

HOW does it WORK?

MICHIGAN FARM TO FAMILY...

...is a Michigan Fitness Foundation project. January through March of 2019, we partnered with Crisp Country Acres farm and United Church Outreach Ministry (UCOM) to make locally-grown produce more affordable for low-income residents of Wyoming, Michigan.

Crisp Country Acres delivered weekly shares of local produce to UCOM and received full price for each share. At UCOM, participating families paid 25% of the share cost, and Michigan Farm To Family paid the other 75%.



CRISP COUNTRY ACRES...

...is a year-round farm owned and operated by the Visser family in Holland, MI. They also supply produce for their own farm stand, local farmers markets and several area restaurants. Michigan Farm To Family is an important way that the Vissers build one-on-one connections with local customers.

"Farming is not just a job to us, but our way of life and our passion. We enjoy planning the crops, watching them grow, harvesting and then bringing them to our customers for their families to enjoy."



UNITED CHURCH OUTREACH MINISTRY...

...is experienced at increasing food access for low-income residents, and helping families put locally-grown produce on their tables. UCOM believes access to healthy food is a human right, and their commitment to health and wellness is directly aligned with the Michigan Fitness Foundation's mission.



20 COMMUNITY MEMBERS...

...participated in Michigan Farm To Family at UCOM. They were UCOM clients, customers and volunteers, with households averaging 2 adults and 1 child and ranging from 1 to 8 people.

Every week the \$4.25 they spent on local fruits and vegetable helped them put **MORE**, and **HEALTHIER**, food on the table for their families. And, they were able to combine their Double Up Food Bucks (a program that matches SNAP benefits spent on produce) with Michigan Farm To Family produce to stretch their SNAP benefit further - allowing them to try more, new foods and still have grocery money.

WHAT WE LEARNED...

Community members shared feedback at the end of the program. Generally, they were happy they had joined the program and enjoyed the food.

Because winter produce included lots of root vegetables and shares did not change much from week to week, people were challenged to try vegetables in new ways.

"I tried rutabaga and didn't like it. So, I'm giving rutabaga another chance [this week]."

Community members liked getting local food and complimented the farm on how good the food looked each week.

One mother said that knowing her children will eat these vegetables means she can buy them again without worrying they'll be wasted.

"I have been trying different recipes to find out to cook those veggies I never had before."



BECAUSE OF MICHIGAN FARM TO FAMILY,

100%

tried new fruits and vegetables.

100%

have been eating more fruits and vegetables.

91%

have been eating more variety of fruits and vegetables.

91%

have been cooking or preparing fruits and vegetables in new ways.

LEARNINGS AND BEST PRACTICES...

- Timing and flexibility of cash flow are critical for farms, community organizations, and community members.
- Operators should be as flexible as possible with the times of day that shares are available for pick up.
- Refrigeration for shares and multiple pick-up times help increase use of the fresh produce.
- Community members would like more materials that describe each item -- including tips for storage, preparation, and recipes.

Interested in trying Michigan Farm To Family in your community? Learn more at: michiganfitness.org

