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# From Source to Soup to Soul: An Exploration of Food Sustainability within Soup Kitchens through Community Partnerships

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From Source to Soup to Soul:

An Exploration of Food Sustainability within Soup Kitchens through Community Partnerships

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GRAD590 A-Dr. Audrey Falk

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### **Dedication**

This capstone could not have been completed without the support I felt from so many people over the past year. First and foremost, I would like to thank the staff, volunteers, and guests of Bread and Roses who provided me with friendship, inspiration, thoughtful conversation, and flexibility throughout this year. Thank you to my professors, for their continued patience, guidance, and support. I am grateful to the new friends I met in this program, who's continued support this year has been invaluable. Anyone who knows me well knows I cannot forget to thank my cat, Chloe and dog, Sallie Belle, who have both blessed me with their unconditional love, and companionship. Thank you to my friends and family for their ongoing support, understanding, and patience during continued dialogue about my workload, and absence from social events. Last but not least, thank you to my husband for working so hard to support our family while I focused on completing the first step in my a career change. Thank you for listening to me talk through my assignments and keeping me motivated to finish strong.

I love and appreciate you all!

### **Executive Summary**

This study explored the needs, wants and feasibility of community partnerships in order to maintain food sustainability and healthy eating within soup kitchens. Specifically, the focus of this case study was related to partnership development within communities to support soup kitchens in creating proactive solutions to reducing food insecurity in Lawrence, MA. In order to have real-life examples, the partnership between Bread and Roses and Groundwork Lawrence was examined.

Before diving into the research, a review of the existing literature took place. During this review, the following topics were explored: 1) The broad food conversations that are happening, 2) Definitions and examples of food insecurity, food deserts, and food sustainability, 3) Politics of food sustainability, 4) Benefits of community partnerships in general, and 5) The psychological impact having to receive food assistance can have on people.

Specific research questions that were addressed included, 1) Does Bread and Roses currently have community partnerships? If so, do these partnerships contribute to creating food sustainability for both guests and the organization? 2) Do the organizations work together to create and maintain a sustainable and proactive partnership? 3) Is nutrition a consideration when preparing the evening meals at Bread and Roses? 4) Are there psychological impacts to people who receive food assistance?

In order to obtain research data, interviews and surveys were conducted, and researcher observations were made of the organization. Staff members and volunteers of Bread and Roses were interviewed, as well as a staff member from Groundwork Lawrence. Guests of Bread and Roses were also surveyed. All questions involved levels of awareness of community partnerships, longevity with the organization, involvement or potential involvement in the

community garden, opinions about current and potential services offered, and knowledge level of nutrition in the evening meals. This study also explored the option of providing prior knowledge of the evening meal as well as gauging the level of interest from all involved in the study for future guest involvement in the local community garden.

While results from the study contained a large amount of useful information, three key themes were common throughout the data: 1) Benefits to soup kitchens of community partnerships, 2) Availability of healthy food donations, and their contributions to meeting nutritional needs within soup kitchens, 3) The psychological benefits that can come from allowing guests to know what they will be eating that evening, and 4) the impact that can be shared with guests through providing opportunities for community involvement.

As a result of this case study, three recommendations were made: 1) include nutrition cards with garden giveaways, 2) provide a menu board on the porch of Bread and Roses, updated daily with that evening's meal described, and 3) create a miniature herb and vegetable garden in front of the Bread and Roses building to showcase the relationship with Groundwork Lawrence. This garden would also seek to encourage guest involvement in harvesting, while providing supplements for the evening meal.

While every attempt was made to make the study as flawless as possible, some events could not be planned for and were considered when reviewing the data. These limitations of the study are described further in the paper. Additionally, while this was a comprehensive study of the topics described, there were areas that became apparent where future research would be beneficial.

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### **Introduction**

This capstone will explore the needs, wants and feasibility of community partnerships in order to maintain food sustainability and healthy eating within soup kitchens. This paper will also discuss what led to conducting a case study about Bread and Roses' partnerships and food sustainability, along with the purpose for the research and methods used. A literature review of research will be conducted around community engagement to food, partnerships between farms, big business and soup kitchens, food sustainability, the government's involvement in these areas, and the psychological aspects of food assistance. Through the discussion of these broad issues, gaps in the literature will be identified.

Through a case study approach, the importance of community partnerships, nutrition within soup kitchens, and the psychological impact to recipients of food support will be explored. As an example, the current partnership between Bread and Roses and Groundwork Lawrence, and its potential for development in the future, will be studied. Current and potential community partnerships beyond Groundwork Lawrence will also be discussed briefly. In order to review the nutritional and psychological aspects of soup kitchens and food assistance, two of the current programs within Bread and Roses will be studied through interviews, surveys and observations: The Evening Meal and The Community Garden. The next section will outline the current issues this capstone will explore.

### **Role of the Researcher**

As a researcher, I acknowledge my place of privilege coming into this study. While in college, I majored in Psychology, minoring in Business, and have always been interested in the mind, and what makes people act the way they do. I am an educated, white, middle class, young American woman who does not live in Lawrence, MA. Yet, I spend a substantial amount of time

there as a result of participating in the Merrimack College Masters of Education in Community Engagement Fellowship Program. I drive into Bread and Roses three days a week to fulfill my fellowship requirements, having showered and dressed at my home, and return every night to a warm bed and full refrigerator. These are luxuries that most guests of Bread and Roses do not have. While I spend 25 hours a week working in the office, I am able to return home at the end of the day to the comforts of my middle class life.

Bread and Roses feeds between 150 and 250 people a hot meal five nights a week, supplies medical care for those who would normally not receive care, and provides emergency food, clothing and hygiene products to those in desperate need. This organizations prides themselves on being a unique soup kitchen, in that they not only focus on feeding the stomachs of their guests but nourishing their souls as well. They do this by providing a “restaurant style” atmosphere where guests can socialize with friends while also find a community of which they might not already be a part.

During my time working at Bread and Roses since August, 2013, I experienced both the office and the kitchen elements of this organization, having served dinner one night a week. After getting to know the facility and systems a bit, I took notice of what was being served and was curious about the nutritional considerations taken with the meal planning. I also got to know the guests better over time and became interested in the psychological impact having to receive support from a soup kitchen could have on guests. Once I learned of the community garden connection between Bread and Roses and Groundwork Lawrence, I began to wonder about partnerships in general between community organizations and non-profits, specifically soup kitchens. How do partnerships create proactive solutions to food sustainability? Are organizations working together, and using partnerships with each other, to proactively sustain a

consistent level of service while also helping guests find necessary resources and get back on their feet?

Before moving further along, I acknowledge my personal bias and belief that everyone has a right to be treated fairly, a right to have freedom of choice about what they would like to eat, and a right not to be prejudged based on external factors that may affect their existing situations.

### **Problem Statement**

The topic of food is a common discussion point across most communities. Some people are in the position where they consider themselves “foodies”, watching the Food Network and discussing recipes. Others may not like to cook but have no concern with obtaining food, and are able to provide the necessary amount of nutrition each day for themselves and their families. There are many people on the other end of the spectrum, however, who are not as confident when it comes to sourcing their food and strive to be able to provide at least one meal for their family each day. Although food is a common topic between groups, the way these groups interact with food, and the conversations and discussions taking place around this topic vary drastically.

While I agreed with the mission of Bread and Roses to provide hope and caring and “...to ease the hunger of people in our [Merrimack Valley] community by providing a well-balanced, nutritious evening meal” (Bread and Roses, 2013, para. 5), I was curious about how they went about executing their mission on a day-to-day basis. As a result of this curiosity, I explored the approach Bread and Roses took to reducing hunger and maintaining food supply. Also reviewed was the level of nutritional awareness present when discussing the meals.

When thinking about accessibility, for example, words such as “food desert,” “food insecurity,” and “food stamps” are common terms, especially when discussing low-income areas where there can be numerous health concerns and limited access to healthy, nutritious food options (Corrigan, 2011; [www.examiner.com](http://www.examiner.com); [www.startsomegood.com](http://www.startsomegood.com)). For the purposes of this paper, the term food desert will be summarized as a city or town with limited to no access for residents to affordable, healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables and other similar options (Satiya, 2011; Greenberger, 2011; [www.startsomegood.com](http://www.startsomegood.com); [www.medanth.wikispaces.com](http://www.medanth.wikispaces.com)).

Also known as hunger, food insecurity can occur when someone is incapable or unsure of how to regularly access the necessary amount of nutritious food to maintain consistent health due to financial constraints or accessibility to resources (Andrews & Nord, 2001; Corrigan, 2011; Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2012). Often people who live in food deserts or experience food insecurity qualify to receive U.S. Government assistance “...through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s nutrition assistance programs” (Andrews & Nord, 2001). There are many government programs available to assist those in need, one of which includes the Food Stamp Program (Andrews & Nord, 2001).

While there currently is a partnership with Groundwork Lawrence and Bread and Roses, the vegetables obtained from the garden go towards dinner meals and sometimes are given out at the end of the night to guests. However, information is not provided about the vegetables such as how to prepare them or what they taste like. Additionally, guests are not provided with a choice in the food they receive since Bread and Roses primarily provides what is donated.

There is an opportunity to partner with community organizations, such as the Merrimack Valley Food Cooperation, to create more sustainable food sources. This partnership could potentially provide educational opportunities for guests, including choices in what they eat,

opportunities to learn how to cook healthy meals with the vegetables provided or teaching other guests if they already know. There is also a chance for Bread and Roses to expand its presence and involvement with the community garden through partnering on a deeper level with Groundwork Lawrence. The next section will explain the purpose of this case study, which will touch upon the issues previously discussed.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this case study is to understand the community partnerships that currently exist to help sustain soup kitchens, specifically for the guests of Bread and Roses. At this stage in the research, the term food sustainability will be generally defined as the process of building community partnerships for food sourcing to adequately supply soup kitchens long term. The current community partnerships that exist between Bread and Roses and Groundwork Lawrence will be generally defined as a community partnership developed to create sustainable food sourcing. Current methods of food education, preparation, and supply will be evaluated and options for expanding community partnerships will be explored. The purpose of this capstone is to research the needs, wants and feasibility of community partnerships to maintain food sustainability and healthy eating within soup kitchens. Thought will be placed around whether soup kitchens are acting proactively or reactively related to sustaining food supply.

Through the Pragmatic Paradigm (Mertens, 2010), current community partnership that exist between Bread and Roses and Groundwork Lawrence were examined. Also explored were current actions taking place around food sustainability, healthy food preparation, future guest involvement with community organizations. This study will focus on the necessary characteristics of partnerships to support a continuum so there can be a sustainable food sources from both perspectives.

