American Bounty, American Hunger: Bridging the Gap Between Food Abundance and Food Scarcity in Northfield and Faribault, Minnesota

American Studies Senior Comprehensive Exercise

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"Welcome to Salinas, Salad Bowl to the World." The weathered sign along Highway 101 greets visitors to this California ag town… Leafy greens of all varieties line the finger-shaped valley from the foothills of the Gabilan Range to the edge of the Santa Lucia Range…. One can even find salad greens at the Crazy Horse Canyon Landfill. When I visited the now-closed landfill, an inch of shredded lettuce obscured the ground like a dusting of green snow. Atop the mountain of trash, Robert Correa oversaw the delivery of 200 tons of excess, rejected, or misbagged produce everyday… The dump closed because it was full, an outcome hastened by that ceaseless supply of green waste. [1]

-Jonathan Bloom, author of *American Wasteland*

While Jonathan Bloom's depiction of mountainous excess food at Crazy Horse Canyon landfill may sound shocking, the magnitude of waste found in "Salinas, Salad Bowl to the World" reflects business as usual in cities and towns across the United States. To get food from farms to our dinner tables uses ten percent of the United States energy budget, fifty percent of U.S. land, and eighty percent of the U.S. supply of freshwater.[2] Yet, despite this massive natural resource expenditure, Americans waste *forty* percent of the food we produce.[3] This waste occurs at all levels of the food system: production, postharvest, processing, retail, and consumption. According to Bloom, consumers, retailers, farmers, and others implicated in the food system find this degree of waste "somewhat palatable" only because of the ongoing national belief that there will always be "plenty more" food.[4] While edible food rots in landfills across the nation, forty-two million Americans are food insecure, meaning that they do not have consistent access to nutritionally sound food. If Americans donated just one third of the food we currently throw away, we would be able to adequately feed the entire United States population.[5]

Why an Academic Civic Engagement Comps?

Through my experience as Program Director of Carleton's Food Recovery Network chapter, an organization that recovers surplus food from dining halls and redistributes that food to local community organizations, I see the vast amount of waste embedded into our food

system. I also see that just outside of Carleton, families face food insecurity. This paradox bothers me on a practical level—American food businesses throw away edible food, and American individuals go to bed hungry. This tension also bothers me on an intellectual level. Why, in this country of vast abundance, do people struggle to feed their families? What is it about the culture of the contemporary United States that allows abundance and scarcity to co-exist in communities across our nation? In this paper, I explore the contradiction between food waste and food insecurity in order to understand what this contradiction says about Americans' notion of the United States landscape as a limitless cornucopia that contains an endless supply of resources for human consumption. This paper, which accompanies my Academic Civic Engagement (ACE) project comps, aims to weave together the reflective and the academic. Because my comps is a product of engaged scholarship, my own voice and experiences are not distinct from my academic learning; rather, they depend on one another.

For my ACE project, I wrote a report that describes the state of food waste and food insecurity in Northfield and Faribault, Minnesota. I produced this report by conducting semi-structured interviews with thirty-six relevant stakeholders including: sixteen directors/employees of Northfield and Faribault organizations who serve food insecure residents, nine owners and employees of Northfield food businesses, and eleven employees of food recovery organizations in Minnesota as well as other parts of the United States. Interviews took place over the course of November 2017 through February 2018. I conducted some of my interviews over the phone and others in person, and each interview lasted between thirty and sixty minutes.

My report outlines key themes that emerged from my interviews, and based on my findings, I include recommendations for how various stakeholders in Northfield and Faribault can bridge the gap between food waste and food insecurity. In my project, I use the U.S.

Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s definition of food waste: "The amount of [edible] food, postharvest, that is available for human consumption but is not consumed for any reason."[6] I also use the USDA's definition of food insecurity: "The limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways."[7] My report seeks to answer the questions: What is the current situation around food scarcity and abundance in Northfield and Faribault? What practices can local social service organizations and businesses implement to address the situation? While my comps project focuses primarily on the tangible reality of food waste and food insecurity in Northfield and Faribault, it is rooted in American Studies scholarship.

I see American Studies as a suitable arena for a civic engagement project, as it is a field that has grown out of grassroots social action. In his book *American Studies in a Moment of Danger*, George Lipsitz, a prominent American Studies scholar, emphasizes the importance of social movements in the forming and reforming of American Studies. Lipsitz writes, "If we are to fashion an American Studies appropriate to our own era… We need to know how scholarship and social movements influence each other, and we need to ask and answer hard questions about the project of national culture and our relationship to it."[8] My ACE project focuses on current local social action around the issues of food waste and food insecurity, as well as the need for further social action on these issues. By addressing local social action through an academic lens, I hope to produce engaged scholarship that contributes to more than just my college, but also to my local community.

I understand locally-based civic engagement as the work of American Studies. Throughout my time at Carleton, I have found that my learning outside the classroom has deepened my learning within the classroom. By engaging in activism and civic engagement both

in the Northfield community and on Carleton's campus, I have developed an understanding of social inequalities in a way that I never could have in a classroom alone. I identified with the sentiments of one of my interviewees, Anna Schulte, from Twin Cities Food Justice (TCFJ), an organization founded by former fellow graduate students. "Part of my experience being in academia and going to grad school," Schulte said, is that "it feels like you're reading a whole lot of books and not doing much. The founders of TCFJ felt really moved to act on the issue of food waste."[9] Schulte and the founders of TCFJ felt driven to build upon the knowledge they had gained in graduate school and apply that knowledge to direct community engagement. Although my comps project is not as large scale as founding a food justice organization, I hope that my research will contribute to existing efforts for social change in the Northfield and Faribault communities.

Readers of my comps report will notice that it is not academic writing. Rather, it is written with a particular audience in mind: Northfield and Faribault's social service leaders, food business owners and employees, and decision makers involved with city planning, such as the Northfield Environmental Quality Commission and The Chamber of Commerce. By writing my comps in a practical and accessible format, I hope that stakeholders can use my report as a resource to aid and expand upon their current work on the issues of food waste and food insecurity.

Patterns of U.S. Consumer Culture

The issues of food waste and food insecurity that I explore in my comps project stem from the historical development of American identity as intertwined with mass consumption. Consumptive practices in the United States speak to Americans' desire for identity and meaning. According to historical scholar Maurice M. Manring, in the twentieth century American families

"used new products" in attempts to improve their "self-image," appease their "doubts," and fulfill their "aspirations" for a good life.[10] Cultural historian Warren Susman situates notions of consumption within an American "culture of abundance," which dates back to the experience of New World settlers and continues to hold true today.[11] Susman argues that after industrialization, Americans began to cling to consumer goods as a way to feel appreciated and liked by others. This consumer-oriented way of life was predicated upon a continued utopian view of an America overflowing with natural resources.[12]

Even during times of American scarcity, like the Depression era, Americans envisioned a nation of plenty; Franklin Roosevelt, for example, claimed that "only technical difficulties with distribution" kept "the American people from their rightful share in the abundance."[13] During Roosevelt's presidency, Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau promoted "limitless economic expansion" as the key to American prosperity. At the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944, he urged delegates to "seize opportunities for increasing material progress on an earth infinitely blessed with natural resources."[14] Roosevelt's administration exemplified the enduring myth of perpetual American abundance. My comps report reflects the relevancy of this myth even today.

U.S. Consumer Culture and Waste

Confronting America's culture of consumption necessitates facing its inescapable byproduct: waste. Historians William Cronon and Jeffrey Bolster view environmentally-harmful actions, like waste production, as products of "American" ways of viewing the natural world as perpetually plentiful. Cronon explains that early American settlers, when chopping down trees, did not chop down "selected species, but all of them."[15] Settlers' powerful and wasteful actions led to a Southern New England that "was as much as three-fourths deforested in the middle of

the nineteenth century."[16] Jeffrey Bolster depicts early Americans' beliefs in American abundance in his book *The Mortal Sea.* He describes mariners entering the Atlantic Ocean with preexisting dreams of abundant resources and then seeing copious amounts of fish like they had never before witnessed. This experience of exploring a sea that appeared to be overflowing with fish, in combination with existing "narratives of abundance" and "cornucopian fantasies," led to overfishing and ensuing "diminishment of the sea."[17] As these historians' insights indicate, driven by their conception of the American landscape as perpetually abundant, early American settlers interacted with natural resources in destructive and wasteful ways.

Unfortunately, wasteful practices of early American settlers pale in comparison to the wasteful practices of Americans during the Age of Industrialization and beyond. During the late 1800s, industrialization altered Americans' ways of consuming food. Instead of consuming food "from farm to table," most Americans began consuming food "from factory to table." This trend lowered food costs and increased easy access to food, thereby encouraging Americans to waste food more willingly.[18] To combat the rise in food waste, the canning industry boomed in 1901 with the introduction of the American Can Company.[19] Later, during World War I, saving food was deemed a "patriotic duty" that would support the war effort. The widespread nature of this patriotic food-saving campaign resulted in reductions in food consumption; consumption dropped fifteen percent between 1918 and 1919. During the Great Depression, food sales dropped dramatically, and without well-developed programs to distribute uneaten food, large amounts of food, on farms and in grocery stores, went to waste. On the other hand, food waste in households decreased, as most Americans could not afford to waste. In contrast, in prosperous times like post World War Two, agricultural developments led to an abundance of food sold at low prices.[20] Plenty of food at low prices meant an increase in waste. It was during this time, too,

that in-sink garbage disposals were invented. Inventions like these "perpetuated the out-of-sight-out-of-mind consequences of consumption and waste that still plague us today."[21] The Age of Industrialization and the consumptive American lifestyles that ensued have created the system of mass food production that we benefit from today—and unfortunately—the waste that comes with that system.

