206

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**SPEAKERS**

Interviewer, Participant 206, Interviewer 2

**Participant 206** 00:02

Yeah, I did an interview yesterday, my son, our son is actually running for state representative in our area here. And so there is a friend of his is a reporter for women's magazine and podcast. And so she wanted to talk to me after she had done his interview, wanna talk to me as a as a woman as mom and like, know how. But it was funny. So I, we were talking for a little bit she was recording it and stuff and I and she said this is great, because a lot of times I talked to people to give me like one word answers and I'm like, Come on, give me more. And I was like, I'll give you way more than you want. Please feel free to record.

**Interviewer 2** 00:42

They've been perfectly fine. And so what we want to do is in you can see the indicator there that the recordings on now. And again, just to remind you, your participation is absolutely voluntary. You can choose not to answer any of our questions, or you can decide to actually at any point to even withdraw from the research. As I said, we'll keep the recording confidential, it's between us we don't use your name. We don't share your name, even in the information in the research results. Your name and identity is not shared there. We would encourage you because as you're working to be mindful if there's anybody in the room or near within earshot that might hear your comments, because there's things you may want to share, but you might not want someone else to hear. So be mindful of your space around you. And in a way, a follow up. If you have any questions, you know, after we've completed today, the information we sent you includes Chris's email address, so feel free to reach out, you know, share any additional information or ask any questions that you might have. Your consent is demonstrated by your continued participation in the interview. And as we move forward, do you have any any comments? Before we go? Any questions or comments before we go forward? I think so. Okay, awesome. Thank you for your consent, we appreciate that. Alright, so the first question I want to ask you is, how would you describe your role or your experience in the local food system.

**Participant 206** 02:18

So on as a manager of the flint farmers market, one of our goals priorities, focus focuses is to support local food in what, in a lot of different ways so that from everywhere from farming, all the way to production, bakery, all that kind of stuff. So I mean, that's, that's kind of ice. I've been at the market for about six years now. And so I see that as being one of the really important things is, whenever possible, as much as we support local. So I think because we're located in the heart of the city, downtown, that people, I hope, identify that with us and, and feel like, you know, it's it's never as local as what you'd want it to be, but resources being what they are sometimes, you know, you have to work around it. But we definitely, that's definitely an important role that I play as market manager in the marketplace in our community.

**Interviewer 2** 03:23

Okay, awesome. Thank you for that. Thank you for that, um, Carissa is going to put up a slide. And what I'd like to do now is just kind of talk with you about the food sectors. And so let us know when you can see that. Okay. All right, great. So we're going to be working with five sectors, five different sectors of the food system, the first being, you know, production. So we're looking at the growing of crops, as well as livestock and anywhere from that garden outside your back door, all the way to the larger farm. So we're looking in that case with our producers. The second sector is the processing and packaging. So those who take the food that have been produced wash packet, including creating, you know, value added products, you know, out of it. So that's the second sector. The third, we'll look at the folks who are taking those foods that are produced by others and then making them available to sale at a wholesale level or resale level. And then our retailers, the places where the food is actually sold. So whether we're talking about the stores, the convenience stores, the grocery stores, the market farmers market, restaurants are the places where people go to buy food, the retail, and then last but not least, as I always like to say as we eat but we don't eat everything. So what have happened, that we didn't eat, and whether it was collected and you know, composted or even rescued. So we'll be talking About that category which might include your haulers or food rescuers or your composters. So those are the sectors. Any questions or any comments on those?

**Participant 206** 05:10

Nope, I find I got ideas on all of them were in all of them.

**Interviewer 2** 05:15

Oh, let's see, there you go. You just answered my next question. Based on your expertise, when you look at these different sectors, which ones would you say that you have the most expertise in?

**Participant 206** 05:28

Well, I will start by saying I have the least expertise in the composting part. But we do do it. A portion of our vendors do work with an outside company that comes in and does that. For our juice bar, and really, probably, I think, from what I've noticed the best at that they because they, you know, they're constantly fruits and vegetables, and they're processing them all the time. And then there's several others. And then in the summertime floor. We also tried to we were lucky when we moved into this building, it was a it was actually a newspaper facility. So they had a huge cardboard compactor, which they got to keep. So we also try to be as responsible as possible in terms of cardboard. There's a lot of boxes and stuff in here. So those I would say, Oh, you didn't ask this.

**Interviewer 2** 06:24

But I would you have expertise in those areas? Oh, yeah,

**Participant 206** 06:28

we do. And it's an area that we definitely could do more in, you know, and we're all looking for opportunities. But yeah, I don't know, it's kind of, I'm gonna say it's hard to pick which of the other four would have the most, you have the

**Interviewer 2** 06:47

most expertise with you being the farmers market that fits in the category with the retail. So we know that this one? For sure. Right?

**Participant 206** 06:56

Yeah. I mean, we work so because I guess I look at it as I'm thinking of it as under my hat. So I'm constantly trying to work with gardens and farms to bring them to the market. And then the value added is that kind of crosses over to our Flint FoodWorks, which is our incubator kitchen program. But that also includes our vendors, so we're always trying to,

**Interviewer 2** 07:24

so you've got some expertise in that area is Yeah,

**Participant 206** 07:27

definitely. And then the wholesalers and resellers, I guess, with that, that's probably that's more probably vendor experience than my experience, because they're the ones that are doing that. But it's definitely, if you're talking about the farmers market, that's a huge part of what we're doing here.

**Interviewer 2** 07:47

Okay, so it sounds like based on what you said, you I mean, with you being a farmers market, that's retail, that's your everyday touch. But you do have some expertise in all of these areas. Yeah, definitely see, okay, well, what we want to do now is familiarize, you just take a few minutes, Chris is going to take a few minutes to familiarize you with how we build mental models. And then we'll go to work.

**Interviewer** 08:13

So also, sorry, I'm going to be looking up the whole time. That's because I have a monitor.

**Participant 206** 08:17

You're right. All right. I started doing this. It's like I don't like what I was saying to someone yesterday, I turned 50 this year. So then I'm like, Oh my God, look at those wrinkles. And I'm looking at myself

**Interviewer** 08:34

right, so I'm just a quick refresher, because I think it's been like almost a year since we last interviewed you and did this process. Um, but just, you know, overarching, it's very much going to be your math, your understanding of how the local food system in Flint works. I'm just going to be the one drawing it as you talk. So definitely take ownership, you know, correct me, you know, there's anything is like I wouldn't word it like that. You know, I don't think that connection works like that. Let me know it's your map. I'm just trying to make sure i i get it correct. So as we're like building out connections between concepts, there's basically three decisions that need to be made. First is the direction. So if I'm interested in what impacts traffic, I might say the number of cars has an impact or influence on how much traffic there is. And then I have to decide if it's positive or negative. And that doesn't necessarily mean that it's good or bad. It's just sort of a mark of if one increases, does the other one also increase or does it decrease so they move in the same or the opposite direction. So we have more cars, we also have more traffic, that's going to be a positive connection, and that's going to show up blue. Public transportation could be more of a negative connection because if we had more or better public transportation, we might have less traffic as more people are taking buses or I don't know if the city has like a subway or something where they're not on the street at all. So that's sort of positive and negative, and that'll be orange. And then my last decision is how strong is the relationship. So is it going to weak medium or a strong relationship, and it's basically a measure of how influential is one thing on another. So cars to traffic might be a very strong relationship, you know, it's like the end all be all, you know, if we had no cars, we wouldn't really have traffic issues in a way. Whereas public transportation might be more of a medium connection. Because you know, even if we have the best public transportation system in the world are some people who really like driving and so they're always going to drive or they have like a really weird commute, or they have to move a couch or something, it's going to be you know, it has pretty significant impacts, but it's not going to totally get rid of all traffic. A weak connection might be something like cyclists, you know, it's gonna, if there's more people, biking places, you're gonna have some impact on traffic, but similar to public transportation, you know, you can't just do everything in your life on a bike. So it's gonna have an influence, but you know, winter still happens, you know, you're gonna be biking in the winter as much. So it's more of a weak connection to traffic. Any questions about this process?

