



Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success (ORIS)

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Report of Farm and Food Summer Youth Internship 2018

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Restatement of mission

The origins of the foundation started as the Somali Bantu Community Association (SBCA) started in 2005 as a need for refugees wanting to put their farming skills to good means. They were funded by the United States Department of Refugee and Resettlement, SBCA reformed into ORIS as a 501 (c) 3 Non-Profit, diversified their staff and members. ORIS structurally identifies the need for fruitful employment opportunities within the community hence the dire urgency to work is remarkable. ORIS later initiated the New American Sustainable Project (NASAP), the beginning goal is to assist the farmers in the start-up process and inevitably ending in becoming profitable farmers while sustaining the needs for their future. In 2012, the organization launched the start of a farm worthy project with very little finding and the assistance of the local high schools, the youth program

became a success. Farm and Food Leaders Internship began as the youth began to express interest in career opportunities in farming and agriculture and the need to expand services geared towards the youth. The participating local high schools would provide stipends for half of the students accepted into the program. ORIS has ordered a land and market based agricultural internship program for teenaged youth living in the greater Manchester area. Students are recruited by applying through their currently enrolled high school institution then hand selected based on their interest, academic performance, experience (or no experience) and a unique feature/skill in which the student will build on for their future. The interns engage in meaningful workshops and conversations about food justice activities. This program is offered in partnership with several Manchester high schools and is supported by the My Turn, Inc Organization, whom provides the funding for the youth stipends. In addition, My Turn, has aided in the advancement of thousands of immigrant and refugee students in brightening their future within in this area from various schools. They are an organization that offers meaningful opportunities in various trades to advance in a wholesome career through trainings and other career services.

Typically, about 75% of the students have some farming background, knowledge and/or has family members that were farmers back in their country. Farming is their lifestyle that dates back for many generations and through their success shows through abilities and perseverance. The goal is to teach sustainable agriculture practices in order that the students and farmers gainfully acquire farming experience that will interest them in a career towards agriculture and farming. Students that participate in ORIS's Farm and Food Summer Program will learn how to successfully germinate seeds and produce bountiful crops worthy of harvest.

This is a great way for students to get the exposure of marketing skills, business planning, sales and production. Sustainability is key in empowering students to carry on the tradition of preserving the land and landscape. The farm land does not allow the use of chemicals and synthetic fertilizers, students are the ones that take on the proactive initiative in researching and presenting better approaches in the use natural fertilizers. Seed selection will be researched by the students, investigating associated organizations that focuses on organic seed and heirloom production and their advantages and disadvantages. All of these sustainable

practices will help to yield more crops for a better living of sustainable agriculture for future advancement.

We expect the interns to learn basic farming techniques, work on leadership projects advancing the farming industry, we also wanted them to feel as part of the community. This was accomplished by having the youth by helping out and giving back as what they did when they volunteered at the New Hampshire Food Bank and package boxes of food from the pantry for the needy families in the community. There are a plethora of benefits for youth to take on this internship as they met expectations:

- Students that are eligible will have the opportunity to earn 1 school credit upon completion of the internship.
- Receive fresh vegetables from the farm
- Advancement into agriculture/farming career opportunities
- Paid internship position
- Exciting opportunity to travel and explore the environment around us
- Develop the idea of friendly and independent thinkers
- Learn farming business planning skills
- Financial literacy-importance of having a bank account and learning the process of what it means to invest, save, deposit, and mindful spending
- Plan out long-term goals

Goals

The goal of establishing the Youth Farm and Food is to develop a sense of appreciation for local foods and farmers, understanding the business components, detailing the hard work that contributes to the food on your plate and assessing eating habits. One of the most important factors is expounding on the youth's personal space and taking them beyond their usual habits. Based on my personal experience, the students were in need of new adventures and I wanted to make sure that I redefined the scope of farming. By providing more in-depth information about terminology, farming practices, hands on situations helped students to better frame an understanding of sustainability and influence healthier life choices.

Projects and Curriculum

Every week there was a combination of new and related topic's

- Organic Agriculture/Sustainable agriculture
- CSA/Food Injustice
- Crop selection/crop rotation/intercropping
- Planting conditions/requirements
- Fertilizations/Composting/soil amendments
- Weeding/Irrigation/pH
- Culture diversity brunch/nutrition/health and diseases
- Medicinal herbal plants
- Genetic Modifying Organism (GMO's)/Pest Collection Project
- Crop compatibility
- Financial Literacy/Resume Writing
- Business Plan/Farm Design layouts with landscape features

Guest Speakers

- **Heidi Bennet**- University of New Hampshire Licensed Nutritionist. Heidi focuses on teaching classes that gives teens and adults the ability to take control of their lives. She introduces lifestyle changes by allowing the teens to become more mindful and keeping track of foods they consume. The students expressed an eagerness to learn about substitutions for unhealthy cultural foods to prevent prevalent diseases within their community
- **Khaleel Shreet**-Southern New Hampshire University Immigrant College Initiative Director. Khaleel was a motivating force in giving insight on how to become successful by using the refugee experience as a tool to inspire educational success. Khaleel, shared his experience of coming to America

as a refugee and transformed his life with the opportunities that college had to offer. He uses his experience as a means to help other refugee and immigrant individuals strive for success despite their past situation. He presented steps in how to enroll in the Refugee Initiative program at SNHU, financial information and explained college degree options available.

- **Jeremy DeLisle**-Extension Field Specialist Food and Agriculture. Jeremy proved that farming has endless possibilities. He led a roundtable discussion with a power point presentation discussing issues with farming and how to resolve those issues. He focused on irrigation, pH and provided plenty of handouts for soil amendments. The presentation was followed by an informative Q & A session of the topics presented and the future of farms/farmers.