The Food Waste Epidemic of Our Time

Today's American food waste epidemic is predicated on inefficiencies in our modern systems. Although the U.S. food industry brings comfort and ease to the lives of many Americans, it also brings adverse effects to people and the environment. In 2004, sociologist George Ritzer wrote the book *The McDonaldization of Society,* in which he discusses the paradoxical inefficiencies inevitable in our modern food system. Ritzer's theory of McDonaldization derives from the work of Max Weber, a German sociologist who, in the early twentieth century, developed the idea of the rationalization of society. Weber saw rationalization as characterized by "efficiency, predictability, calculability, and control."[22] Ritzer built upon Weber's theory of rationalization by creating the concept of "McDonaldization," which he defines as: "the process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world."[23] Ritzer argues that although McDonaldization offers advantages—such as a wider variety of goods accessible to a large population, instantaneous access to people's desires, and availability of goods regardless of people's geographic location—McDonaldization has a dark side. Ritzer cites "the need to grow uniform potatoes from which to create predictable french fries" as an example of the inefficiency present in an "efficient" system. Farms that produce potatoes "rely on the extensive use of chemicals," and "the need to produce a perfect fry means that much of the

potato is wasted."[24] Further, Ritzer describes McDonaldized workplaces as "inhuman settings in which to work."[25] The concept of rationalization can be applied to the mass production of food in the United States today and the massive inefficiencies built into a system that is meant to be rational and efficient. The American food waste epidemic of today operates within this greater context of American consumer culture and the massive amounts of waste that result from that culture.

In the twenty-first century, like in the days of early American settlement, assumptions of inexhaustible food supplies drive Americans' overconsumption and waste of food. Founder of food recovery organization D.C. Central Kitchen, Robert Egger, recounts his experiences recovering excess food from catering events: "No one cared about excess…People would call me at 1am- they'd say, 'Dude we've got 15 leg of lamb, 3 suckling pigs, 14 pans of strawberries."[26] These notions of plenty in tandem with social norms that allow people to "communicate prosperity" through "copious amounts of food" lead to vast amounts of waste.[27] Aaron French, a chef, describes this phenomenon: "Caterers never run out. They can't. That's why they plan ten to fifteen percent over, because they'll never work again if they run out."[28] In Bloom's own home, he notes a similar pattern. "I once planned a menu for some dinner guests so precisely that everyone was satisfied but nothing remained in the serving bowls. Yet, it felt as if my wife and I had been rude."[29] Copious amounts of food, and the food waste that accompanies it, operate at both the food business level and the individual level.

Many of my interviewees, especially those who work directly on food recovery efforts, see expectations of endlessly abundant food as central to the American food waste problem. As Amy Kelley from the D.C. Food Recovery Working Group described, "Generally speaking, on the caterer's part, they put out more food than necessary. On grocery stores' part, they will only

take very specific looking fruits and vegetables, which means 'imperfect' produce is left at the farm to rot in the field. And we as consumers want to see lots of food on the catering table, and pretty looking produce at the store. It's a systemic issue that needs addressing on many different levels."[30] In the twenty-first century, Americans still imagine food as without bounds, and food retailers feed into this imagination by overproducing food.

The culture of consumption that permits waste of over forty percent of American food operates, in part, because of people's alienation from both the food production and waste management processes. Although similar illusions of limitless abundance operated before the Industrial Revolution, unlike most Americans today, early Americans had to "till the soil, sow seeds, care for the crops through continual watering and weeding, and finally harvest the fruit of their labor.[31] In the twenty-first century, "there's an abundance to be had with minimal effort. It's all just a swipe of a card away at the supermarket or superstore."[32] This lack of direct connection has increased freedom for American families by reducing the need to physically work for food. Still, a removal of direct access from the food system has resulted in unforeseen consequences. The illusion of limitless plenty persists because the U.S. government, since the mid nineteenth century, has incentivized farmers' use of chemical fertilizers as well as the widespread practice of increasing "yield and selling the surplus overseas."[33] Most consumers remained unaware of these decisions, yet each decision has affected what consumers *can* see—a drop in food prices, which has promoted the false "attitude that we didn't have to worry about waste" and has facilitated Americans' continued patterns of overconsumption.[34]

Americans' distance from and devaluation of food persists, in part, because of the enduring notion that our food supply will never run out. In his discussion of the city of Chicago's development, historian William Cronon captures the process of distancing between people and

the food they consume that perpetuates consumptive behavior. He writes, "Living in the city means consuming goods and services in the marketplace with ties to people and places in every corner of the planet, people and places that remain invisible, unknown, and unimagined as we consume the products of their lives." Because the complicated intertwining processes that produce food operate out of sight, Americans see only finished commodities, which they can then carelessly waste.[35] The disconnect between Americans and the sources of their food elucidates the food waste crisis; if we fully understood the complex relationships embedded in food production, we might not waste forty percent of our food.

Today, food waste is a hot-button issue for environmentalists and organizations that address food insecurity in their communities. Government bodies like the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and sustainability nonprofits like the Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC) have raised food waste reduction as a top priority that necessitates thoughtful attention from stakeholders in all parts of the food chain: producers, processors, distributors, retailers, and consumers. The NRDC, EPA, and the Food Waste Reduction Alliance, among others, have analyzed the harmful impact of food waste as well as opportunities for change in cities and towns across the nation. In fact, the EPA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have together set a Food Loss & Waste 2030 Reduction Goal. They plan to work with organizations and businesses across the nation to reduce national food waste levels by fifty percent from 2015 levels.[36] With this national perspective in mind, my project highlights local businesses and community organizations that are actively working to reduce food waste and food insecurity. It also highlights areas for improvement and growth.

Food Insecurity in Our Land of Plenty

Vast amounts of wasted food in the United States parallel high food insecurity rates across the nation and in our local community. According to the U.S. Census, in 2016, 10.6% of the Northfield population, slightly below the national average, was living in poverty.[37] In Faribault, 17.3% percent of the population was living in poverty, which lies above the national average.[38] I use poverty measurements as a proxy for food insecurity, as specific data on food insecurity rates in Northfield and Faribault are unavailable. Through my interview process in Northfield and Faribault, I have come to understand that just outside of the haven of academia that is Carleton College, families struggle to buy healthy food for their families. Families choose between medicine and food. Families feel stigma and shame around asking for help accessing food. For some families, government assistance is not enough, and nonprofits in Northfield and Faribault are attempting to fill the gap.

"A Portrait of Hunger, the Social Safety Net, and the Working Poor," a study featured in Policy Studies Journal, highlights some of the same patterns I found in my research. As I found that working families are struggling with food security, this study, focused on food pantry clients in Iowa, explained that "job-related demands, such as transportation, childcare, and uncovered health care costs, force choices between food and other necessities." The study found that "working individuals are more likely to report having to make difficult choices between basic life necessities and food than those who are unemployed."[39] The study suggests that government assistance programs fail to protect Americans from hunger, and many families are turning to food pantries and other social service organizations that provide free food. At the end of their study, the authors state, "Our society tolerates hunger."[40] In a country that wastes forty percent of its food, we must stop tolerating hunger.

Food For Thought

Although food waste and food insecurity are complex and dynamic issues, I do not see them as insurmountable on a local level. As one of my interviewees, Amy Kelley of The D.C. Food Recovery Working Group expressed, "Unlike other issues, food waste seems to be one of those issues that is not partisan. Everybody believes that it is wrong that one of the richest countries in the world still has millions of people who are food insecure. There is perfectly edible food available to send to food kitchens. It just seems like a no brainer to most people."[41] In Northfield and Faribault, organizations are working together so that food insecure people can access high quality food. Individuals throughout Northfield, including farmers like Rocky Casillas of Main Street Project and Kathy Zeman of Simple Harvest Farm, teachers like Cheryl Mathison of the Area Learning Center and Jennifer Lompart of Northfield High School, and business people like Dean Christensen of Brick Oven Bakery and Stephanie Aman of Just Foods Co-op, identify food insecurity and food waste as pressing issues in their community. They see their organizations as integral parts of the solution. My report highlights and combines the hard work, insights, and problems identified by a variety of key community members. My hope is that, upon reading my report, stakeholders can identify mutual self-interest and find ways to collaborate more deeply to address the issues of food insecurity and food waste in our community.

In his book, *The Sociological Imagination*, American sociologist C. Wright Mills wrote, "Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both."[42] I grew up in a historical moment in which Americans were becoming increasingly aware of both our warming climate and the ever-increasing gap between the rich and the poor. My social context, a nation of both abundance and scarcity, impacts the way that I

understand the United States and my place in it. When I first learned about climate change as a little kid, I remember feeling sad and frustrated. The same was true when I learned about poverty. Today, I am a young adult, and I am still sad and frustrated by the massive injustices that characterize the United States. But, at the same time, I am beginning to see that I do not have to resign myself to the world *as it is*. I can imagine the world *as it should be* and join grassroots efforts to create that world. As a student of American Studies and a civically-engaged person, I hope to continue to engage with complex social problems in critical and creative ways. My ACE comps is part of that journey, and I am excited to see where I go next.

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[1] Jonathan Bloom. *American wasteland: how America throws away nearly half of its food (and what we can do about it)*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2010, 2.
[2] Dana Gunders. "Wasted: How America Is Losing Up To 40 Percent Of Its Food From Farm To Fork To Landfill." *NRDC Issue Paper* (August, 2012), 4.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Jonathan Bloom. *American wasteland,* 67.
[5] Dana Gunders, "Wasted," 4.
[6] "U.S. Food Waste Challenge Frequently Asked Questions." USDA | OCE | U.S. Food Waste Challenge | FAQ's. Accessed October 17, 2017. https://www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste/faqs.htm.
[7] "Definitions of Food Security," USDA ERS, last modified October 4th, 2017, https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security/.
[8] George Lipsitz. *American Studies in a Moment of Danger.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001, xvi.
[9] Anna Schulte, interview by Natalie Jacobson, January 25, 2018.
[10] Maurice M. Manring. *Slave in a box: the strange career of Aunt Jemima*. Charlottesville, Va.: Univ. Press of Virginia, 2002, 11.
[11] Warren Susman. *Culture as history: the transformation of American society in the twentieth century*. Washington: Smithsonian Inst. Press, 2003., xxii.
[12] I explored much of what follows in this paper in my earlier essay "American Faith, American Food," in AMST 396, June 2017.
[13] Warren Susman. *Culture as history*, xxiv.
[14] Theodore Steinberg. *Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, 273.
[15] William Cronon, *Changes in the Land* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 114.
[16] Ibid, 156.
[17] W. Jeffrey Bolster, The Mortal Sea (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012), 48.
[18] Willey, D., Pendergast, H., Hickok, S., & Ewing, S. (n.d.). Food Waste Digital Exhibit . Retrieved November 15, 2017, from http://exhibits.usu.edu/exhibits/show/foodwaste/intro
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Frank W. Elwell, "Ritzer on the Rationalization of Consumption," Rogers State University, accessed March 7, 2018, http://www.faculty.rsu.edu/users/f/felwell/www/Theorists/Essays/Ritzer1.htm.
[23] Ritzer, George. *The McDonaldization of Society.* Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge Press, 2004, 1.
[24] Ibid, 17.
[25] Ibid.