**Participant 206** 11:18

No, I think I remember.

**Interviewer** 11:21

Yep. Yeah. As Rene asked questions, I'll just, you know, be mapping those connections, and then we'll like turn back into like, cool, this dynamic that you talked about, I modeled it this way. Does that make sense to you?

**Interviewer 2** 11:33

Okay, that sounds good. All right, great. So now we're gonna, we're taking a look at the map. So you can see here, all the sectors that we talked about production, processing, wholesale, retail, composting, or waste, and then you can see the connections there off of retail, where we're looking at markets, which is your like, your market, the stores and restaurants as types of retailers. So based upon your, your own experience, you know, as a manager, the farmers market, when you're taking a look here at the system, how would you draw your involvement and connection to the various different sectors, you know, in the in the system here?

**Participant 206** 12:18

Me personally or the farmers market?

**Interviewer 2** 12:20

You, as the [Role]. I mean, you're welcome to also you, you're an eater. You live in Flint, you know? So you could also use that perspective as well in defining connections,

**Participant 206** 12:35

I would say most well-producers, I think producers and then retailers, are probably the two areas that I have the most connection to, And I don't know, it's kind of hard to like.

**Interviewer 2** 13:03

Yeah so when you think about, just made that point, as the [Role] of the [Organizarion], talk a bit about your connection with the producers.

**Participant 206** 13:14

Yeah, I mean, I'm always looking for more. Because I spend, you know, a significant-and matter of fact, it's gearing up for that time of year, I say that, oh, my gosh, I gotta start thinking about outside. So we're in-even though we're always full inside, technically, you know, always looking-it-kind of in a constant state of looking for more producers for outside for ways to help people already here produce things that maybe they're not-and that kind of runs over the value added to so it's kind of, that's why I'm having... But I also see, and then the retailer, part two, because we do have restaurants, we do have stores, and we have markets. So like all of those three things reside inside our market because it's public market and so I kind of see all of those things. They're all part of my job. And like I say, with the wholesaler reseller, that's more of probably a connection from the vendors to their contacts; I'm less involved in that. But also because the [Organization], because and I think you talked to [Name] that runs [Organization] the last time when we did this too. So he and I kind of work together you know he's in charge of that, but I'm always getting on his case about [laughter] all the parts of it or you know, talking to people like oh yeah, so we kind of, he really by nature is more-should be more of the value added person and like wash and pack stuff and all that kind of stuff. I feel like I end up doing a lot of that. I mean, because I'm here more, and I see the people that come in and watch [inaudible]. So, but I mean, we really have a true between him and I, personally and professionally, we really have a true, like, partnership, you know, six and one half dozen other interchangeable most times. I don't know as many of the particulars in terms of probably the logistics of the wash and pack process and the rules of the washing back. So I'm kind of more on the okay, well, this is your quality of product, okay, let's see what we can do with this. How can we extend it? How can we ramp this up for you? So I do a lot of that piece of it. And he does more of the logistical elements of it.

**Interviewer 2** 15:56

Okay, so when you describe how you're doing it, is that you're more around what the opportunities are?

**Participant 206** 16:02

Or I would say, yeah, I would say that's a good way to put it like so I try to continually be looking for opportunities to bring people in, and if that means bringing them in to be a part of the farmer's market or part of the [Organization] kitchen, or both. Or even sometimes, as a supplier to someone that is already a vendor in the market with some really great product, you don't have space for them, but it fits. You know, someone comes in and has like a really great brand of salsa. We don't have a space to put someone in that can just sell salsa. But we do have a business that is all Michigan products, number one, we have another one that does like a lot of spices and sauces, so maybe they could go there, or we have a taco place that also sells chips and stuff. So maybe they could go there. So I'm-that's my... Yeah.

**Interviewer 2** 16:49

Okay. So that's a connection. So you're making connections between the vendors and other vendors and other opportunities in the market. Okay. Excellent. Okay. So that's how the value added part works out.

**Participant 206** 17:05

Yeah. Yeah. And I'd say, again, with the compost, that's, it happens, it's one of those things that goes on, and I'm not really sure. I see the bins and I see the guy coming and going and whatever, and I, you know, because some of that, honestly, some of the folks that use it, too, I think are kitchen users from the commercial kitchens, as well. So I'm not exactly sure what the deal is with that. So it goes on and I'm happy about it. But I don't know.

**Interviewer 2** 17:36

And the commercial kitchens are where?

**Participant 206** 17:39

They're located in one of the wings of the market. So they're right here on our site.

**Interviewer 2** 17:43

Okay, they are in the market. Yeah.

**Participant 206** 17:46

Yep, there's two commercial kitchens and then there's also a demonstration kitchen, which, interestingly, we use for cooking demonstrations and for small cooking classes. It's not fully I mean, it's like a really fancy home kitchen; it doesn't have all the industrial equipment. The commercial kitchens I have all the industrial equipment, and we have two of them. But we have people that come in and do-they aren't affiliated with the market at all, but they want to do a cooking video, or they want to promote their catering business outside so they'll come in because the kitchen is pretty and it's nice, so they want to use it, which is cool, because it also, you know, they usually say thanks to the farmers market for letting me do this in their space. So that's how that one works.

**Interviewer 2** 18:34

Great. So I also heard you say that the people that they use the kitchens are the ones that are sending stuff to the-are they sending stuff to the compost?

**Participant 206** 18:41

So I think so. Yeah, I think some of them. Those folks, well, I mean, we have an interesting mix, so there's current vendors that use it, because they don't have a HUD system in their space, and so or some of that big equipment, so they utilize that to offset or access the space they have. Then there's caterers that are full on catering, like for a wedding or something off site, for weddings here too, but and then there's the people that are really making the product like barbecue sauces and seasonings and stuff like that. So I think they, I don't know, [Name] would know that better, or maybe he might not even be aware, but I do see the containers back there for those things. And like said, I know there's a couple of our regular vendors like the juice people are super good about compost, they have a lot but I think there's like eight bins and I don't know if two different people share a bin or whatever, but they picked them up every week and they're, you know, the size of like a tall kitchen garbage container, so.

**Interviewer 2** 19:49

Okay, all right. Great. I heard a couple things I just want to play back for you. You talked about your your kitchens and that they've got a couple of different uses for kitchens are being used for value added production, so people are using the kitchens to create stuff. But then you also talk about the kitchens being more of educational or demonstration art, as well?

**Participant 206** 20:18

Yeah, that's mostly done in our demo kitchen, because it is more simplified so it doesn't have all that I think, again, [Name] is more of an expert in the requirements and stuff. Our demonstrating kitchen is setup to have an audience in it, and still have enough space to appropriately so health department, you know, cross contamination, all that fun stuff is okay in there. So they don't-whereas the other two are really production kitchens, so every once in a while, they'll do like [Name] does like a knife class in there to teach people how to use knives properly, or different things like that, but not any like full on bringing a bunch of people in there that may be germy or whatever in the kitchens?

