

Long Beach Hudson Gardens

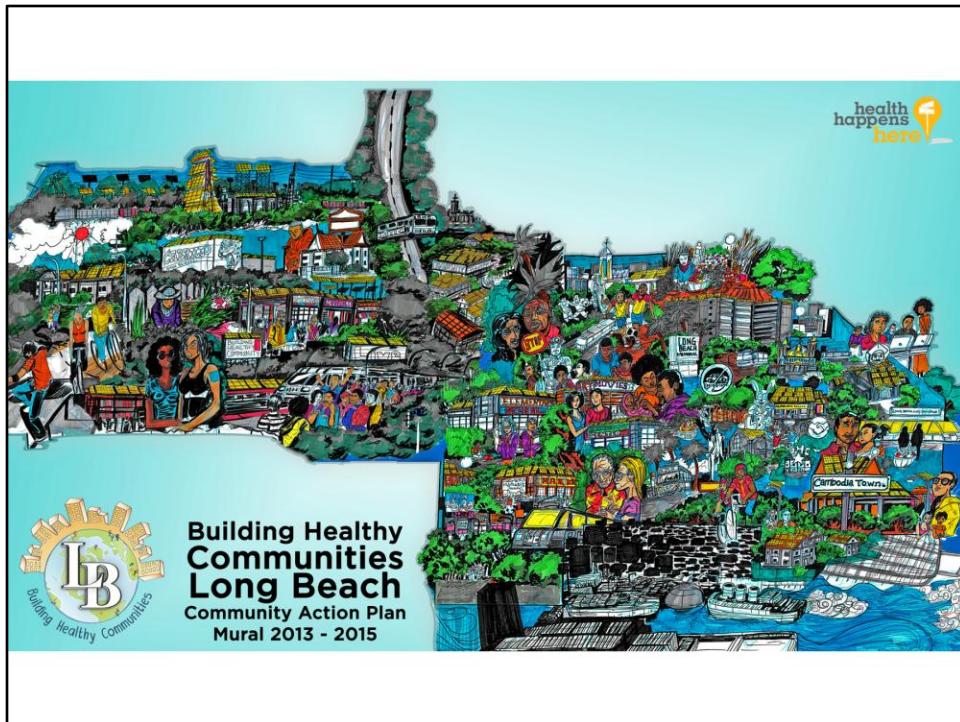


Long Beach *Fresh*

A brief snapshot of the
Long Beach local food
movement

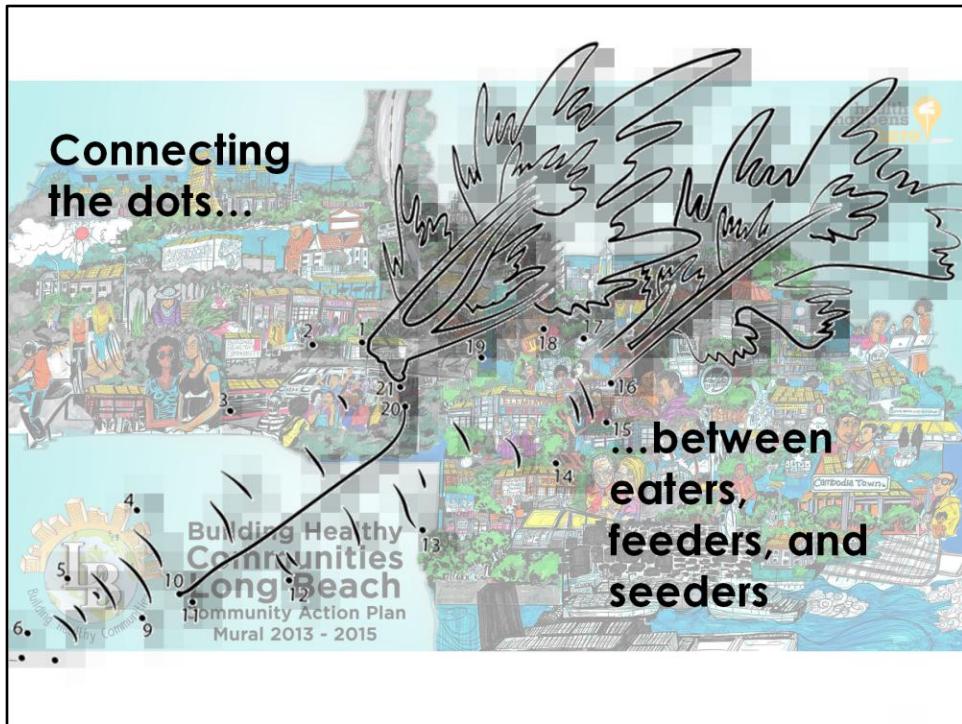
Michelle Azurin
MPH(c), Public Health Nutrition
UC Berkeley School of Public Health
2015 Summer Internship