[26] Jonathan Bloom. *American wasteland,* 68.
[27] Ibid, 69.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid, 70.
[30] Amy Kelley, interview by Natalie Jacobson, January 26, 2018.
[31] Jonathan Bloom. *American wasteland*, 67.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] William Cronon*, Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: Norton & Company, 1991), 384.
[36] "A Call to Action by Stakeholders: United States Food Loss & Waste 2030 Reduction Goal." EPA. March 21, 2017. Accessed October 17, 2017. https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/call-action-stakeholders-united-states-food-loss-waste-2030-reduction.
[37] "QuickFacts Northfield city, Minnesota." United States Census Bureau. 2016. Accessed March 04, 2018. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/northfieldcityminnesota/PST045216
[38] "QuickFacts Faribault city, Minnesota." United States Census Bureau. 2016. Accessed March 04, 2018. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/faribaultcityminnesota/PST045216
[39] Maureen Berner, Trina Ozer, and Sharon Paynter, "A Portrait of Hunger, the Social Safety Net, and the Working Poor," The Policy Studies Journal 36, no. 3 (2008): 418.
[40] Ibid, 419.
[41] Amy Kelley, interview by Natalie Jacobson, January 26, 2018.
[42] C Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1959, 3.

American Bounty, American Hunger

A Report on Food Abundance and Food Scarcity in Northfield and Faribault, Minnesota

Written by Natalie Jacobson, American Studies Major and Program Director of Carleton's Food Recovery Network

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Executive Summary:

"I've always had an innate belief that in our country of abundance, our citizens have a right to eat. That's my value that drives me."

- Jim Blaha, Executive Director, Northfield Community Action Center

Although we live in a country of abundance, Americans still struggle to access good, healthy food. According to the Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC), **Americans waste forty percent of the food we produce**.[1] All the while, **forty-two million Americans are food insecure,** meaning that they face "limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways."[2] **If Americans donated just one third of the food we currently throw away, we would be able to adequately feed the entire United States food-insecure population.**[3]

Food waste also contributes to one of the most pressing challenges of our time: climate change. According to the NRDC, food and agriculture consume roughly sixteen percent of our nation's energy, almost half of its land, and sixty-seven percent of its freshwater use. When forty percent of our nation's food goes uneaten, roughly one-fifth of our cropland, fertilizers, and agricultural water are wasted. Furthermore, food is now the top contributor to U.S. landfills, releasing methane as it rots.[4]

As Program Director of Carleton College's chapter of **Food Recovery Network (FRN),** an organization that recovers surplus food from Carleton's dining halls and redistributes that food to eight nonprofits in Northfield and Faribault, Minnesota, I have become increasingly aware of the tension between food waste and food insecurity that exists here. On a daily basis, Carleton's dining halls produce dozens of pounds of surplus food, while on the outskirts of Carleton, community members struggle to feed their families.

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[1] Gunders, Dana. "Wasted: How America Is Losing Up To 40 Percent Of Its Food From Farm To Fork To Landfill." NRDC Report (August, 2017), 4.

[2] "Food Security in the U.S.: Measurement." United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. October 04, 2017. Accessed March 03, 2018. https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/measurement.aspx#insecurity

[3] Gunders, Dana. "Wasted: How America Is Losing Up To 40 Percent Of Its Food From Farm To Fork To Landfill." NRDC Report (August, 2017), 4.

[4] Ibid, 5.

Food recovery —collecting surplus food and donating it to local organizations —is part of the solution to food waste and food insecurity. According to ReFED, a data driven guide for stakeholders involved in food waste reduction, "Food recovery is one of the most effective methods of reducing food waste; experts estimate food recovery efforts can divert 1.1 million tons of waste annually, and increase food donations to hunger-fighting nonprofits by nearly 1.8 billion meals."[5] Food recovery efforts are already occurring throughout Northfield and Faribault, but there is room to expand these efforts.

This report explores **the intersecting issues of food waste and food insecurity at a local level**. The report does not contain the answers to these massive social and environmental challenges; rather, it provides a window into the knowledge of the Northfield and Faribault communities who interact with the issues of food waste and food insecurity every day. In highlighting the observations of these community members, this report aims to showcase both the work already being done on these issues and the gaps that still exist. I hope that relevant stakeholders, like the Northfield Chamber of Commerce, Greater Northfield Sustainability Collaborative, and others, can use this report to aid and expand upon their ongoing work on food waste and food insecurity.

Methodology and Structure:

In order to create this report, 36 stakeholders were interviewed. These interviewees fall into three stakeholder groups. **[See Appendix A for a full list of interviewees.]** Interviews were conducted over the course of November 2017 through February 2018. Some interviews were conducted over the phone, others were conducted in person. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.

Stakeholder Group One is composed of sixteen people who lead or work for organizations that address the needs of food insecure residents in Northfield and/or Faribault. Members of Stakeholder Group One were interviewed in order to determine: How does food insecurity impact the organization's clients? What role do food donations play in the organization's ability to serve its clients?

Stakeholder Group Two is composed of nine owners or employees of food businesses in Northfield. Members of Stakeholder Group Two were interviewed in order to determine: If a business already donates

[5] Food Recovery Network, 2017 Annual Report, p. 6, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/555b5cf1e4b0864ccf1a0156/t/5a3c1e7c71c10b9c1ace75f3/1513889441697/FY+17+Annual+Report, accessed March 4, 2018.

food, what are their processes of doing so? If a business does not already donate food, what are the barriers that the business faces? What are the business's general policies and practices around food donations?

Stakeholder Group Three is composed of eleven people who lead or work for food recovery organizations in Minnesota as well as other cities in the United States. Members of Stakeholder Group Three were interviewed in order to determine: What best practices does the organization use when working with businesses that donate food and with community organizations that receive food? What challenges does the organization face when working with food businesses and with community organizations that receive food?

This report is divided into **four main sections: Food Insecurity in Northfield and Faribault, Food Waste in Northfield and Faribault, the Role of Food Donations in Northfield and Faribault, and Barriers to Donating Food.** These four sections highlight key themes that emerged from my interviews, such as negative assumptions around hunger, the shifting public understanding of food waste, and the need for expanded compost programs. These sections depict the local work already being done on the issues of food waste and insecurity as well as barriers and gaps that remain. The next section, **Areas for Growth and Change**, takes into account the gaps indicated in the previous sections and contains a list of recommendations for how local stakeholders might work together to fill these gaps. Last, **Food Waste + Food Recovery Resources** provides suggested links for further reading.

"Food recovery is one of the most effective methods of reducing food waste; experts estimate food recovery efforts can divert 1.1 million tons of waste annually, and increase food donations to hunger-fighting nonprofits by nearly 1.8 billion meals."

-Food Recovery Network 2017 Annual Report

Food Insecurity in Northfield and Faribault:

In 2016, 12.3% of the U.S. population was food insecure.[6] During that same year, **10.6% of the Northfield population** was living in poverty.[7] **In Faribault, 17.3% percent of the population was living in poverty**. For both towns, poverty measurements will be used as a proxy for food insecurity, as specific data on food insecurity rates in Northfield and Faribault are unavailable.

This section explores the **four most frequent themes** relating to food insecurity that emerged in interviews:

1. The psychological impacts of food insecurity
2. Lack of access to healthy food
3. Transportation barriers to food access
4. Assumptions and myths surrounding hunger

Psychological Impacts of Food Insecurity:

Eight interviewees, mostly from Stakeholder Group I, discussed their observations of psychological impacts of food insecurity on the people with whom they work. Several of these interviewees, particularly people who work directly with young students, have noticed that food insecure children in their programs struggle to concentrate. Caren Hoffman, Director of A Child's Delight, a daycare in Faribault, works with about eighty children, thirty of whom receive free or reduced lunch. Hoffman expressed that she "can always tell who hasn't eaten in the morning. Those kids are crabby and not concentrating. They're learning a ton at this age," she said, "and if they can't concentrate because they're hungry, that's a problem." Charles Cooper, Community School Coordinator at Faribault Middle School, also notes a lack of energy from students struggling with food access. Cooper notes that these students "seem lethargic during the school day. **It's hard to care about Algebra when it's been a couple days since you've had dinner."** Food insecurity is an urgent local health issue that is tightly linked to not only physical health, but mental health as well.

Interviewees also noted connections between anger and food insecurity. Cheryl Mathison, a teacher at the Area Learning School, noted that fifty percent of the students with whom she works qualify for free or

[6] "Food Security in the U.S.: Key Statistics and Graphics." United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. October 04, 2017. Accessed March 03, 2018. https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/key-statistics-graphics/

[7] "QuickFacts Northfield city, Minnesota." United States Census Bureau. 2016. Accessed March 04, 2018. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/northfieldcityminnesota/PST045216

reduced lunch. She describes her student body as "students who are homeless and students whose parents are CEOs and Vice Presidents of companies and everything in between." Mathison shared a story of her efforts to talk with students about how to control anger. She asked her students, "What are your anger trigger points?" One of her students answered, "When all the food is gone." As interviewees' observations demonstrate, food insecurity, especially during critical stages of child development, can have debilitating effects on the wellbeing and academic success of students.

Lack of Access to Healthy Food:

Food insecurity impacts the physical health of Northfield and Faribault residents. **Eighteen interviewees,** including almost every interviewee who works directly with food insecure residents in Rice County, cited lack of access to healthy food options as a major pattern in the populations with whom they work. Raquel Rendon, a community health worker at Healthfinders Collaborative, stated that many of her patients "struggle with being able to provide a healthy diet to their children." She said, **"I come into homes where unfortunately the parents or primary caregiver has come down with an illness- usually cardiovascular or diabetes."** According to Rendon, many of her patients know that fruits and vegetables are healthy options, but they cannot afford to buy those items. Instead, she said, **"they're stuck with ramen and mac and cheese."** After all, Rendon expressed, "good food is expensive."[8]

Fresh produce, in particular, is inaccessible to many local low-income families. Katie McKenna, Bon Appetit's General Manager at Carleton, used to work with Carleton students to volunteer at Thursday's Table, a program through the Northfield Community Action Center, which provides a hot meal to roughly 200 people each week. "The first time we did it," McKenna said, **"students gleaned kale, and we made a fabulous kale salad, and no one there knew what it was, because they didn't have access to fresh produce."** The lack of familiarity with fresh produce that McKenna describes points to time constraints that limit food insecure families' ability to cook healthy food. Processed foods are available at a low-cost and are easily accessed at convenience stores. For low-income families, who often work long hours, processed foods are an attractive option.