**Interviewer 2** 21:06

Okay, so we really got two types of kitchens, one is a production kitchen, where people are producing value added products. And the other kitchen is an education kitchen, where people are coming for. So we probably want to separate those. Okay, gotcha.

**Participant 206** 21:26

Each of them has different elements like they're kind of the same. But then one has the convection ovens. So all the people that want to do bake stuff go in there. And then the other one has a giant steam kettle. So like our people that make sauce and stuff like that, they use that one.

**Interviewer 2** 21:43

Okay. All right, great. That gives us a really good picture of the value and aspects that people using that particular kitchen.

**Participant 206** 21:52

And they're 24/7, those kitchens, so people have access, the concept being that a lot of people when they're starting off a food business, they are already working another job, like maybe at a bank or well somewhere else, and they can't come when the markets open. So there, they actually, we don't have a lot of people that are using it at two o'clock in the morning, although I feel like every time I look at our security cameras, I'm like, why are people in the market right now? It's three o'clock in the morning, but so you know,

**Interviewer 2** 22:24

When they can get in there, right. Right. Now, you mentioned at the top of the interview that as part of your role is really about local food. So in the market, that implies you've got local produce food as well as non local food that you're selling in the market?

**Participant 206** 22:40

Yeah, so there's like the bakery-all of the like, I would say the sweets people like baked goods, and then chocolates, candy and stuff. So those folks, none of them currently are making them in this market. They all have bakeries and facilities in Genesee County, so like 10 to 15 minutes drive, where they make stuff so it's local within our county and then they bring it here. And so they're all-I would consider that a local, you know, local producer, they're in Genesee County. And then we have-so we have a cheesemonger is what I guess you would call them-we don't usually use that term but some of the bigger markets use the term fishmonger, cheesemonger, we have both. So they are like aging cheese, and they have a facility off site; it's not in Genesee County, it's in the next county. They've been in our market, like, oh my gosh, I think fifty years or something. So they're not actually like, processing the cheese and making it, so I don't know where they're-they get it, they age it, they have a facility, some of that gets murky. I don't know how [inaudible] with that. Then we have like people in the market that are non food, but I guess you're not asking about non food.

**Interviewer 2** 24:21

I just want to tap into what you were just saying a moment ago. So the people that are doing-so the people that are baking are in the value added kind of space because they're taking ingredients and making something else. I heard you say that some of those, they're local, but they're not Flint, like the Genesee County local. But not Flint local. So we've got some local foods from the county coming in, the value added processors. So they're not necessarily producers, but they're value added processes like the bakers. Do you-so on a local side, are there-if we look at each of the other areas in the food producers, the folks that are growing food, is their local food also [inaudible]?

**Participant 206** 25:09

That's, in terms of growing the food, it's continually dwindling. In terms-I don't think that it's not being produced, it's just not being brought here. And so interesting yesterday, I mentioned the [City] phone call that I had, and the woman I was talking from the mayor's office, city owned public market, and so she's tasked with researching the top 10 or 15 markets in the country. And so hence I was on her list. But she was telling me that she had recently talked to Pike's Place. So in the Farmers Market world, Pike's Place in Seattle is the gold standard. It's like THE farmer's market. And she said that the gentleman she spoke with said they currently had one produce seller in the market. And again, it's not because it's not being sold, but it's a very interesting evolution of agriculture, retail agriculture, because I mean, it's cool, it doesn't really help us, it doesn't help us look any better, but if you're looking at really supporting agriculture, people are growing it. But they figured out either through technology, or just, I mean, I'm not really sure how, they can make connections now directly, they can grow stuff, they can call their local school districts, their local nursing homes, their local restaurants and bars. And they can make those connections directly. They can also-a lot of them have seen the value of having a little farm stand right at your house. And a lot of costs for farmers are fuel costs and the actual logistics of getting the product from your farm to the farmers market and then paying someone to stand there all day, when they could be back home harvesting constantly and just, you know, people, the restaurants come and pick it up or however you you work that. So that system is pretty interesting that it's evolved and I think it's wonderful, but it doesn't help us here [laugthter].

**Participant 206** 25:15

Right. So those producers, right, so I hear what you're saying the connection between producers, they're actually bypassing the market by having their own market as opposed to the farmers market. Okay. We got that, [Interviewer] got that.

**Participant 206** 27:47

Yeah. Again, it's good for them. It's just not a good optic for us. And it's hard that people don't-unless I'm telling you that most people, they just go like, Oh, there's no farmers at the farmers market.

**Interviewer 2** 28:01

Wow. Okay. And you'll say that about the local producers, you're saying people that are growing local, are bypassing the market.

**Participant 206** 28:08

And so what I heard you say there was that tied to that loss of family farms is due to age or aging farmers.

**Participant 206** 28:08

Okay. Right. Yeah. So, you know, we're continuing to work, you know, every year, do a big recruitment and try to get people to come in and try to encourage new folks and stuff. But I mean, it's one of those things, where, and I probably mentioned this before, it's just, we used to have a ton of family farms. 10 years ago, we probably had a really strong family farms at the market, not year round before of course because they were actually farmers. But they've all timed out. You know, when I came to the market, most of them were in their 60s, maybe 70s. And it's such a hard job and you know the younger people coming in they don't want to do it. You know, there's no way-there's nobody to transfer this heritage of a farming. There's nobody that wants to take it, you know, so.

**Participant 206** 28:35

Yeah, no, definitely. Definitely. And I heard most succinctly, we work with the Michigan Farmers Market Association, [Name], you guys probably affiliated or heard of them, but we talked about this with her about a year and a half ago, and she said, Here it is. We grew farmers markets, but we forgot to grow farmers. Yeah. Basically, I mean that pretty much-everybody got so excited about farmers markets, local food, and everybody got excited and I mean our market was already here but other markets are popping up. And then there's only so many markets that farmers can go to.

**Interviewer 2** 29:59

I'm gonna make one little edit to what I heard said was that in that it was age, but it was also labor. It's hard. So those are two factors that I heard you mentioned.

**Participant 206** 30:11

I will tell you from sitting here every year talking to people that come in, and I don't know, generational or whatever. And every year, I get kind of the same age group come in, yeah, I'm gonna be farmer and work the land and do all this stuff. And I'm like, okay, great, this is how it works, let's get you signed up for all these programs where you can accept food assistance, because we do a lot of that here. You know, they come like two times, they don't make a million dollars, and then you never see them again. It's hard, like, party all night, and then go out and you don't try to work your garden that day. So it's kind of a weird-but there's a lot of the farms-they're out there and they're doing what they need to do and they're doing great. But in terms of new people, every year, I get four or five...

**Interviewer 2** 31:12

And not as many people are coming back or dwindling, I heard you say that.

**Participant 206** 31:15

[inaudible] different, but it's the same every time, every year. They come in, yep, I'm gonna do this and I want to do this and this is great and all the stuff and then we handhold. And they come like two times, well, you know, you're selling lettuce for $8 a head; I know you worked hard on it, but you know, people have budgets, they can't pay $8 for their lettuce, they're gonna pay $3.50.

**Interviewer 2** 31:38

Okay, yep. So you just introduced another, the pricing as well. One connection I heard you make early, so I hear you're saying that these are like, if I can frame it with production, you've lifted up two things, you lifted up, one, the loss of the farms because of age and labor, but you just introduced that the cost is also, you know, the price of what they can sell it for, is another factor.