Also considered in this continuum is the idea of choice for the recipient of the food. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, humans have basic needs and can only satisfy higher needs on the pyramid once the lower needs have been met. These include, Physiological, Safety, Love/belonging, Esteem and Self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). Later, self-transcendence was added to the top of the pyramid to incorporate a higher being and level of spirituality to the hierarchy (Koltko-Rivera, 2006).

How can we use community partnerships to benefit our guests in moving through Maslow's Hierarchy, despite the sometimes lack of basic needs? How do we develop partnerships between Groundwork Lawrence and Bread and Roses, for example, to elevate the dialogue happening about hunger relief to the top of the pyramid for everyone?

### **Research Questions**

On a broad scale, this study explored the partnership of community based organizations in ensuring and enhancing food sustainability and healthy eating. This study also researched the potential psychological impacts that receiving support has on people. Specifically, does Bread and Roses currently have community partnerships? Do these partnerships contribute to creating food sustainability for both guests and the organization? Do they work together to create and maintain a sustainable and proactive partnership? Is nutrition a consideration for the evening meals at Bread and Roses? Are there psychological impacts to people who receive food support?

This study gathered opinions from the staff, volunteers, and guests of Bread and Roses around current and potential services offered, existing community partnerships, and knowledge of nutrition within the meals. This study also explored the option of providing evening meal choices as well as gauged the level of interest from all involved in the study for future guest involvement in the local community garden.

## Literature Review

### What Broad Food Conversations are Happening?

The freedom of being able to purchase weekly groceries without stress of where the money will come from or what type of food is available is not a reality for every person living in the world. Access to nutritious food is a struggle for around 16 percent of adults in the US and 25 percent of children (Bruening et al., 2012; Tu, 2012; Corrigan, 2011). Despite government involvement and support, there are still noteworthy issues surrounding food and economic insecurity (Tu, 2012; Andrews & Nord, 2001; Corrigan, 2011). This uncertainty of where your next meal is coming from can cause a substantial amount of stress, which can lead to health problems (Whiting & Ward, 2010). Staying healthy should be of utmost importance for people, especially among the low-income populations who may have limited resources and often no health insurance. The ability to supply healthy, nutritious, and affordable food for their families would help to avoid stress related to acquiring food, thus potentially reducing illness and additional medical bills. Educational and supplemental food programs are available for those in need, and will be discussed in more detail later. However, despite the plethora of assistance programs related to food and economic insecurity, there are still 49.1 million people living in the United States who are considered “food insecure” (Corrigan, 2011).

This literature review will outline the subjects previously mentioned, the benefits of partnership developments between big business and local farmers as well as the results of incorporating community gardens into low-income neighborhoods. Current programs that exist to help alleviate some food insecurity in these populations, as well as the benefits and methods for engaging a community in the conversations, will be examined. Current accessibility issues, potential resistance to new programs, and benefits of partnership and engagement will also be

discussed. The next section will consider what it means to be food insecure and will outline the relationships between food insecurity, food sustainability, and food deserts. A brief historical context and contributions of each topic to the larger food conversation will also be included.

### **Food Insecurity, Food Deserts, Food Sustainability: What does it all mean?**

**Food insecurity.** Food insecurity may be a new term for some, while others are all too familiar with it in their lives. As mentioned above, food insecurity has many definitions but can be summarized as occurring when one is incapable of, or unsure they can regularly accessing the necessary amount of nutritious food to maintain consistent health due to financial constraints or accessibility to resources (Andrews & Nord, 2001; Corrigan, 2011; Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2012). Those who are considered food insecure sometimes eat lower quality foods rather than eating less of higher quality foods in order to feel full (Andrews & Nord, 2001).

The decision or need to eat lower quality foods could be related to culture, accessibility issues, lack of education, limited time for preparation due to potentially having to work multiple jobs among other factors. Regardless of the reason for food insecurity, some maintain that as a result of trying to avoid hunger, food insecurity can be linked to obesity, especially among children and low-income communities (Bruening et al., 2012; Corrigan, 2011). Uncertainty as to where your next meal is coming from has also been linked to stress and other health problems (Hamelin & Hamel, 2009; Whiting & Ward, 2010).

**Food deserts.** One factor that can be linked to food insecurity among low-income populations are “food deserts”. Again, there are many definitions for the term food desert but the term can be overall summarized as a city or town with limited to no access for residents to affordable, healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, and other healthy food options (Satija, 2011; Greenberger, 2011; [www.startsomegood.com](http://www.startsomegood.com); [www.medanth.wikispaces.com](http://www.medanth.wikispaces.com)). Residents of

food deserts are at a disadvantage compared to those who have ready access to fresh fruits and vegetables, not only economically but physically as well (Karpyn et al., 2010).

Food deserts are found primarily in low-income areas and can contribute to increases in health related problems such as obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes etc. People living in food deserts often cannot access the only grocery store available due to transportation issues or lack of funds. Typically there is an abundance of convenience stores and fast food restaurants in these low-income areas, which do not contribute positively to health issues among this population (Greenberger, 2011; [www.startsomegood.com](http://www.startsomegood.com); [www.medanth.wikispaces.com](http://www.medanth.wikispaces.com)). As of 2009, the USDA reported that “23.5 million people living in low-income areas lack access to a supermarket within a mile of their home and that 68 percent of low-income residents live in areas with limited or no supermarket access” (Karpyn et al., 2010).

Soup kitchens, food pantries, and other support services are plentiful in the neighborhoods of Lawrence, MA. Lawrence was incorporated in 1853 and began as a prosperous textile city. It was not until the 1950s when the industry slowly declined, which brought the city down as well. Lawrence later became known as an immigrant city with people coming from countries all over the world to live there (Retrieved from <http://en.wikipedia.org>). As of the last census report in 2010, the average household income was around \$26,000, which is roughly \$16,000 below the US Average (Retrieved from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>). Lawrence only has one large “full-service grocery store” to service just over 77,000 residents and it is located on the outskirts of town, bordering North Andover (Satija, 2011; [www.quickfacts.census.gov](http://www.quickfacts.census.gov)). Driving through Lawrence, you will find smaller convenience stores, bodegas and fast food restaurants within walking distance to so many apartment buildings and residential houses.

While food deserts can contribute greatly to health problems mentioned above, including obesity, some argue reducing or eliminating food deserts by supplying healthy foods via an increased number of supermarkets would not help change the way people choose to eat and is only one of the many factors that needs to be taken into consideration when discussing health issues. Culture plays a key role in the food choices people make and where they choose to grocery shop (Satija, 2011). Not only are smaller convenience stores such as bodegas closer in proximity to residents, culturally they cater to immigrant communities that are prevalent in Lawrence. They often do not have the physical space to store the amount of food required to buy items in bulk in order to keep prices reasonable and competitive for customers. On the flip side, a large-scale grocer such as Market Basket does have the capability and space to provide fresh, healthy foods but often cater to their customer base, carrying foods that sell in their stores. When people buy junk food, the stores supply junk food in order to increase profits (Satija, 2011).

There are some small storeowners trying to break the stereotype and provide affordable, healthy foods for their customers. The owner of La Fruteria, for example, is able to offer fruits and vegetables at comparable and sometimes lower prices than Market Basket as a result of "...maintaining close relationships with local suppliers and jumping on every discount deal he hears about" (Satija, 2011).

**Food sustainability.** The idea of partnerships, relationship building and longevity within a community as being success factors in delivering healthy food to local communities leads to the idea of "sustainability" related to the ongoing food conversation. The term sustainability can apply to many topics of conversations and differs depending on each person (Gillespie, 2010). It has often been linked to the environment and figuring out ways to maintain methods of

consumption that do not deplete the earth, leaving resources for future generations (Hamilton, 2013; Gillespie, 2010). In 1992, Local Agenda 21 was developed to ensure policies were in place to create means for “local sustainability” (Holland, 2004). Local Agenda 21 was the beginning of partnerships forming to create sustainability since it required the collaboration of multiple stakeholders from “approximately 66 developing and industrialized countries” to come together to implement local projects promoting sustainability (Owen & Videras, 2007).

The food industry is a huge part of the sustainability conversation. In order for a small store such as La Fruteria to be able to survive, the owner needs to have a relationship with a “big business” to get the pricing to an affordable level. One can also assume he has local connections to farmers and independent food suppliers who provide him with products as well. This is the model from which sustainability thrives within the food conversation, as big and small businesses need each other to succeed (Hamilton, 2013). One project Hamilton (2013) is part of within the Sustainable Food Lab is collaborating with various businesses and other foundations and nonprofits “...to design ways that global supply chains can best benefit small farmers and the poor” (Hamilton, 2013, My Own Story section, para. 15). Partnership is key in making change within food sustainability. Hamilton (2013) believes, “The fertile ground of systemic change is in this partnership space, both practical and visionary, because we need to execute as well as dream” (My Own Story section, para. 17).

On a smaller scale, partnerships are continually important amongst communities with food insecurity. According to a report by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) local organizations, individuals, and charities partnered with low-income and food-insecure communities to help alleviate their food insecurity issues by distributing nearly 750,000 tons of food (Andrews & Nord, 2001). The USDA also reports nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)

have helped contribute to reducing food insecurity through food recovery (collecting and repurposing nutritious and useable food from restaurants, farmers and other retail facilities) for redistribution to those in need within low-income communities (Andrews & Nord, 2001).

Building on this report, while Hamilton believes NGOs are successful with food recovery, they cannot do their work alone, and would be more successful when partnering with businesses (Hamilton, 2013).

The next section will discuss the role the U.S. Government has played in the overall food conversation, specifically around reducing food insecurity among low-income populations.

### **Current Politics of Food Assistance**

The United States Government (both state and local agencies) have been involved with food accessibility and education for quite some time, specifically through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). A large amount of money has been spent on “nutrition assistance programs,” ensuring food accessibility and education for all for over 60 years. Specifically, some of these programs focus on women and children and include commonly known programs such as the Food Stamp Program (currently known as SNAP), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) among many others (Andrews and Nord, 2001). Focus has also been placed on reducing food insecurity in the United States. Both the “World Food Summit” in 1998 and the “Healthy People 2010 initiative” set goals to reduce hunger and food insecurity by half (Andrews & Nord, 2001).

### **The ‘Let’s Move’ Campaign**

One current issue is how to address the obesity problem in America, especially among children within low-income neighborhoods and often food insecure families (Bruening, MacLehose, Loth, Story, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2012; Corrigan, 2011; Satija, 2011). This seems

to be a topic of conversation regularly in the media, politics or within every day conversation. Recently, a new campaign was introduced to address this issue. According to LetsMove.gov, Michelle Obama started the “Lets Move” campaign in 2010, which is focused on reducing childhood obesity through a variety of programs involving constituent groups such as parents, community members, schools, and policy makers. Education is at the forefront of this initiative along with the need for attention to be paid to issues such as food accessibility, affordability, empowerment, and the need to increase physical activity among children ([www.LetsMove.gov](http://www.LetsMove.gov)).

