

**CITY FRESH  
FRESH STOP:  
COMMUNITY OWNER'S MANUAL  
VERSION 1.0**



**CONTAINS JUST ENOUGH INFORMATION FOR YOU TO START TO GROW A FRESH STOP IN YOUR OWN NEIGHBORHOOD.**

**DISCLAIMER! THIS MANUAL IS BY NO MEANS DEFINITIVE.**

**IT IS NOT A BIBLE.**

**NOTHING IS FIXED.**

**WE FULLY EXPECT THAT YOU WILL HELP RE-WRITE IT AS WE CAPTURE AND LEARN FROM YOUR INNOVATIONS THROUGHOUT**

**THE GROWING SEASON.**

**(FIRST TAKE PENNED BY BRAD MASI WITH HELP FROM THE CITY FRESH TEAM OF ALL OF YOU**



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# FRESH STOP FENG-SHUI

## *How It All Flows Together*

We start with **the glaciers** which left behind an 80 foot thick layer of glacial till. Till includes an assortment of mineral deposits that remained after the glaciers melted. The glaciers also impacted the formation of Lake Erie which had its own influence on shaping the Lake Plain soils and the old sandy beach ridges which support many of the historical farms and orchards in Northeast Ohio. Glacial till is a deep and forgiving soil that tends to be heavy on clay and in need of lots of organics to become productive (unless, of course, you want to run a pottery business). Upon this geological legacy, we find the deciduous forests and wetlands that dominated the region before settlement. We keep forests and wetlands in mind as the more primitive food systems that sustained a lot of life before the settlement. We continue to find ways to broaden our definition of food systems to include the wild plants and animals of this area.



Amid this backdrop of ecological history, we find the people who have worked the soil, or till the till as it may be. City Fresh maintains regular communications with farmers to track what they have available. Communication takes the form of e-mail, cell phone, and (in the case of our Amish suppliers), post cards. The **Fresh Stop farmers** receive orders early each week based on the number of share reservations each week. They pick their food the night before and morning of each Fresh Stop to insure the freshest possible quality.

**Farmers supplying City Fresh** come from both the city and the country. They include fifth generation farmers, neighborhood youth, recent college graduates, retirees, hobby farmers, and full-time farmers.

City Fresh organizes **cooperative distribution hubs**. The hubs provide the consolidation point for all produce. Some produce is brought in by urban gardeners or rural farmers. City Fresh also owns and operates a diesel box truck which goes to more remote Amish farms to collect produce to bring to the city. Remember Back to the Future 2 when Matthew J. Fox loads garbage into a futuristic car? The City Fresh box truck isn't too far from running off of "garbage". As in nature, what is considered one organism's waste is another organism's fuel. The box truck will operate on waste oil collected from Case Western, Oberlin, and other sources. When not using waste oil, the truck will use bio-diesel to create a distribution system that is independent of fossil-fuel energy.

The distribution hubs are run by community volunteers and City Fresh youth. Hubs for 2007 Fresh Stops will be located in Lorain County, Urban Community School (Cleveland West-Side) and Slavic Village (Cleveland East Side).

After being sorted and counted, the produce is prepared for delivery or pick-up to each **Fresh Stop location**. From there, the cycle is completed. Happy neighbors interact with food, children, and others and take home a bulging bag full of homegrown goodies, much of which was picked that day!

As a final step, hopefully the **waste scraps will be composted** and used in a backyard garden or given to a neighborhood community garden or market garden.

# WHAT THE HECK IS A FRESH STOP?

When you visit your neighborhood Fresh Stop, you connect with a larger community of friends, including your neighbors, the gardener down the street, the farmer in the next county, the youth of the city.

Fresh Stops are not part of a chain store, owned and operated from another state. Fresh Stops are owned and managed by people that you know who care about the health of our communities and our region.

The suppliers of Fresh Stops are not giant mega farms from halfway across the world with genetically-modified crops, heavy chemicals, and poor working conditions. The suppliers of City Fresh are in your neighborhood, in your city, and in your region. They include youth, recent college graduates, Amish farmers, fifth generation family farmers, and retirees. They include traditional farmers and urban growers.

Fresh Stops represent more than just another place to drop in and get your food. They represent an invitation to build an alternative food system rooted in community,

Fresh Stops represent consumers who value locally grown, high quality, fresh fruits and vegetables. City Fresh foods are colorful, plentiful and nutritious. The City Fresh food buyer is meticulous and deftly at his craft of buying the best for our food bags or "shares" as they're called. Shares are affordable and accessible to anybody who wants to invest in supporting local farmers, be they teenagers down the block or a fifth generation family farmer in the next county.

Fresh Stops also provide community education through weekly nutrition education programs and bi-lingual recipes, food handling tips, and nutritional facts. Fresh Stops also provide educational events, from chef demonstrations, farmer meet-and-greets, and even digital videos.

Fresh Stops offer a variety of functions for a neighborhood. They support commerce and exchange between local farmers and consumers. They offer a social gathering space and opportunities for youth, adults, and elders to interact. Fresh Stops express the unique cultural values of each neighborhood that they serve. Unlike a fast-food franchise which looks, feels, and smells the same everywhere in the world, each Fresh Stop will function differently, shaped by the creativity, history, and interests of its host neighborhood.



Overall, Fresh Stops support health in the broadest sense of the word: healthy land, healthy individuals, healthy communities, and a healthy economy.

Some people ask: Is a Fresh Stop a Farmers' Market? Is it a buying cooperative? Is it a community-supported agriculture program? A Fresh Stop combines elements of all three of these to create something new, flexible, fun, and funky. See the box on the next page to see how the Fresh Stop incorporates each of these areas.

### *IS A FRESH STOP A BUYING COOPERATIVE?*

A buying cooperative usually consists of a group of consumers that get together to form a larger purchasing block. Buying cooperatives can be as small as 10 people distributing food in someone's basement or as large as a retail grocery store. Buying cooperatives have members who all receive voting power, participate in decision-making, and receive a share of profits at the end of the year. A Fresh Stop is like a buying cooperative in that a group of neighbors get together each week to pool their resources to purchase a "share" of each week's harvest coming off of the farms or neighborhood gardens. A Fresh Stop does not require membership, but Fresh Stop shareholders can participate in helping to operate their Fresh Stop. Fresh Stops can even evolve to become a cooperative if the Fresh Stop shareholders wish to formalize that arrangement or create a more formal cooperative structure that includes membership, by-laws, and community ownership.

### *IS A FRESH STOP A FARMERS MARKET?*

A farmers' market is an open-air market where farmers have a canopy or booth to sell products directly to the customer. Typically, farmers are charged a weekly or annual vending fee to participate in the market. A Fresh Stop offers the feel of a farmers market in that produce is displayed openly and in a colorful manner. Most Fresh Stops have open-air canopies and invite people to linger, chat, and touch the produce.