My internship with Long Beach Fresh revealed the assets and challenges of the food movement in Long Beach; I had the opportunity to meet food movement leaders, understand their strengths and weaknesses, and help to fill in gaps by connecting with key stakeholders. I learned that while the food movement is growing and strong, it consists of a small bubble of people – and whether or not that bubble is truly penetrable by those who lack access to good food was the biggest question that came up during my time there. I cannot say that I found an answer by the time my internship came to an end, but I do believe in the potential of the food movement to thrive and succeed through collaboration.



Before I go on to explain what projects I worked on, I must first explain the nature of LB Fresh's work.

LB Fresh is funded by the California Endowment, through the Building Healthy Communities initiative in Long Beach. Thus, the primary target areas for LB Fresh's work are Central and West Long Beach – low-income areas made up substantially of populations of color, namely Latino, Cambodian, Filipino, and African-American. However, there are also major food assets in North Long Beach, and I found myself traveling there often for site visits.



A quote from the LB Fresh Facebook Page: "We believe in helping all three parts of a local food economy work together: Eaters (consumers), Feeders (establishments ranging from schools and hospitals to restaurants, distributors and co-operatives) and Seeders (local farms and growers). If Eaters, Feeders and Seeders can become more connected, both supply and demand for local food production will scale up and become a change agent in public health and the local economy."

LB Fresh seeks to accelerate the local food economy by facilitating connections between eaters, feeders, and seeders. The organization also provides support and technical assistance for local projects and programs related to urban agriculture, school nutrition, food access, and business. As such, this calls for a very broad scope of work, and I found myself connecting with all three stakeholder groups in different ways.

Local Policy Development and Implementation

- Advocacy for AB 1321 (Nutrition Incentives Matching Grand Program)
- Goats, Chickens, and Bees Ordinance at City Council
- Planning Commission—Land Use Element
- Council Visits with Rex Richardson (District 9) and Suzie Price (District 3)
- Implementation of AB 1616 (Cottage Food Operation)

Connecting the Dots with Community Engagement

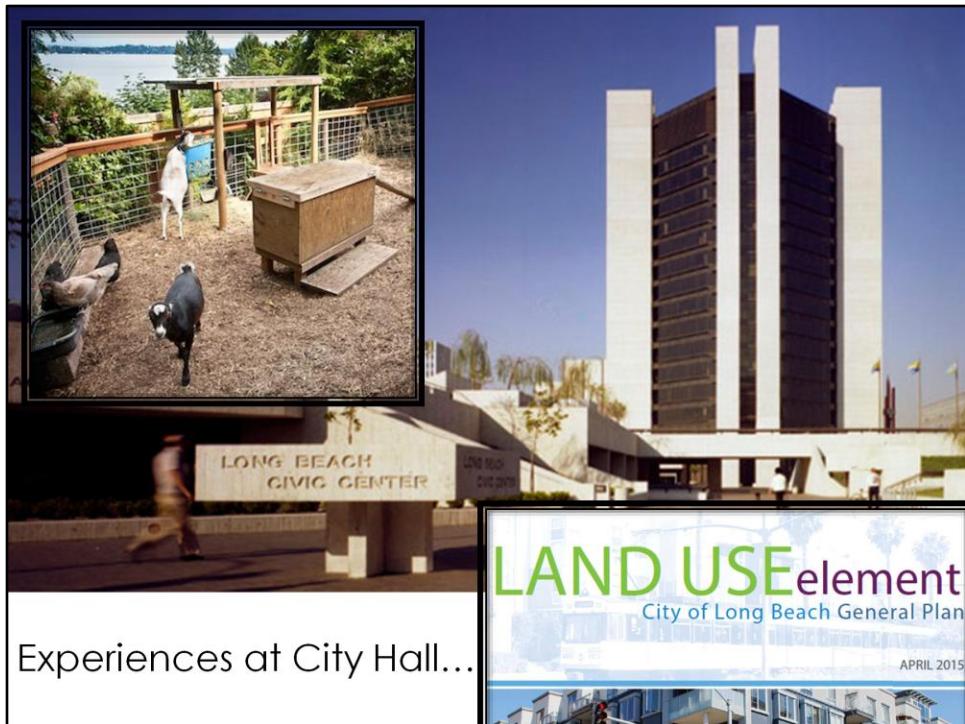
- Interviews with local organizations
- VoiceWaves Food Systems Coverage
- “The Little Things” Guest Posts
- Food story documentation and promotional videos
- BHC Fit Series and Food Party in a Box
- Champions for Change Collaboration—LB Health Department