Of course there are other factors that contribute to health issues and food accessibility in low-income areas such as culture and general business practices (Satija, 2011). That being said, “Let’s Move” seeks to eliminate food deserts completely by 2017 with a budget of 400 million dollars per year, according to a video cross-posted on the White House blog in February of 2010 ([www.medanth.wikispaces.com](http://www.medanth.wikispaces.com)). When discussing her research done around food deserts in Chicago, Mari Gallagher, Principal at the Mari Gallagher Research and Consulting Group, questioned, “How can we have a paradigm shift? How can we go from food desert to food oasis?” (<http://www.fooddesert.net>). These questions, while addressing the issue in Chicago, are also relevant to needs in other areas where food deserts are apparent.

The “Let’s Move” initiative, while focused on childhood obesity, does involve a wider range of demographics. Many groups need to work together to implement change, showing the importance and value of community partnerships. Despite government support, funding, policies and programming, the United States is still experiencing food insecurity, food deserts and accessibility issues in low-income communities today (Greenberger, 2011).

### **Community Partnerships and Accessibility to Healthy Food**

Research among low-income and disadvantaged populations is limited. While some individual research has been done around the implementation of community gardens in low-income neighborhoods, there is a gap in research available for the United States and even less in the Massachusetts region, specifically regarding the connection of community gardens, community partnerships, and non-profit organizations. There needs to be more research around the impact each factor can have on supporting residents of low-income communities through implementation of educational programming, and community gardens within non-profit organizations, such as soup kitchens.

For example, research around Lawrence and food deserts in other parts of Massachusetts appeared in 2011 but any more recent articles or discussions in the area were not apparent. The Merrimack Valley Food Cooperative founders, for example, started gaining support in 2011 and are still trying to move forward with their cooperative model for low-income communities as of just last month. This non-profit organization is interesting in that it is trying to remove the stigma of what a cooperative is and create accessibility for healthy foods in low-income areas ([www.StartSomeGood.com](http://www.StartSomeGood.com) & [www.facebook.com/merrimackvalleyfoodcoop](http://www.facebook.com/merrimackvalleyfoodcoop)).

There is also much debate around cost and whether healthy food is more expensive or if there is no difference. One study stated the cost difference between eating healthy and unhealthy foods is only about \$1.50 per day (Godoy, 2013). However, as noted in this study, that is a substantial amount of money for low-income families. On the flip side, the cost of treating illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease are much higher and one could argue, worth the additional cost (Godoy, 2013). While the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) agreed that

many healthy foods could be equivalent in price to unhealthy diets, there are other factors that contribute to the cost of food.

When it comes to food cost, location also matters. As mentioned earlier, food deserts with limited grocery stores tend to appear in low-income areas and have higher prices than those of suburban grocers with more competition ([www.medanth.wikispaces.com](http://www.medanth.wikispaces.com); [www.ers.usda.gov](http://www.ers.usda.gov)). A report from 1998-2003 based on a group of sample groceries found prices to be above the national average on the East and West and below the national average in the South and Midwest ([www.ers.usda.gov](http://www.ers.usda.gov)). This price gap was not mentioned in the study reported by Godoy (2013), however did compare closely to the ten developing countries where additional studies took place.

In the next section, I will continue the conversation by exploring the psychological aspects of food insecurity and poverty. Focus will be placed on the stress low-income populations can experience as a result of food insecurity, and the way in which this increase in stress impacts mental health and cognitive function among people experiencing poverty.

### **The Psychological Aspects of Food Insecurity and Poverty**

Research has been done surrounding the relationship between health issues of low-income communities and their eating habits. However, there is a gap in research regarding how varying levels of food security can affect mental health. What impact does poverty have on the brain? Joshua Abreu, of Northern Essex Community College, recently spoke at a Speaker Series for the Community Engagement Masters Program. During this speech, he discussed the impact poverty can have on people in terms of causing side effects of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). He related his dialogue to the difficulties children of poverty often have focusing in school. However, the argument can apply to adults and their general day-to-day functioning as well. During this speech he said, “Not knowing where your food is coming from is traumatizing.

Having to open the door to the stove for heat is traumatizing. We don't often think about these issues causing PTSD" (Abreu, J. 2013).

Although limited, some research was found in support of his statements, noting the effect poverty has on cognitive function. The human brain has only so much bandwidth available to perform a variety of tasks. When applying this concept to how poverty is viewed, researchers "conclude that poverty imposes such a massive cognitive load on the poor that they have little bandwidth left over to do many of the things that might lift them out of poverty-like go to night school, or search for a new job, or even remember to pay bills on time" (Badger, 2013, para 2).

Mani, Mullainathan, Shafir, and Zhao (2013) showed similar results after conducting two studies that examined the way in which cognitive function was directly affected by experiencing poverty. "It appears that poverty itself reduces cognitive capacity. We suggest that this is because poverty-related concerns consume mental resources, leaving less for other tasks" (Mani, Mullainathan, Shafir, and Zhao, 2013, p. 976). Thinking about poverty related to cognitive function and PTSD brings a new perspective for those trying to understand behaviors of the poor and meet the needs of low-income populations. This psychological connection can also help explain a wide variety of behaviors that exist among people who experience poverty.

### **Research Methods**

According to Mertens (2010), "Qualitative studies are used in research that is designed to provide an in-depth description of a specific program, practice or setting" (p. 225). This type of research is based on situational context, individual interpretations, and personal experiences and observations. Given the nature of my research questions and the situational context of where my research took place, a qualitative method, specifically a case study, made the most sense for me to use. As a social person, I was drawn towards qualitative data gathering approaches when

determining how to conduct my research. I believed I could obtain the best information possible through observations, interviews, and surveys. Volunteers, staff, and guests of Bread and Roses and Groundwork Lawrence have each had unique experiences that provided me with detailed information I needed to conduct my study. Throughout the research and data collection, the anonymity of guests, volunteers, and staff members was maintained, as ensuring anonymity of guests is a key part of the philosophy of Bread and Roses. This factor allowed for participants to feel comfortable sharing their opinions, potentially allowing for typically unheard voices to be heard.

### **Data Gathering**

This qualitative study included interviews, observations, and survey methods. Hearing from the guests, volunteers, and staff members of Bread and Roses and Groundwork Lawrence was vital to this study. For the privacy of those involved, names of those interviewed and surveyed were not used. Names of organizations have remained, since identifying community partners is a critical part of this study. Both Bread and Roses and Groundwork Lawrence agreed to be identified through signing a consent form provided prior to conducting the interviews.

Data collection began by consent forms, email invitations, and interview questions being prepared for Bread and Roses and Groundwork Lawrence participants. Generally, the questions for each set of interviewees were the same, however individual questions varied slightly for each set of interviews to accommodate for differing organizations and the position of the interviewees within that organization. The only difference in questions was for Bread and Roses staff members, who were asked an additional question around the food sourcing and donation process of Bread and Roses. Please refer to Appendix A for the Bread and Roses consent form, Appendix

B for the Groundwork Lawrence consent form, Appendix C for the invitation emails, and Appendix D for the interview protocol.

Five invitations were verbally initiated to Bread and Roses staff members asking them to participate in individual interviews and they all agreed to participate. In order to announce the request for volunteer interviews, an email was prepared and sent to 16 volunteers chosen from a list provided by the Assistant Director. Interviews were scheduled with those volunteers who replied expressing their interest. Responses were expected from at least ten volunteers but only five actually replied and were interviewed. Email invitations were also sent to two Groundwork Lawrence staff members, however only one responded. All Bread and Roses interviews were conducted during the last two weeks of February, both in-person and over the phone. The Groundwork Lawrence interview took place over the phone in mid March.

In addition to relying on interviews, general observations of day-to-day kitchen and dining room operations were made, including donation drop-offs, meal planning, and dinner preparations. Observations were also made while working in the office answering phones, replying to emails, writing grants, and participating in meetings with staff members. Regular conversations that happened within the vicinity of the researchers also contributed to general knowledge of Bread and Roses, therefore influencing the overall analysis of the data.

Finally, opinions of Bread and Roses guests were obtained through an anonymous and optional survey around topics such as knowledge of food sourcing, partnerships, and current and potential programming. Originally, surveys were going to be left on the tables during dinner but after discussing this plan with the Executive Director and Assistant Director, they both felt a more direct approach should be taken. The Assistant Director offered to distribute the surveys during dinner to guests willing to participate. Guests were given the choice to complete the

surveys, but were not obligated. The survey was written in English and translated into Spanish. The Assistant Director was given 25 copies of each survey to distribute during dinner as applicable, and asked to have them completed and returned to the researcher within the next week. There were 25 completed surveys returned, 23 in English and two in Spanish.

The survey began by asking basic questions around how long guests have been coming to Bread and Roses and how often they participated in the evening meal. Survey questions then moved into gauging guests' knowledge of services offered, awareness and interest in current and future programming, as well as overall satisfaction with services offered at Bread and Roses. There was space available for guests to answer an open ended question and provide additional comments if they wished. Please see Appendix E for the survey questions in English.

Providing guests with the opportunity to voice their opinions through completing an optional and anonymous survey helped balance the data obtained by being able to compare to staff and volunteer interviews results. The survey results also helped provide a full view of the organization from the perspective of the guests, to whom the evening meals are served. If guests did not wish to participate, they did not complete a survey and therefore were not included in the study. As the primary researcher, I was not involved in the survey distribution so guests were able to remain anonymous while keeping the integrity and confidentiality of the data intact.

By creating an opportunity for guests to be involved in this case study anonymously, they were provided the chance to have a voice while not being put on the spot. A follow-up interview was going to be offered in the survey with the option to provide their contact information. However, the Executive Director felt that providing a space for guests to include their contact information was going against the Bread and Roses philosophy of anonymity, even if it was made optional. As a result, those questions were removed from the survey. Responses to this

offer for a follow-up interview were not greatly anticipated, so the absence of this question did not detract from the study.

During interviews, surveys, and observations, information was gathered regarding Bread and Roses in order to complete a case study around this particular soup kitchen in Lawrence, MA. Based on this information, recommendations were made for ways Bread and Roses can continue to serve the Merrimack Valley population through new and existing partnerships within the community and programming within Bread and Roses. Actual results will be discussed further in the Results section.