**Participant 206** 32:07

It's very interesting. It will be very interesting this summer to see because we try-and different markets do things different ways, I probably create a lot more headache for myself-but we try to keep people at a comparable selling price point across the board, which we understand is very frustrating for local growers coming in, versus people that are buying it in bulk at the terminal and reselling it, they can make more money off it, and so our resellers are really good. We have really good people that understand this, and they know how it works, and they also respect the amount of work that it takes to actually farm and grow your own stuff. So they're most of the time, there's always a couple hiccups, somebody gets a really good deal on blueberries or strawberries and all of a sudden, my regular farmers are knocking at the door like, hey, they're selling this for half of what I'm selling it for, I worked my butt off for this, you know... But it will be very interesting because right now what's happening and this is also-the lady I talked to yesterday in [City] said the same thing there: the cost of buying produce as a reseller at the different terminals and stuff is (and I've heard this from my own people), it's just through the roof because of the current inflation situation. The cost of food is so high. So it will be very interesting when inaudible] season hits, see now, I don't know that there's going to be-there's not that much of a difference if we have growers from what the people that are reselling have to resell it to make a profit.

**Interviewer 2** 32:16

Ah, gotcha. Okay, so you're saying that inflation is causing the resellers prices to be higher right now?

**Participant 206** 33:58

Yeah and so now they're going to be up on the pricing...This is new. I mean, this is in the last 12 months, you know, and COVID related. I would-I blame it on that 100%, so it's that, which in the past has never been an issue prior to COVID. That was never an issue it was always just like, yeah, obviously they can buy it for cheaper, they can sell it and they make more money than someone that has to pay someone to actually go out and harvest it and wash it and bring it in here and stand here all day. So that's an weird development from COVID. And we'll see what happens.

**Interviewer 2** 34:48

That's an interesting connection I'm trying to see. So we know you said here we got higher prices on local food, but you also are seeing higher prices on resale food because of COVID. Okay, yep, we got that.

**Participant 206** 35:04

Even our restaurants here, you know, the people that are-we have about six restaurants at the market, hot food, prepared food folks. Yeah, and it's just their food costs are so high or high. Okay. And they try not to pass it on but at some point you have to, I mean, you're feeling it's really getting tight.

**Interviewer 2** 35:29

Yeah, so we can see, let's just go ahead and talk about COVID. Um, when you think about it as as the shock that it is, what are some other ways that you're seeing it affecting the local system? So you talked about the higher prices for the resellers and you mentioned the connection also to the restaurants. Can you talk a little bit about the impact that COVID had on the restaurants?

**Participant 206** 35:50

Yeah, definitely. So our restaurants in particular here are basically- they're kind of to go already, I mean, because, you know, we have one sit down restaurant in the market, and the rest of them, you know, you order, and then you can sit in the market, like a food court type thing and eat. So they're kind of already to go. It was a hard pivot for some of them, well, really, for most of them, because we had to shut down the market completely for several months, and...

**Interviewer 2** 36:29

So because of COVID you shut the market down?

**Participant 206** 36:33

Yes, totally shut it down. And we converted everything to curbside. We did online ordering and curbside pickup. I would say it was definitely successful, and we still have it, not that many people are taking advantage of it. But enough are that it's a service to our customers and I have a really good lady that enjoys doing it. And you know, but at one point, I mean, we were doing, like 150 orders a day for curbside pickup. It was crazy. And that included-we did it in a different way than other markets, like [Market] did it probably smarter because they always are, probably smarter, they did just a food box and this is what it has in it and do you want it for $40 period. I was concerned and this was me, about trying to-and we could have done that easily with four vendors, where you get your milk, cheese, meat bread, you're done. It was such a shock to our system, I wanted to try to involve as many of our 45 Indoor vendors as possible, that were willing to do it. And so therefore, creating a lot of extra work but I think it was worth it; it was something, you know, when people had nothing to hold on to and everybody was afraid, they had something to hold on to. Even [Vendor], you know, we put all of his 178 varieties of soy candles, they're on there, and you know, he didn't get a lot of sales, but he got some sales, but people still saw that as an option to try to remind them, we're still a farmers market, we're local businesses, there's no franchise in here, you know, we're trying to put food on our table. And so allowing as many as possible in during the course of it, I'd say between the start of it and what it is now, at least half of our vendors have participated in it. When we went back to being open all the time, some of them it just wasn't worth it for them to continue to be in it. And some of them they didn't quite-with the with the restaurants, that's I guess, was your question, that was a bit complicated to put into that pickup system. You're talking about somebody, Yeah, I want to Falafel sandwich but I want a side of this instead of a side of that, ot I wanna pick up some ribs, but can you do this and that. We weren't built for that, in terms of the way we did our- I think it was built for products not restaurants. But some of our restaurants pivoted and they started actually being able to source some of the products they used to make the restaurant food. So our [Vendor] that that has amazing pho, he started they started making the pho and freezing the pho and then people could buy it online and then take it home. And he was able to source some particular type of shrimp that they use for one of their egg rolls and different stuff like that. So some of them, they had it easy for them and their mindset, they were able to pivot. Some of my other food people were just like no.

**Interviewer 2** 39:54

So when you said they source, weree they sourcing local?

**Participant 206** 39:58

No they were sourcing wherever they could find it, yeah, wherever they could find it from their connections. Okay, so, you know, part of the deal with that was, you know, you've got to come down here and get the order ready for them, and so some people just were like, No, I'm not coming in there, I don't, you know, before they actually came out... So some people just opted out. But for the restaurants I don't know, I'd say, my management style for this market is, I probably do more hand holding, I guarantee it, than any other market manager. So in so many ways that's why people love this market and that's why it's special and that's part of the spirit of the market. But it also kind of enables people to rely on the farmers market for a lot of their own business to figure out how to do it. And so [Name] and I spent time like, you know, and because he knows how to do this because he's a culinarian and so he's got more of this, but he's like, you know, you've got to pivot, you need to put together this, you know, pick one or two items that we can put on curbside, you know, or either that or just do your own and time it at the same time as we're doing our curbside, so people can order from you, but you know you're going to have to do phone orders, and you're gonna have to process debit cards, and you're gonna have to do these things, and so...

**Interviewer 2** 41:28

Gotcha. So one of the things I'm hearing you say about the farmers market, is that your support in terms of helping people, that support, which of the sectors do you feel is benefiting most from the kind of extra support that you're giving? So as a farmers market, I just heard you describe support services that you're giving to the people that are part of the market? Are there particular, is it more of the producers? Is it more of the restaurants or others?

**Participant 206** 42:03

It's probably, don't know, I'd almost say it's more end game, like retail, it's more of like, getting people to come in and buy the stuff.

**Interviewer 2** 42:17

So it's really hitting the retailers more, the support that you're giving?

**Participant 206** 42:21

Yeah, I mean, we don't have it as-and because there's more of them. And I guess I see producers as being retailers too, kind of. You know what I mean? Yeah, so I don't really separate, in my mind I don't separate how they're making it or where they're sourcing it, I just think about trying to get as many customers in here to buy it as possible.

**Interviewer 2** 42:46

Right. So I'm teasing out of what you said that support services that you're giving them is you're giving it to producers, and to the restaurants that are in the market.

**Participant 206** 42:58

Yeah. And the arts and crafts people and the, you know,

**Interviewer 2** 43:05

The non food as well.

**Participant 206** 43:06

Everybody. Yeah, they all get the same...

**Interviewer 2** 43:15

And [Interviewer] I'm trying to call their support service out, because that's a critical element that allows people to do what they do. So there's a support element, you know, in addition to classes, but there's support services that are given to the producers and the restaurant?

