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Michelle Howell

Farmer & Community Organizer

Health Initiatives / Equitable Food Systems / Urban-Rural Community Development

"Michelle is dedicated to helping and serving our community in many ways - from her involvement in food system development and marketing programs to her passion for initiatives that improve the quality of life for women and children. Michelle has contributed behind the scenes to programming across the state.. Not only is she a great communicator, but she's passionate in her endeavors and sees them through. I'm confident that any organization she becomes involved with will greatly benefit from her knowledge, experience, connections and talents."

- Katie Frassinelli, Publisher & Owner of Bowling Green Parent Magazine

Summary

Becoming a full-time farmer (2013) as well as co-founding Community Farmers Market (2011) has become a culmination of several focuses from my previous work. After being introduced to local food while working at a large orchard in South Central, KY I went on to pursue a degree in Horticulture at Western Kentucky University. Upon graduating I worked as a Horticulture Extension agent providing educational opportunities to both consumers and producers. My passion for community was extended as I worked as the Landscape Manager for the city of Bowling Green. I realized that working with several organizations to develop a system that was successful could be both challenging and monumental. After leaving my permanent position to stay home with my children I began farming alongside my husband, volunteering in the community and became more passionate about local and healthy foods. I quickly realized that many families were struggling to meet their own basic needs regardless of income level. I learned that shopping at a farmers market could be a great way to motivate yourself to make better food choices. After becoming involved with the local birth and breastfeeding community and organizations that serve women and families I quickly realized that by simply providing a sense of community and making local food more accessible we could develop a stronger local food system that would also support farmers incomes.

Community Development

- Assisted in writing over \$1,600,000 in grant funding to improve food access, family life courses for women, and urban-rural development
- Co-Founder of Community Farmers Market in Bowling Green
- Kentucky Coordinator for Food Day. Successfully assisted in directing the Food Day event in South Central, Kentucky that included a day long conference, Meet Your Farmer night market and Farm Elegant dinner.
- Organizing community events, educational opportunities and outreach to underserved populations at Community Farmers Market through WIC/Senior FMNP, SNAP, Big Red Dollars and FRESH RX
- Speaking at state wide conferences on the topics of women's health, nutrition, and food access
- Collaborating with schools, chefs, government agencies and organizations
- Board of Directors, BRIGHT COALITION (Barren River Region)
- Co-Founding Member, CHAT Coalition (Allen County)
- Speaking at state agriculture and public health conferences on the topics of food access and consumer engagement
- Consulting work for cities like Lexington and Nashville, and organizations like Food Chain, Community Food Advocates, and food cooperatives
- Developing and Organizing a regional Community Group for women of childbearing age
- Writing freelance articles for SOKY Happenings, BG Parents on issues related to healthy foods, parenting, and community involvement: 2009-2012
- Writing articles on home gardening and food preparation for Kentucky Gardener: 2001-2004
- Freelance writing for multiple online blogs and websites: 2001-Present

Education

Western Kentucky University Bowling Green, KY 1996-2000

Bachelors of Science: Horticulture and Small Business Management

*Graduated Cum Laude.

Employment History

Need More Acres Farm

01/2003 - present

Co-Owner

- Social Media and Website Development: www.needmoreacres.com
- Educational outreach for customers, community members
- Hosting 3000 people on farm tours each year
- Organizing weekly deliveries to HOTEL INC (food pantry in South Central, Kentucky) feeding 1900 households and over 3600 individuals locally grown fruits and vegetables
- Development of the Super Snax program in Allen County
- Distributing over 60,000 prepared fruit and vegetable snacks to Bowling Green City and Allen County Schools annually
- Overseeing a 10 household full-diet, all you can eat CSA program that provides 85%+ of participating households full supply
- Marketing year-round fruits and vegetables to Community Farmers Market, restaurants, and schools in South Central Kentucky
- Mentoring beginning and refugee farmers in South Central, Kentucky
- Partnering with organizations like UK Extension, Farm Service Agency, Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky, Organic Association for Kentucky to host consumer and farmer field days

City of Bowling Green, KY

01/2001 –01/2004

Landscape Manager

- Maintains Landscape and Beautification Areas of City of Bowling Green
- Supervises 4 fulltime and 3 part time positions
- Supervises the operating budget for the Landscape Division
- Provides educational experiences on sound horticulture practices
- Attends and supports meetings of the Greenways Commission, Bowling Green Tree Board, Downtown Redevelopment Authority and Bowling Green Parks & Recreation

University of Kentucky

11/2000 – 01/2001

Horticulture Extension Agent

- Develop education programs in horticulture that are economically feasible, resource conserving, and environmentally compatible
- Develop field trials, test demonstrations and result demonstrations in areas related to horticulture products.
- Develop horticultural expertise of local citizens through educational programs such as the Master Gardener Program.
- Develop and/or utilize councils, advisory groups, and program committees to facilitate community involvement in programming.
- Develop a program plan based on locally identified needs, which will lead to improved quality of living for individuals and families.
- Build collaborative relationships with other agencies and organizations to multiply effectiveness and avoid duplications of programs.
- Provide technical subject matter in horticulture to producers and individuals.
- Work with community and civic leaders to enhance the economic and social well being of the county and communities contained therein.
- Disseminate research information, identify researchable problems, and communicate information and research needs to the land-grant faculty.
- Ensure that all youth and adults have an equal opportunity to participate in Extension programs regardless of race.

Jackson's Orchard & Nursery

04/1991 – 11/00^[1]_{SEP}

Greenhouse Manager/Supervisor

- Supervising full-time and part-time staff
- Managing the production of greenhouses and plant sales
- Organizing educational and community events
- Offering tours for school groups and businesses

Relevant Skills and Attributes

- Excellent organizational, written and verbal communication skills
- Effective writing and publishing skills
- Strong interpersonal skills with customers, organizations and diverse community groups

- Effective problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, especially in complicated situations
- Knowledge of effective community organizing, collaboration and program development

References

Available Upon Request