### **Research Framework**

My research is rooted in the pragmatic paradigm. According to Patton (2002), as referenced in Mertens (2010), pragmatism is based on the idea that research can happen as a result of a question that is looking to be answered. Researchers taking the pragmatist approach choose qualitative methods for many reasons, one being the researcher is seeking a more personal approach to the study they conduct. My study focused on the people of Bread and Roses and contained no access to quantitative data so as to maintain confidentiality for our guests. Due to my background and interest in the field of psychology and interpersonal relationships, my preference was to speak with people directly when conducting research. In regards to the methods, which are rooted in the pragmatic paradigm, the nature of this research lends itself to be more qualitative than quantitative.

When analyzing the data, I kept the pragmatic paradigm in mind and focused on collecting and categorizing the data that answers my research questions. I was also aware of not influencing the data with my own interpretations by applying “the *verbatim principle*, using terms and concepts drawn from the words of the participants themselves” to identify codes

(Stringer, 2014, p. 140). As a result, the hope was to gather authentic responses of interviewees. Using this principle and method of analysis to process the interviews, I followed the steps recommended by Stringer (2014) which include: “Reviewing the data, utilizing the data, categorizing and coding, identifying themes, organizing a category system and developing a report framework” (p. 140).

Interviewing three different groups, Bread and Roses Staff, Volunteers and Groundwork Lawrence Staff, afforded me the opportunity to triangulate the data from these sources to find common and opposing themes to support my research questions. It was difficult to determine coding categories prior to conducting the research, as the themes were yet to be revealed. Initial possible categories included: partnerships within the community, sustainable food sources (including the community garden), nutrition education and programming, and the psychological impact having to eat at a soup kitchen can have on people. If other topics were revealed during the interview transcription, categories were adapted as appropriate.

### **Data Coding and Analysis**

Both interviews and surveys were used to gather data. All interviews conducted were recorded and transcribed in their original form. Prior to the interviews, each interviewee reviewed and returned a signed consent form, including the mention that interviews would be recorded. I also reminded interviewees of the recording at the start of the interview in case they forgot or missed it in the consent form and received verbal consent. Each interview lasted between 25-45 minutes. Exact duration of each interview depended primarily on how detailed each person’s responses were to each question since all questions were relatively the same. Other potential factors for differences in timing included the role of the interviewee in the organization, their general knowledge of the organization, and their overall personality types.

In order to transcribe each recorded interview, the interviews were listened to three times and exchanges typed completely before starting coding began. When beginning to code, a list of themes was developed by hand that were expected to be seen in the transcriptions. As coding progressed, additional themes were revealed and added to the list. While reading the interview transcriptions, specific categories were organized into a table to help compile responses to these common themes to be included in the Results and Discussion sections. Categories included, knowledge of the term “Food Insecurity”, volunteer and staff opinions of guest involvement in the community garden, educational programming, and whether or not they mentioned nutrition before being asked. A tally was also created based on how interviewees viewed the cost of healthy food and what they assumed guests would purchase if they had a dollar. While this information was useful in determining the overall view of interviewees, not all data was used.

Coding the interviews began by reading through all the transcripts and assigning themes to each related response directly on the transcripts when identified. A document was at the ready to make notes as general observations were made about the data. Any outliers to the data were noted on this document. All the themes were reviewed and identified on the margins of the transcripts and narrowed down into three main categories or topics: 1) The importance of community partnerships, 2) How nutritional needs are met within soup kitchens, and 3) The psychological impacts of receiving food assistance. These themes were written on a Word document and portions of the interviews pertaining to each theme were copied and pasted electronically into the corresponding theme sections. This document was then used to formulate the results of this study. In the next section, a summary of data obtained surrounding these three themes will be presented.

## Results

In order to gain a full understanding of Bread and Roses as an organization and address the primary research questions, data was gathered through researcher observations, interviews, and guest surveys. While data obtained through these methods resulted in a plethora of useful information, three key themes were common throughout: 1) The benefits of community partnerships to soup kitchens, 2) The availability of healthy food donations and their contributions to meeting nutritional needs within soup kitchens, and 3) The psychological benefits that can come from allowing guests to know what they will be eating that evening as well as providing them with community involvement opportunities. These themes were chosen because they were most relevant to this study and addressed the primary research questions. Other themes surfaced from the data collected but could not be included in this study due to the volume of information obtained. In order to prevent the data from going to waste, summaries of the interviews and surveys will be shared with the staff members of Bread and Roses for their reference and future use if desired.

### **The Value of Community Partnerships for Bread and Roses**

When asked what benefits community partnerships had for an organization such as Bread and Roses, some interviewees stumbled to come up with an answer while others rattled off many ideas. Some benefits mentioned included:

- Providing support, unity, good contacts, collaboration, sharing of resources
- Publicity of organization-For example, the partnership with the community garden shows others that Bread and Roses is “more than just serving food”
- Using each other as tools and resources to bounce ideas back and forth, think “outside the box”, advocate for people and “trade food back and forth”

- Provide a new network of volunteers from which to choose
- Networking and gaining knowledge of what else is happening in the city to help meet various needs of guests such as furniture, housing, etc.
- Food drives held by organizations such as The Boy Scouts or U.S. Post Office

It was evident from all the interviews that community partnerships are imperative in maintaining day-to-day operations of Bread and Roses. With the sharing of resources comes the ability to feed more people. According to a guest comment within the survey, Bread and Roses is “a great help to the community in all aspects.” Before being asked any questions, a staff member of over 30 years opened the interview by saying:

...most nonprofit city agencies have grown in a vacuum...we have greater numbers now than when we started in 1980. We grew from within-never reached out. It’s only in this recent past that this inter-agency respect and helping each other has evolved...people like Groundwork Lawrence and other agencies have developed based on needs within the city and so (our) enter(ing) into partnerships with them is relatively new for the city, so we all try to help the people who we service, but it mostly has been internal.

Bread and Roses volunteers shared similar sentiments when they commented, “No man is an island; we don’t stand in this city alone.” Another volunteer said, “Community isn’t community if it’s only one sided. Community means a multitude of different persons...” When asked about the importance of community partnerships, the Groundwork Lawrence staff member stated, “...we’re all linked by a common thread of just wanting to improve the community.”

It is clear from interviews and observations that Bread and Roses has worked hard to establish formal community partnerships to maintain the influx of food, above and beyond the evening meal. At first glance, donations seemed to come in at random, leading one to think

Bread and Roses acted more reactively to receiving donations. Upon further investigation, there were many community partnerships that have a more formal relationship with Bread and Roses so they could be more proactive in their approach towards food sourcing. For example, Stop & Shop, Market Basket, and Whole Foods each have specified donations days. Tripoli and local farm stands often call when they had food available for pick up.

From observations that have been made throughout the year, it is clear Bread and Roses works hard to keep donations moving with limited waste. This passing on of resources to other organizations in need would not be possible without the relationships that have been built over time. What can be used in meals or passed along to guests is prepared and given out that night or stored properly for future dinners. When fresh food donations come in that cannot be used, phone calls are made and other organizations come collect the donations. For example, the director of St. Vincent DePaul recently called to see if Bread and Roses had any surplus food and they were able to give him extra beans that would not be used. A volunteer mentioned his awareness of these community partnerships when he said, “I’ve overheard in the kitchen, ‘Lazarus had an abundance of tomatoes so guess what? We’re having tomatoes tonight.’ That cooperation and relationship is in existence.”

A key partnership mentioned by all the interviewees was the connection to Groundwork Lawrence, the host organization for the community garden plot benefitting Bread and Roses at Costello Park. A part-time staff member of Bread and Roses spoke highly of the garden relationship and the way it provided vegetables for the entire year:

Last year was the first year...it was GREAT! All the income of stuff that came in was just great so I can’t wait for it actually; cause our freezer for the soup (is getting empty).

We had so much zucchini, squash and kale and that freezer was FULL and now it’s kinda

gone. There would be days when I'd say, 'oh my gosh there's more zucchini! There's more squash! Noooo!' but we use it! We had so much of it, now we don't have any down there I don't think. I hope (the garden continues) to maintain our food supply because it makes our meals a lot healthier with all the nutritious vegetables.

This quote leads nicely into the next section, which will explore The Evening Meal program.

### **Working Together to Provide Healthy Evening Meals**

Many programs offered by Bread and Roses were mentioned during the interviews. These included the emergency food pantry, doctor's office, and emergency clothing and hygiene products. For this study, focus was placed on the main program of Bread and Roses that was mentioned: The Evening Meal. As noted in interviews and through observations, this program provides a three-course dinner to anyone who enters, no matter his or her circumstances. Unlimited soup, an entre made up of a protein, starch, and vegetable and a dessert is served restaurant style to guests from five pm to seven pm Monday through Thursday and Saturday evenings every week. Most meals are donated from churches or schools. While Bread and Roses emphasizes the importance of nutrition, full control over the meal is not always possible. However, some organizations who have been donating for well over ten years, are aware of the standards Bread and Roses has and do their best to meet the needs of the organization and guests.

While there were interview questions that referenced nutrition, some interviewees mentioned this topic prior to being formally asked. For example, all five volunteers did not mention nutrition prior to being asked and answered the questions when prompted. However, four out of five Bread and Roses staff members, and the Groundwork Lawrence staff member all mentioned nutrition in one way or another prior to being asked. In response to a question regarding programming a staff member would like to see integrated, he responded:

We are working on a nutrition program, but it's kinda in its infancy so it's more or less coupled with what we do with the community garden. So when we bring in vegetables, anything that we can give away, we want to be able to educate our guests as to what the food actually is. So they may not be familiar with Swiss chard or kale or something like that...recipes, takeaways in English and Spanish that people would be able to have with pictures so they could match and identify the vegetable. On top of that is just general education about nutrition because our guests are probably upwards of 75% diabetic because of the high sugar, no exercise diet that's just their lifestyles. Unfortunately they succumb to the disease pretty quickly so we were talking about trying to educate them a little bit further to maybe sway them in a healthier direction.

Despite the split in when interviewees referenced nutrition, most felt the evening meals were of high quality and very nutritious for the clientele being served. When speaking about how guests responded to vegetables integrated into the meal, another staff member said, "Sautéed kale on a plate would be rejected...but we can hide it in the soup chopped up small and they'll eat it. And some guests only have soup; it's hot, it's nutritious." Another staff member went on to discuss the integration of vegetables into the meals:

I just took the LAST two bags of squash and peppers out of the freezer that we had frozen during the summer and this is February! I've been saving them once a month for meals because I put them in my American chop suey and it's well accepted. I usually use four peppers but only had two left. They were the end (of the supply)."

Some interviewees believe a balance needs to exist between providing meals for nutrition versus survival for guests; including a large amount vegetables verses fat and carbohydrates. According to a staff member, "...there's two schools of thought...we're going to give this high

protein, high fat meal, all the milk, coffee, tea you can drink and that's fine, that's great, it's a good boost, it's good energy but how can we make it even better for them, to make the guests feel a little bit better before they walk out. So we're trying to work it out.”

