

Sustainability Project Fund Application

Applicant/Project Leader: Local Food Plus/McGill Food Systems Project

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Project Title: McGill Food Systems Project/Local Food Plus Intern

Budget Requested: \$2880

Project Group

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Abbreviations:

LFD – Local Food Days

LFP - Local Food Plus

MFDS – McGill Food and Dining Services

MFSP - McGill Food Systems Project

Project Overview

Review of Summer 2011 Internship

In the summer of 2011, the Sustainable Projects Fund supported a McGill Food Systems Project/Local Food Plus Internship position. The goals of this internship were to strengthen the Local Food Plus (LFP)-McGill Food and Dining Services (MFDS) relationship by laying the groundwork for a local and sustainable food system in Quebec, and to communicate the local sustainable food movement to the McGill Community.

The internship position achieved the initial goal of laying the foundations for a local and sustainable food system in Quebec, led by McGill. Relationships were established with stakeholders from LFP and MFDS, and meaningful conversations were held with more than 40 suppliers, and some key distributors. These conversations and relationships are already leading to improvements in agricultural practices and certifications under the Local Food Plus program. In fact, the Macdonald College Horticulture Centre became the first farm to achieve local sustainable certification in Quebec.

One unexpected positive development over the summer was the interest expressed by a number of Quebec-based organizations, including Quebec Vrai (an Organic Certification body), the Union des Producteurs (the main organization representing Quebec farmers), Equiterre (a well-established Quebec environmental organization), and UQAM. These new connections will increase the capacity of McGill's initiative to foster a local sustainable food system, provide educational opportunities for the McGill community, as well as opportunities for collaboration. The role of the Quebec-based intern is essential in further developing these relationships.

Role of McGill Food and Dining Services

MFDS is committed to partnering with Local Food Plus to create a healthier, more sustainable food system and planet. MFDS has demonstrated its support of LFP to its suppliers, and has helped connect LFP with a number of new suppliers interested in certification (*for example, we are currently speaking with a large apple juice producer about changing its pesticide practices in order to meet McGill's new Local Sustainable certification requirement*). MFDS has also hired a new Food Systems Administrator, Maria Mazzotta, who is very much in support of the LFP program. There is a great opportunity to work with Maria to share LFP's research and knowledge of agriculture and food systems in order to strengthen MFDS procurement practices and future policies.

The McGill University Context

The summer internship identified opportunities for education and celebration of McGill's commitment to local sustainable food systems. This fall, the MFSP and LFP representatives, Sophie Silkes and Sarah Archibald, are working with students in the Living Learning Communities to make Local Sustainable Food Days a meaningful learning experience and a place to discuss the many aspects of food. By working with MFDS, they can share the food and stories of newly certified local sustainable farmers with students at McGill, while explaining the leadership role that McGill is taking to bring this unique program to Quebec. Students will learn how their food choices can support sustainable farming practices and a resilient local economy, while enjoying food from Certified Local Sustainable farmers in their cafeterias and taking part in workshops on sprouting, canning and farming. All of these activities will provide the lead-up to the Quebec launch of the LFP program in the new-year, in collaboration with UQAM.

The partnership between McGill and Local Food Plus will also extend into the classroom. Students in the Farm Management Technology program, as well as those studying agronomy, will be able to use the LFP model as a tool to explore on-farm sustainability issues. Students in ENVR 401 (fall 2011) are exploring the Quebec agricultural landscape with a focus on the sustainability issues identified in the LFP program. Sarah Archibald is currently supporting the ENVR 401 group to help answer questions and provide resources to students.

Project Need

The summer internship has set the table for the development of a local sustainable food system in Quebec, in collaboration with farmers, processors, distributors, food service providers, university administrators, researchers and students. In order to take advantage of the tremendous momentum created over the summer, strengthen relationships with participants throughout the food chain, engage students, and ensure the success of the McGill/LFP partnership, it is essential that the role of the intern be continued throughout the 2011-2012 academic year.