Fresh Stops differ from farmers markets in that food is purchased directly from the farmer and then delivered directly to the customer through a limited distribution system. For many farmers, farmers' markets represent a significant time commitment because they have to harvest all of their food, transport it to the market, operate their stand for several hours, and then figure out what to do with the remaining food that is not sold. While farmers receive retail prices, they do devote a lot of man-hours to operating a stand. We find that for some farmers, this means less time with their families and their farms. For some farmers, such as Amish farmers, access to most farmers' markets is not an option due to transportation limitations.

Fresh Stops provide an alternative for farmers who benefit from consistent prices without having to devote time to operating a stand. Fresh Stops can host participating farmers through meet and greets which provide the direct contacts that you find at farmers' markets. Many communities are using Fresh Stops as an anchor to start a larger farmers market. The share program can attract 30-100 people each week. Around those shares, you can create a space for other farmers to provide products independent of the share program. Some products can complement food not found in sharebags, such as honey, free-range meats, processed goods, or non-traditional items.

### *IS A FRESH STOP A COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE PROGRAM?*

A community-supported agriculture program consists of a group of residents who purchase a "share" in a local farm. The "share" consists of an advance-payment that covers produce for the entire growing season. Shares can range from \$200 to as much as \$600. Most shares are distributed in boxes or bags that are dropped off at a site in the city for pick-up. CSA's help farmers by providing money up-front at the start of the growing season which covers seed, inputs, and labor in the months before produce can be sold. For some farmers, the cash flow advantages of a CSA program allow them to stay in business.

Fresh Stops differ from traditional CSA programs in that advance payment is not required for the entire growing season. In order to provide flexibility for more limited resource shareholders, advance payments need only be made 1-2 weeks in advance. Whereas a CSA is typically a relationship between one farm or a small group of farms and one or two groups of people, Fresh Stops draw from a network of over 22 farms and connect neighborhood groups from two counties.

# OPERATING YOUR FRESH STOP

Operating a Fresh Stop is simple and fun. Fresh Stop operators need to be responsible for making sure the following five things happen:

- a) communicating weekly share orders to the City Fresh coordinator;
- b) operating the Fresh Stop;
- b) taking payments;
- c) keeping records, and
- d) finding an outlet for unclaimed shares.

We recommend having a least one dedicated operator for Fresh Stops handling 25 shares or less and two for Fresh Stops operating more than 25 shares. It is helpful as well if shareholders or other volunteers can assist with set-up and tear-down. Fresh Stops receive an extra share bag for the first 25 share holders and two extra sharebags for more than 50 shareholders.

## Communicating Weekly Share Orders

**Start of the Growing Season:** At the start of the Fresh Stop season, the first shareholders will include individuals who have made an advanced payment. A list of individuals and share levels will be provided by City Fresh as well as how many weeks shareholders have paid for. A lot of folks come to the first Fresh Stop to sign-up for the program. Shares will not be available for walk-ins, but can be made available the following week after the first two payments are received.

**During the Growing Season:** No later than Saturday at noon of each week, the Fresh Stop operators) need to provide a share count for the following week to the City Fresh Coordinator. This can be emailed to Maurice Small at [mrsmall216@yahoo.com](mailto:mrsmall216@yahoo.com). If you do not have access to the internet, you can call Maurice Small directly at 216-849-8224 with that information. It is essential that share counts come in on-time as there is a tight window to communicate orders with the farmers. Since several of our growers are Amish, we have to send order counts on postcards.

**Determining Numbers of Shares:** The purpose of the share program is to facilitate a committed relationship between shareholders in a neighborhood and local farmers. Having a stable and reliable outlet for farmers is key to improving the viability of our farms in the city and countryside of Northeast Ohio. Having your neighborhood group there weekly to support the farmers means a lot to them.

Also, having exact counts for shares means that there is little or no wasted food at the end of the day. All produce finds a happy home!

It is important that shareholders understand that the City Fresh program is relationship based. Not showing up to claim a share or coming in and out of the program creates less stability for growers. However, we recognize that people go out of town or have things that come up, so we like to see some flexibility as well.

Thus, we look to each Fresh Stop to communicate with their shareholders to get exact counts for the following weeks.

# Operating the Fresh Stop

The first detail for operating a Fresh Stop, obviously, is securing a space to host it. Fresh Stops can function like an open-air market in a parking lot, can take place in a classroom, or at a park or other pleasant neighborhood setting. We encourage Fresh Stops to consider visibility, as many of the shareholders might walk in off of the street, attracted to the colorful displays of produce. It is good to consider whether or not the host site can store canopies, tables, or other supplies.

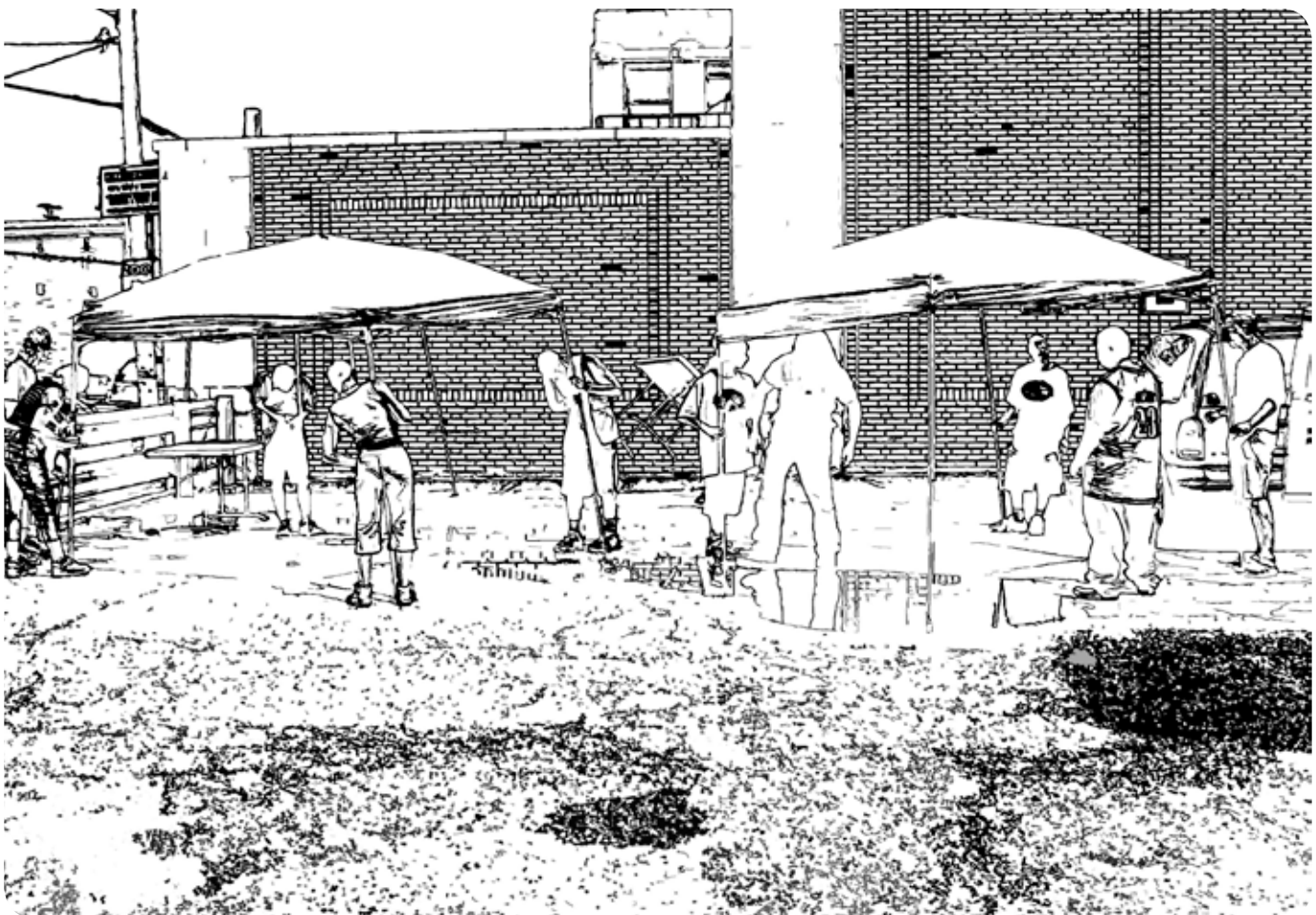
*Here is a sequence of activities for organizing the Fresh Stops:*

