Small Food Business Incubation for East Side Residents

MY IDEA FOR CHANGE

This project proposes a commercial kitchen facility with an educational program to help incubate small food businesses on the East Side of Buffalo. The goal is to transition residents from working at no or low-paying jobs to building and growing their own micro-food enterprises. Growing small-scale businesses in Buffalo will provide employment opportunities within the local community.

This commercial kitchen model will help new startups by eliminating common obstacles to business creation, such as high costs for overhead, insurance, equipment, utilities and other requirements needed to operate a food-related business. Potential users of the kitchen include home-based cooks, caterers, chefs, bakers, food truck operators and food cart owners.

Users will have access to business building sessions to take their enterprises to the next level. The facility could also offer health and nutrition education to the community. This project will improve the health, well-being and quality of life of individuals and families in the East Side, by providing them with information and tools to prepare fresh and nutritious food.

WHERE THE CHANGE WILL HAPPEN

There is a food movement occurring in this country, and Buffalo’s growth in the food service and hospitality industries is creating many food related opportunities in the city. Taking these opportunities and distributing them throughout the city will have a great impact on East Side residents, in terms of increased jobs, nutrition, health, and quality of life. Due to its high unemployment, low median income, and low food access figures, the East Side of Buffalo is an ideal location for teaching residents how to take advantage of these opportunities in food service. This could be accomplished through the creation of a commercial kitchen where users could hone their cooking and food service skills, practice preparing fresh and nutritious meals and products, and learn skills for operating a small food-related business. Potential sites include: the Broadway Market, churches, and Wellness Centers.

Planning a Change

ACTIONS TO MOVE IT FORWARD

Find a commercial kitchen to deliver programming
Locate funding to deliver programming and manage the kitchen
Finalize nutrition and health curriculum with partners

RESOURCES NEEDED TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

Funding, Partnerships, In-kind Service Donations

FUNDING RANGE

$50,000 - $100,000

STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

IDEA PLAN ACTION

Food unites families and communities, and can also give people a path to a prosperous future. Everyone eats and anyone can cook. A commercial kitchen geared towards educating new business owners and reducing barriers to entry would help level the playing field for people who just need that small break to get going.

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