Another staff member commented:

I think our meals are good. I think they could be healthier but I think that for our clientele they're really good...we always give soup, which are very nutritious...main meals, they're good but they are high in fat and carbohydrates. I don't know how much we could take out of that because we are looking to really give people a lot of fat, give them lots of carbs because that could be their only meal in a couple of days. So I think we're doing a great job. Potentially we could make it better and we just need to hire someone to see if we could.

While not mentioning specific nutritional components of the meals, guests commented about their overall satisfaction of dinners served in the open comments on the surveys. One guest said, “Coffee and soup are welcomed treats. Sandwiches to take home, fresh fruit, these are wonderful! They go to great lengths to serve good food.” Another commented, “I like Bob's cooking.” A third guest said, “Clean and good. Excellent food.” Clearly the meals being served are well received by guests.

**Nutritional aspects of donations and giveaways.** Bread and Roses is fortunate to receive more donations than can be used in the meals so any surplus, such as bread, donuts, muffins, cookies, and sometimes vegetables get bagged into individual portions and organized in a “giveaway closet” each night. Through observation, the majority of this food is high in fat, sugar, and carbohydrates. According to one staff member:

We give out lots of sugar. We give out tons of breads, carbohydrate. With the clientele in Lawrence, diabetes is extremely high, obesity, these are problems of individuals we're serving and here we are giving them a loaf of bread every night or cookies.

Nutrition doesn't have to suffer simply because products are provided free of charge.

Bread and Roses is learning that free items do not need to equate to unhealthy items. She went onto say:

I would like to see us move away from these types of donations and really take some time to research people that can give us healthier food or go back and say, 'Hey, you know we can't use as much pastry. Is there any way we can get more vegetables?' and if they can't give us that produce, that's fine but as far as my knowledge goes, we haven't asked...a common thought is, they're giving it to us so we don't want to be picky which I understand but...it makes me nervous to see someone every night take three loaves of bread. What are they doing with it? They might not be eating it. They may be giving it to someone who couldn't come but if they are eating it, how are we helping them in that sense? We're just adding to their medical issues.

Another staff member mentioned pushing back on donors and is working on reducing the amount of junk food coming into the building through donations:

One of the things we're learning is that we probably have a little bit more control over what comes into the building from these donations than we think...so we could probably easily request from Stop and Shop that we don't get cakes anymore and ask them to just bring vegetables. We're starting to move in that direction where we might be able to regulate what comes through by (pushing back) so (donations are) not just everything loaded into a truck. We would be specific. So we're learning. Whereas before, we just

thought, this is what we get but we're finding out now that there could be healthier options for us to bring in.

Sometimes giveaways come from the supply Bread and Roses keeps in the basement of their building. The food coordinator does a nice job keeping track of surpluses of food that cannot be used in evening meals as well as food that may still be good but has passed the "best by" date, so cannot be served. When these occasions occur, giveaways of 150 items are prepared and set up for guests to take at the end of the evening meal. These giveaways vary and are always a welcomed surprise for our guests who are used to seeing the pastries, breads, and sweets in the giveaway closet. Some packages that have been given out in the past have been a bag of two cups of flour, one box of pasta, and a bag of three cups of rice. The rice was a result of a few huge 50-pound bags donated that could not be used for meals. More recently a giveaway was put together including a jar of peanut butter, a can of tuna, a box of pasta, a can of baked beans, and a package of six juice boxes. Supplying giveaways that can be used for meals at home instead of just snack foods helps maintain healthy eating for guests beyond when they dine at Bread and Roses.

Providing healthy giveaways are a priority for Bread and Roses and an attainable goal through the community garden partnership. In the future, Bread and Roses hopes for more volunteer involvement in the garden, which would yield in a larger harvest. The goal for Bread and Roses "...is to get a larger harvest this year so we can supply meals and giveaways more sufficiently." Having a larger partnership with Groundwork Lawrence and the community garden in the future will help with nutritional components of the meal. In the next section, benefits of community partnerships that go beyond food will be discussed.

### **Beyond Food: Emotional Benefits of Community Partnerships for Soup Kitchens**

The focus of Bread and Roses is not only to provide food for those who are hungry but to provide a community atmosphere of dignity and respect for guests as well. Bread and Roses is clearly its own community and nourishes stomachs as well as souls. Through observations, it clearly functioned more like a local restaurant than a soup kitchen. Participants of the meal were always referred to as guests, which set the tone for how folks were treated when they entered the front doors.

**Bread and Roses and their guests.** Open for over 34 years, Bread and Roses has served an evening meal to those in need five nights a week. The majority of guests surveyed have been coming for many years. Ten percent said they have been coming for less than one year, 36 percent said between one to five years, 40 percent said between seven and ten years, and 14 percent said they have been coming over for over 15 years! One guest of ten years commented, “People are warm-big stars! Everything's better here. I come here b/c I can't cook. Everything's good here!” While there were some guests who said they only come when in desperate need, there were just as many who come regularly for the company. A guest of just three years commented, “Great service and I hope (the program) always runs.”

Mostly all of the volunteers and staff who commented on why guests come to Bread and Roses felt there was a pretty even mix of those coming due to physical need verses coming for emotional needs. One staff member felt:

Who we serve is split...there are different people who come to us...we do have a portion of guests who probably aren't feeling completely food insecure but for whatever reason they can't cook the food...but then we also have people who are homeless and people who, at this point, just can't afford (food) so we do have a lot of guests who are insecure.

Another staff member agreed and added, “We have a core group who come here and a lot of it is because of economic status, social status, and things like that but we also have a constant influx of new folks coming through...it’s a constant revolving door of people in need.”

As mentioned before, “people in need” refers to both physical and emotional needs. A volunteer went on to say, “There are people who come in who do take advantage of the system, there are people who genuinely need the help, and there are people who are lonely who don’t necessarily need the help but it has become something to do, a community to meet with and be out.” Fulfillment of social and emotional needs through partaking in the dining experience is just as important as the physical needs that are met by eating the meal.

The theme of always being open for guests, never closing due to weather, and staying open for most holidays except Christmas, carried through almost every interview that took place. Talking about the number of guests served, one staff member said, “I guess another really good example is we haven’t closed during any of the bad storms we’ve had. We’ve been open during two blizzards and two severe snowstorms and we still served 70 guests upwards so there are still people that are coming out in that. They’re desperate for a meal and we’re very glad to be open. We’re very glad to serve them.”

When referring to the emotional aspects of frequenting soup kitchens, a volunteer commented, “I think (guests) have huge confidence for being able to come to Bread and Roses and have their meal five nights a week. I think most of them feel that if they’re in an emergency situation, that Bread and Roses can help them out.” A staff member carried this idea through when he discussed what he felt it must be like for people who need to utilize food assistance programs. He described the layers of assistance available for people in need, starting with food stamps, moving towards food pantries, and lastly soup kitchens, where Bread and Roses fit.

I look at it almost kinda like a bottom of the barrel and it is sort of a pride thing. I mean it's hard to get food stamps. It's hard for a person to admit they need to apply for food stamps and then it's even harder for them to start waiting and walking through a food pantry line. Then you can imagine it's incredibly hard for them to show their faces in an organization like ours.

Awareness of the unique set up of Bread and Roses, and reasons guests frequent the organization are important to keep in mind when moving forward through the results. Taking the "feeding the soul" element of their mission one step further, the next section will discuss the potential psychological impact being provided with prior knowledge of the evening meal has for guests, providing them with a semblance of choice around what they would like to eat.

**Knowledge and choice in the evening meal.** Questions were included on the survey surrounding the potential for prior knowledge of the meal. The researcher, on a day-to-day basis, often observed and responded to questions surrounding the menu when answering phones. When being served, it is assumed guests want the meal, as it is prepared, unless volunteers are told otherwise. During dinner, requests for special meals from guests often came in at the beginning of the night since guests are aware that alternatives of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches or cereal are offered if they make it known they do not want the meal that evening. They need to make their requests known, prior to being served and often are not aware of what they want to eat until they sit down.

The researcher made observations of many parts of meals that went to waste, such as the bread, salad or vegetables. This could have been due to many reasons, one of which was because guests did not like the food that was served. When aware of that evening's meal, however, guests were able to tell volunteers of special accommodations they preferred prior to being

served. Many times, volunteers would call out special orders to the kitchen such as, “I need two meals, one with no salad.” or “two seconds, no carrots.” Other times, guests requested just the vegetables, salad or more greens in their soup so there was a mix of preferences regarding healthy parts of the meals.

These observations were confirmed while reviewing the guest survey responses. When guests were asked whether they would like to see a sign posted in the entranceway with that evening’s meal described, 83 percent of guests responded, “Strongly agree” and “agree”. Nine percent of guests responded, “disagree”, and eight percent responded, “I don’t know”. Interestingly enough, one of the guests who disagreed added a comment, "I like the surprise." The other guests who disagreed and did not know did not include comments. See Figure 1 for a visual representation of this data. Unfortunately, the Spanish surveys did not include this question because it was left off by mistake during the translation. Therefore, the two Spanish survey responses to this question were not included in the results.

A key observation made was surrounding the split of opinions between staff members and volunteers who believed in sharing the evening meal with inquiring guests and those who felt guests did not need to know. Those who believed it was inconvenient to take time to share the menu seemed to have a longer tenure with the organization (ten plus years) and admitted to potentially being jaded as a result. Those who did not mind sharing the menu with inquiring guests, either over the phone throughout the day or those who came up to the counter at the beginning of the night, seemed to be younger and with the organization fewer than five years.

For example, after listening to the researcher respond to two calls from guests inquiring about that evening’s meal, a volunteer of ten plus years commented, “You’re nice to give out the menu. We used to give it out and then people would call so much and interrupt our work, we

said ‘that’s it’. If they’re hungry enough, they’ll eat it.” The researcher responded that she was too nice not to share the information to which the volunteer laughed and replied, “Well, you haven’t been here as long as I have.” When interviewed about how to respond to meal inquiries, a staff member of 30 plus years also commented, “You tell them, ‘It’s free and it’s hot’.”

A staff member with the organization only two years seemed uncomfortable saying the suggested response when asked, and observations throughout the duration of research showed that she never did respond that way to guests and always shared what the meal would be that evening. Some days, she asked the kitchen what the meal was that night if she did not know off the top of her head. The researcher, there for less than one year, provided the same information when asked. The next section will discuss the benefits of creating opportunities through community partnerships for guests outside of Bread and Roses.