1) Arrive at the site with tables, canopies, and supplies. Set-up the canopies.

2) Get your food! We will do everything that we can to get food to Fresh Stops with 25 shares or more. Fresh Stops with more than 25 shares. Distribution will be worked out with each Fresh Stop. For Fresh Stops with fewer than 25 shares, pick-up will have to be arranged at one of the City Fresh distribution hubs.

3) Unpack and arrange the food in sections on your display tables. Be creative and play with the shapes and colors of your food! We recommend storing extra food under your display table. For food like lettuce that wilts easily in the heat, we recommend a cooler for storage.

4) Write down the number of items that people will receive in each of their sharebags. These counts will be determined for regular share bags and budget share bags by City Fresh. Some Fresh Stops will pre-assemble bags for shareholders. We recommend not pre-assembling as it gives folks a



chance to see and interact with their food.

5) Make sure that you set a special table aside as your “City Fresh Learning Table”. This spot will provide space for your nutrition educator, educational displays, and an area where food samples can be picked-up.

6) As each shareholder comes to pick-up their food, make sure that they have already paid. Mark the day on which the food was picked-up. For Ohio Direction Card holders, advance payment will not be possible. For these individuals, they need to sign-up in advance, but can pay with their Ohio Direction card at each Fresh Stop (see details later in this section). City Fresh will provide a data-base template for your shareholders. This database will capture the following information:

- a) Name(s) of shareholders
- b) Category of share (Reg, reg limited income, budget, budget limited income)
- c) Payment method (cash/check or Ohio Direction)
- d) Weekly contribution amount to share fund (if applicable)
- e) “X” marked for each day share is picked-up.
- f) Shaded bar to show days that are already paid for.

City Fresh will need copies of these records at the end of the year for reporting purposes to determine percentages for limited income shareholders served and overall activity.

7) You can expect to have a lot of walk-ups to the Fresh Stop of folks that are interested in getting food. Have some brochures on display about the share program to encourage folks to sign-up. Some people may find the share program to be a bit unusual at first. Explain that shares are a way that we are working together to support our local farmers and improve food access in the inner-city where it is presently lacking.

8) At the end of the day, you will want to make sure that your shareholder records are up-to-date and that your payments are stored securely in an envelope. Make sure that you place the envelope of payments in a safe place before you start to collapse the Fresh Stop. Although it hasn’t happened yet to City Fresh, it is common for cash boxes or money pouches to be stolen at farmers’ markets during tear-down.

9) Tear down your canopies and produce displays and arrange for pick-up/delivery of unclaimed share bags (see details in later section).



# Taking Payments

Each Fresh Stop will be responsible for taking payments for weekly shares. City Fresh is based on relationship building and trust, but that does not mean that people won't still try to take advantage of the Fresh Stop. We highly recommend that one trustworthy person be responsible for taking and keeping payments for the shares and that the payment envelope be stored in a secure, out-of-the-way location during Fresh Stop operations.

Share payments can be taken in the form of cash, checks (recommended), or Ohio Direct (see page XX for detailed instructions). Share payments can also be made on-line through the NAC PayPal account.

In an effort to distribute ownership of Fresh Stops to the very neighborhoods that they serve, we are asking each Fresh Stop to partner with a "host" organization. The host will need to be a non-profit, community-based organization that shares the mission of City Fresh to support the local economy, reduce the environmental impacts of our food system, to improve nutrition, and to encourage urban micro-economies around food. The host will take and deposit payments for City Fresh shares. In turn, the host organization will provide a check to the NAC to cover each week's food purchases. Examples of existing hosts include community development corporations, churches, schools, or community health centers.

As an alternative to a fiscal agent, the NAC can provide fiscal agency services. However, we see this as a temporary arrangement until a host organization can be found. In these cases, the NAC will work with the Fresh Stop to find a branch bank account near the neighborhood where Fresh Stop operations take place.



Following are detailed instructions for payment processes.

1) Shareholders will present their "City Fresh Bills" to claim their share bags each week. When the shareholder runs out of bills, they will purchase more for the next two weeks or following several weeks. Shareholders paying with Ohio Direction do not receive or exchange bills. We leave it to the individual Fresh Stops to be flexible. For some people, weekly payments will be the only option.

2) City Fresh Bills will be given out as follows:

Regular Share holder	Pays \$20	Reeives \$20 City Fresh Bills
Low Income Regular	Pays \$10	Receives \$20 City Fresh Bills
Budget Share holder	Pays \$10	Receives \$10 City Fresh Bills
Low Income Budget	Pays \$5	Receives \$10 City Fresh Bills
Ohio Direction	pays directly each week at the Fresh Stop	

3) At the end of the Fresh Stop, all payments need to be collected in one place and records updated to reflect days shareholders have committed to claiming their shares. The payments should be summarized on a deposit ticket and provided to the entity that holds the Fresh Stop account. If the NAC is being used as a fiscal agent, then a deposit summary should be given to the NAC (preferably e-mailed) and funds should be deposited into a branch of Third Federal Savings or other financial institution specified by the NAC in the neighborhood of the Fresh Stop.

4) The money will deposited into the host account and then a check for the total shares purchased (less low-income subsidies) will be written to the NAC and sent to MPO Box 357, Oberlin, OH 44074 along with all City Fresh Bills turned in for share bags. Upon receipt of the check (or deposit into a branch account), a new packet of City Fresh Bills will be prepared. The City Fresh Bills will include 1:1 exchange for regular dollars in addition to extra City Fresh Bills to cover low-income subsidies. For each deposit, the Fresh Stop operator will need to indicate the total numbers of each share category.