This slide displays just some of my work with Long Beach Fresh (excluded from this is a list of the many neighborhood meetings, workgroups, and events I had attended). This work allowed me to see how communication occurs between state-level organizations (like the California Food Policy Council) and local organizations like Long Beach Fresh, and how local organizations can play a role as state policy advocates. I gained more experience calling congressional offices about bills such as AB 1321, signing on to letters of support, and following the progress of the bills through Congress. I was also involved in both local policy development and implementation, and engagement with local residents, community organizations, city council, and city departments/agencies, which I will describe a bit more in detail in later slides.

I had one-on-one conversations with leaders of local community organizations, such as LB Latinos in Action and the Filipino Migrant Center, to better understand the issues that their residents, as members of underrepresented populations, face in accessing good food and how LB Fresh could be of most use to them. I also spoke to feeders (owners of local food businesses) and seeders (local farmers and gardeners) to get a sense of the barriers they must overcome to improve the growth and distribution of local food. I also helped to open up avenues of collaboration to better promote the local food system and shift the culture of food in Long Beach.



This is LB Fresh's guide to “good food” (created by Ryan Smolar, one of the organization’s co-coordinators).



My internship provided me with my first real experience with local policy development—prior to this summer I had never witnessed a full city council meeting. In June, I assisted LB Fresh in outreach and calls-to-action regarding a city-wide ordinance that would increase food sovereignty by easing restrictions on the keeping of goats, chickens, and bees. When it was brought to council, dozens of members from the food movement spoke during public comment, and the ruling was passed in a unanimous vote.

Additionally, this summer the new Land Use Element was proposed to the city's Planning Commission, and I spoke on behalf of Long Beach Fresh during public comment to address some concerns (as well as support) for the aspects of the Element pertaining to urban agriculture. While a bit of a nerve-wracking experience, it showed me the importance of having residents speak up about the policies that affect them and how effective City Hall is in providing a forum for this.



Good Food is Good Health and Good Economics

Long Beach Fresh Policy Overview

PUBLIC HEALTH

Improving our food system has a multitude of advantages for public health. By encouraging community garden participation, supporting healthy retail, and expanding healthy food initiatives we can work together to protect food sovereignty, provide access to fresh food, deepen social connection within communities, increase food and nutrition education, and promote sustainable land use.

1. Food Growing Opportunities

 *Proliferate community gardens--* There is a strong demand across diverse neighborhoods for community gardens in Long Beach. It is current city policy to establish community gardens in every park that is five acres or larger by 2020. Participation could be increased by publicizing locations of potential lots and leveraging key partners to spread awareness of this opportunity. *Protect the right to grow--* California has recently passed state legislation (AB 2561) facilitating residents' right to grow food. The city's Healthy Communities Policy and proposed Land Use Element promote residential growing and we hope that Long Beach City Council continues to support this.

2. Healthy Retail

 As part of the new Healthy Retail Partnership with the Long Beach Health Department, we support local corner stores and supermarket chains in adopting healthy retail practices, such as stocking fresh produce, increasing healthy marketing, and improving signage. City council could be a partner in encouraging and incentivizing stores to participate by hosting healthy food pop-up days in various markets.

3. Healthy Food Initiatives

 Under LA County's RENEW grant program, the Health Department is partnering with community coalitions and local residents to expand the Healthy Snack Food and Beverage Policy. Existing policy requires snacks at youth events to meet nutrition standards and vending machines in public spaces to offer healthy options. Long Beach Fresh is in regular communication with the coalition and the American Heart Association as they work with council members to expand these policies.



District 3: Suzie Price



District 9: Rex Richardson

Towards the end of the summer, we began working to build direct relationships with council members. The other members of LB Fresh and I collaborated on developing a policy agenda to present to the council members during our visits.

The first meeting I attended was with Councilmember Richardson, who raised concerns that his North Long Beach district does not even contain a single coffee shop (which typically serves as a communal meeting space for diverse groups within a community). Councilmember Price's district, on the other hand, is abundant in successful, higher-end restaurants serving local and organic food. The stark difference between food availability in these two districts allowed me to see how we might frame the issue of food access to different policymakers based on what their district has to offer. I was forced to think critically about how we might leverage the opportunities in each district to expand access to local food for all people in Long Beach.