McGill has committed to purchase a percentage of its food from Quebec-based Certified Local Sustainable farmers and processors, both in order to meet its own sustainability objectives and to support the growth of a local sustainable food system in Quebec. This commitment will be celebrated at the formal launch of the program in the new year. It is critical to the success of the program that work continues to certify farmers and link them with MFDS. Summer months are

busy months for farmers, and many who expressed interest in the program were at the height of the growing season and unable to take time away from their fields to learn what changes in production will be required of them, fill out the necessary paperwork and go through the inspection process. As well, students must be engaged throughout the year in order to understand the essential role they play as concerned consumers in the future of agriculture in Quebec. All of this requires a knowledgeable intern, supported by LFP staff, who can continue to build relationships to ensure meaningful engagement and participation from all stakeholders. The internship role is critical in order to foster these relationships, provide support to producers, certify food that will be sourced by the McGill Cafeteria, and engage students. Therefore we are requesting funding to continue the internship on a part-time basis throughout the 2011-2012 academic year.

The intern will work in the following areas:

1. *Sustaining Relationships with Producers and Supporting Certification:*

Nurturing relationships and helping farmers and processors through the certification process is time-consuming but fruitful. The intern will work with producers, helping them complete necessary paperwork for certification, and prepare for the program launch in the new-year. The intern will also seek out opportunities to connect certified farmers and processors with students. For example, certified farmers could be highlighted in the cafeteria, or even come to McGill to engage in conversation directly with students. Suppliers who have expressed interest include *duBreton Pork, Crudessence rooftop garden, Savoura Tomatoes, Hydroserre Mirabel Lettuce, Horium Tofu, Ferme les Voltigeurs chicken, Potager de Mont-Rouge, Carottes Isabelle, Lufa Farms, McGill Poultry Production, Bonduelle Frozen Vegetables, Burnbrae Egg Production and Centre Maraiche Eugene Guinois Jr. Inc.*

During the Period of November –March we are aiming to sign up 10+ suppliers, which may include large suppliers (who source from hundreds of farms), which will allow for a large shift in purchasing dollars (the ultimate goal of 10% of cafeteria food procurement expenditures) as well as increased sustainability across the Quebec Agricultural Landscape.

2. *Deepening Relationships with Quebec Organizations*

Relationships with l'Université du Quebec à Montreal (UQAM), Equiterre, Quebec Vrai and l'Union des Producteurs offer wonderful opportunities for collaboration to grow local sustainable food systems in Quebec. The intern will play a key role in fostering and developing these relationships.

3. *Integrating LFP knowledge and connections with MFDS and Aramark*

MFDS and Aramark have been keen collaborators from the start. Throughout this academic year it will be important to work with McGill's Food Systems Administrator to transfer knowledge of sustainable agricultural practices and Quebec's agricultural landscape learned during the summer internship. This knowledge transfer will help McGill act on its commitment to local sustainable food procurement. The intern will also meet with Aramark regularly to collaborate on institutional support for local sustainable purchasing.

4. *Providing educational resources to the McGill Community*

McGill University's Macdonald Campus is home to McGill's Farm Management Technology Program as well as a variety of Agricultural Programs. Local Food Plus has a wealth of knowledge about sustainable agriculture and food policy. Senior staff are regularly invited to give presentations to organizations, institutions, and municipalities across Canada and internationally. The partnership between McGill and Local Food Plus, nourished through this

internship, means that LFP can be a resource to students in the Farm Management Technology and Agrology courses, helping to put McGill graduates at the forefront of the sustainable agriculture movement. LFP staff will be available to answer questions from students, and to provide real life examples of how a local sustainable food system can be built. If useful and appropriate, LFP staff could also be available to do a presentation at McGill on one of their visits to Montreal. The internship will also allow for increased programming in McGill's cafeterias, especially during Local Sustainable Food Days, where the intern will work with McGill Food and Dining Services, MFSP and LFP to provide fun, interactive educational opportunities outside the classroom. Over the year, the intern will also be involved with a First Year Office event, Agricultural Science presentations. The internship will be involved in approximately 10 presentations to promote local sustainable agriculture.

5. Preparing for the Launch

The internship will also support the formal launch of the LFP-McGill-UQAM launch. The LFP-University of Toronto launch in 2006 attracted more than 500 people from the university and the community at large to sample local sustainable food prepared by university chefs, and was covered widely in the media. A similar event is being planned for the Quebec launch. The intern will work with SSMU, as well as other student groups, and coordinate with McGill and LFP to ensure the success of the launch.