Many low-income Northfield and Faribault residents want to eat healthy, fresh food, but high costs limit access. Rocky Casillas, founder of Main Street Project's Sharing Our Roots Program, emphasized that healthy food options are present in Northfield, so the issue is not availability of high quality food, but rather, access to

that food. **"In Northfield, there are so many farms, but their fresh products can be expensive. If farmers were willing to give better prices to low income people, they would be more likely to be able to afford them."** Interviewees' insights demonstrate that lack of access to affordable, healthy food presents a challenge for low-income Northfield and Faribault residents.

Patients "are stuck with ramen and mac and cheese."

- Raquel Rendon, Community Health Worker at Healthfinders

Transportation Barriers to Food Access:

While Northfield and Faribault offer food support resources, like food shelves and other food donation pick-up sites, not all residents can access these resources. **Eleven interviewees** emphasized lack of transportation as a barrier to food access in Northfield and Faribault. Raquel Rendon at Healthfinders suggested that lack of transportation options can limit her patients' ability to access food from support services like the Northfield Community Action Center's Food Shelf. **"They could get to the Food Shelf and get their rations, but how do they carry it? They don't know the language, so they can't navigate the bus system. Sometimes people have to walk twenty blocks carrying all of that stuff."** A lack of driver's licenses and lack of car insurance among Rice County's undocumented Latinx population presents another challenge. Finding ways to bring food directly to people could be one way to counteract this transportation barrier.

Unexpected community spaces can be ideal locations for food distribution. Rendon suggested that organizations bring food directly "to where the masses" congregate. "Come to them instead of them coming to us," she said. "Bring health to where it's happening: in the community. Health is happening in parks, in schools, in people's homes." Some Northfield and Faribault organizations already practice this. Sharing Our Roots and Growing Up Healthy, two local organizations, plan to **bring health where community already congregates** by integrating a cooking club into pre-existing community programming. Rocky Casillas of Sharing Our Roots explained that they will host the club at Greenvale Community school and Faribault Community School, because transportation and childcare are already built into the programming.

Although the Community Action Center meets the needs of many food-insecure Northfield residents, Executive Director Jim Blaha wondered, **"Could we be more portable?"** Caren Hoffman, Director of A Child's Delight Daycare in Faribault, noted that "there's been talk over the years about a traveling van to transport

food." Blaha cited *Fare for All,* a discounted fresh foods program, as one example of a program that brings food to directly to community members in a new setting: St. Dominic's Catholic Church. While food shelves and pantries are typical sites for food donations, less predictable locations, like churches and schools, offer convenience and accessibility.

> *"For folks that might not be able to come directly to an organization that provides food, bring it out to where the masses are! Where do people congregate? Come to them instead of them coming to us. Bring health directly to where it's happening: in the community. Health is happening in parks, in schools, in people's homes."*
>
> -Raquel Rendon, Community Healthworker at Healthfinders Collaborative

Assumptions and Myths Surrounding Hunger:

Although food-insecure residents of Northfield and Faribault come from a wide variety of backgrounds, narrow myths surrounding food insecurity persist. **Nine interviewees** expressed the need to educate people in Northfield and Faribault, as well as in the United States as a whole, about the realities surrounding food insecurity. Natalie Slinger, a Carleton student and employee at various food businesses in Northfield, suggested that students at Carleton College could be made aware of complex social issues that exist in Northfield. She said, "Carleton students have this idea that Northfield is a haven of academia. Especially for students only interacting with professors, they are unaware of what I would call the other side of Northfield. There is child homelessness, there is heroin addiction. **People think this is a wealthy place. But have you ever been to the trailer parks? Have you been to the low-income schools? There's a lot more going on than people realize."** While Slinger emphasizes social class, Jennifer Lompart, Northfield High School English Learners teacher, emphasizes race. She specifically identifies that white Northfielders and members of the Northfield's Latinx community seldom interact, consequently leading to white people's impression that, "Viking terrace [is] this horrible place." If they knew the truth about that community, she said, "They'd see it's such a kind, supportive neighborhood." Northfield, like many cities across the United States, is racially segmented, which can perpetuate community members' false racial and class-based narratives.

Further, interviewees noted that both community members and people involved in hunger alleviation efforts sometimes underestimate the capabilities of food insecure families. Anika Rychner, Program Director at the Northfield Community Action Center, reviewed the results of a food shelf client survey in Dakota County, Minnesota. This survey showed that ninety percent of families accessing food shelves "reported that they

wanted more healthy food options and knew how to cook those foods, but were not able to afford such foods." Rychner explained that many food program resources "are poured into helping people learn how to cook, but the reality is that **people actually know what to do. People for the most part know how to cook. They just can't afford those items. The healthier the food, the more expensive it is."** This food shelf client survey highlights the importance of uplifting the voices of food insecure residents, so that food access programming responds to clients' actual needs—not assumptions about their needs.

Unraveling false assumptions about food insecurity can not only help social service organizations but can also encourage food businesses to donate surplus food. Katie Bull, who oversees the food rescue specialist program at Second Harvest Heartland, a Twin Cities food bank, explained: "We are really trying to dispel the myth that people going to food shelves are all homeless and unemployed and are not taking care of their own lives. People who come to food shelves often *are* employed; they are making decisions about paying for housing or medicine over food**.... We are trying to help connect retailers to where the food is actually going. Giving them a tour of the food shelf, or signing them up to volunteer at the food shelf**—things that make them go, 'Oh my gosh, I had no idea that in my neighborhood, there's a food shelf in this area and a ton of people who need help.'" As these interviewees' insights indicate, addressing food access issues necessitates that community members do not reduce food-insecure people to a singular narrative.

> *"We are really trying to dispel the myth that people going to food shelves are all homeless and unemployed and are not taking care of their own lives. People who come to food shelves often are employed; they are making decisions about paying for housing or medicine over food."*
>
> -Katie Bull, Second Harvest Heartland

Food Waste in Northfield and Faribault

Excessive food waste, like in towns across the United States, exists in Northfield and Faribault. Raquel Rendon, Community Health Worker at Healthfinders Collaborative, serves patients who work for local food businesses. **"My patients talk to us about huge vats of food businesses throw out on a daily basis,"** she said. "I imagine that's everywhere. Businesses don't want to get sued. There's liability, so I understand, but that's very wasteful. To me, it hurts." Cheryl Mathison, teacher at the Area Learning Center and proponent of food waste reduction efforts, recalled a story from her sister, a former employee of Casey's restaurant: "My sister would close up, and donuts used to be leftover, so employees would take them home. But Casey's changed their policy, and employees no longer could, so they threw them in the garbage. Employees would put the donuts in boxes and go outside like they were going to the dumpster, and get in their cars, and then grab the donuts and go." The magnitude of waste that Rendon and Mathison observe reflects business as usual in cities and towns across the United States, and Northfield and Faribault are no exception.

This section explores the **five most frequent themes** relating to food waste that emerged in interviews:

1. The shifting public understanding of food waste
2. Understanding the scale of food waste
3. Need for expanded compost programs
4. Businesses' waste reduction solutions
5. Understanding food waste at the individual level

The Shifting Public Understanding of Food Waste:

In the United States today, we throw away approximately *forty* percent of the food we produce. Even so, **nine interviewees** described a recent shift in culture around food waste: customers are beginning to ask that businesses they support take steps to reduce food waste. Hannah Cather, Program Manager at Food Recovery Network (FRN) National, sees positive change on the horizon for national norms around food waste. FRN's model —recovering surplus food from campus dining halls and donating that food to community organizations — as of 2017, existed on 230 college campuses in forty-four states and D.C.[9] **"Think**

[9] Food Recovery Network, 2017 Annual Report, p. 7, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/555b5cf1e4b0864ccf1a0156/t/5a3c1e7c71c10b9c1ace75f3/1513889441697/FY+17+Annual+Report, accessed March 4, 2018.

about the hundreds of students involved with FRN who will be engaging in communities beyond school and what their standards will be. Students spend four years in school and then go onto become members of the workforce in a variety of sectors, anywhere from working at a compost operation to working on Wall Street. That's telling me about how this will change the landscape" said Cather. Food waste is now becoming part of a national conversation that touches on issues ranging from climate change to wealth inequality, and food businesses are taking note.

Interviewees who work directly with large food retailers, like Katie Bull of Second Harvest Heartland Food Bank, has noticed that as the number of grocery stores increase across Minnesota, customers are starting to ask: **"'Why should I pick one retailer over another?' Maybe they'll make that decision based on the company's impact on the community or what they're doing with their waste."** Cather believes that when businesses donate surplus food, they are sending an important message to their customers that they "care about the community and the climate." As more corporations engage in food recovery efforts, Second Harvest Heartland appeals to businesses' desire to remain competitive. Second Harvest Heartland uses companies' food recovery success stories to encourage other businesses to adopt similar practices. As Hannah Cather of FRN National puts it, starting up a food recovery program "might take effort now, but would a business rather be a leader or someone embarrassed about getting into it after its the norm?" Food recovery presents a new model that reverses food businesses' normative practice of wasting high quality food, and fortunately, many businesses are celebrating this model.

> *Starting up a food recovery program "might take effort now, but would a business rather be a leader or someone embarrassed about getting into it after its the norm?"*
>
> -Hannah Cather, Program Manager at Food Recovery Network National

Understanding the Scale of Food Waste:

Employees' lack of awareness of their businesses' food waste limits waste reduction efforts. Because businesses juggle a variety of challenges and logistics, food waste is not often at the forefront of staffs' minds. **Four interviewees** identified this lack of awareness as a key issue. According to Amy Kelley, member of the D.C. Food Recovery Working Group, "It's a case of food waste not being a priority for businesses, so they haven't paid much attention to it. **Most businesses would think they don't produce that much trash, but once they do a waste audit, and we show them how much they're producing, a light bulb clicks on**

and they realize they need to manage this." Kelley's company, (r)evolve, offers waste audits to businesses so that they can understand where they are generating waste and establish solutions. A service like this might benefit Northfield businesses. If local businesses understood the scale of the waste they produce, they might be more willing to change their practices.