Cottage Food Producer Survey

Localism and LB Fresh will be working with the Health Department pipeline for cottage food producers in Long Beach to bring the market. We are trying to better understand the barriers you may be making this happen so we can develop and propose solutions. Your input would be immensely helpful! Please fill out the survey below.

* Required

Please provide a short description about your food product. *

Another major project I assisted with was in collaboration with an organization called Localism (which supports local makers, artisans, and food producers) and the Long Beach Health Department. The goal of this project was to create a pipeline for cottage food production (AB 1616), as many individuals have trouble starting or sustaining their small business. I assisted with research on the requirements of becoming a CFO, created a survey to send out to aspiring and registered CFOs and, prior to my departure, was aiding in the process of developing a flow chart that outlines the steps to becoming a CFO.

This experience revealed the challenges and benefits of operating a small business in Long Beach and how direct communication between residents and local agencies such as the health department is essential (and sometimes a more efficient way) to effect change.

Top left: A shot of the ladies who founded Wide Eyes Open Palms, a “pop-up” coffee shop that sources locally.

Bottom left: A shot of the inside of “MADE,” a retail store for local artisans, makers, and food producers.

Right: A screenshot of the Cottage Food Producer survey we created with Localism.



A photo with the members of the Filipino Migrant Center's walking club after having a discussion about local food!

LB Fresh's Rules for Engaging with the Community...

What We Don't Do

LB Fresh is a facilitating group. It's important to note that we will not do the following:

Duplicate Existing Programs and Services

We do not replicate existing services or launch competitive fundraising campaigns. For example, we will not open the "Long Beach Fresh Community Garden;" instead it is our job to support existing and burgeoning gardens.

Create New Bureaucracy

We enable people in the local food movement to self-start new initiatives and collaborate directly with one another to solve problems.

LB Fresh does not duplicate existing services; rather, it initiates collaboration between individuals in the food movement so that change can be sustained, even without our presence. As such, much of my work in engaging the community was about helping to create connections and facilitate partnerships. Examples of these are on the following slides.

VOICEWAVES long beach

DIA DE LOS VERDES
A SUSTAINABILITY CELEBRATION
LIVE MUSIC • FOOD • YOGA • ART
ALTARS • FARM TOURS • DANCERS
DIY WORKSHOPS • ACTIVITES

SATURDAY, OCT 25TH
10AM - 6PM

at THE GROWING EXPERIENCE URBAN FARM
750 VIA CARMELITOS, LONG BEACH, CA 90805

Little Recipes with Local Chef Agustin Romo

Quinoa Steamed Rice

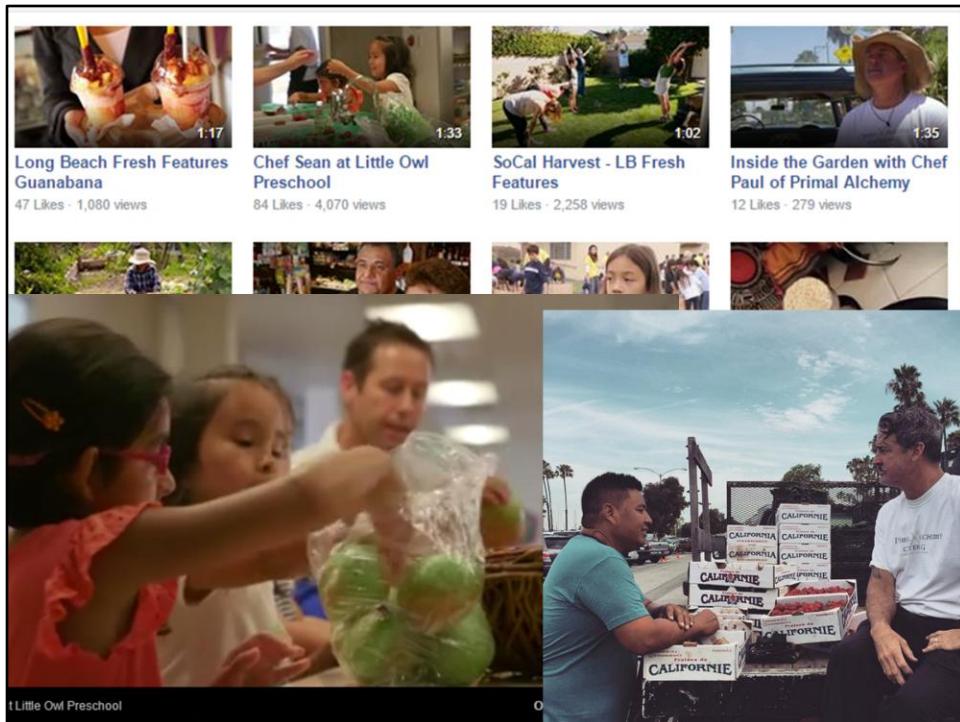
Looking for a simple way to make your white rice healthier? Try the Quinoa Steamed Rice recipe by Chef Agustin Romo.

