



East Oakland Healthy Corner Store *Project Update*

6/21/20 *

Updates since 6/21 in Red

Since organizing, and receiving funds last year, we have increased healthy food access for residents east of High Street by investing in their neighborhood stores with the Sugar-Sweetened beverage tax dollars. The funds are being used for produce procurement, delivery, and training of store owners, equipment upgrades, marketing and produce promotion that uplifts the participating stores as viable, affordable, and community based markets. We have also partnered with community residents living nearby our 5 stores to raise awareness in the community on sugar consumption, promote new healthy products, and build a customer base for the participating stores.

Project Status as of **7/21/2020**, we have:

- Established the Healthy Retail Advisory Board (HRAB) to oversee and guide this project and to vet applications. Our board involves community store owners and community members from East Oakland. The HRAB is providing oversight to our technical assistance plans with the cohort. We have 7 members on the board, and we will have 10 board meetings in 2020. **Our last meeting took place on 7/16/20 to discuss program sustainability and market viability.**
- Designed an application inviting store owners East of High Street interested in healthy foods to apply. We used the following scorecard to appraise applications.
 - Proximity to: schools, affordable housing, community-based organizations, churches
 - Located in a residential area vs. a commercial corridor
 - Impressions from follow-up visits, store owner motivations and long term plans.
- We received 17 applications from store owners located East of High St. and have chosen to work with 5 located in the flatlands of district 6 & 7. *Please see the attached map on pg.6.*
- The 5 selected stores are:
 - Q&S Market located on 100th ave & Walnut
 - Jalisco Market on 97th ave & Edes
 - Royal Foods Market on 76th & MacArthur
 - 4M Market on 64th & MacArthur
 - Arwa Market on 86th & Bancroft



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- We required a matching amount of 10% to be paid by store owners accepted into our program, which will be reinvested in supporting communities in adopting healthier eating habits. **We have created an M.O.U. with store owners to commit to the 10% amount to go back into the community in the form of coupons and vouchers. Main agreements listed in the MOU have been designed by the HRAB community board and include the following:**
 - Any equipment or interior upgrades paid for through this fund will be utilized for healthier products, i.e. if installing a new counter, the store owners are expected to place healthy products on the counter. Refrigeration, deli's or other equipment, marketing and signage made will directly & only promote healthy products including but not limited to produce. Flyers will also only promote healthy foods promotions.
 - Benchmarks are created per store and thus any upgrade provided to the store is contingent on the store meeting its set benchmark of: sourcing and maintaining produce independently of our program, promoting and pushing healthy products to customers, in some stores : increasing WIC items on the shelf, providing store staff to support us in flyering neighborhood...etc. Store owners agree to sustain new and healthier products in the store as long as they are participating with our program and receiving support.

- We began working with two stores by creating technical assistance (TA) plans (*Jalisco Market and Q&S Market*) and will be gradually onboarding the remaining three stores from the middle of July and until August. Our TA plans include the following services:
 - Produce procurement: Mandela Distributors is providing sustainable produce deliveries at no cost for 2 weeks. **Saba has connected store owners to grocery store owners from within this same immigrant community (the Yemeni Community). Store owners have transitioned into purchasing their own produce by the 3rd, from grocery store owners operating bigger stores and able to secure produce at a lower price from both the SF food terminal, and OAK food terminal. Our produce provider has thus far offered delivery to each store, yet we are exploring options of utilizing a central location for stores to pick up from, in East Oakland (*more on this below*). We are currently exploring the long term sustainability and**



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standardization of this model as it allows corner store owners to purchase in smaller quantities at a wholesale price. Previous to our program, both stores reported buying produce from Costco at a retail price, and selling it at the same rate, and/or adding a percentage for profit. This system is one factor as to why products are more expensive in corner stores in low-income areas.

- **Training:** We have launched a training for store owners provided by successful Yemeni grocery store owners operating in the SF Bay Area on produce maintenance, handling, procurement, pricing, negotiation, display and marketing. Store owners are guided and supported in exploring purchasing options at the OAK and SF produce terminal, as well as produce wholesalers in Oakland and San Leandro. Store owners are guided in conversation to collectively purchase produce from nearby farms, or wholesalers.
- **Resident Leaders :** We have partnered with the Sugar Freedom Project - a resident lead organizing project that raises awareness on the impacts of sugar consumption in low-income communities of color and uplifts healthy cultural practices by organizing residents in a relational community building model. SFP is providing:
 - Deep community engagement for each of the stores through surveying and relationship building. From June-July 500-1000 customers and neighbors will be surveyed and some will participate in zoom planning calls to help inform stores on how to transform into community stores.
 - One-on-one support to residents who are shifting their diets to a more healthy one.
 - This project is providing branding design for coupons and vouchers, as well as funds to cover coupon costs. We are distributing coupons to residents by both partnering with SFP (the Sugar Freedom Project) and by having store owners and staff distribute flyers to nearby residents. To this date we have distributed 140 flyers near Jalisco Market, 7 of which were redeemed as of 7/13, which is ~5% . We have also flyered 200 residents at Q&S Market with a similar redemption rate. *Please see attached flyer designs.*