**Participant 206** 43:34

It's a lot. I mean, and it's a lot of different things. I mean, honestly, I don't know, I've said before, I don't know, my kids have said forever, like Mom, they need to do a reality show about [Organization] because the stuff that happens here and happens to people here is, I don't know, I mean, maybe it's other places, and I just don't know. But the crazy amount of conversations that I have people sitting across my table that come up in, like, I need to talk to you about something like okay, how can I help? And it's, I mean, I don't even know where to start and where to end, it's the craziest...

**Interviewer 2** 44:11

It sounds very personable. [laughter]

**Participant 206** 44:13

It is, and I think it's important and I think that when people say, why is the [Organization] specia;, I think that the relationship between myself, vendors, and the vendors with each other and the vendors and the customers, I think it's trickled down, like you have a standard we're not, you know, you gotta be careful how hands on you are because it is their own businesses, but also our market, which is not- the more I talk to other market managers, [Name] always says, God you're making so much more work for yourself. Other people are just like, Yeah, you know, they pay the rent, I pay the bills. I fill the spots, they do their thing, you know, There's not all the personal and everything, but that's part of it like you're dealing-

**Interviewer 2** 45:09

Those are support services. I mean, when you get down to it. So a couple of quick things I want to ask you with you being in Flint, so we've talked about COVID. What about when you look at the what happened with the the things that impact and influence the food system? What do you see how the water crisis impacted the Flint food system?

**Participant 206** 45:33

Well, I'm not, I'm probably not qualified to say in terms of the food system, but definitely how it impacted our market. Keeping keeping in mind that, Hurley Children's Center, where [Name], teaches [inaudible] to her office like right there. So keeping in mind that sort of epicenter is right in the farmers market, so it was very tricky, for the first year of dealing with a water crisis as managing this market because two big things. We're owned by a nonprofit and have been since 2001. We're not owned by the city of Flint. But so many people still think that we're the property of the city of Flint. So the associations that people make, and you guys as researcher know, people see something and then they don't read further, they don't really listen that well.; making the leap and connecting one thing to another is dangerous. And so the first year, it was a really tight line to walk in terms of supporting our community as a giant public space, and not drawing a line between bad water and [Organization] business. And so that was really hard, because my personal instinct is like, yeah, okay, yeah, come down here, do the thing here, have the meetings here, do the stuff. But unfortunately, at least in our community, you can't trust people to read the details. And if you just see an advertisement that says, you know, water crisis, or who knows, anything, and then you have [Organization] in the next sentence, then the leap is, people that were already maybe looking for an excuse to not come downtown, then they're like, oh, remember, the farmer's market has bad water, the pipes are bad, they have bad water, I'm not eating their food, I'm not getting things from there. And so it was really hard for me from like a social justice is the right term, but from wanting to be supportive, personally, and at the market but also looking like my job. That's what I tell the vendors all the time: my number one job is for your business to continue. And so I always have to be vigilant about, you know what, I think that's a great thing, but I got to look at the optics of how are people-is this going to affect your bottom line, because that is 45 businesses-100 families that need food to eat to and so it was really hard to try to figure out how to be, while protecting these businesses, you know, so we had said, I don't know what was said, but it's basically like, our water is good, our pipes are good, we've been tested, so I don't know.

**Interviewer 2** 49:02

Yeah, so I'm hearing what you say is the connection between the water crisis and the [Organization] was sustaining the viability of the vendors in the water crisis. Your main focus as a action was to maintain the viability of the vendors. That's what you were saying the water crisis was all about for you, just to maintain the viability of the vendors.

**Participant 206** 49:31

Yeah, and not let that take us out. Because honestly, if we would have been in the building that before-if we would have been at the old Farmers Market, and we were transitioning right when that happened, I don't even know what happened. I don't even know; we wouldn't have survived. I don't know. We would have had to have moved. I mean, we are lucky this building's beautiful and we were here just in the nick of time, [inaudible]. But what was interesting, so, like I was saying, the first year of the water crisis, that was kind of the juggle, but then I was excited because an opportunity presented itself to figure out how we can play a role in the healing part of it. So we weren't in on the kind of-I don't know what the right word is-it's not anger-but we weren't in on the-tried to be more of the solution. And so what we could offer was that it's known that fruits and vegetables help mitigate, yes, diminish the effects of lead. And so that was what we keyed in on in our program partners, Michigan State Extension, you know, all of those folks, were like, alright, let's now let's be part of this as part of the solution. It's past the point where we're going to be associated with a problem. Now we want to be associated with the solution and so then at that point, we became a vessel for all sorts of great things here at the market, to try to lift people up that had been affected. So it was kind of like that waiting time of like, I really want to help, right, and we gotta wait. Yeah.

**Interviewer 2** 51:19

So I think we got that, I think I heard the two pieces and [Interviewer] I really want you to put the other one up about the viability of the vendors tied to the water crisis, because those are the two main things that I'm hearing there. And so as we're moving through this, and we're looking at this map, by the way, this has I mean, it's just been amazing the things that you've drawn out from the perspective of being the [Role]. As you glance at your map, is there anything-I want to ask you specifically about the connection of racial equity to the food system, in terms of, what are some of the ways that you would see race racial equity impacting participation, if there are, in your view, are there ways that racial equity impacts participation in the local food system in Flint?

**Participant 206** 52:15

Yeah, so that's an interesting question, because my next call today at noon is from someone at [Organization] that wants to talk us into hosting an urban farming initiative that the other players in town have said they can't do. So it's interesting that this is timely. So, um, I would say, in terms of business support, I think we do a really good job. We have a diverse group of vendors. I mean, we're not where we should be, but we're definitely probably far above other folks. And we have a very diverse market makeup inside the farmers market and kind of outside to in terms of our outdoor vendors in the summertime, it's probably about the same. But if you're talking about straight up producers, most of our diversity comes from prepared food, like restaurant places, not really at all from farmers. Over the years-and I hope it comes back-there was a lot of push in Flint's capacity in terms of just like, literally, it's land, what's available for using, if you're talking about the city of Flint, it is a city, you know, so there are places and there are a lot of places for gardening and you get some pretty big gardens growing and, you know, the land bank is working with that and I think we're, we're evolving in terms of that. But in terms of the number of people that would come into the market, and say--that are people of color that would say, I want to be a farmer or you know what I mean? It's not, food, yes, higher percent, in terms of prepared food, and even I think [Name] would say that too, even for the kitchens like caterers, you know, all that kind of stuff. So in terms of being a good steward of diversity, the [Organization] generally in terms of events that we hold, customer base, vendor makeup, all that, I think we do really well. But if you're talking about just really breaking it down to producers. I don't see it a lot. We haven't been in a position to do a lot of recruiting because we usually have a pretty steady stream of people coming in the door. So I don't know if that was different like I've never done a targeted approach. So that's why I'm curious to talk to the person from [Organization] of what their idea is because I would love to see it. It just doesn't come in my door. I don't see that on a regular basis. But again, food businesses, huge, food trucks, huge, like, great. And even...

**Interviewer 2** 55:19

You're seeing diversity of the food itself is what you're saying in terms of what's showing up in the market? And then you said the market as far as farmers..?