**Creating opportunities for guests through community partnerships.** While there were many assumptions and generalizations made by volunteers and staff members regarding the guests of Bread and Roses, focus was placed on how volunteers and staff members viewed the idea for including guests in helping to harvest the community garden. Further research could be done surrounding volunteer and staff assumptions of guest capabilities and the impact their views have on treatment of guests as a result of the data obtained.

When interviewees were asked about future guest involvement in the community garden, there were mixed feelings on the topic. Six interviewees were in strong support of the idea and felt it would be “super” and “exciting”. While excited, most shared in the opinion that involving the guests would be possible with “a fair amount of effort on someone’s part at Bread and Roses to organize it and help out...” according to one volunteer. Interviewees also mentioned mutual benefits for the guests and Bread and Roses. Benefits for the guests included opportunities for

job training, skill development, creating a sense of accomplishment, and helping to increase their appreciation of the food they are being served. One staff member in support of the idea stated:

...We have all levels of guests but there are some people who I think would benefit by having the activity they must do every Wednesday or whatever...and they would also benefit by actually producing something....there are probably some folks (that) for one reason or another cannot hold a job...but if they could get into a program almost as part of their therapy, it would be a nice growth opportunity for folks.

A staff member of Groundwork Lawrence also saw the benefits of incorporating guests with the community garden when she said, “What better way to teach these concepts? Having folks that are going to Bread and Roses actually participate (in the garden) I think would be beneficial for them and for Bread and Roses because...if there are folks who are underemployed or unemployed who have time to give, and are looking to develop a skill, I think that would be great.” Most interviewees agreed that involvement with the community garden could provide guests with an opportunity to grow and develop, while not ignoring the fact that “it would require someone to really devote themselves to that aspect of it” according to a volunteer.

While few people disagreed that guests should be involved with the community garden, the five remaining interviewees were not as enthusiastic about the idea. Staff members of Bread and Roses were split in their opinions and two shared the view that, while a good idea, counting on guests to make the commitment to the garden would be difficult. According to a staff member of over 30 years, “volunteerism from guests has a double edged sword. The positive part is that they’ll take ownership of your mission and they’ll protect it from people who would otherwise destroy it just for the sake of it...” He went on to explain the other side of the sword is that with that ownership comes a sense of privilege and entitlement that isn’t supposed to be part

of the deal. This sentiment was shared by another staff member who believed, “There are certainly people that come in that need something to do. It’s just a matter of reliability, and that’s just the nature of who our guests are.”

One volunteer, while in support of guest involvement in the garden, was also skeptical and shared his opinion surrounding this topic:

The whole volunteering thing to me is a very serious commitment, and I would like to see some of the guests have as serious a commitment to Bread and Roses...I would like to see more of the community of people we serve help and become more involved in helping the people who are in their own community. It’s not about people coming in from somewhere else and helping. There has to be some movement from within the community to help each other. Everyone should be involved in helping out sometimes. It seems one sided.

He went onto say, “*I know* that if you work for something you appreciate it more when you have it, rather than just coming in and getting it...so I would like to see guests committed, not just to showing up, but to helping us out too.” He felt that by being a part of the harvesting of the food that is served, guests would have a larger appreciation for what was being provided.

When guests were asked about whether or not they would be interested in volunteering in the community garden, results were relatively split with 56 percent of guests having replied no, 40 percent having replied yes, and four percent were not sure. While a majority of guests said “no”, almost half the guests expressed interest in the community garden. Of those who said no, there were a variety of differences in longevity ranging from people who had been with Bread and Roses less than two years to those who have been coming to dinner for ten to 30 years and thought they were “too old.” Those who replied yes had been coming to Bread and Roses for

between two and twenty years as well so there was no clear relationship between willingness to participate in the garden and longevity of attendance to dinner.

### **Discussion**

A review of the literature surrounding the research questions being studied was conducted and data collected from Bread and Roses Staff members, volunteers, guests, and a Groundwork Lawrence staff member. Overall, data gathered correlated with the results of this study and will be discussed through the various themes that emerged.

#### **Nutritional components of soup kitchens**

Research of the literature showed there is many contributing factors to the way people choose to eat and such factors were also apparent as a result of this study conducted. The majority of data collected showed the meals served at Bread and Roses to be nutritious and high quality for the clientele they serve. Staff members of Bread and Roses mentioned needing to have a balance of nutrition and fat to ensure guests received substantial and fulfilling meals to sustain them until the next dinner. However, no matter how many fresh vegetables are served with the meal, there will always be people who do not eat the salad portion or pick around the leafy greens.

This balance of healthy and unhealthy food should also be considered when discussing food deserts and food sustainability. Some grocery stores will cater to their clients and supply what is popular while others will work towards supplying healthy options. If guests of Bread and Roses receive balanced meals and vegetables from the garden to take home, they may choose to purchase from the smaller bodegas featuring fruits and vegetables as opposed to the junk food sold in other grocers. Bread and Roses, therefore, is contributing to nutrition awareness among guests and attempting to avoid contributing to diseases related to poor nutrition. When guests

are not eating at Bread and Roses, their exposure to healthy food will hopefully transfer to their choices within the community when shopping in local grocery stores and bodegas. While culture was called out in the literature to be a contributing factor to the grocery stores people choose to use and what they choose to purchase, it was not a factor explored in this study.

### **Benefits of Community Partnerships**

Results showed community partnerships filtrate all organizations and change agents, whether they are government managed, for profit business or nonprofit businesses. As mentioned in the literature review, big and small businesses need each other to succeed (Hamilton, 2013). While Non Government Organizations (NGOs) are successful with food recovery, they would be more successful when partnering with businesses because they cannot work alone (Hamilton, 2013).

The amount of food recovery taking place at Bread and Roses was readily apparent through discussions with Bread and Roses staff and volunteers as well as observations of the donations that arrived daily to the building. Food sustainability for Bread and Roses can not only be attained as a result of the many community partnerships they obtained throughout the years, but can contribute to the overall health and well being of the low-income populations being served.

Research was not readily available regarding the need for leadership when managing these community partnerships. However, results of the study showed that the benefits soup kitchens can obtain through community partnership largely depends on the level of involvement and commitment of leadership at the soup kitchen. Being able to push back on community partners who are providing unhealthy donations, for example, is huge for the organization and

those to whom they serve. This push back is also beneficial for the donor in that they are able to reallocate the donations to other organizations in need.

### **Psychological impacts of soup kitchens**

When thinking about the psychological impact receiving food assistance and frequenting soup kitchens can have on people, findings correlated to the literature. Bread and Roses welcomes anyone to dinner, no matter their socio-economic status, however most guests do fall into the low-income category. Feeling food insecure can affect and What can we do to remember every person has value?

As mentioned in the literature review, Maslow believes a person's Physiological needs need to be met before being able to develop further as a person. While the primary mission of Bread and Roses is to feed the hungry, thus meeting one basic human need, this study showed equal efforts on the part of Bread and Roses staff and volunteers to provide an environment where guests can find love and belonging as well. According to Maslow, a person then needs to feel esteem and self-actualization, which is counter-intuitive to having to ask for food assistance. However, by providing a balance between not just serving food to those who are hungry, but doing so in a dignified and respectful manner, Bread and Roses has created an environment that helps guests move through Maslow's hierarchy within the four walls of the dining room.

This data mirrors the National Public Health Strategy goals issued by the government and mentioned in a webinar hosted by the Healthy Food Action group. The Healthy People 2020 goals involve: 1) reducing preventable diseases, 2) achieving health equity, 3) creating healthy environments promoting social and physical health, and 4) "promot(ing) quality of life, healthy development and healthy behaviors across all life stages" (Kumanyika, 2014).

By referring to patrons as guests, serving “restaurant style,” and ensuring well balance restaurant quality meals, Bread and Roses has created a safe atmosphere of respect and dignity for guests. This environment provides the opportunity for each member of the community to feel fully self-actualized, if even just for the duration of time they spend during dinner, and directly relates to the third Healthy People 2020 goal mentioned above.

During the webinar, Kumanyika (2014) went on to comment, “Food access and the kinds of food that are available should improve people’s quality of life. It’s not about having a medicinal diet. It’s about having a food system that really brings to people food that’s good for their souls so to speak as well as their health.” This quote speaks directly to the mission of Bread and Roses to feed stomachs and souls, and relates to the reasons guests partake in the Evening Meal: for the food itself and sometimes just as much, if not more, for the company of others.

While there is always room for improvement, Bread and Roses has successfully created a balance of providing for those with severe Physiological needs while also creating a space for those who wish to enjoy each other’s company, and fill their Love/Belonging needs as well. Through dedicated volunteers, staff members, community partners, and a clean, pleasant physical environment, guests are able to feel dignity, respect and trust, no matter their situation.

What does it mean when organizations make choices for their patrons? What does that do for people’s moral and self worth? Results of the Bread and Roses survey showed the majority of guests would like to have prior knowledge of the meal before entering the dining room. Providing guests with this information would help create a sense of “health equity” (Kumanyika, 2014). Studies have shown that experiencing poverty can result in a reduction of “cognitive capacity” as a result of the majority of cognitive bandwidth being allocated to the poverty itself (Badger, 2013). Another study related to limited cognitive capacity among those living in

poverty showed that, "...living in poverty is the equivalent of losing 13 points in your IQ" (Badger, 2013). "All the data shows it isn't about poor people, it's about people who happen to be in poverty. All the data suggests it is not the person, it's the context they're inhabiting" (Badger, 2013).

There is no official "policy" about whether or not Bread and Roses staff members should or should not share the menu with guests. However, as a researcher, I believe it is a basic human right to know "what's for dinner" that night, no matter if you're a paying customer in a restaurant or guest at Bread and Roses receiving a free meal. If they are serving restaurant style, shouldn't they act like a restaurant in terms of customer service as well? How can prior knowledge of the meal and potential for choice affect patrons of food assistance programs? By not answering the "what is for dinner?" question, is Bread and Roses implying their guests do not have the right to know what they will be eating because they should be grateful to have food or are they simply fulfilling their mission to the best of their ability?

Part of being provided support and sustenance is mental as well as physical. By simply *knowing* what the meal is, guests are able to feel like they have a choice and some say in the matter of what they eat. If they know that they don't like chicken and that is what is being served, they either know they need to ask for something else when they come or have to find another way to eat that night. If they didn't know prior to arriving, they would be stuck making an on the spot decision in front of everyone, while others are waiting to be seated, which can cause embarrassment and frustration. By simply creating a space for guests to have some control over their evening meal, even though there is only one hot option offered, guests are able to reach a level of Self-esteem and confidence moving up through Maslow's hierarchy if even just for the night. They know they will have food when they arrive, they know they are safe and will

be surrounded by people to meet their social needs so by creating an opportunity to give our guests options and choices in what they eat, we are helping them reach a level of esteem building which moves them closer to self actualization.

