kits Distributed	Kit - \$	Market - \$	Market Produce Ingredients
June	Asparagus Goat Cheese Flat Bread	30	100	\$77.00		\$128.60
July	Berries & Angel Food Cake	11 on website	100	\$59.28		\$83.82
August	French Onion & Waffles	95	100	\$109.08		\$43.74
September	Baked Eggplant	80	100	\$12.64		\$542.38
October	Roasted Brussels Sprouts with Butternut Squash	90	100	\$99.05		\$487.00
					\$275.54 (Storage bins, paper bags, cups, etc.)	
Totals	6 Kits	314 Pre-Registered	500 Kits Distributed	\$1,196.12		\$1,085.54



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One example of how we accomplished the goals of the Cook the Kit program was apparent with the Baked Eggplant Recipe. Bill Kehoe from Udder Bliss Farm shared that he had several shoppers express to him that prior to using the Cook the Kit vouchers they had never tried eggplant before and were looking forward to preparing the recipe and tasting it. Bill said the following week these same shoppers returned to his stand and commented how they liked the eggplant. And to take it a step further they utilized their own money to purchase eggplant from him again.

Lessons Learned

- **Registration time frame**
- **Availability of produce**
- **Kit assembly**
- **Tracking new participants**
- **Unclaimed kits**
- **Being intentional**



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Registration filling up in approximately 12 hours.

With each recipe we were able to evaluate the program. One adaptation we made was to shift the opening of pre-registration of the current recipe to three weeks prior. This update allowed new individuals the opportunity to participate. Another lesson learned during the Cook the Kit distribution process was that supply ran short for both Eggplant and Brussels Sprouts. Shoppers were understanding and happy to be able to pick up the items their next visit to the market as vouchers were redeemable all season.

Sponsor – McLaren Health Plan wanting to know how many participants were new with each kit. Tracking in place.

Staff Time – Assembling Kits, Green Tree packaging spices.

Unclaimed Kits – Phone Call Reminders, E-mail Reminder

Running out of ingredients, no longer available choose replacement update ingredient listing

Looking to the Future

- **Increase funding = Increase impact**
- **Native Farmers Market**
- **Central Michigan University New Farmers Market**



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Farmers Market Collaborations

- Storytime @ park
- Book Bike
- Live performers
- Kids & Culture
- Storywalk



League of Women Voter trivia questions in combination with Voices & Votes Democracy in America Smithsonian's Museum on Main Street traveling exhibit, Michigan Humanities Council

Parks & Recreation Collaborations

- Thrilling Thursdays
- Kids & Culture
- Summer Reading Club Kick Off
- Under the Big Top
- Permanent Story Walk – coming soon
- Teen Lock-in
- International Games Week



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