**Participant 206** 55:29

Diversity in terms of business owners,100%, diversity in terms of business owners, I think we do a great job. I haven't thought about it product wise, but just people wise, you know, business owners and stuff. I think it's great. It's a market umbrella. And, again, extending that to the crazy number of events that we have at the farmers market, public and private events and stuff. I'm super proud of all that. But in terms of like an actual person coming in that may want to be a farmer or really grow things. I just don't see it. I don't know why. I just haven't seen it.

**Interviewer 2** 56:09

Okay, well, taking a look at this beautiful map that you have created by thank you again, when we stand back, and we think about what's next in terms of considering change? What would you consider-when you look at the map, the next thing we're going to talk about is just considering, you know, leverage points, so basically looking at changes to help improve the actual system, like when [Interviewer] was refreshing you on the traffic map, where maybe adding something would make the traffic situation better, we want to take the same kind of approach here to looking at this map that you've created of your understanding of the food system. And looking at this, how would you change it? What changes would you make to improve it?

**Participant 206** 57:01

So well, just the map, I would say like the support for local food businesses and racial inequity. So I don't know if I'm reading it wrong. That should be like a strong connection. Or is it not strong because you're saying inequity as opposed to...?

**Interviewer** 57:22

Yeah, so it's-

**Participant 206** 57:24

I just wanted to be sure. I'm like, no, we do that, that's really a big deal for us.

**Interviewer** 57:30

Absolutely. Thanks for asking. Yeah. So it's a strong connection from the farmers market that they support local businesses, and the support for local businesses lowers inequity, which means it raises equity. It's just like a double negative.

**Participant 206** 57:45

I just wanted to make sure I got it because with the connection of producers, it's definitely not great. But the connection to businesses is huge.

**Interviewer 2** 58:00

Okay. Thanks for catching that, so you know, that's really awesome. Because a lot of times, people don't necessarily, you're talking and not necessarily able to follow the connection. Yeah.

**Participant 206** 58:11

And I wanted to add one more piece. With regards to... I key in on the red lines, and make sure that that's what I'm looking at, make sure that it's saying the right- sending the right message.

**Participant 206** 58:21

So the water crisis part though, the end piece of that, that I think is important is that because we after the first year or two, I don't know what year we are have it now. But we started to be be seen as a resource and vehicle for the solution, and in helping people get healthier. We also-that gave us the opportunity to partner with different agencies that we would have never had a partnership with and would have never been connected to probably and one of the biggest ones being the National Basketball Players Association. They have a foundation and so they reached out to us through Hurley, and and I might have talked about this in our last one but they gave a huge amount of funding to children in Flint schools through [Organization] gift certificates to come down and and buy food at the at the farmers market. And I mean to the tune up. It was $100,000 within probably a year 18 months and then they did a second follow up one so I couldn't I can't offhand I don't know the total amount. But for us, that was a huge amount. We didn't the market didn't make any money off. It was just fine. But it was a it was a great you know, kind of and I didn't see it at the time, but you know, it was a great support. of the farmers market from the basketball players association, say like, go get some good food at the flint farmers market. Those of you that have been significantly impacted by the water crisis, it's okay, you know, go to the farmers market. So that actually, as I'm saying it, I don't think I've said enough, you know, for us running it for the businesses I'm thinking speaking as like for the business, that was a huge benefit. The other part of it was the partnerships that we have with Hurley, MSU, extension, Michigan State University School of Public Health, all of those kind of nutrition agency or nutrition champions, I guess. They were able to garner additional grant funding separately from us, they did it, not our grants, the NBA Foundation was directly to us, those were indirect. And they did their prescriptions for health program, which you guys probably familiar with, but they ramped it up, like right now, I'm not complaining, I'm just stating a fact that I think there are currently five different tracks in our giftcard prescriptions for health system that I got to keep track of all the time [inaudible], is this one from this is this one, this this one, but it seemed to be working. And so you know, when people from Flint, well, and even outside of Flint in Genesee County come to the farmers market, to the Hurley Children's Center, and then they even expanded it to other major pediatric offices in Flint. And so that was really a big deal. And they give them, every time they come in for a well kid visit, they get $15 to spend at the farmers market, they can't spend anywhere else.

**Interviewer 2** 1:01:41

Great, so you're actually processing those at the market.

**Participant 206** 1:01:44

Yes, and so those-so that was our role, I think, our role in the water crisis but the healing part, and so we were able to do that, in addition to just a ton of like, information and cooking classes and stuff about that we had every, it was either Tuesday or Thursday for a whole entire year, every cooking demonstration was specifically dedicated to lead mitigation. So I just wanted to be sure that that was recognized, because, you know, as hard as it was to figure out our place and to protect these businesses, then it was really great to be able to come out under it and to be able to be that place for the community.

**Interviewer 2** 1:02:30

Okay, awesome. Thank you for that.

**Participant 206** 1:02:32

Thank you. That COVID-19 line. I mean, yeah, it just, I don't think there wasn't really-I mean, you try to look for a rainbow in that and there really isn't one other than our businesses all survived, which I think is good. And I finally got my curbside pickup program that I've been pitching for, like the end, since like, the first day I started, like we need to do, I called it grocery getter, like we need to do this, like, we're going to be last to the game and we were kinda last to the game. But it wasn't a have to, like, we have to give these vendors some way to have some type of money coming in, and we have to save our customers; we got to keep them coming. You know, we have the best customers, they're so loyal. And just, you know, so that one balance kind of tough. That's a big one. And, you know, and like it says the rising food costs, you know, and rising labor costs, and all of the losses, I mean, we thank goodness did not lose anyone, which is pretty remarkable, because there's, you know, a couple hundred people there at the market And we're pretty I'd say middle to hardcore on the rules, in terms of, you know, I'd say maybe closer to hardcore in terms of masks and, you know, distancing and stuff. You know, it's a bit of a challenge in a place like this, like, how do you manage the most public place in the county during a time where people aren't supposed to be in the public, but you don't want to kill all the businesses? Like how do you like, how do you do this? You know, so? You know, so I think, yeah, I guess I lost where I was going with that.

**Interviewer 2** 1:04:29

Yeah, no, actually, it was support; what I was hearing in that was still connected back to the support. I hear that as a common thread as you're talking is that the farmers market is really supportive of the vendors even in the case of a crisis you talked about in both cases COVID and the water crisis, it was about keep the customers, keep the vendors, do what you can to meet the depth. So looking through that I heard those things stand out about what you said in your experience.

**Participant 206** 1:05:06

And I can tell you for sure from we have, because with the growth of all the farmers markets, there are neighboring farms, you know, not not real close, but close enough on neighboring communities or neighboring counties with farmers markets. So we share vendors sometimes where you know, I have a few vendors that are in multiple farmers markets, and one of our best vendors, biggest vendors, he came to me right away, and I mean, I didn't really know what anybody else was doing, I just tried to figure out what we should do. And he came in, you know, after we had reopened and said, Oh my gosh, like thanks because the other markets were-they said the doors are locked. Like, they're locked and we don't know when they're going to open and they still had to pay their rent. Like when we shut down, we abated the rent and everything so nobody, for the two and a half months we were shut down, vendors did not have to pay any rent, and they could participate in curbside and make an income. And so for the rest of the year, like 25%, so just try to help them because we were still down in numbers, but the other markets that they were in, in our area, you know, like like Saginaw, Midland Bay City areas, they just shut down, and he told me he said, like, understanding yeah you gotta shut it down, but you couldn't even get in to get our products so that we could try to sell them online. Like doors are locked. Nobody here. Yeah, just like, so. Yeah. Okay. Wow. I can't imagine doing that.