5) The City Fresh bills are compact enough to fit easily in someone's wallet. There may be times when people do not remember to bring them. What to do in these cases? Remind people to make sure that they need to bring them each week to claim their shares. We leave it to the flexibility of each Fresh Stop operator to make exceptions at first as people get used to the system. It is a subtle message, but think about the impact of carrying City Fresh Bills with your actual dollars. The City Fresh Bills are backed by the soil, labor, and natural ecosystems of Northeast Ohio. They are backed by tangible food. The Benjamins are backed by, well, who knows what? Oil, gold, international financial markets?

6) Monitor Closely! The City Fresh Bills are based on a program that we implemented in Oberlin with our share program several years ago. It worked out really well and shareholders enjoyed buying produce with their "monopoly money". This is an experiment to try to reduce the record keeping of the NAC, keep dollars in the communities that are supporting the Fresh Stops, and create a mini-version of a "local currency" that reflects a geographic limit to the flow of dollars. We may find it to be a disaster in need of change. It may work out wonderfully. Like everything with City Fresh, continuous evaluation and feedback will be key.

# Keeping Records

Fresh Stops will need to keep track of the following records. There are sample sheets for each one in the appendices at the end of this manual. Basically, these will be the record keeping responsibilities of each Fresh Stop:

## 1) Share Records.

Keep a master sheet of shareholders that includes dates that shares were picked up and pre-paid dates. City Fresh will need copies of this list for reporting purposes at the end of each year.

## 2) Deposit Records:

Keep copies of each weekly deposit amount and the distribution between regular and limited income shareholders.

## 3) Mailing List:

Keep a list of contact information for your shareholders, including addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses so that you can update them on Fresh Stop activities or let them know about special events.

## Finding an Outlet for Unclaimed Shares

Inevitably, there will be times that share bags are unclaimed at the end of the day. It is important that shareholders understand that they are paying to reserve produce on particular days. If they do not show up to claim their produce, it will be donated to a local source and cannot be re-deemed at a later date (the idea of advance payments is that the produce is paid for in advance for delivery on a set date). We encourage Fresh Stop operators to make case-by-case decisions when someone is sick, tending to an emergency, or otherwise unable to get their share-bag.

We recommend that each Fresh Stop find an outlet for any unclaimed shares at the end of the day. Possible outlets might include: donating produce to a senior center, group home, community health center, food pantry, or residents near the Fresh Stop that might be homebound, physically handicapped, or otherwise unable to get around easily.

It is ideal to have your outlet lined up ahead of time and a volunteer identified that can deliver the produce to it. Consider this a part of your Fresh Stop set-up.



# CITY FRESH NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

Food plays a significant role in the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities. However, trying to eat right can sometimes be a challenge because of cost, availability, or just not knowing how to prepare something healthy.

City Fresh and Ohio State University Extension's Nutrition Education program (EFNEP) have come together to help overcome some of these challenges.

City Fresh brings competitively priced, fresh, locally grown produce right to city neighborhoods. EFNEP brings easy to prepare recipes that can be tried at City Fresh Food Stops. These recipes are prepared using produce available at the Fresh Stops. City Fresh share holders get a packet of nutrition education materials including the recipe of the week in their weekly produce bags. EFNEP also provides nutrition displays and brief presentations on current nutrition topics like the new MyPyramid, fruits and vegetables - how they help prevent chronic diseases, healthy choices when eating out, nutrition facts labels etc.

At each Fresh Stop, EFNEP staff set-up a display and have ongoing presentations at the City Fresh Stops - come join us to learn what's new in nutrition and to try our recipe of the week. After attending 10 sessions, participants will receive a certificate from Ohio State University Extension, a recipe book, and a week's share from City Fresh.



# MARKETING AND DEVELOPING YOUR FRESH STOP

We encourage you to employ outreach methods that work best for your community. In the past, City Fresh has promoted the share program through some of these more traditional outreach methods:

- Public Service Announcements on local or college radio stations;
- Attending community events likely to attract residents interested in City Fresh (i.e. block clubs, churches, after-school programs, local schools) and talking about City Fresh and handing out brochures;
- Working with a local community organization with a mailing list that is willing to include information about Fresh Stops in a community newsletter, e-mail distribution, or other special mailing;
- Handing out small flyers or brochures door to door in the neighborhood around the Fresh Stop;
- Considering banners, posters, or other publicly visible announcements near the Fresh Stop location in advance of the Fresh Stop opening;
- Placing flyers or brochures at businesses, such as coffee shops, corner stores, or cafes;
- Posting flyers on community bulletin boards at recreation center, libraries, or other locations.

Some of the above methods involve cost and time for outreach. We encourage them, but have found that, by far, the most effective outreach is what you might call “affinity-based marketing”. People are most likely to respond favorably to a program if they have friends or people in their community that they trust who recommend it. The word of mouth approach might be most effective over time and it costs nothing. As you sign-up shareholders, see if they can bring or share the information with friends. Consider hosting a City Fresh event at a local household or community center. You can show the DVD or talk about how City Fresh supports local farmers, better nutrition in our cities, and a healthier food supply while you enjoy a pot-luck of locally grown food.

Seeing is believing and people will often need a bit of convincing to sign-up for a program that requests advance payment. The Fresh Stop itself can be the best vehicle for promoting the Fresh Stop. A significant percentage of shareholders signed-up after the Fresh Stop started. Many Fresh Stops began with a small collection of shareholders and grew over time. For example, our first Fresh Stop in Clark Metro began with one dedicated shareholder the first week of operations. By the end of the season, 65 people had signed-up for the program. It is good to have information materials available at the Fresh Stop so that people can see the produce and the festive feel of the Fresh Stop. That can probably sell the program more than anything.



## FRESH STOPS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

The Fresh Stop brings together each week unique cross-sections of each community. Over the course of the past two years, we have seen many ways that the Fresh Stops utilize these weekly gatherings to organize special events that can focus on education, social activities, or just plain fun.

Here are some examples of special events that you can consider organizing at your Fresh Stop:

- A farmer meet-and-greet where City Fresh shareholders have an opportunity to meet the farmers growing their food and learn about their operations.
- A music event highlighting a local band
- A potluck featuring locally grown foods
- A learning circle around a book or particular topic related to food or community development
- A brainstorming event to invite public input into community food opportunities, such as utilizing an empty lot or abandoned building in the neighborhood to increase the supply of local food.
- A celebrity chef event where a local chef attends the Fresh Stop and demonstrates what shareholders can do with the food
- A community art event featuring a mural project around the Fresh Stop location or art activities for children.
- Educational opportunities, such as providing information on energy efficiency, composting, or sustainable living
- Invitations to farmers that specialize in particular products, such as grassfed beef or goat cheese, that can use the Fresh Stop to identify interested shareholders that might want to purchase their products monthly.
- Efforts to promote local businesses in the neighborhood, such as a special promotion for a local restaurant or other unique business.