Businesses' lack of awareness can lead to initial defensiveness when staff are confronted with the idea of donating surplus food. When Anna Schulte, Program Assistant at Twin Cities Food Justice, interacts with food businesses, their first reaction to her is often, "We don't waste food!" Schulte tries to discuss food waste as a problem that she can solve for a business. "I try to frame it as, 'Yeah, **you *do* waste food, because everyone does**. I don't say, 'You're wasting and that's bad,' but instead, 'We could use that food to help people who are in need, and there will be a tax benefit for you.'" Schulte said that "a lot of places don't need coercing; sometimes people just need a kick in the pants." Katie McKenna of Bon Appetit at Carleton noted that initial defensiveness is common among dining staff on college campuses too. "Chefs immediately think, **'What do you mean? We don't have a lot of food waste. I run a very tight kitchen.'** They take it very, very personally," McKenna said. To curb initial skepticism, it can help to frame food recovery as a doable, positive solution to a food waste problem that is not an employee's fault, but rather, a systemic problem that needs to be addressed at multiple levels of the food system.

> *"Chefs immediately think, 'What do you mean? We don't have a lot of food waste. I run a very tight kitchen.' They take it very, very personally."*
>
> -Katie McKenna, Dining Services Manager, Bon Appetit

Need for Expanded Compost Programs:

Currently, few food businesses in Northfield compost food waste. However, the Northfield Curbside Composting Initiative, a workers' cooperative, launched a residential compost pickup program in the summer of 2017, which brings potential for increased composting in Northfield's food businesses. **As of fall of 2017, 250 households were signed up for the compost pick up service.** Once the business solidifies their residential base, they will consider expanding to Northfield's food businesses, according to employee Natalie Slinger. Slinger has already heard local businesses, including Just Foods and Tanzenwald Brewery, vocalize their interest. As soon as the compost initiative is ready to expand their services to businesses, Slinger thinks that they will be equipped to spread their visibility and reach, especially to independent businesses. Although Slinger thinks that they will have better luck making connections with these businesses, the cooperative's **"long term goal is to get everyone in Northfield composting," even larger chains.**

Twelve interviewees voiced their desire for further composting infrastructure. Dean Christensen, owner of Brick Oven Bakery in Northfield, already diverts most of his business's food waste through frequent donations of bakery items to the Community Action Center, but he said, "we haven't tackled the compost issue yet." Despite the energy it might take to start a program, Christensen is eager to explore that option. Natalie Slinger, former employee of a Northfield food business, noted that all of the store's coffee grounds currently go in the trash. "Coffee grounds," she explained, "are an incredible compost material because they're so high in carbon. The fact that they're going to the landfill and releasing methane and contributing to the degradation of our planet is fixable. It's a simple thing." Although it takes added effort for a business to start composting, the Northfield Curbside Compost Initiative will hopefully soon offer a low-maintenance solution for businesses who want to reduce their waste.

> *"Coffee grounds are an incredible compost material because they're so high in carbon. The fact that they're going to the landfill and releasing methane and contributing to the degradation of our planet is fixable. It's a simple thing."*
>
> -Natalie Slinger, Curbside Compost Initiative

Businesses' Waste Reduction Solutions:

While many local food businesses waste excess food, businesses also engage in creative food waste reduction practices. **Eleven interviewees** described innovative waste reduction solutions that they have witnessed in their work. **Instead of discarding food that does not sell, Just Foods puts that food in a staff fridge that employees can access**. Natalie Slinger, employee of Just Foods, appreciates this food waste reduction tactic, as it allows her to take items like overripe bananas, which she can freeze and use in smoothies or banana bread. When Katie Bull, Food Rescue Programs Manager at Second Harvest Heartland Food Bank, interacts with grocery store managers, she emphasizes the value in repurposing "imperfect" produce. For example, she said, "if a store has dented peppers in the produce department, those peppers can go to the deli to be chopped up and put in a salad." Practices like these not only reduce food waste, but also bolster businesses financially, as would-be-discarded foods are instead reused.

Some Northfield businesses like Just Foods and Tandem Bagels, extend their waste reduction strategies beyond food. According to Slinger, **"all the boxes and pallets at Just Foods go back to the vendors. Farmers take back boxes and reuse them."** At Just Foods, "there's a general employee interest in becoming

more educated about where to throw your stuff away. A lot of people working at other grocery stores are trying to make enough money to get by," she said. "But, when you're working at a co-op, you agree with the values, which goes along with wanting to reduce your waste." Tandem Bagels, a business which donates its bagels to local organizations 4-5 days per week, also has readily accessible compost bins for customers' waste. Tandem is one of few businesses in Northfield that composts. Although some businesses are taking steps in the right direction, there is need for more Northfield businesses to establish waste reduction policies and practices.

Understanding Food Waste at the Individual Level:

Businesses play a critical role in food waste reduction, but so do individuals. **Thirteen interviewees** spoke about the need for individuals to gain consciousness about their personal contributions to the food waste epidemic. Anna Schulte, Program Assistant at Twin Cities Food Justice, sees individuals as deeply implicated in food waste issues. "We want perfect produce," she said. "That's really a problem because that's just not how nature is. That's not how things grow. **It's a problem to demand perfection from the food that grows out of the ground in the dirt."** Many individuals do not place high enough value on their food and do not realize the environmental consequences of unnecessary waste. Schulte described a story of a friend who "**would throw out the milk the day it hit its best buy date. I would say, 'It smells fine!' He would respond: 'Nope, I'm not risking it.'"** In order to combat high levels of food waste at both a local and national level, individuals must limit wasteful practices.

Interviewees involved in dining services at Carleton and St. Olaf Colleges expressed surprise at the level of post-consumer waste left on students' plates at the end of meal periods. Katie McKenna, Director of Dining Services at Carleton College said, "Some of this stuff blows me away —cupcakes tops are taken off and the bottoms get thrown away. Whole cups of milk or juice, and whole, unopened pieces of hand fruit" remain uneaten. Bella Mosqueda, Founder of St. Olaf's Food Recovery Network chapter, describes seeing "athletes get trays full of food and a tray full of seven glasses of milk. They would leave the dining hall and still have three full glasses of milk. Can't they just go and refill their glass?" Despite these disheartening behavioral patterns, education around food waste reduction offers hope. Anna Schulte sees educating young students about food waste as a way to spread knowledge around waste reduction solutions. **"Kids are so eager to learn and go home and tell their parents, 'No, mom, that's not actually expired!'"** Interviewees'

observations indicate a need for further education around the impacts of individuals' food waste and strategies that individuals can use to reduce that waste.

The Role of Food Donations in Northfield and Faribault

*Although there is room for improvement, Northfield and Faribault currently offer a wide range of food access resources. **[See a list of existing food access resources in Appendix B.]**

Carleton Food Recovery Network's food recipient organizations highlighted the benefits that healthy, fresh food donations can bring to local nonprofits. Bella Mosqueda, AmeriCorps Vista Fellow at The Key, Northfield's Youth Center, explained that "many teens who attend The Key don't have money, have rough family situations, and are trying to get jobs to afford things." The Key is open from 3pm-10pm 365 days a year, "so a lot of the time, kids stay the whole time because they don't want to be home. They obviously need food. The Key can't buy food, so we get donations from Just Foods and Carleton's Food Recovery Network." For many local nonprofits, budgets are tight, so food donations lift some financial burden. "Donations take a lot of stress off of Scott," the Key's Executive Director, said Mosqueda. Laura Berdahl, Co-Coordinator of Greenvale Community School, also receives food from Carleton and Just Foods. Without these donations, Berdahl explained that the Community School "wouldn't have food for any events, couldn't send meals home with kids, and wouldn't have snacks to hand out to kids at school. We'd have nothing." Recovered food donations can positively impact local nonprofits, and, as a result, more organizations are seeking donations.

"Without food donations, Greenvale Community School wouldn't have food for any events, couldn't send meals home with kids, and wouldn't have snacks to hand out to kids at school. We'd have nothing."

-Laura Berdahl, Volunteer Coordinator of the Greenvale Community School

This section explores the **five most frequent themes** relating to food donations that emerged in interviews:

1. Building relationships for effective food programming
2. Cultural understanding
3. Building community around food
4. Issues of dignity and empowerment
5. Benefits to businesses that donate food

Building Relationships for Effective Food Programming:

There is only so much that one organization alone can do to fight food waste and food insecurity. **Fifteen interviewees** discussed the importance of building relationships to maximize the impact of hunger alleviation work. Stephanie Aman of Just Foods and Kathy Zeman, owner of Simple Harvest Farm, shared a story that highlights food businesses coming together in support of a local nonprofit, The Key. As Aman told it, "A couple falls ago, Kathy Zeman was on our board, and we were sitting at the annual meeting, and she said- 'Hey, know any nonprofit that could use a pig? Every year, I donate some form of livestock and I'm looking for a nonprofit.'" Zeman donated the pig, the owner of Dennison Meats donated the processing, and according to Aman, "She went above and beyond. She didn't just cut the meat. She made sure it was something that the kids would enjoy." Aman had an empty freezer, where she stored the pig. Zeman noted that with this pig donation, "Kids get to learn how to cook and eat and take food home to their families." Because of the collaborative efforts of Just Foods, Simple Harvest Farm, and Dennison Meats, kids who attend The Key, some of whom are food insecure, had access to high quality, locally produced meat for free.

Natalia Marchan and Laura Tiano of Growing Up Healthy have found that some people feel comfortable accessing food through **informal community support networks**. When Darla, the Northfield Community Action Center Food Shelf Manager, is left with surplus produce at the end of the day, she sends Tiano a text message, and Tiano loads her car with food that she thinks can be used in Growing Up Healthy (GUH) neighborhoods. She explained that "in two neighborhoods, GUH has neighborhood leaders who post the availability of the free groceries on their personal Facebook pages, or they will reach out to individuals who they know are in need of food. These neighborhood leaders either have people come pick up the food at their trailer or apartment, or they deliver it personally to people." Because GUH's work is built on relationships, community members feel comfortable approaching Tiano and Marchan when they are experiencing hardships. GUH's informal food distribution network highlights the power that building relationships brings to food access efforts.