**Interviewer 2** 1:06:47

Well, huh. Okay, that's a lot. And I think we've gotten, you know, some of the-was watching [Interviewer] doing the lines. So we've got, when you talked about COVID, you know, had already talked about the curbside as a result, you also, and this was a positive out of the negative the ability to abate rents to help keep people sustainable, and also keeping the customers coming by using the curbside. So again, it was the viability of the business, and the sustaining of your customer base. So let's take a look at this. This is, and again, thank you for this great map. When we look at leverage points or opportunities to change or improve this, How would you-how would you make changes to the system?

**Participant 206** 1:07:47

I think one of the areas, you know, with the racial inequity part. I mean, I think like I said, I'm interested for that call today. Because it's just, that's just me personally, like I- that's me, my life, before I worked at the farmers market, like that's- I'm involved that so. Um being- all the other things that I'm doing it has, I haven't been able to really focus on it. And I haven't really been in, you know, not to say I should, I could seek it out. But I haven't been presented with an opportunity that seems like it works for where we live. And the people in our community so. That, in terms of producers, just literally- when I say producer, I'm thinking farmers and growers, that that that can definitely somehow be increased.

**Participant 206** 1:08:40

But my- so this is me personally, living in this community my whole life, working in the inner city of Flint, in a completely different capacity for almost a decade with at-risk youths and families. And understanding the, kind of, and a limited understanding of the farming business, if you're actually farming. I don't know how much interest there is, you know, like, I don't know that it's that we're not cultivating it. I just don't know that there's that much interest in it. I think there is a great amount of interest for business. For like, entrepreneurship and starting things like food businesses, huge. I mean, I think that's, that's huge. But in terms of actually getting out there, you know, cultivating a plot of land and doing the actual daily work of farming. My experience that I've seen and I work- my husband and I have worked with 1000s of kids, like nobody said they wanted to be a farmer. You know, I just don't know that that's something that we can talk people into because it's really hard. And there's other stuff that just seems a lot more fun. Because you really have to start young. You know, I don't know, there's not really any great ways to make farming sound fun. It's so important, so important to our lives, but it's not really, you know, it's a lot more exciting to think about, you know, being a business owner or being an attorney, or being a doctor or being a nurse or any of the other things which I see so much amazing work being done in our community, and really working on equity with regard to that, but I just don't know. This is 100% my personal opinion, I just don't know, if the if the want is there, I just don't know. Maybe we have [inaudible].

**Interviewer 2** 1:10:48

Yeah, other kinds of changes that you think would improve? You know, as we as we look at the next future of Flint food?

**Participant 206** 1:11:00

You know, I don't know, I mean, I just, it's kind of worrisome. I mean, in the one hand, I don't, I don't worry too much. But it, about, like, you know, the the T shirts that say, like, who's growing your food, but like, I mean, it's growing, I know, people are doing it. But it's interesting from where I'm sitting, watching the evolution of it, which I think is good. And COVID definitely ramped that up. I mean, we, we as a farmers market, we're willing to completely, completely block out retailers being at our market for an entire day, which is a risk to our customers. Because at that time, when you're looking at costs, and you're looking at the amount of people that spend EBT, and staff in this market, they have a budget. I mean, all of us have a budget, but they really have a budget. And so one of the reasons why we'll never be- we would never be a growers only market is because we have to provide food to people in the city that need it all the time, all year round. And it has to be a reasonable cost. So we were- we made a big commitment to like, Okay, we got to get farmers, we got to get the farmers back to the farmers market. So we're going to cut out on Tuesdays and Thursdays outside, no resellers, just Saturday, and some people do both, which we seem to have pretty decent mix of like, we don't have very many people that 100% grow everything, we've got some people that grow 75% of it. But if you're a real vegetable grower, you're probably not growing blueberries, you're not, you know, a blueberry farmer is growing blueberries. So we do allow for an amount of that. So we were ready to jump in, like we're gonna do this finally, we, we focus grouped all of these different farmers and we heard the same thing. We can't compete with a resellers. So we're willing to do this, we are not going to charge you rent, come to our market, we're going to promote, we're going to put advertising money, we're going to do everything we can. And then stupid COVID happened.

**Participant 206** 1:12:55

So in that group of people, I will tell you it was it was very non diverse though. And we reached out through all of sort of the agricultural agencies and people that are plugged into farming and people that are interested in all that kind of stuff. And we just didn't get it. We didn't get a real interest, and in fact, to be honest, most of the people were not from Genesee County that we talked to, they were willing to drive from outlying counties. There were, I think we had 16 people that were willing to sign an MOU that they would come if we would, if we would block out resellers and just do grown, only they would come to the market. And I'm gonna say I'll bet you there was only four of them that were from Genesee County. So depends on your definition of local but just... we didn't see it and I don't think there was, there was there is one young lady who's really awesome. Who is from Flint. And that was it.

**Interviewer 2** 1:14:02

Wow, okay, that was helpful. That's very, very helpful. Just walking us walking us through that.

**Participant 206** 1:14:09

So we're gonna be trying. Yeah, we're gonna keep trying it. We're gonna, we're gonna try and like I said, I, like I said, I looked at my staff the other day, I was like, Oh, we got to figure out outside again, you know, and it's been- what we what we ended up doing, so since I talked to you- so this has been a really interesting, and we're definitely going to do this again, although we'll continue to try to bring in the actual farmer, family farmer into the market, but Flint fresh food hub, which- did you guys talk with them? [name]? Okay. So what we ended up doing last year because we're just like, oh my gosh, we got to get- we either can't be open, well- Most markets are not.. their outdoor farmers are only there one day a week. So us trying to have people three days a week is very unrealistic, but it's also- our community is so used to it. So it was like "where all the farmers? Well they used to be here three days a week." You know, yeah, they did, its changed. Well, I mean, you know, it's such an uphill battle trying to make that market from 10 years ago, the outside market, nobody complains about the inside market, just the outside making that outside market replicate itself is just... the inside has gone [accellerating sound effect]. You know, great. Awesome. Amazing. Better than anyone thought but the outside just ehhh, it's not coming. So um shoot, what was my point? It was a really good point, too.

**Interviewer 2** 1:15:30

You were you were talking about the the farmers, actually having the farmers in the market.

**Participant 206** 1:15:36

I know. Darn. I had a good ending thought

**Interviewer 2** 1:15:39

You started out with the talking about the flint fresh.

**Participant 206** 1:15:43

Flint Fresh, yeah, thank you. So what we ended up doing, because we were just like, ahh, when you talk to [name], too, I think, did you, that was my predecessor? Yeah. So he's been trying to help all this. Because everyone's like, well, maybe you're too busy. You don't have enough time talking to farmers, that poor man, man. He was like, I don't know how much- how much more I can hold hands to get, you know, it's just not happening. So he's on the board of Flint Fresh. So is [name], that's my partner at [organization]. So we reached out to Flint Fresh and said like, alright, here's the deal. You guys actually have the produce. But again, with them, they have to produce, the product is there, it's just that they don't have the people willing to stand there and sell it. So they have a great, they have a mobiel, the Flint Fresh mobiel, it's really cool. It's a big bus, then they park it and it opens up and does all this cool stuff. So basically, what we finally arrived at was an agreement with them. And we started in August, and it was great. We literally moved the tables out of our pavilion so they could pull the vehicle underneath the roof. And underneath the pavilion. We had one really big farmer that's family farm and still here. So he sets up in our first like six spots with all of this stuff, nice display. And then the Flint Fresh mobiel pulls in next to them. And they spread out about six more places. And then we get a couple of food trucks down at the end. And you know what? Perception? It's full.