# CROSS-LEARNING WEB

The New Agrarian Center, in partnership with LESS Productions, a local digital media company, is forming a cross-learning web. This web-site will include short videos, photos, and essays to encourage cross-learning between communities working to grow local food systems. The cross-learning web can provide a unique resources for connecting neighborhood Fresh Stops.

Consider what you might want to teach the wider community about your Fresh Stop and its surrounding neighborhood. Do you have a unique recipe for a shareholder incorporating City Fresh food? You can film a short video demonstrating how to prepare the dish. Is there a unique aspect of your neighborhood that you would like to share with others, such as its history or ethnic heritage? You can produce a short film about that. Have you come up with an interesting innovation in your Fresh Stop? You can use the cross-learning web to share that innovation with others. Or you can just introduce us to who you are and highlight some of your shareholders or participating farmers.

City Fresh will have digital cameras available for folks that might be interested in borrowing them for a period of time to capture footage, interviews, or other features. City Fresh will also provide a short film-making workshop as well to teach some basic techniques for filming, backlighting, and editing.

We see the cross-learning web as a tool for promoting grassroots learning and information exchange. Over the course of the year, each Fresh Stop will develop its own character and flavor. We'd like to use some new technologies in digital and web-based media to create greater connections across the region. We leave it to you and your community to decide how you might want to take advantage of this.



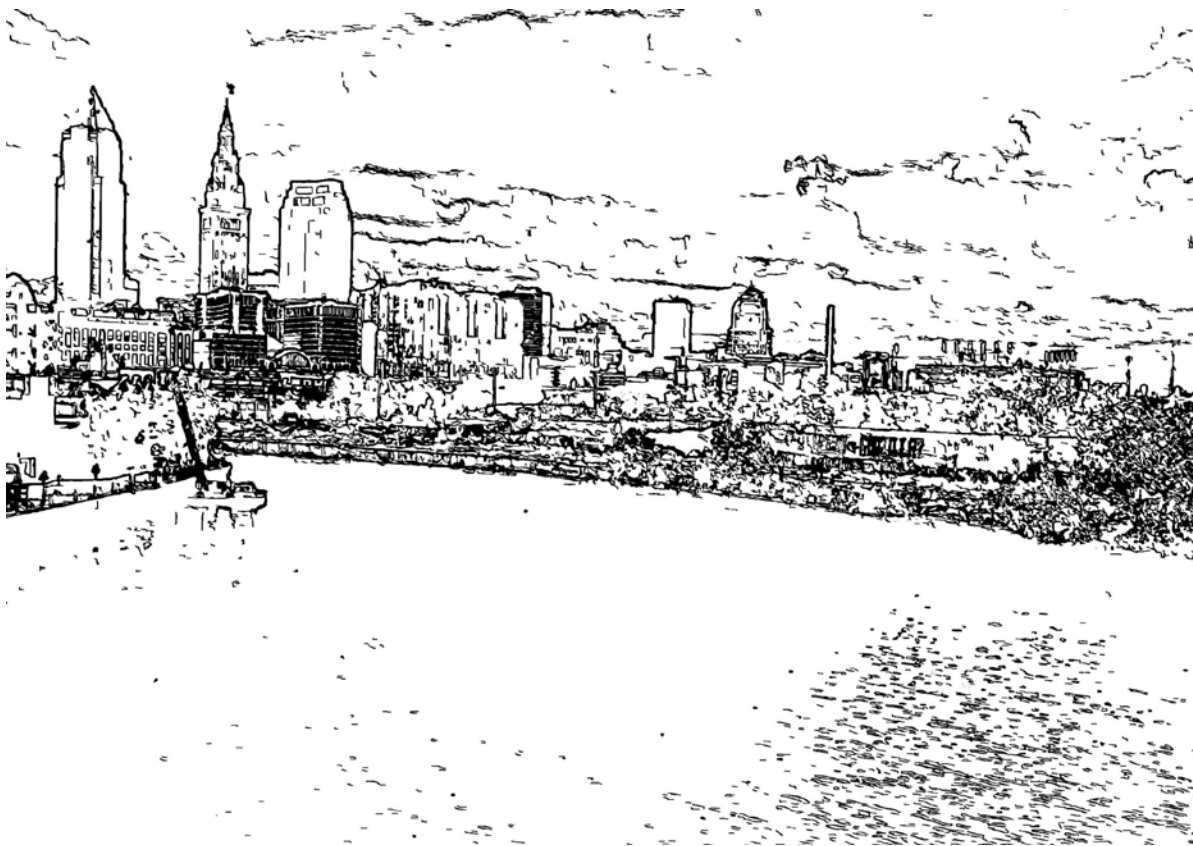
# THE FRESH HOP

City Fresh is introducing a new concept in 2007: the “Fresh Hop”. The idea of the Fresh Hop is to encourage shareholders or other supporters to “hop” to another neighborhood to participate in a special forum, harvest event, or other fun or educational activity.

Think of how the Fresh Stop can be used as a vehicle for drawing people from outside of your neighborhood. Perhaps there is a program that you can offer through your community anchor that might draw interest in what you are doing. Perhaps you can highlight a special historical feature of your neighborhood that makes it unique to Northeast Ohio.

Some examples of Fresh Hop activities might include: a “celebrity chef” cook-off, a farmer meet-and-greet, a community art project, a tour of historic buildings or sites around the Fresh Stop, a mural painting, an engaged forum on a community food development topics, a guest speaker, or a harvest celebration. Come up with some ideas and we can help spread the word and encourage attendance through our network. Or perhaps there is an opportunity in your neighborhood that you would like to invite community brainstorming around, such as converting an old building to a food processing center or promoting use of vacant land for market gardening.

The strength of City Fresh is in bringing together neighborhoods at the grassroots level and finding ways that we can learn from each other and support each other in our efforts. Fresh Hop activities in the works include a summer solstice party and community brainstorming for an adaptive re-use of an abandoned library in Slavic Village; an urban agriculture forum in St. Clair-Superior; an cross-learning event between Cleveland and Youngstown; and a harvest celebration in Oberlin. What can you add to the mix?



# FRESH STOP F.A.Q.'s

## **How does City Fresh determine eligibility for low-income?**

City Fresh uses WIC guidelines to determine eligibility for receiving limited-income subsidies. City Fresh provides each Fresh Stop with up-to-date WIC household income tables that can be used to help people determine whether or not they qualify. We allow shareholders to self-identify themselves as limited income. We do not require proof and rely on individuals to self-identify. There may be a few small instances of abuse, but we prefer to keep people's financial information private.

## **Where does City Fresh get its food?**

City Fresh currently has a network of about 22 suppliers, about half of whom are market gardeners in the City of Cleveland. Most City Fresh suppliers follow organic production methods, although most do not certify organic. Organic certification is advantageous if you are selling food wholesale where the label indicates that organic methods are followed. In the case of City Fresh, because we work directly with each farmer and know their production methods, certification is not required. A limited number of City Fresh farmers do use chemical inputs very sparingly and only in cases when crop failure would result without intervention.