 @chasqui_482
Agustin Romo



One of my first successes in helping to better publicize the local food movement in Long Beach was meeting with VoiceWaves, a media outlet featuring youth journalists, about documenting aspects of the local food system. They were thrilled with the idea, and together we brainstormed ideas for potential stories. I also connected them with the organizers of “Food Dia,” a Food Day and sustainability event to be held in October so that they could collaborate on finding an appropriate venue to premiere the stories.

In addition, I helped to develop a page for the LB Fresh website called “The Little Things.” This page contains educational resources for making small, healthy behavior changes. I worked with a local chef named Agustin Romo, who filmed short videos containing healthy recipe ideas. I also developed an online form for submissions to the “Little Things” page so that LB residents could contribute to the page and better engage with our organization.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=njQBBFFOuP0> – First video I worked on for LB Fresh: Chef Paul planting at the community garden.

A major project I worked on was our “Food Stories” project, in which I collaborated with a videographer to produce five videos for Long Beach Fresh. For two of these videos, we spoke to Paul Buchanan, a champion for local food in Long Beach and owner of a farm-to-table catering business. We spoke to him about the guiding principles for his work and took a tour of the farmers’ market with him, where he described some of the relationships he has with local farmers. The other three videos highlighted Little Owl Preschool (a model for farm-to-school practices), Guanabana (a family-owned ice cream shop that creates authentic, Mexican desserts using fresh fruit), and The Growing Experience (a 7-acre urban/aquaponic farm located on a public housing development). The individuals from these businesses/institutions spoke to both the successes and challenges of being a local food leader. The interviews were incredibly enlightening, and the videos highlight their amazing work in the Long Beach food system.

Bottom left: Some of the students from Little Owl Pre-school helping Chef Sean, the school’s chef and food educator, set-up their bi-weekly “farmers’ market.”

Bottom right: Chef Paul speaking to Roland Tamai, a local farmer from whom he often sources food for his business.

Neighborhood Food Party in a Box



As Tupperware parties were an excellent way for neighbors to gather and learn about future-aged plastic food storage containers, our neighborhood food parties invite neighbors to gather for an evening of fun and education about the local food system.

Goals:

- To educate neighbors and social networks across the city about local food options in Long Beach
- To provide resourceful information about alternative food procurement strategies
- To connect local food businesses and social programs with target audience

Food Champion Program



To truly change food in Long Beach, it will take at least one person in each organization championing for local, healthy food.

Long Beach Fresh wants to connect with food-minded individuals who want to help their neighborhood, business, church, school or social group eat more local, healthy food.

The Food Champion Program will create a stronger relationship between you and the greater food community by providing you access to: education and training opportunities, local resources and supplier relationships, best practices, sustainability and recycling, local food producers, good food policies, volunteers, designers, press and easy and fun ways to start growing and learning about food.

Screenshots from the LB fresh website about two other major projects on which I provided assistance: the “Food Party in a Box” and the “Food Champion Program.” At the start of my internship, LB Fresh was looking to make more progress on these, so I was tasked with moving them forward.

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During the summer, I worked with an intern from Building Healthy Communities to produce a series of health and fitness work shops for community members. Through an organization called the Long Beach Time Exchange (also funded by BHC), we found a nutritionist named Michelle English who volunteered to facilitate healthy eating/nutrition workshops for Khmer elders at the United Cambodian Community in Central Long Beach (photos on the next slide). The workshops were very successful, and we decided to use this model for the Food Party in a Box. I helped to develop materials to distribute to community organizations, neighborhood associations, local chefs and nutritionists to encourage their participation in the program.



Pictured left: Michelle English presenting to Khmer Elders at UCC (with the help of a translator).