Greenvale Community School encapsulates the power of cultivating connections across community organizations. The Community School hosts bi-weekly evening programming, which relies on food, childcare, and other supports from outside organizations like Healthfinders, Food Recovery Network, and Carleton's Adult English Class. **"By the grace of all of our community partners," said Laura Berdahl, "we can offer**

exercise classes, a flu shot clinic, high school physicals, diabetes classes" and more. Community spaces like Greenvale Community School unite a wide array of social services, including food resources, thus increasing community members' access to information and direct services. Interviewees' insights highlight the necessity of collaboration. In order to facilitate increased collaboration around food access issues, Northfield and Faribault might benefit from forming a "food network," where relevant stakeholders come together to identify places for further alliance-building.

Because of the collaborative efforts of Just Foods, Simple Harvest Farm, and Dennison Meats, kids who attend The Key, some of whom are food insecure, had access to high quality, locally produced meat for free.

Cultural Understanding:

Although the populations of Northfield and Faribault are majority white, significant minority populations, including Latinx and Somali communities, are growing**. Eight interviewees** emphasized the importance of both understanding cultural differences in community members' food preferences and working with staff who connect culturally to food recipients. Rocky Casillas values the Main Street Project staffs' ability to understand members of immigrant communities on a deep level. Because some staff members come from immigrant backgrounds, they can relate to community members' stories and struggles. Raquel Rendon, Healthfinders Community Health Worker, echoed the importance of mutual understanding between caregivers and patients. "**Being from another culture and having assimilated ourselves, community health workers are coming in knowing the cultures and knowing what it's like to live in America having come from a different culture**. They feel a sense of trust. You've lived through that. You've been able to overcome that. You're already looked to as a model. That will translate quickly to trust." Casillas and Rendon both see building relationships as essential to providing high quality care and resources. "That's part of why we do this work," said Casillas, "to bring people to a safe environment where we can learn about each other, share stories, and know that we're not just providing food or an experience, but we want to provide support too." Casillas and Rendon offer something that white Americans working in social services often cannot — **a basis of trust rooted in mutual understanding.**

Alongside the importance of building mutual trust, interviewees emphasized the need to offer culturally appropriate food donations to Northfield and Faribault's immigrant communities. Caren Hoffman, Director of A Child's Delight daycare in Faribault, noted that at the Faribault Food Shelf, "there is not enough diversity of

food," which she thinks might prevent immigrant families from visiting the Food Shelf. Because **food is a central part of culture,** it can connect immigrant families to their home country. Rendon pointed out that carb-heavy foods, like rice and tortillas, are not always the healthiest option but are culturally important. Latinx people's "priority was not always health," said Rendon. "There were other pressing matters that lowered that priority for us." When Rendon works with patients on healthy eating strategies, she keeps the cultural value of food in mind. She does not ask patients to leave behind culturally significant foods if they are unhealthy. Rather, she advises that patients cut down on certain parts of meals. For example, she might suggest that patients cut back on tortillas but keep rice and beans. These observations reflect the importance of uplifting community members' voices when planning food programs, in order to retain cultural values.

Building Community Around Food:

While donating surplus food is worth celebrating, simply distributing food donations is not enough. When food access programs reach their full potential, they nourish not only community members' bodies, but their relationships as well. **Six interviewees** discussed the unity and community-building that food can facilitate. Casillas and Tiano of Sharing Our Roots and Growing Up Healthy described the unifying power of their joint summer programming that brought Northfield and Faribault community members together to harvest fresh produce. Casillas described "grandparents picking vegetables with their grandchildren" and taking a moment to just "be together as a family." One woman told Casillas that "she enjoyed being in the field because it reminded her of life back home in Mexico." This woman had her own farm back home and "loved being out in the open in the fields with family," as it felt familiar. Similarly, Tiano noted that the Main Street Project's donations of chicken, eggs, and vegetables to Growing Up Healthy encouraged program participants to come together. **"The food became the reason to gather,"** said Tiano. Over the summer, Growing Up Healthy hosted art activities, games, and adult bingo. Fresh food donations from The Main Street Project enhanced these community activities.

Interviewees emphasized the power of food to bring a new dimension of joy to organizations' existing programming. The Key, Northfield's Youth Center, receives frequent food donations from Just Foods and Carleton's Food Recovery Network. According to Stephanie Aman of Just Foods, the first few times students received food donations at the Key, "the tone of the kids changed. The food would show up and then they'd all gather around the table to see what they got versus sitting in the corner and doing their own thing, because now there was something to bring them together." Raquel Rendon, who leads a Chronic Illness Education class through Healthfinders, expressed that **food is the glue that "binds programming together**."

These interviewees' comments highlight the added value that food can bring to the daily work of local nonprofits. When local businesses choose to donate surplus food, they can contribute to this value.

Issues of Dignity and Empowerment:

Twelve interviewees spoke about the need to create a culture of dignity and empowerment in organizations that provide donations to food insecure community members. Jennifer Lompart, English Learners teacher at Northfield High School, received prepared food donations from Carleton's Food Recovery Network in 2017. Despite working with a population of which roughly half are enrolled in free or reduced lunch**, Lompart found that students whom she thought might benefit from food donations were not putting food in their backpacks**. "Part of it may be pride," she said. "I've sold it as, 'If you don't feel like cooking tonight, take this food home! Or, I might say, 'Sometimes I take a bag home when I don't want to cook.' I'll never frame it as, 'You don't have enough to eat,' but kids are savvy and they probably figure out what I'm getting at." Lompart also noted that when the food is "packaged up nice and pretty like it's from a restaurant, the kids seem to take more." Just because food is free does not mean it meets the needs or desires of low-income students.

Some food access organizations address the issue of pride by following a "choice model," meaning that clients choose food items instead of being handed whatever food is available. Kanko Akakpovi, SNAP education division educator through the University of Minnesota Extension program, discussed the SuperShelf Grant, one of its recipients being the Northfield Food Shelf. The SuperShelf Program works with food shelves to "improve the supply of healthy foods" and utilize "behavioral, economic, and education strategies to encourage healthy food selection among clients."[10] Akakpovi explained that the program "makes sure that the food shelf environment is inviting and that volunteers are sensitive to the needs of the people. We want food shelves to be nice and clean, like when you walk into a grocery store, so that people feel comfortable. We want people to have the option to shop and not get pre-boxed foods." The SuperShelf program will soon be up and running at Northfield's Community Action Center. Rebecca Leighton, founder of the Nutritious U Food Pantry at the University of Minnesota, also emphasized the importance of following a choice model. **"People deserve access to the food they want in a dignified way**," she said. **"It's important to listen to what people prefer."** These observations reveal the importance of uplifting the voices of food insecure residents when creating food donation programs; centering these voices will allow the needs,

[10] "SuperShelf Evaluation." University of Minnesota Program in Health Disparities Research. Accessed March 03, 2018. https://www.healthdisparities.umn.edu/research-studies/supershelf-evaluation

desires, and insights of food insecure people to drive the conversation and successful implementation of food access programming.

Beyond just including community members' voices in the creation of food programming, Rocky Casillas of Main Street Project and Laura Tiano of Growing Up Healthy spoke to the value in empowering people through food. Through the Sharing Our Roots Program, Casillas hopes that some program participants might go beyond harvesting produce and tap into opportunities for economic mobility. "If there are people who come harvest who really want to start a business, say salsa, we could build a team or a cooperative. Some could harvest all of the ingredients, such as the tomatoes and peppers, someone could cook everything, others could jar them, and together we could start a brand!" Laura Tiano of Growing Up Healthy gushed about another Main Street Project program in which they **"teach families how to raise chickens with the goal of selling them" through a family business."** High impact food access programming involves more than just distributing food. It means engaging local communities in finding ways to bring about a more just society.

Benefits to Businesses that Donate Food:

Although food recovery efforts require that a business spend extra time planning**, twelve interviewees** discussed a variety of ways that donating food benefits businesses. Many business owners see **donating excess food as something that "feels good."** Stephanie Aman of Just Foods Co-op gets "goosebumps" just talking about food donations' direct impact on families. For a business like Just Foods, donating food aligns with its mission. Aman explained that as a Co-op, "our job is to care for the people that are here, whether they are our customers, our members, or people in the community at large. Does it feel good? Of course it does." But more importantly, she said, "We know **that people are being fed good, healthy food."** While Troy Foxen, manager at Econofoods in Northfield, did not speak about donating food with the same passion as Aman, he too does not see drawbacks to donating food. "It's good to help out the Community Action Center," he said. Kate Urbank of U.S. Food Rescue finds that when she approaches potential food donors, "they are delighted to find that there is a solution as to what to do with their excess food—they don't need any convincing." After all, employees often feel disheartened when throwing away high quality food. One business, according to Urbank, now has "improved employee morale," knowing that their surplus food is feeding people instead of landfills.

In addition to general good feelings around food donations, businesses that donate benefit from **increased product visibility.** Main Street Project has donated their eggs to the Northfield Food Shelf, and Rocky

Casillas hopes that these donations not only spread Main Street's brand in the community, but also encourage people to eat healthy, fresh food. Like Casillas, Dean Christensen, owner of Brick Oven Bakery, first and foremost donates food because he is "supporting the community," but he also notes that his "products are labeled, so when someone gets a donation, they might later stop in the store." Visibility, while not the core reason why business owners donate, provides an added benefit.

Although business owners may assume that starting a food donation program will hurt their business financially, there are a variety of **financial benefits** for businesses that donate food. Reduced waste hauling costs from reverting food waste can be a major cost saver. As Katie Bull of Second Harvest Heartland Food Bank explained, fifteen years ago, "pig farmers paid retailers for food scraps, but that is totally flipped now. The same is true for composting. Today, counties and municipalities tax businesses for food that is put into waste." If food businesses want to dispose of their food in a sustainable way, they have to pay a steep price for an industrial compost company to pick up that food.

Donating food to nonprofits is an excellent way for businesses to save waste hauling costs while supporting food insecure families in their local community. In addition to reducing their waste hauling costs, food businesses can receive tax deductions for food donations. Further education and awareness around the benefits of donating surplus food might inspire Northfield and Faribault food businesses to start donating.

"When I approach potential food donors, they are delighted to find that there is a solution as to what to do with their excess food—they don't need any convincing."

-Kate Urbank, Site Director at Food Rescue U.S.

Barriers to Donating Food

Donating surplus food is becoming a more widespread practice among food businesses, but barriers still stand in the way for both food business owners and organizations that recover surplus food.