## **Does City Fresh make a profit off of share sales?**

City Fresh is operated as a non-profit initiative. The average American farmer receives between 5 to 18 cents for each dollar of food purchased. With City Fresh, we work to directly link farmers with consumers so that 90% of each dollar spent on City Fresh goes to the farmer. The remaining 10% covers the expenses of picking-up and distributing food and maintaining communications with farmers. Any remaining funds at the end of the year are put into our share subsidy pool to provide resources to limited income shareholders. Thus, each \$20 share bag will return \$18 to the farmers and \$2 to support the cost of bringing the food into the city.

## **Why do we bother with shares? Doesn't that deny the consumer choice?**

The idea behind the share program is to organize clusters of urban residents who are committed to supporting local farmers throughout the growing season. Purchasing shares means that each farmer has a guaranteed outlet for their food. One of the biggest challenges for farmers is the volatility of prices and markets for food. Many local farmers are sealed out of markets altogether because they lack the ability to supply high volumes of food to national distributors or because cheaper food imports undermine local markets. Through City Fresh, farmers are guaranteed a decent price for their food and a guaranteed market outlet for their products. That stability can make all of the difference for smaller producers, many of whom are struggling on the edge of existence.

## **What is the New Agrarian Center (NAC) and how does it relate to City Fresh?**

The NAC is a non-profit organization whose mission is to support local food system development in Northeast Ohio. The NAC began in 2001 as a Farm to College partnership with Oberlin College. The NAC assumed management responsibilities for a 70 acre farmstead owned by the college, the George Jones Farm and Nature Preserve. The NAC is based in a strawbale office building at the Jones Farm. The farm supports a variety of farm enterprises, education and training programs, and habitat restoration activities. The NAC worked closely with OSU Extension and several other community partners to organize the City Fresh initiative. City Fresh came out of a need to improve food access in the inner-city through Fresh Stops, urban market garden development, and farm to business links. As City Fresh is nearing the end of a three-year support grant from the USDA, the NAC is working with the community partners to sustain the work of the NAC without continuous outside subsidy. To this end, we are exploring the possibility of developing City Fresh as a cooperative social enterprise that focuses on local food distribution and rural to urban links.

# FOOD AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: *Some Recurring Themes*

As should be clear by now, the Fresh Stop is an example of community invention and experimentation. Having “field-tested” Fresh Stops for two years, here are some of the emerging themes that show how City Fresh can contribute to community development at the neighborhood, city, and regional levels.

## Mixing

One of the indicators for a healthy urban neighborhood is opportunities for mixing. At the Fresh Stop this mixing occurs at several levels. Fresh Stops provide opportunities for mixing between neighbors in a neighborhood. They also connect youth and elders. Many Fresh Stops host youth as hired help or volunteers who assist elderly shareholders with carrying their bags. Through share subsidies, Fresh Stops also encourage a mixing of individuals at different income levels. Fresh Stops can be used to encourage mixing and interaction between different ethnic groups. Through special events or activities, Fresh Stops can draw people and encouraging mixing between different neighborhoods. And, of course, Fresh Stops provide a mixing between urban and rural residents through farmer meet-and-greets, or inclusion of specialty farmers for additional produce sales.

## Anchors

All Fresh Stops have a host or what we call a “community anchor”. Anchors include a wide-range of community organizations who find the Fresh Stop program to be a nice complement to their already existing community programs. Anchors can also be an effective way to add legitimacy to the Fresh Stop program and assist with outreach efforts. Examples of anchors include: Community Development Corporations, neighborhood centers, schools, churches, community mental health centers, medical centers, or businesses.

## Share

Fresh Stops encourage what we might refer to as a “sharing economy” which encourages us to think beyond ourselves as we make our daily purchases. There are many ways that Fresh Stops can encourage sharing, including: directing purchases to support local family farmers or emerging urban market gardeners; sharing food with neighbors, those with means paying more to support a subsidy pool for those with fewer means; sharing recipes; sharing stories or ideas through forums or alternative media; and even sharing yard waste or food waste for composting at market gardens or community gardens in your neighborhood. We are also working on sharing between neighborhoods so that Fresh Stops in wealthier neighborhoods can provide additional funds to support Fresh Stops in limited resource neighborhoods.

## Health

Fresh Stops provide an opportunity to grow an alternative food system rooted in health. As we

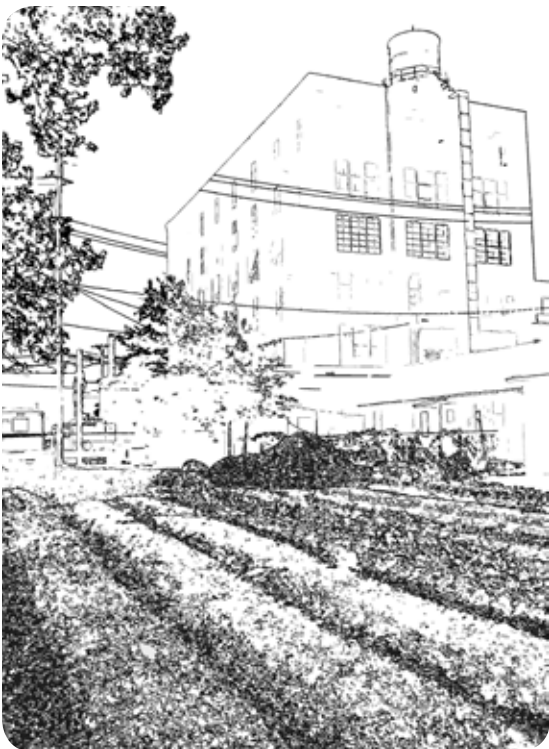
struggle with the rising health impacts of obesity, heart-disease, diabetes, and other diet-related ailments, Fresh Stops can bring healthy foods to neighborhoods that lack access. Fresh Stops can provide families and youth with food, recipes, and nutritional information to promote health. Fresh Stop shareholders can be encouraged to walk or bike to the Fresh Stop or participate in their neighborhood gardens. Fresh Stops also promote the broader health of our natural environment. Local food at Fresh Stops travels less distance to get to us, reducing carbon emissions in our diet. City Fresh farmers work on a smaller-scale and employ methods to reduce the use of chemicals which run-off into our water.

## Youth

We encourage every Fresh Stop community to find ways to involve youth. City Fresh employs some youth during the summer who assist with neighborhood gardens or food distribution at their Fresh Stops. Through the Fresh Stops, young people can contribute to their own neighborhood and learn about the value of civic engagement. They can be of service to others by helping to carry bags for shareholders. They can also learn some basic skills of entrepreneurship through involvement in the Fresh Stop. At some Fresh Stops, youth even learned the names of different crops and assisted with the distribution of nutritional information.