Pictured right: Goods from the farmers' market. I encouraged Michelle to provide snacks from the market and discuss local food with the residents; they asked a lot of really great questions about how to shop at the farmers' markets and I must admit that I learned quite a bit myself as well.

LONG BEACH

Food Party

IN A BOX

LBFRESH.ORG

Sample Event

location:
United Cambodian Community Center

when:
July 15 and July 29, 2-3:30
(after an English class for Khmer elders)

instructor:
Michelle English, Nutritionist

topics:

- What is Nutrition and Why it Matters
- How to Identify Nutrient Dense Foods
- Dirty Dozen Fruits/Vegetables
- Tips for shopping the Farmers' Market

A screenshot from the “decks” we created to promote the “Food Party in a Box.”



How it Works

1. We match your group with an instructor

We connect you with a local chef, nutritionist, or knowledgeable resident looking to share their knowledge about local healthy food.

2. You provide an audience/venue

You provide a space and time for the instructor to host a cooking class, health demo, or nutrition workshop and lead your group through a part of the food system they know best. This can happen in the hour before or after an existing meeting, or we can arrange a time that works for both your group and the facilitator.

3. Your group parties its way to health!

This event provides an opportunity to build community among members within the group in a social setting. This would be an opportunity to learn about local food and health and become better connected with the Long Beach local food movement.

A screenshot from the “decks” we created to promote the “Food Party in a Box.”



**CHAMPIONS
for CHANGE™**

Eat Healthy **Get Moving** **Rethink Your Drink**

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For the Food Champion program, I connected with Lara Turnbull, project director for Healthy Active Long Beach with the Long Beach Department of Health, regarding the Champions for Change program (which primarily services individuals from low-income, underrepresented populations through outreach and education). We agreed on a partnership with their program in which LB Fresh would act as a liaison for champions in the adult peer-to-peer program and other food/health organizations in Long Beach. Rather than creating our own program, this partnership would allow us to engage with residents who already have (or seek) the potential to become leaders in the community and better connect them to local food resources.



LONG BEACH FOOD CHAMPIONS REFERRAL FORM



Long Beach Fresh and Champions for Change

Long Beach Fresh is an organization that is dedicated to making local, healthy food more available in our city. We are excited to invite you to continue the Food Champions Program with us. By working with Long Beach Fresh, you will get the chance to learn more about food and health, educate your peers, and become more involved with the community! If you have any questions, feel free to contact us. Website: www.LBFresh.org | Email: hello@lbfresh.org | Phone: 562-704-6909

WHAT IS YOUR NAME? _____

WHAT IS YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS? _____

WHAT IS YOUR PHONE NUMBER? _____

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO REACH YOU?

- Email
- Phone

WHAT TOPICS ARE YOU MOST INTERESTED IN LEARNING ABOUT? (PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- Peer Education
- Food Policy
- Nutrition/Cooking
- Eating on a Budget
- Buying Local Food
- Growing Food
- Starting a Food Business
- Other: _____

PLEASE CIRCLE WHEN YOU ARE FREE

Sunday	9am-12pm	12pm-3pm	3pm-6pm	6pm-9pm
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A screenshot of the referral form I created for champion moms and dads in the adult peer-to-peer program who may be interested in continuing to be food champions with LB Fresh.

The Long Beach local food system thrives on collaboration, communication, and community building!



Through this internship, I learned that the Long Beach local food system thrives on collaboration, communication, and community building. There is a huge need for greater representation in the food movement by those who are most adversely affected by inequity in our social and economic systems. Unfortunately, many of them do not know that the food movement exists, do not understand the benefits, or do not know how to get involved; language barriers and cultural differences are a major reason for this, especially in a city as diverse as Long Beach. As such, we must continue to work at all levels of the social-ecological model, from policy and institutions to social networks and individuals, in order to have the greatest impact on public health.

Left: A shot of the LB Fresh crew with Isaac and Henry, the garden managers of the Hudson Gardens (one of Long Beach's oldest community gardens) in North LB. Isaac and Henry described the importance of remaining sensitive to each member's culture/heritage in their garden practices. The garden is in high demand (as they offer large plots for only \$40 per year) and is a prime example of the need for more gardens at parks of 5 acres or larger (a citywide policy that has been passed but not yet implemented in Long Beach).

Right: A shot of us speaking with some regional partners from the Riverside Food Systems Alliance and Riverside Food Cooperative.



I would like to acknowledge the Berkeley Food Institute for awarding me one of the 2015 Community Engagement Fellowships, and the Max Factor Family Foundation for providing me with a scholarship to help fund this summer internship.