This section explores the **three most frequent themes** relating to donation barriers that emerged in interviews:

1. Legal confusions and inconsistencies
2. Challenges of donating prepared food
3. Seasonal challenges

Legal Confusions and Inconsistencies:

Sixteen interviewees discussed confusion around food donation legality as a major barrier that either prevents businesses from donating food or causes hesitation. Fortunately, food businesses are covered legally by **the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act, which "establish[es] a uniform national law to protect organizations and individuals when they donate goods in good faith" for the purpose of "encourag[ing] and enabl[ing] restaurants, grocers, and other donors to feed the hungry."** To make matters confusing, though, states each have their own laws regarding food donations. For example, according to Amy Bachman of D.C. Central Kitchen, some states state that businesses cannot donate expired foods. But because the Bill Emerson Act is a federal law, **it "preempts state law,"** according to the University of Arkansas School of Law.[11] The Bill Emerson Act explains that **any food business that donates food to a 501c3 in "good faith" is not liable if someone gets sick after consuming donated food**. Although many businesses fear that a customer might get sick from donated food, according to Nicole Civita, director of the Food Recovery Project at the University of Arkansas Law school, "There is no available public record of anyone in the United States being sued — or having to pay damages — because of harms related to donated food."[12] Despite this all-encompassing legal act, many food business employees remain unsure of the legality surrounding food donations. Stephanie Aman of Just Foods expressed her understanding that "from a USDA inspection

[11] James Haley. "The Legal Guide to the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act." Report. Law School, University of Arkansas. Fayetteville, AR: The Women's Giving Circle, 2013.
[12] Eleanor Goldberg, "Restaurants Officially Have No Excuse Not To Donate Leftover Food," Huffpost, July 18, 2016, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/restaurants-that-dont-donate-because-of-liability-are-just-making-excuses-experts-say_us_577d6f92e4b0344d514dd20f.

standpoint, we should not be giving out expired food. What I don't understand then, is why other folks can do it." According to Katie Bull, the reason "why other folks do it" is that many products are perfectly safe to eat after the date listed on the product.

The **Food Keeper App**, a resource developed by the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, Cornell University, and the Food Marketing Institute, is a resource that allows individuals and businesses to maximize freshness and quality of food. **The Food Keeper App provides recommendations for how many days food can be safely consumed after its printed expiration date.** Dairy, for instance, can be consumed up to seven days past its printed date.[13] Second Harvest Heartland shares the Food Keeper information with retailers from which they receive food. According to Bull, most local retailers remove products from store shelves long before products are unsafe to consume. Troy Foxen, manager of Econofoods grocery store in Northfield, said that Econofoods does not sell perishable items within five days of their expiration date, and they do not sell nonperishable items within thirty days of their expiration date. Although these items are safe and high quality, Econofoods, like many other retailers, follows stringent company policies that limit how long safe food can sit on store shelves.

In order to fully understand the benefits of donating recovered food, it is important to understand the key distinction between food safety and food quality. According to Katie Bull, **printed expiration dates "are about quality, not safety."** Amy Bachman of D.C. Central Kitchen noted that businesses throw away foods when "there's no safety concern at all… it's just that the food is no longer at peak quality." Robert Ekergen, Dining Services Staff member at Carleton College said that they keep products in the Carleton cafe's coolers for two days. After those two days, they remove those foods. "Nothing is wrong with the food, obviously," he said. "It's foods like wilted lettuce on sandwiches, tomatoes or cucumbers that won't look as fresh. **It's more about eye appeal than that the food isn't good for you."** Fortunately, Carleton donates its surplus food to local nonprofits. Many businesses, though, throw away food that no longer meets the company's quality standards. Katie Bull notes that "food safety is used all the time as an excuse for why retailers don't want to donate." Second Harvest Heartland explains to retailers "that they are not liable for any food-borne illnesses, as long as the food is handled in the same way they would handle it at the store." In order to break down the false understanding that businesses cannot donate surplus food due to "safety concerns," food waste reduction advocacy groups need to engage in further outreach and education efforts.

> "There is no available public record of anyone in the United States being sued — or having to pay damages — because of harms related to donated food."

[13] "FoodKeeper App." Foodsafety.gov. Accessed March 8, 2018. https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/foodkeeperapp/index.html

-Nicole Civita, University of Arkansas

Challenges of Donating Prepared Food:

In Northfield, as well as in other parts of the United States, restaurants tend to donate food infrequently or, even more commonly, not at all. Although restaurants and catering companies produce a considerable amount of food waste, donating prepared foods presents a variety of challenges. **Twenty-one interviewees** discussed the barriers that retailers and food donation recipients face when dealing with prepared foods, such as surplus lasagna from a dining hall or surplus soup from a catered event. One challenge is that additional food safety measures must be applied when a business donates prepared food. As Amy Bachman of D.C. Central Kitchen explained, "You have to make sure you know, when was it cooked? How long was it out?" Keeping food at a safe temperature is also essential. In order to be considered food safe, donations can never reach the "danger zone," which is between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Dean Christensen, owner of Northfield's Brick Oven Bakery, finds that donating bakery products is straight-forward: "It's not that bread doesn't spoil, but it's not like a cooked food where you have to worry about temperature," he said. Restaurants that serve prepared foods, on the other hand, **must ensure that food has been refrigerated at the correct temperature and for the correct amount of time**. Concerns about food safety often limit restaurants' eagerness to donate surplus food.

In order to keep prepared food at safe temperatures, food recovery organizations need access to proper storage and refrigeration facilities. **Eight interviewees** noted lack of such facilities as a limitation to their organization's ability to distribute prepared foods. Laura Berdahl, Volunteer Coordinator at Greenvale Community School, receives food donations multiple times per week from organizations like Carleton's Food Recovery Network, Just Foods Co-op, and the Northfield Food Shelf. Berdahl notes that **lack of freezer and fridge space is a "problem for many organizations," including the Community School.** She thinks that local social service organizations need to work together to find solutions to food storage. "For example," she said, "Greenvale Community School has fridges but not freezer space. Darla from the Northfield Food Shelf will call us up and say they just got a lot of food from CUB, like a big shipment of ice cream or something. She doesn't have room for it, and we don't either!" Refrigeration may appear to be a small barrier, but for nonprofit organizations with limited budgets, that barrier can be enough to restrict an organization's capacity to receive perishable donated foods.

Furthermore, **nine interviewees** noted that restaurants often do not have a consistent amount or desirable type of surplus food each night. For this reason, many food recovery organizations do not actively seek out

restaurants as donation partners. Anna Schulte from Twin Cities Food Justice explained that **"restaurants can be tricky, because you don't know what will be leftover at the end of the night.** There might not be enough whole meals that can be recovered." Caren Hoffman, Director of A Child's Delight Daycare in Faribault, has also experienced inconsistency in donations. She receives prepared food donations from Carleton College's Food Recovery Network, and greatly appreciates these donations, but she has noticed that in the 2017-2018 school year, "We've had less Carleton food than we've ever had before." Inconsistent donation quantities require that Hoffman's staff think more creatively about how to integrate donations with other purchased food items. As Carleton's chefs become more efficient at minimizing food waste, sometimes the amount of surplus food is reduced, leaving less food to donate to organizations like A Child's Delight. Further, a restaurant's surplus food on a given night may not meet the needs of donation sites. Jennifer Lompart, English Language Learners teacher at Northfield High School, emphasized the important of specifying donations to the particular needs and desires of food recipients. **"Students don't want to eat food that they're not familiar with just because it's free,"** she said. "It needs to be cooked really sensitively." Often times, because food is prepared initially for a specific customer base, it does not meet the needs of the people who receive it in donation form.

Inconsistent sourcing of donated food poses barriers as well. Jim Blaha, Executive Director of the Northfield Community Action Center, appreciates food donations from local businesses, but nonetheless, he sees "the unpredictability of sources" as a challenge. **"We get opportunity donations,"** he said. "Like the Main Street Project began marketing eggs. Lovely brown organic, well-fed chicken eggs. And we bought them for a dollar a dozen, but they probably retail at $3.50 or $4.00. And when their market developed enough, they didn't have as much for us. So that's an example of some of the local donations that come to us, and then drop off or change." When food shelves purchase food in bulk from food banks, food shelf managers have more control over the quality and quantity of the products they provide.

Although many leaders in the food insecurity arena support the environmental benefits that come from recovering surplus food, if recovered food does not cater to the needs of food insecure folks in a dignified or scalable manner, that food does not meet community organizations' standards. Although Rebecca Leighton, Founder of The Nutritious U Food Pantry at the University of Minnesota, advocates for food recovery, she does not rely on a donation model at Nutritious U. **"We purchase our food from a food bank. That allows us to control the type and quality of the food we provide**. We serve thousands of students per month. In order to provide equitable access to food, we cannot rely solely on recovered food donations." As Leighton points out, recovered donations, especially recoveries of prepared foods, often come in inconsistent and unexpected

quantities, and are thus often not able provide the scale of food that pantries, shelters, or other food distribution sites need.

Seasonal Challenges:

Although many local businesses happily donate food, **nine interviewees** noted that the winter and summer months pose challenges for these businesses. Rocky Casillas from Main Street Project is thrilled that the Sharing Our Roots Program fostered community building around food during the summer months, but he wonders, "How are we going to continue those relationships with people over the winter? Most Northfield farms stop producing food over the winter months, but as Casillas said, "People need to eat all year!" Casillas sees the adult cooking club that Growing Up Healthy and Main Street want to co-launch as one way to maintain relationships and food donation flow during winter months.

Summer poses different challenges. Food Recovery Network chapters at Carleton and St. Olaf donate hundreds of pounds of food each week during the school year, but when summer comes around, donations programs pause. Katie McKenna, Dining Services Manager at Carleton said that she is open to continuing food recovery over the summer, but "there haven't been interested students," and her "dining services team doesn't have time to coordinate it themselves." Further, while schools like the Area Learning School and Greenvale provide food support to students during the academic year, these programs do not continue during the summer. Although many local food donation sources, like FRN chapters and farms, want to consistently donate food, they are not currently able to year-round.

"Most Northfield farms stop producing food over the winter months, but people need to eat all year!"