## Farming

Fresh Stops work directly to provide an easy venue for farmers to reach urban populations. Many City Fresh farmers live in remote rural areas or, in the case of some Amish growers, lack transportation to reach urban areas. Organizing shareholders at the neighborhood level helps to cluster demand and create reliable and steady markets for farmers. Fresh Stops can also provide an “entry-level” market for urban market gardeners. Some urban growers collaborate to supply larger volumes of food for Fresh Stops. Other urban growers can set-up stands in conjunction with the Fresh Stop to provide additional food or specialty products that might not be available in share bags. Shareholders use the Fresh Stop to keep farming as an integral part of our regional economy, whether it involves farming in the city or in the country.



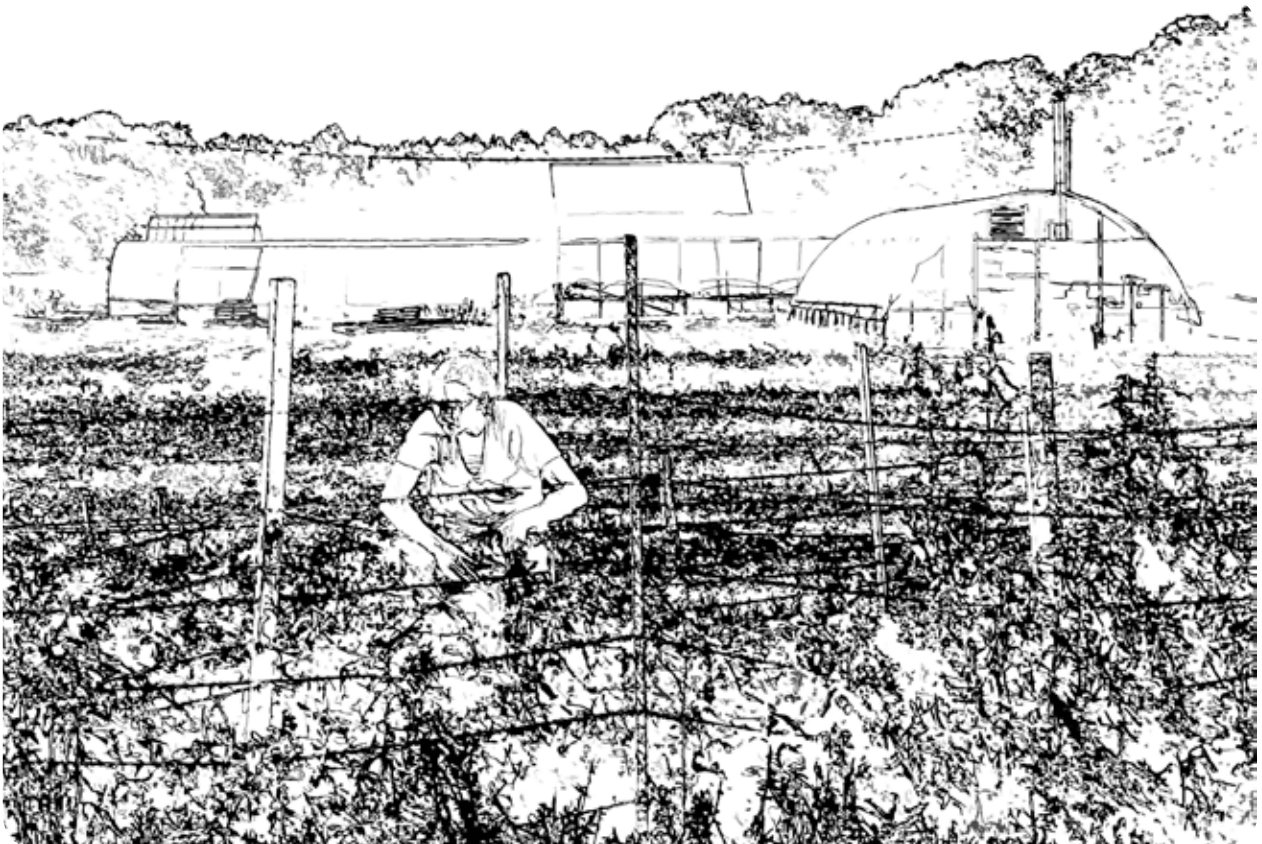
## Microeconomy

The Fresh Stop can provide a beginning place for forming an urban micro-economy around food. At the most basic level, the Fresh Stop represents a cluster of neighbors that pool their resources to commit to supporting a group of farmers in Northeast Ohio, whether in the city or rural farmers in adjacent counties. Around this cluster of shareholders, a variety of other activities can take place. Shareholders can pool resources to purchase a portion of a cow or pig from a local livestock producer. The Fresh Stop can encourage other urban market gardeners to set-up stands to sell their products. Or the Fresh Stop can find ways to turn vacant land in the neighborhood to a market garden that supplies food directly to the neighborhood. Perhaps there might be

an old building that has a certified kitchen or a restaurant that doesn't utilize its kitchen during certain hours of the day. These facilities can support value-added processing and provide economic opportunities for small businesses or clusters of growers to make their own local brands of salsa, pasta sauce, or other products. The Fresh Stop is like a seedling planted in each neighborhood. How can the Fresh Stop grow to meet wider food needs while providing opportunities for farmers or individual entrepreneurs?

## Sustainability

City Fresh received a three-year grant from the USDA to get started. The ultimate test of the long-term viability of City Fresh depends upon the extent to which communities become invested in maintaining the networks that City Fresh has helped to establish to keep the Fresh Stops going. We see grants as an investment in social capital. Social capital comes in the form of knowledge, skills, local infrastructure, and networks between residents, farmers, small businesses, and community organizations. As we look to the future, how can we grow our social capital to encourage the expansion of Fresh Stops and new opportunities to create income, jobs, new businesses, or enhance existing businesses? How can Fresh Stops create clusters of innovation and creativity and a sustained commitment to a regional food system? How can cities become the catalyst for supporting family farmers or urban market gardeners in the region? How can our youth find opportunities for creating their own small garden or assisting with Fresh Stop operations to become the food system entrepreneurs of our future? The other aspect of sustainability involves ecological sustainability. How can Fresh Stops help to reduce carbon emissions and fossil-fuel use by increasing the availability of local food? How can we operate our distribution system with renewable resources, such as restaurant grease or bio-diesel? How can we encourage sustainable or organic production methods by encouraging farmers to reduce chemical use or incorporate natural habitat into their operation? How can we expand urban market gardens to create green space in our cities?



# Appendix One:

## CITY FRESH Roles and Responsibilities:

### New Agrarian Center (City Fresh)

- Technical assistance with Fresh Stop start-up/operations
- Assist with planning and developing operations for Fresh Stop
- Organize farmer/supplier networks to Fresh Stops
- Organize "hub" drop-offs and facilitate neighborhood share distribution
- Develop/distribute "subsidy resources" for share program
- Coordinate cross-learning events (workshops, multi-media, events, forums)
- Assist with advertising/promotions of events to wider network
- Facilitate broader community development (food policy, infrastructure development, etc.)