Field trips

- **Wintergreen Botanicals**-Herbal Planting Tour in Allentown, NH
Maria Noel Groves is a best selling author, herbal clinic owner, herbal consultant and educator. She aims to empower the ability to heal by connecting people with nature and bring our bodies back into balance. With her endless expertise, she provided sensible wisdom remedies as she divided the day into 2 interesting segments. The tour entailed a walk-through of vivacious herbal growing beds full of textures and aromas. Maria, the herbalist allowed the students to taste and sample/collect the different parts of herbal plants while proceeding with the tour by giving historical medicinal references, ways to use the plant albeit toxic parts or in culinary cuisines. The second half of the tour was spent in her classroom as the students attended a hands-on workshop where she created samples of tea, fresh herbal tinctures and other edible products for the youth to experience.
- **NH Food Bank**, Community Service Project
We spent the day sorting and packing at the New Hampshire Food bank to provide families in need with donated household items and food. The students worked as a team to decide how to properly organize goods and

discarded expired food items. The other half of the day we engaged in yet another community service project drive. This garden is key in contributing to the free “Cooking Matters” classes promoting good eating habits sponsored by the Food Bank. The Production garden also provides fresh produce for the program “Recipe for Success Culinary Job Training” sponsored by the food bank as well.

Outcomes

The Summer Youth Farm and Food Internship was an important learning program to increase the awareness about the farming and the food industry with an aim on youth ranging from 16 through 18 years old. The program coordinator had to consider 3 major factors: their interest, willingness to put in the effort and participation and most importantly their skill level. Some of the students have had experience within the farming area while other students did not have much exposure but that was a great motivational factor to spark an interest. ORIS Farm and Food was an 8-week summer paid internship, 4 days a week from 10am until 2pm, Monday-Wednesday and 2:30-6:30 on Thursday to assist at the Manchester Farmers Market from July 2nd- August 23rd.

Local field trips and guest speakers were included in the learning curriculum. With 4 returning students and 5 new faces we completed the program with 9 students, 3 representing the My-Turn program through Central High School. My-Turn is an Organization designed to help youth populations specifically from economically and educationally disadvantage. Serving nearly 500 youth annually in 6 gateway cities, My-Turn aides in furthering youth education, offer educational resource services such as completion of a diplomacy program, assist in employment and offer career training programs. My Turn was able to subsidize payment for 3 students. The remaining 6 students were supplemented through the ORIS program.

Methods to gather data on the program

Recruitment consisted of presenting to groups of students through Extended Learning Coordinator opportunities instructors (ELO) advisor heled. The instructors were directly in touch with the students at the school and she would help to plan the best strategic way to connect with the students during school hours. The planning and organizing began in the fall/winter months but beginning early spring, the youth coordinator of ORIS active participation in the career fair and word was spread by word of mouth. In total we received 16 applications including 1 verbal request of a returning student. The students came from Central & West High, Manchester School of Technology and 1 application from Boston University Academy in Massachusetts. Although, most of the students had exceptional applications we were able to accept only 9 students this year due to funding.

An attendance log documented the student's daily attendance which helped me to keep track of their participation as well.

As reiterated, based on the recruitment results we had 4 returning students re-enter the program which was remarkable that they decide to participate yet again. This is an internship that requires outdoor work and strenuous tasks to maintain the farm, in turn, the work is not considered easy. Nonetheless, I'm happy for their return and they have yet again made the program a complete success by showing impressive levels of determination and persistence.

Some of the greatest strengths that we encountered was having speakers come in and enlighten the students about their personal career path. Students were intrigued with the "trials to triumph" and certainly can relate to wanting to become something greater in life. There was a huge effort to make small changes with their eating habits, social skills and work ethic. We tried to provide as much information as possible and allowed them to apply what they have learned outside of the organization. We traveled to our Dunbarton farm once or twice week (depending on lesson plans) to help with the CSA's. This was our busiest day of the week since it was pertinent that all of the vegetables were harvested fresh from the stem, properly washed, weighed and organized based on the share and lastly the CSA produce would go to directly to the market. The students played a key role in this process as they were involved in every part of the food journey. By the

end of the program the students began to find alternatives for breakfast which entailed reading labels, thinking more health conscious and eliminating junk food for breakfast. It was a small start but I began to see the difference in their awareness with the benefits of farm fresh foods.

The grant has very instrumental in assisting with the farm supplies that was needed to maintain the garden beds. Once the plants got started growing we did encounter some difficulty however, we were able to amend the soil with composting to alter the pH levels and add nutrients back in the soil. Along the growing season, we had to prepare for small setbacks but having the right tools we were able to make the proper adjustments. The kelp that was used for fertilization was very helpful in replenishing plant growth. The basic planting supplies i.e rakes, shovels and multipurpose tools helped to guide the students to learn about safe agriculture practices as well.

In the future, we would like to expand the youth program and allow it to go into 2 directions. First, we want to extend our recruitment radius and reach out to more schools/districts advocating for farm/agricultural education programs. Secondly we would like to train students for a career in farming in order that they have the opportunity to gain a substantial certification and enter into the workforce. In this community, we've identified problems with youth, since this is a densely populated area with refugee and immigrants, the youth have a problem with seeing a way out and hope to change. The vision is to provide job opportunities to sustain their future upon completion of the program

(Budget Supply list and expenditure list provided by request)

Thank you immensely for your contribution!

Ameenah Shabazz,

ORIS Farm and Food Youth Coordinator