Project Support

LFP's experienced team will continue to provide the intern with training and mentoring on broad food system issues and the specifics of the LFP program. Founder and President Lori Stahlbrand -- a former CBC national broadcaster, author and food policy expert, Vice President and Director of Certification Don Mills -- a farmer and national farm leader with more than 20 years of experience in food and agricultural policy, and Director of Institutional Relations Erin Shapero -- a former municipal leader on sustainability issues and board member of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, are just three of the LFP team members who will be providing direct support to the intern.

Local Food Plus is a national charity which receives funding from major foundations including the McConnell and Metcalf Foundations. It was founded in 2005 to develop a replicable model for scaling up local sustainable food systems. Local Food Plus has pioneered successful partnerships with institutions such as the University of Toronto (now in its fifth year), the Town of Markham (now in its third year), and many others. The partnership with McGill marks the launch of the LFP program in Quebec.

LFP will be working with Equiterre to bring this program to Quebec. As part of the relationship between the two organizations, Equiterre has offered the intern office space in its newly opened "Maison Durable," located at Ste. Catherine and Clark.

Local Food Plus began in 2005 as an Ontario-based program focused on developing a replicable model for scaling up local sustainable food systems in regions across Canada. In order to ensure the long-term viability of the program, LFP has recently launched a consulting arm, embarked on a business plan development exercise, and expanded its direct donor program. Conversations have also begun with the Quebec government regarding financial support for the program. The

intention is to eventually transition the Quebec position from an internship to a staff position, and funding from a number of sources is being sought for this. LFP sees working in Quebec as a critical and essential part of its long-term strategic plan for growing the model in regions across Canada. Funding from McGill at this juncture is critical to the long-term success of the program in Quebec.

Qualifications of the Intern

We are putting forward Sarah Archibald for this internship. Sarah is a McGill student in the faculty of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, majoring in International Agriculture. Her work with the MFSP over the past 18 months has given her a thorough understanding of the McGill Food System, and strong relationships with senior leadership at McGill Food and Dining Services. Through her studies and extracurricular interests, Sarah has developed both hands-on agricultural skills and a great understanding of sustainability issues in agriculture more broadly. She has a strong personal relationship with the Horticultural Centre at Macdonald College, many McGill and Quebec-based agricultural groups, and was recognized by a Catalyst Award in 2011 for her collaboration with the McGill administration on food system issues. Sarah excelled in the summer internship position at LFP. Her commitment to sustainable agriculture and environmental awareness on campus, as well as to the larger goal of helping McGill become the first university in Quebec to implement a local sustainable food procurement program, make her an ideal candidate for this position.

Brief outline of Timeframe

Key Stakeholders:

McGill Food and Dining Services: MFDS is committed to working with LFP to help McGill become the first institution in Quebec to implement a local sustainable food procurement program. However, the success of the program depends on a strong network of committed farmers to supply the food and create opportunities for purchasing and education.

Aramark: Through its contract to provide food services to McGill, Aramark has committed to match and meet all sustainability goals set by MFDS. Aramark has indicated strong interest in the program, and wants to ensure that the supply of local sustainable food is sufficient for the success of the program.

UQAM: UQAM has recently joined with McGill to launch the LFP program in Quebec. This is an exciting development which will encourage University Collaboration, participation from a wider group of farmers, processors, distributors and caterers, and provide additional opportunities for student collaboration from McGill and UQAM.

McGill Food Systems Project: The intern will work closely with MFSP to enhance student engagement, student applied research, and knowledge transfer.

Farmers: Farmers who are currently supplying McGill will benefit from the LFP certification program in their relationships with all of their other customers. They will be identified as sustainability leaders within the agricultural community. The intern will facilitate the integration of the program by helping current farmers through the certification process, and introducing the program to new farmers.

Local Food Plus: LFP has a strong platform for working with institutions and farmers. However, an intern who is familiar with the McGill food system will play a key role in

facilitating the integration of the program into McGill cafeterias, and ensuring a successful program launch.

Financials

Expense Description	Estimated Cost	Timeline
Salary for intern	12 weeks *10 hours/week *\$12/hr = \$1440	September- November 2011
	13 weeks *10 hours/week *\$12/hr = \$1560	January-April 2012

Total Cost = \$3000