### Neighborhood Fresh Stops

- Coordinate outreach and sign-ups
- Communicate weekly share amounts to Fresh Stop Coordinator
- Organize community events around Fresh Stops
- Collect and deposit share purchases into local account or fiscal agent
- Transfer share dollars to Fresh Stops
- Keep accurate records of share sales/memberships
- Document the process!

## APPENDIX TWO

### FRESH STOP SUPPLIES

Each Fresh Stop will have different needs, according to location and nature of operation. As a baseline, we recommend some of the following materials and supplies to make each Fresh Stop operate smoothly:

- \_\_\_ Pens and pencils for filling out records and forms.
- \_\_\_ Supply of City Fresh Share brochures to distribute to new shareholders
- \_\_\_ Three or four fold-up canopies to provide shade and shelter from the weather and protection of the produce
- \_\_\_ Four fold-up tables for produce display and housing of nutritional information and displays.
- \_\_\_ Bushel baskets, boxes, or other containers for holding produce in the display
- \_\_\_ Table clothes or tapestries to cover the tables.
- \_\_\_ Water to keep Fresh Stop operators hydrated!
- \_\_\_ Portable CD player or car stereo for music to provide festive feel
- \_\_\_ Roll of plastic bags for bagging up loose produce such as lettuce greens or beans
- \_\_\_ Stash of plastic or paper bags (preferably recycled) for shareholders that forget their re-use bags
- \_\_\_ Vases for holding fresh cut flowers for appearance.
- \_\_\_ Coolers with frozen ice packs to keep more perishable items like lettuce greens fresh
- \_\_\_ Large plastic or metal bowls that you can fill with water to keep some items fresh, such as swiss chard or collard greens
- \_\_\_ Chalk boards or dry erase boards to provide information or messages to shareholders, such as how many quantities of each item they can take. Alternately, you can get laminated sheets or small cards to create tags by produce to let people know what it is and what quantities they can take.
- \_\_\_ Sealable box for storing nutritional packets and other Fresh Stop materials to keep them dry and away from the wind.
- \_\_\_ Zippable pouches or cash boxes that can be used to safely store money, checks, and City Fresh share bills
- \_\_\_ Supply of City Fresh canvas bags that can be distributed to new shareholders.

## APPENDIX THREE PROCESSING FOOD STAMP VOUCHERS

1. Get shareholder's Ohio Direction Card and complete the "Offline Food Stamp Voucher" Form
2. Don't worry about the "Authorization boxes" you'll get that when you call-in!
3. Also, don't worry about the boxes marked "Reason"
4. Check box marked "Purchase"
5. Print cardholder's name and get their signature
6. Write Store FNS Auth Number: 0028570
7. Write Store Name: City Fresh
8. Write Store Address: 2511 Clark Ave  
Cleveland, OH 44109
9. Get a Fresh Stop Manager's (adult) Signature
10. Explain to the shareholder you will now call-in the transaction and get an authorization number.

\*\*\*\*\*

1. Dial 1-866-568-2835
2. Choose English or Spanish Language
3. Select "Manual Voucher" - Option #1
4. It will ask for 7-digit FNS Authorization/License #: Give 0028570  
(They will repeat # back and if correct, press #1)
5. It will ask for voucher #: Give red numbers printed on voucher followed by # key
6. It will ask for cardholder's 16-digit card number: Give # as it appears on card
7. Lastly, it will ask for amount: Give amount (use star/astisk as decimal)
8. It repeats everything & gives you an authorization number to write on the voucher
9. Give shareholder their copy of the voucher and return the Merchant Copy with your paperwork!

# APPENDIX FOUR: Sample Shareholder Record

Last Name	First Name	Address	Phone	E-mail	Size	Pay	6-7	6-14	6-21
Darringer	Felix	999 Eagles Nest Way	216-555-1014	Felix@eagle.net	Reg, \$20	Check		X	X
Forthwright	Alan	888 Tree Swallow Way	216-555-7775	alan@swallows.net	Ltd, \$10	OD		X	
Negel	Alexis	444 Heron Rookery Way	440-444-1982	alexis@greatblue.net	Ltd, \$5	Cash	X	X	

Codes: OD= Ohio Direction  
 Reg, \$20= \$20 Regular Share  
 Bud, \$10= \$10 Budget Share  
 Ltd, \$10= Regular share, limited income  
 Ltd, \$5= Budget share, limited income

Note: Mark columns pre-paid with an "X"

APPENDIX FIVE:  
Sample Deposit Summary

NAME OF FRESH STOP: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF OPERATOR: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF FRESH STOP: \_\_\_\_\_, 2007

TOTAL DEPOSIT: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# of Full-Sized Regular Shares: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Total number of full shares. A full share equals two half shares)

# of Full-Sized Limited Income Shares: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Total number of full limited income shares. A full share equals two half shares)

# of anticipated Ohio Direction Shares: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Calculate for week following the one reported)

TOTAL CITY FRESH BILLS REQUESTED: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Include total amount for 1:1 exchange for regular shares and 1:2 exchange for low income shares)

*I work to renew a ruined place, that no life be hostage to my comfort.*

*-Wendell Berry,  
Farmer & Writer*

*By building soil, you are able to impact community.*

*By building soil, you are able to impact the environmental waste going into the dump.*

*By building soil, you are able to create a food structure in a food desert.*

*-Maurice Small,  
City Fresh Action Hero*

*I've watched a number of my friends who are farmers lose their operations. I've actually lived their extinction and seen the quality of our life reduced. Our whole food system is now just a transportation system. Yet, where we live, our community, has been disconnected, the country from the town. The country is really the lifeblood of the adjoining villages and cities. It is where our food comes from. It is our natural ecosystem and one that we should be strengthening, not weakening.*

*-Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur  
Ohio- 9th District*

*I have seen a community start to grow around the City Fresh "Fresh Stop". It is most rewarding to see a nondescript parking lot turn into a "happening place". A community of teenagers and a very diverse cross section of people (age, ethnicity, and lifestyles) seem to be gathering and lingering around the Fresh Stop. There is an added component of advocacy and nutrition education that is being shared and passed along in this way. "Eating by Example" sums it up!*

*-Abe Bruckman,  
2006 Director of Commercial Development  
Clark-Metro Community Development Corp.*

*Urban market gardens fill another important niche in our city. Urban farmers grow food for folks who cannot or choose not to grow food for themselves. They sell food close to where they grow it, not only increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables in "urban food deserts," but also limiting "food miles," the distance food travels from farm to table. Urban farmers keep food dollars in Cleveland. They create jobs and provide local food at a fair cost to our community. Programs like City Fresh not only increase access to local food, it also educates entrepreneurs and connects them to a community of growers and buyers.*

*-Joe Cimperman  
Cleveland City Councilman, Ward 13*