### **Recommendations and Implications**

Based on the findings from this study, three recommendations were made for Bread and Roses related to the key themes that surfaced. These recommendations were to 1) provide nutrition cards with the garden items in the evening giveaway, 2) grow a mini garden in front of Bread and Roses with a small amount of herbs and vegetables, and 3) have a menu board on the porch with that evening's meal described.

As mentioned earlier, Bread and Roses often has a surplus of donated items that are stored in the "giveaway closet" for guests to take after their meal. During the peak of gardening season, many of these items include vegetables that may not be familiar to guests, such as kale or Swiss chard. By providing a nutrition card with each item, guests might be more likely to prepare the vegetables at home. Therefore, Bread and Roses has the potential to improve guests' nutritional education, and continue the opportunity for access to healthy food beyond their dining room. Nutrition cards would need to be available in both English and Spanish, and include the name of the vegetable, what it may resemble, various methods of basic preparation, and simple recipes.

A second recommendation for Bread and Roses came from an interview conducted with a Groundwork Lawrence staff member. Incorporating fruits, vegetables, and herbs harvested from the community garden at Costello Park makes up a large part of the evening meal throughout the year. Having a small representative garden in front of the building that guests could participate in harvesting creates awareness of the partnership between Bread and Roses and Groundwork

Lawrence. The garden would include a sign stating, "...Your food tonight is being served from the Costello garden" and would act as a great visual tool to continue to make a connection between the meal and garden, emphasizing the importance of community partnerships when maintaining food sustainability. The mini garden would also be helpful to remind guests, volunteers, staff members, and the general Lawrence community that "...you are able to grow food in Lawrence and it's good and it's healthy..." (Groundwork Lawrence Staff Member). This could potentially inspire others to grow their own gardens or participate in the harvesting of the larger Bread and Roses community garden at Costello Park.

The third and final recommendation is to have a menu board placed on the porch where guests wait to enter the dining room. This menu board would be updated by the graduate fellows currently working at Bread and Roses, and would describe that evening's meal, including the type of soup, entre and dessert being offered. This simple addition would provide guests with the opportunity to think about what they would like to eat for dinner that evening before sitting down to be served. They could prepare themselves to either eat the meal provided as is, ask for accommodations if they only wanted part of what was being served, or plan to ask for cereal or peanut butter and jelly. By providing an awareness of what guests will have to eat that evening, they are given the opportunity for choice, thus allowing them to feel more empowered and dignified.

### **Study Limitations**

This study was limited to information the researcher received through interviews, observations, and guest surveys. The study did not set out to explore cultural differences of guests nor the potential roles these cultural differences played in why guests came to Bread and

Roses. While these reasons were mentioned during the interviews and on the surveys, the responses were not connected to cultural differences of guests in this study.

Additionally, not every guest who participated in the evening meal was able to be surveyed for various reasons. Bread and Roses serves around 150 guests on average each night, sometimes serving as many as 250 guests. By only having surveyed guests during one evening meal, voices were not heard from the majority of the community. While ideally every guest would have had the opportunity to complete a survey, due to the nature of the study, this was one of a few obstacles that were not able to be worked around. Some reasons for the smaller data size included limited ability for some guests to read and write, a variety of languages spoken other than English and Spanish, time restrictions of the study, and limited space to easily complete the survey while guests were eating due to the set up of the dining room.

While there were probably other limitations, a final limitation observed was the differences in questions between the interviews and surveys. While guests were asked if they would like to see a menu board outside on the porch with that evening's meal posted, this question was not included in the interview protocol for staff and volunteers. Any information obtained from volunteers or staff regarding sharing the menu for the evening ahead of time with guests was gathered through general observation, and day-to-day conversations between the researcher and the people of Bread and Roses. Interview protocols were created and approved prior to survey questions being developed. Therefore, the two documents could have mirrored each other a bit better, so as to obtain more consistent data between guests, volunteers, and staff members. Despite these limitations mentioned, the data collected was sufficient to complete this study and provided the researcher with recommendations. Additionally, as this study did not

cover all possible subject matters, there are areas for further research, which will be discussed in the following sections.

### **Areas for Future Research**

While many themes developed from the data analysis, only three key themes were presented in this capstone. Therefore, there is an opportunity for future research to be conducted around a variety of topics such as:

- The affect of organizational or mission changes
- Volunteer motivations
- Benefits of educational programming for nonprofits
- Expanded research about other community partnerships, such as The Hunger Roundtable not expanded upon in this study
- The relationship between psychological and physiological aspects of receiving food assistance, and the affects healthy and unhealthy food has on low-income populations

There was a discrepancy of opinions when staff members were asked about future programming being discussed for Bread and Roses. Some believed programming should stay true to the mission of the organization and relate to food and nutritional improvements. Others referenced adding to the medical services that are already being offered. This difference of opinion showcased an area for future research surrounding organizational change within nonprofits, and what can happen when there is a difference of opinion as far as the vision and mission are concerned. Is there an old verse new mentality? While there can be value in having a young and fresh perspective, there can also be value in historical data and relying on what has

worked in the past. Other thoughts to consider include, the ultimate goal for the organization to move forward, and whether or not the mission needs to change from what it has been.

Bread and Roses could not carry on without the dedicated volunteers scheduled to serve dinner, coordinate donations, write thank you notes, and many other tasks. While all volunteers who were interviewed felt confident in the mission of Bread and Roses, there were differences in opinions related to their views of the guests, meals, and overall management of the organization. This opened an opportunity for future research surrounding volunteer motivation, specifically why volunteers donate their time to organizations such as Bread and Roses. This question was not part of the interview protocol and would be interesting to research further. Is there a service learning mentality where volunteers simply want to “do good” for others or are they viewing their time as social justice and community engagement work that is a long-term investment?

While there was a question surrounding nutritional programming in the guest survey, results from this question were not included in the final capstone report. Future research could be explored as to benefits of creating workshops and programming surrounding topics such as life skills training, cooking classes and demonstrations, nutrition classes, or educational programs about healthy foods available for purchase with food stamps, among many others.

There are many future research opportunities surrounding the benefits of community partnerships for non-profits. This capstone only discussed benefits relating to food sustainability focusing on one partnership in particular. However, other types of community partnerships and benefits could be explored. One example that was mentioned during multiple interviews was The Hunger Roundtable, which was created by Bread and Roses in response to the growing needs of Lawrence. The Hunger Roundtable is a collaboration of local soup kitchens and food pantries in the area that meet once a month to share ideas, knowledge, and resources they may

have to help each other. During these meetings, they developed the idea to create a central distribution location, such as a community warehouse, where surplus donations could be stored and made accessible to any organization in need. This is just one example showing the value collaboration of organizations can have and the potential change that can occur from community partnerships.

Finally, while some psychological aspects of receiving food assistance were discussed, there are many additional areas that could be explored in future research. A key area would be the physiological impact nutrition can have on low-income populations. More research could be done surrounding the health implications of eating healthy foods, the benefits for local businesses to investing in healthy food sources, and benefits of nutrition education. A connection could also be made to the way in which low-income and food insecure populations move through Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, striving to reach the top, if adapted to relate to the food conversation.

### **Conclusion**

Change is difficult for most people to accept and typically does not happen overnight. It is only through great ideas, perseverance of motivated and dedicated people, and patience for making small strides towards desired outcomes that improvements can be made. Collaboration and focus on every cog in the wheel are also imperative when making change. When soup kitchens build partnerships with other local organizations in the community, opportunities are created beyond simply providing resources. Each small step can lead to great changes, as was shown in this capstone. Community partnerships, if managed properly, can create opportunities for healthy eating, nutrition education, and positive psychological impacts to recipients through community involvement. Respect of patrons of food assistance programs is paramount, and

makes a difference in the way guests view the organizations from whom they are receiving help. When guests are involved with community partnerships, opportunities grow and develop, thus fostering mutual respect and care for the entire community. Everyone is in this world together; why not help each other survive whenever and wherever possible?

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Lawrence,\_Massachusetts

## Appendix A

### Bread and Roses Staff and Volunteer Consent Form



#### INFORMED CONSENT

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH PROJECT ENTITLED: From Source to Soup to Soul: Creating Sustainable Food Sources within Nonprofit Organizations through Community Partnerships \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Katelyn Grimes \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

As a volunteer/staff member with Bread and Roses, you are invited to take part in a research case study exploring the need, want and feasibility of community partnerships to maintain food sustainability and healthy eating within soup kitchens, particularly the relationship between Bread and Roses and Groundwork Lawrence. You have been asked to participate because you have volunteered/worked with this organization in such a capacity that will provide valuable information for this study.

Procedures: If you choose to participate in the study, you will be asked to participate in a 30-40 minute interview. The interview questions will be focused around your current involvement with Bread and Roses and how you see community partnership developing over time, specifically related to the partnership with Groundwork Lawrence. The interviews will be semi-structured so there will be questions to answer; however, you will have the opportunity to expand on the questions provided if you'd like to do so. These questions will be anonymous unless otherwise requested. Interviews will be recorded and responses transcribed by the researcher.

Benefits: This study may or may not be direct benefit to you. It will improve our knowledge of the current relationship between Bread and Roses and Groundwork Lawrence, thus potentially improving the experience for our volunteers, staff and guests. The interview may provide you with ideas of how you and other volunteers/staff members can develop within Bread and Roses and keep the organization moving forward with continued success. Participating in an interview will also provide you with an opportunity to express your opinions about the community partnerships and these organizations involved.

Potential Risks: There are no inherent physical risks in the procedures themselves, and it is not anticipated that participants will experience risks in completing the questionnaire. Participants will not be exposed to any more risk of harm or discomfort than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. Occasionally, an individual may be more aware of ongoing stresses as a result of completing the questionnaire. If this is the case, you are free to discontinue completing the surveys at any time.

Confidentiality: The information from the surveys will be used for research purposes only. Your responses will be identified by a number and the identity any participant will be kept confidential unless otherwise discussed. In addition, your name will not be used in any reports or publications of this study.

Freedom of Choice to Participate: You are free (1) to decide whether or not to participate, and also free (2) to withdraw from the study at any time. A decision not to participate will not adversely affect any interactions with the investigator or any representative/employee of Merrimack College.

Questions: Before you sign this form, please ask any questions on any part of this study that is unclear to you. You may take as much time as necessary to think this over. At any point in the study, you may question the Principal Investigator about the study, Katelyn Grimes, 508-737-6829 and [grimesk@merrimack.edu](mailto:grimesk@merrimack.edu). In addition, you are free to contact Dr. Russell Mayer, the Institutional Review Board Chair, with any questions ([irb@merrimack.edu](mailto:irb@merrimack.edu), 978-837-3499).