**Interviewer 2** 1:17:10

You got the outside to-

**Participant 206** 1:17:12

Saturdays, Saturdays, we have a lot of vendors that want to come in because most of your you know, you get a lot of people that grandpa used to always say there's hobby people, and then there's real farmers, you know, farmers market vendors, so you get a lot of the happy people. But that's fun. Because Saturday is like a family day at the market. You're not here- some people are here for a grocery shop, but a lot of people it's just like, it's a place where we're seen as a place to go. So you get more of your arts and crafts, and cottage food people and different stuff like that. So Saturdays are never difficult, but um, that worked out really good. And in any given day, the Flint Fresh mobiel had eight different small farms represented. So if you look at it like that, now you put those farms back again, it's just a matter of how does that look with manpower. You've accomplished the local food piece of it, it's really local.

**Interviewer 2** 1:18:08

So they've got because they aggregated the firm, eight farmers represented in the mobile in one farmer next to get that outside. Yeah.

**Participant 206** 1:18:18

So that's what- that's been our solution. And I think it works really well. It worked out great. Flint Fresh is really good to work with because they're very, they have their own agenda, which is different than ours. And so, but also, they're very, like... wanting to be complimentary, not competition. And so on Tuesday and Thursday, that works. It works really, really well. So we're gonna continue to do that this year. And, you know, that might just be the way that it's going. It makes it easier for everybody. I mean, if you're really, this is where I struggle, you know, you hear the feedback of like, you have local, you know, yes, we do, you know, but is it you know, Mrs. Farmer, Mr. Farmer, Mrs. farmer's son, Mr. Farmer's daughter marching along? No. But do you really want the food or just want to talk to somebody or see them there as a farmer? Like what? You know, it's kind of... it gets frustrating. It's hard to overcome a perception. But the food is there. If we're really talking about I want to eat local food. I want to support local farms and I want to feed my family better, is that accomplished? Absolutely. This is all local farm. It's helping local farmers, and you're eating better and you're eating healthier. 100%. But you have to go and explain that to people. You got to say yes. So there's eight different firms are located here, here, here, here here. And the Flint Fresh people do great about that. But it's not obvious to people.

**Participant 206** 1:19:15

see it's making it more visible making it more-

**Participant 206** 1:19:57

So that's something we can work on. And that's something we can work out. This year, we kind of tried it out and started late, you know, in August, but we went, they went all the way through, oh my gosh, they were here until...

**Interviewer 2** 1:20:09

Okay, so making a local food more visible.

**Participant 206** 1:20:12

And sharing that story, now that we know that it works. I think this year, we'll do a lot more promotion around that and saying like, this really is, you know, just, this market is so old. And so everybody just has such a memory. People here have memories for their whole lives. And even people that are 30, they're remembering it 25 years ago, and when they were five years old, and they went with their grandparents, that everybody seeing that outside farmer experience, and they really look like farmers, you know, they didn't have matching shirts, and you know, they literally had a straw hat on and you know, they were farmers. Trying to get people to understand it or take the time to learn about it.

**Interviewer 2** 1:21:04

Well, thank you so much. That was that was helpful. I mean, every time we talk to people, and they've even this conversation is different than the first, as you notice, there's a lot of things that came out in this conversation. So we really deeply appreciate that. And as we finalize the interview today, again, we want to remind you that we recorded it, but it's confidential. And if anything else bubbles up, because you know, clearly, as you're thinking through this, everything doesn't always come out. Right when we're talking. You have to resist email, feel free to reach you know, back out if it's helpful to talk to us even reach out, we could even talk to you. And I'll

**Participant 206** 1:21:51

let you know what I find out today, if I'm interested in that conversation.

**Interviewer 2** 1:21:55

Absolutely. Yes.

**Participant 206** 1:21:58

What kind of their? What are they looking at? Because if they're looking at getting involved in fruiting like they're going to do that going? I don't, I'm only one person. Like, I don't I can't do all that. But I know it's really important.

**Interviewer 2** 1:22:11

Sounds like you had a couple of conversations that might be worth following up on you mentioned the farmers market study talking to the folks out of Cleveland as well. So if you don't mind, we can follow up with you. Yes, you know, send us a note and let us know when you're, you know, available, we can follow up with you. That's perfect. Thank you. And thank you for all the great work you're doing as it comes across as we're listening. And the survey, we always survey to find out, you know how this conversation went. So Chris is gonna, we got two ways to do that. We'll drop one in the link, a link in the chat now, but you'll also get it in the email. Okay, so feel free to, to use that, to get back to us and let us know about the experience. And again, as always, just thank you so so very much for engaging, but even more than that, for all the great things that you're doing. To to help further, you know, food in Flint. Definitely appreciate it. And listen,

**Participant 206** 1:23:11

thank you for taking the time, and I get pretty spirited about some things, you know.

**Interviewer 2** 1:23:15

Excellent. Hey, nice, stay spirited.

**Participant 206** 1:23:19

Yeah. Like, it's so nice for somebody to actually ask. And I can be like, This is what we're doing. And this was, you know, it's like, it is funny when you get on the phone with other market managers or people. It's very similar. I mean, everybody has a little bit different. I don't know, I mean,

**Interviewer 2** 1:23:36

Yea but you plug in yourself. And this is just my voice. Plugging in yourself makes a difference. We can hear and feel that. I speak for myself, I can hear and feel that.

**Participant 206** 1:23:47

Thank you.

**Interviewer 2** 1:23:48

And so because you pointed out earlier you were talking about well, we could just do this and they could just do that. That's transactions, everybody's doing same transactions, but you're doing what you're doing, as, you know, a manager.

**Participant 206** 1:24:03

So following in my predecessors footsteps, because that's what I saw him do. That's how I view even being able to step outside of it. People say what's the difference? Like? That's, that's a lot of difference. I mean, it is a reflection of how you treat people, reflects how they treat you back and how they treat the people that they're interacting with.

**Participant 206** 1:24:23

And so, yeah, if you ever had a chance to do a survey, like it would be a- research about different farmers markets, it would be really interesting if you could get people to be really honest. Across you know, like some of the Midwest farmers markets even or there's something- it'd be, it'd be very interesting to see the different models, even in terms of like, ours is owned by a nonprofit. So it's very different than the Cleveland market that is owned by the city and all staff are city employees, city pensions, all that kind of stuff. We don't have any of that kind of stuff. I mean, So, I- transactional is a good word. There are a lot of places that are simply transactional. Those are also- people usually call for a reason to ask us what's, what are you doing in Flint, you know. And then listening to how they're doing, they're not going to come right out and say, Oh, well, here's why. But kind of. Like, you hear what they're saying. And you go like, Oh, okay, well, I can see why... the beautiful public space, but you're running up against a lot of issues that are internal, and there's probably some reason why.

**Interviewer 2** 1:25:38

yeah, you got it. You got it. Well, thank

**Participant 206** 1:25:41

you guys.

**Interviewer 2** 1:25:44

Look forward to seeing you soon in the market.

**Participant 206** 1:25:46

Okay, good. And I will. I'll let you know if anything comes to that Michigan State College.

**Interviewer 2** 1:25:54

To see who you talk to, so definitely let us know

**Participant 206** 1:25:56

that Maria is the lady's first name. And so I'll find out more, I guess today at noon.

**Interviewer 2** 1:26:04

Alright, thanks. Enjoy the rest of the day.

**Participant 206** 1:26:07

Take care. Bye

1:26:09

bye