-Rocky Casillas, Founder of the Sharing Our Roots Program at Main Street Project

Areas for Growth and Change

Based on the insights of 36 interviewees, below are key areas for growth and change on the issues of food waste and food insecurity:

1. Create a **unified website and resource guide** with all available food resources in Northfield and Faribault, and **create and distribute a calendar** that displays the dates/ times of all available food access resources

2. Expand **compost services** to Northfield businesses
    a. The Northfield Curbside Compost Initiative will likely soon move in this direction

3. Establish **more convenient hours for local social services** (like the Faribault Food Shelf and WIC)

4. Spearhead a **public awareness campaign around food waste**, perhaps modeled after the Ad Council's "Save the Food" campaign: http://www.savethefood.com/

5. **Increase educational programming** in Northfield and Faribault that focuses on local food insecurity issues

6. **Encourage more local businesses to donate surplus food**
    a. Implement a **Food Recovery Verified program** for Northfield food businesses. This program would allow businesses to display their commitment to the community and to the climate. It could be implemented through the Northfield Chamber of Commerce or through Northfield's forthcoming Climate Action Plan
    b. Create **education materials** to provide to businesses about the legality of food donations
    c. Encourage businesses to donate to nonprofits in Faribault, where there is more need

7. **Convene Northfield and Faribault food businesses** to discuss food needs in the community and assess businesses' capacity for donations
    a. Convene a wide array of food businesses including restaurants, catering companies, bakeries, and farms
    b. Create city-wide **expectations for businesses' food waste reduction practices**
    c. At the Northfield Chamber of Commerce, discuss making food recovery a norm among Northfield businesses

8. Because lack of refrigeration is a major barrier that prohibits nonprofits from storing food donations, set up a **fridge/ freezer donation program for local nonprofits**

9. Encourage local churches to **offer free meals on days besides Wednesdays**

    a. As the appendix shows, many local churches offer free dinners, but most of these dinners currently occur on Wednesdays only

10. Improve public transportation options in Northfield and Faribault

11. Invest more community resources in food programs that empower food recipients, like the Main Street Project's Sharing Our Roots program

12. Survey local farmers to determine which farmers have excess produce they could donate
    a. This could decrease food waste on local farms and increase food insecure families' access to healthy, fresh foods

13. Establish a Northfield/ Faribault "food runner" program modeled after Food Rescue U.S.: https://412foodrescue.org/programs/foodrescuex/
    a. Food Rescue U.S. connects volunteers, food businesses, and food recipient organizations through a user-friendly app to streamline the food donation process

14. Establish more pick-up sites for food donations by identifying locations where food insecure residents already congregate

15. Investigate the feasibility of a portable food shelf

16. Encourage churches located near elementary schools to "adopt a school" for a Breakfast Club program, as St. Peter's Lutheran does on Wednesday mornings for Sibley students

17. Create a Rice County food network where relevant stakeholders can come together to act on community food needs

18. Connect St. Olaf to additional Northfield and Faribault community partners so that St. Olaf's Food Recovery Network can expand its reach (it currently only donates food once per week to one community organization)

19. Include business waste audits as a goal in Northfield's new Climate Action Plan

20. Find ways to make free or low cost healthy food accessible during the summer months

    a. Institute formalized summer food recovery programming at Carleton and St. Olaf so that students who are working summer jobs on campus can recover food

21. Create an on-call volunteer method for Carleton's catered events, so that food from *plated catered events* can be recovered and donated to local nonprofits

22. Engage in city-wide advocacy around food safety standard laws and expiration date laws

Food Waste + Food Insecurity Resources

- **Save the Food Campaign:** http://www.savethefood.com/
- **Food Recovery Verified Program:** https://www.foodrecoverynetwork.org/frv/
- **ReFed's food waste solutions:** http://www.refed.com/solutions/?sort=economic-value-per-ton
- **Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC) 2017 Report on Food Waste:** https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/wasted-2017-report.pdf
- **Legal Guide to the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act:** http://media.law.uark.edu/arklawnotes/2013/08/08/the-legal-guide-to-the-bill-emerson-good-samaritan-food-donation-act/
- **USDA Food Waste Challenges:** https://www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste/
- **Food Rescue U.S.**: https://foodrescue.us/
- **Northfield Community Curbside Composting:** https://www.northfieldcompost.com/
- **FoodKeeper App:** https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/foodkeeperapp/index.html
- **Food Waste Reduction Alliance:** http://www.foodwastealliance.org/
- **Minnesota Hunger Solutions:** http://www.hungersolutions.org/hunger-data/
- **Rice County Community Health Improvement Plan:** https://www.co.rice.mn.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/696
- **Environmental Practices Inventory, Survey of MN Grocers:** https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/p-p2s1-01.pdf
- **Northfield Green Business Guide:** http://northfieldsustainability.org/northfield-green-business-guide/

Appendix

Appendix A- Full List of Interviewees:

Stakeholder Group	Name and Position	Organization
1	Cheryl Mathison, Teacher	Area Learning Center, Northfield
1	Laura Berdahl, Volunteer Coordinator	Greenvale Community School
1	Savannah Stuckmayer, Americorps Member	Greenvale Community School, Northfield
1	Jennifer Lompart, English Learners Teacher	Northfield High School
1	Kanko Akakpovi, SNAP-Ed Educator	University of Minnesota Extension
1	Anika Rychner, Program Director	Northfield Community Action Center
1	Jim Blaha, Executive Director	Northfield Community Action Center

1	Darla Stadler, Food Shelf Manager	Northfield Community Action Center
1	Emma Dubay, Intern	Northfield Community Action Center
1	Raquel Rendon, Community Health Worker	Healthfinders Collaborative, Faribault and Northfield
1	Kevin Skrip, MESA Coordinator	Healthfinders Collaborative, Faribault and Northfield
1	Laura Tiano, Co-Coordinator	Growing Up Healthy, Faribault and Northfield
1	Natalia Marchan, Co-Coordinator	Growing Up Healthy, Faribault and Northfield
1	Laura Turek, Co-Coordinator	Northfield Promise
1	Charles Cooper, Coordinator	Faribault Community School
1	Caren Hoffman, Director	A Child's Delight, Faribault
2	Rocky Casillas, Founder	Sharing Our Roots Program at Main Street Project, Northfield
2	Dean Christensen, Owner	Brick Oven Bakery, Northfield
2	Robert Ekegren, Staff	Carleton College Dining Services, Northfield
2	Katie McKenna, Manager	Carleton College Dining Services, Northfield

2	Caroline Carty, Intern	Carleton College Farm, Northfield
2	Troy Foxen, Store Manager	Econofoods, Northfield
2	Kathy Zeman, Owner	Simple Harvest Farm, Nerstrand
2	Stephanie Aman, Marketing and Community Relations Manager	Just Foods Co-op, Northfield
2	David Frost, Facilities Manager	Just Foods Co-op, Northfield
3	Shira Kaufman, Founder	Carleton Food Recovery Network Chapter, Northfield
3	Hannah Cather, Program Manager	Food Recovery Network National, Washington, D.C.
3	Bella Mosqueda, Founder	St. Olaf Food Recovery Network Chapter, Northfield
3	Anna Schulte, Program Assistant	Twin Cities Food Justice, Minneapolis
3	Amy Kelley, Managing Partner	(r)evolve, Washington, D.C.
3	Amy Bachman, Director of Procurement and Sustainability	D.C. Central Kitchen, Washington, D.C.
3	Katie Bull, Food Rescue Programs Manager	Second Harvest Heartland, Minneapolis

3	Kate Urbank, D.C. Site Director	Food Rescue US, Washington, D.C.
3	Mallory Goggans, President	University of Minnesota Food Recovery Network Chapter, Minneapolis
3	Rebecca Leighton, Founder	Nutritious U Food Pantry, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis
3	Chris Kane, Campus Coordinator	Post Landfill Action Network, Dover, New Hampshire

Appendix B- Existing Food Support Resources:

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri
St. Dominic's Church: free to-go meals after Spanish mass most Sundays	Northfield Food Shelf: open 11am-5pm	Faribault Area Food Shelf: Open 1-3pm	Faribault Area Food Shelf: Open 1-3pm	Faribault Area Food Shelf: Open 1-3pm	Northfield Food Shelf: open 11am-5pm
	Dinner at Faribault Community School: free for all under 18 from 4:30-5:30pm	Greenvale Community School: free to-go meals after evening programming	Breakfast Club: at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, for Sibley Elementary students	Thursday's Table: a free meal every Thurs (5-6:30pm)	St. Vincent DePaul Church Pantry Days: 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month from 1-3pm
	St. Vincent DePaul Church Produce Days: 1-3pm	Northfield Food Shelf: open 12pm-7pm	Dinner at Emmaus Baptist Church: the third Weds of each month, 5:30pm	Greenvale Community School: free to-go meals after evening programming	
		Dinner at Community Cathedral Café: 4:30pm	Dinner at St. John's Lutheran Church: 5:15pm	Northfield Food Shelf: open 11am-5pm	
		Dinner at Faribault Community School: free for all under 18 from 4:30-5:30pm	Dinner at First United Church of Christ: 5:30pm	Dinner at Faribault Community School: free for all under 18 from 4:30-5:30pm	
			Dinner at St. Peter's Lutheran Church: 5pm	Arts in the Park-sponsored by Northfield United Methodist Church during the summer (art + snacks)	
			Dinner at Full Belly Inc.: free dinner at		

			5:00pm on Wednesdays at Cathedral of Our Merciful Savior		
			St. Vincent DePaul Church Produce Days: 1-3pm		
			Dinner at Faribault Community School: free for all under 18 from 4:30-5:30pm		

Ongoing Food Support/ Donation Resources:

- **The Key Youth Center:** Provides donated food to youth
- **Area Learning Center:** Distributes donated food to students
- **Sharing Our Roots:** A program that brings together community members to harvest fresh produce during the summer months
- **Growing Up Healthy:** The Farmer to Family mobile vegetable market program provides local produce to low-income families at a reduced price + cooking lessons
- **Nutrition Assistance Program for Seniors (NAPS):** provides a box of free food each month to seniors who meet income guidelines
- **Women, Infants, and Children (WIC):** Education about nutrition, breastfeeding, referrals to community health resources, and vouchers for healthy foods
- **Backpack Program:** Run by students at the Area Learning Center. Each week, students fill backpacks with $15-20 worth of food and deliver backpacks to school social workers
- **Fare for All:** A program that provides fresh food for 40% off. Once per month at St. Dominic's Church in Northfield and Three Rivers Community Action Center in Faribault

- **Meals on Wheels:** A home-delivery meals program supported by the Northfield Hospital. Meals cost $6.35