Consent: This project has been explained to me to my satisfaction and in language I can understand, and I have received a copy of this consent form. I understand what my participation will involve and I agree to take part in this project under the terms of this agreement. I understand that I am not giving up my legal rights by signing this form.

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Signature of Participant

---

Date

---

Printed Name of Participant

---

Signature of Investigator/Designee Obtaining Informed Consent

---

Date

## Appendix B

Groundwork Lawrence Staff Consent Form



### INFORMED CONSENT

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH PROJECT ENTITLED: From Source to Soup to Soul: Creating Sustainable Food Sources within Nonprofit Organizations through Community Partnerships\_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator(s):\_\_\_\_\_ Katelyn Grimes

Participant Name:\_\_\_\_\_

As a staff member of Groundwork Lawrence, you are invited to take part in a research case study exploring the need, want and feasibility of community partnerships to maintain food sustainability and healthy eating within soup kitchens, particularly the relationship between Bread and Roses and Groundwork Lawrence. You have been asked to participate because you have worked with this organization in such a capacity that will provide valuable information for this study.

Procedures: If you choose to participate in the study, you will be asked to participate in a 30-40 minute interview. The interview questions will be focused around your current involvement with Groundwork Lawrence and how you see community partnership developing over time, specifically related to the partnership with Bread and Roses. The interviews will be semi-structured so there will be questions to answer; however, you will have the opportunity to expand on the questions provided if you'd like to do so. These questions will be anonymous unless otherwise requested. Interviews will be recorded and responses transcribed by the researcher.

Benefits: This study may or may not be direct benefit to you. It will improve our knowledge of the current relationship between Bread and Roses and Groundwork Lawrence, thus potentially improving the partnership and experiences for Bread and Roses volunteers, staff and guests. The interview may provide you with ideas of how you and other volunteers/staff members can develop within Groundwork Lawrence and keep the partnership moving forward with continued success. Participating in an interview will also provide you with an opportunity to express your opinions about the community partnerships and these organizations involved.

Potential Risks: There are no inherent physical risks in the procedures themselves, and it is not anticipated that participants will experience risks in completing the questionnaire. Participants will not be exposed to any more risk of harm or discomfort than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. Occasionally, an individual may be more aware of ongoing stresses as a result of completing the questionnaire. If this is the case, you are free to discontinue completing the surveys at any time.

Confidentiality: The information from the surveys will be used for research purposes only. Your responses will be identified by a number and the identity any participant will be kept confidential unless otherwise discussed. In addition, your name will not be used in any reports or publications of this study.

Freedom of Choice to Participate: You are free (1) to decide whether or not to participate, and also free (2) to withdraw from the study at any time. A decision not to participate will not adversely affect any interactions with the investigator or any representative/employee of Merrimack College.

Questions: Before you sign this form, please ask any questions on any part of this study that is unclear to you. You may take as much time as necessary to think this over. At any point in the study, you may question the Principal Investigator about the study, Katelyn Grimes, 508-737-6829 and [grimesk@merrimack.edu](mailto:grimesk@merrimack.edu). In addition, you are free to contact Dr. Russell Mayer, the Institutional Review Board Chair, with any questions ([irb@merrimack.edu](mailto:irb@merrimack.edu), 978-837-3499).

Consent: This project has been explained to me to my satisfaction and in language I can understand, and I have received a copy of this consent form. I understand what my participation will involve and I agree to take part in this project under the terms of this agreement. I understand that I am not giving up my legal rights by signing this form.

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Signature of Participant

---

Date

---

Printed Name of Participant

---

Signature of Investigator/Designee Obtaining Informed Consent

---

Date

**APPENDIX C****Email Invitation for Volunteers**

Greetings,

As you may or may not already be aware, I am in the process of completing my Masters of Education in Community Engagement at Merrimack College and am working with Bread and Roses as a fellow from August, 2013 – May, 2014. Part of my graduation requirements is to complete a Capstone Research project. I have chosen to focus my study around community partnerships within nonprofit organizations, focusing on the relationship between Bread and Roses and Groundwork Lawrence.

As a volunteer with Bread and Roses or Groundwork Lawrence, I am interested in your perspective around this topic and would greatly appreciate 30-45 min of your time to speak with me during a semi-structured interview.

Please reply by (INSERT DATE HERE) if you are willing to participate and I will respond with further details.

Thank you in advance for your time reviewing my request.

Sincerely,

Katelyn Grimes  
Bread and Roses Fellow

**Verbal Script for Bread and Roses/Groundwork Lawrence Staff Members**

Greetings,

As you may or may not know, part of my graduation requirements for my Masters Fellowship at Merrimack is to complete a Capstone Research project. I have chosen to focus my study around community partnerships within nonprofit organizations, focusing on the relationship between Bread and Roses and Groundwork Lawrence.

As a staff member of Bread and Roses/Groundwork Lawrence, I am interested in your perspective around this topic and would greatly appreciate 30-40 min of your time to speak with me during a semi-structured interview. Are you willing to set up a time to have an interview and discuss the above topic? If so, I will follow up this conversation with an email confirming our interview date, time and further details. Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Katelyn Grimes  
Bread and Roses Fellow

## Appendix D

### **Bread and Roses Volunteer/Staff and Groundwork Lawrence Interview Protocol**

#### Programs:

- What programs are currently in place at Bread and Roses/Groundwork Lawrence?
- Are you aware of future programs being discussed? If so, please describe.
- What type of programming would you like to see at Bread and Roses/Groundwork Lawrence that may not be in the works?
- How would you feel about integrating food education programming to Bread and Roses?

#### Community Partnerships:

- What community partnerships are you aware of that are currently in place at Bread and Roses/Groundwork Lawrence?
- Do you see the partnership developing with Groundwork Lawrence and if so, how? (reversed when asked Groundwork Lawrence)
- How would you suggest strengthening community partnerships that currently exist or create new partnerships to maintain food sustainability? (Partnership with Groundwork Lawrence/Bread and Roses)
- What are some benefits you see to community partnerships beyond immediate donations and support?

#### Community Garden:

- Are you aware of our community garden? If so, please describe your involvement (if any) in our community garden. If not, are you interested in becoming involved?
- Where do you see our community garden going in the future?
- What is your awareness of the term food insecurity in Lawrence and among our guests?
- What are your thoughts on future guest involvement in the community garden?

#### Food Sources/Donations (Only asked to Bread and Roses Staff)

- How much food is donated to Bread and Roses from the Groundwork Lawrence partnership?
- What is the breakdown of donations currently? (Community partnerships, individual volunteers, prepared meals/Bread and Roses prepared meals? Random? Consistent?)

## Appendix E

### Optional Guest Survey

Created in English and translated into Spanish

\*\*Questions were duplicated below. \*\*

The original was not included due to the page orientation and formatting issues.

As a guest of Bread and Roses, you are invited to take part in a research case study exploring the needs, wants and feasibility of community partnerships to maintain food sustainability and healthy eating within soup kitchens. Your opinions are much appreciated and incredibly valuable to this study. By completing this survey, you agree to participate in this study. If you choose to participate, you will not be identified. Please complete only once.

How long have you been coming to Bread and Roses? (Blank line) (enter in amount of days, months or years)

How often do you eat dinner at Bread and Roses? Daily Weekly Monthly Infrequent (a few times per year as needed)

Are you interested in volunteering in our community garden in the future? (Circle one) Yes No

**Please place an X in the correct box that best describes your feelings for each statement.**

(boxes were under each topic with a scale of Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree and I don't know)

I was aware of the programs offered by Bread and Roses prior to reading this survey  
(Check all that apply below: Doctor visits on Wednesdays, Emergency Food Pantry, Emergency Hygiene Products and Emergency clothing

I am aware of where the food comes from that is served at Bread and Roses.

I would attend workshops about food preparation, life skills training, or other subjects if offered.  
It would be nice to see a sign posted in the entranceway with that evening's meal described, much like a "specials" board.

Open ended questions

What programs or services would you like to see at Bread and Roses that may not already be offered?

Any additional comments

## Appendix F

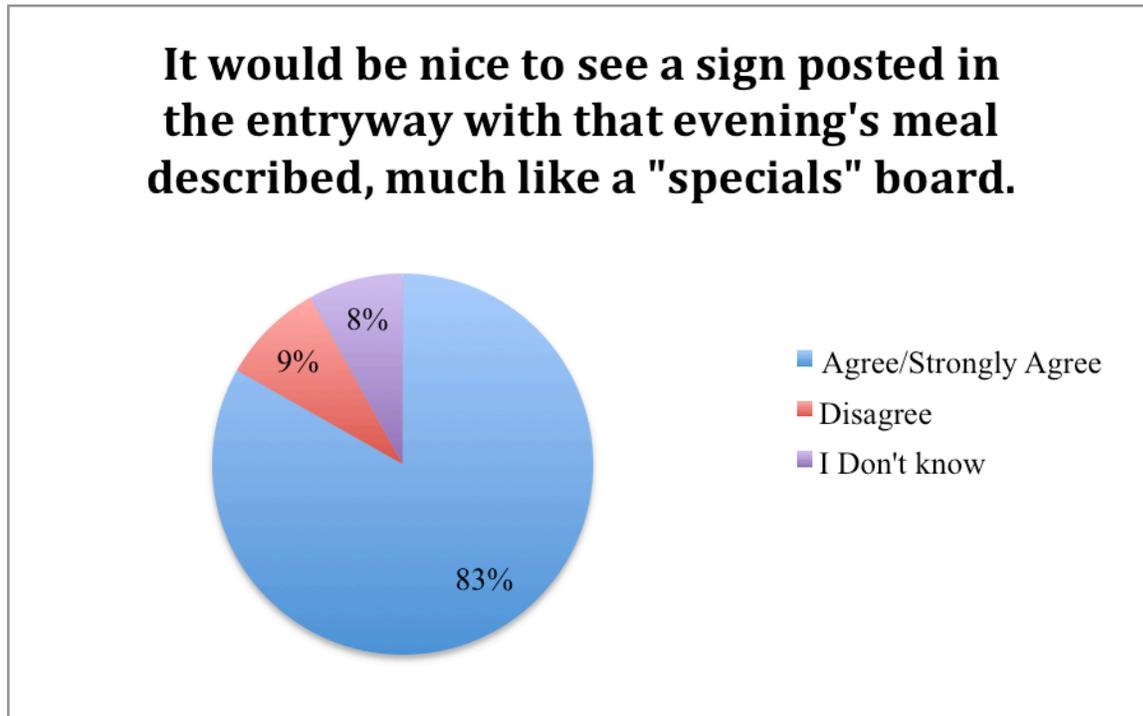


Figure 1: The desire for guests to have a menu board available prior to sitting down to eat dinner