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- **Store Branding:** Both Jalisco Market and Q&S Market have been provided with an initial set of brand designs that promotes healthy products and repositions stores in communities. We will be completing the store branding process by the end of July 2020. *Please see expanded designs attached.*
- **Marketing:** Our TA plans include a marketing plan per store which includes flyering in the community, USPS bulk mailing, and installing banners. We will also utilize facebook advertising tools. SFP resident leaders are boosting our work by spreading word-of-mouth news within the community on the availability of produce.
- **Layout design:** Mandela Partners has provided suggestions and options for store owners on how to maximize real estate, and promote new products. *We have reached out to pro-bono interior designers for their services but received no support.*
- **Website Development:** We are working with stores to establish an online produce delivery service through platforms such as InstaCart and GrubHub. This will help increase access to essential needs, build the vitality and resilience of communities and stores during public health pandemics, fires, and other emergencies.
- **COVID Policies & Response:** We have assisted in establishing safe measures according to CDC guidelines, local and county recommendations to contain COVID-19. This includes placing a hand sanitizing station in front of our partnered stores to ensure community safety and reduce transmission. We also established consistent policies that include senior hour, limited number of customers, 6 foot distances, and mask requirements. SFP resident leaders are providing masks, hand sanitizer pumps, and gloves at stores to customers.
- **Conversations:** One of our store owners, his customers and nearby community institutions have expressed the need to host a community meeting on the subject of Loitering, which we plan to host by the end of the summer. Additionally we will be hosting a virtual town hall where residents and store owners can come together in a restorative justice setting to discuss racial tensions between both communities.
- *As of July 21st, we have on-boarded the three remaining stores:*



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- 4M Market on 64th & MacArthur, has agreed to clear out one shelf of its existing fridge, which currently hosts juices and other sugary beverages in order to make space for more produce. We plan to have our first produce delivery arrive by July 28th, and flyer the neighborhood on the 29th. The biggest improvement we discussed with this store owner is purchasing and supporting his initiative to provide a Deli for the neighborhood. We will be promoting this expansion on our flyers and marketing work. Store owner agreed to flyer the neighborhood along with our staff.
- Royal Foods Market on 76th & MacArthur has an extensive deli department and is looking to expand its produce section. We have agreed to focus on building up the produce variety as well as store branding before any investment is made at this store for equipment. Store owner agreed to have store employees flyer the neighborhood along with our staff.
- Arwa Market at 86th & Bancroft has an extensive deli department and produce area. We have offered to support the expansion of this produce section by connecting the store owner to our produce source which offers more competitive pricing, we are also negotiating an offer to cover the cost of a fridge and freezer if candy at the counter is removed. We agreed to support this store owner in his first order of frozen items as he will not be utilizing Mandela's Distributors free two weeks of produce. Store owner agreed to have store employees flyer the neighborhood along with our staff.

Impact: We are assessing impact by utilizing established in-store evaluation tools previously developed by Mandela Partners such as, pre- and post- assessments, which include interviews with store owners and store walkthroughs, customer surveys, and most importantly sales reports.

Key factors to success:

This project has been able to leverage an existing social infrastructure within the Yemeni and Arab community, which has allowed us to save on staff time needed to build relationships. The support of City Council Members has supported us in building momentum and increased store owners' buy-in of running



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a successful grocery business. Seating a community advisory board (HRAB) that comprises both store owners and residents has been instrumental in keeping our work grounded in principles of a successful business endeavor. *We saw the value of the HRAB most recently as store owners not participating in the program yet attending our HRAB meetings expressed interest in accessing our produce grocery supplier to acquire produce for their own stores at their own cost. Other store owners participating in the HRAB meeting offered their property (empty lots) in East Oakland for us to use as a central drop off location where participating, and non-participating, stores can pick up produce during select hours of the day. We are currently working on the logistics of what it would take to make this happen.* Partnering with Mandela Partners has brought value and structure to our operations. Partnering with the Sugar Freedom Project has balanced our initiative by activating community members living around stores.

Greatest challenges:

When MP was originally offered this grant funding, their initial goal was to implement its existing program model at 5 new stores in East Oakland, with the Saba Grocers Initiative supporting community outreach and engagement with their store owner network built through the SSB Tax organizing campaign. Saba felt it important to reassess some of MP's programming components, such as consignment based produce delivery and the necessary staffing to carry this out, and also suggested that MP include the HRAB in program design and implementation. Deliberations over program structure and oversight delayed some of our activities scheduled to begin during Q1, but these deliberations were critical to exploring innovative strategies and in ensuring store owners, community members, and HRAB voices were included in the pilot program design and implementation.



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Future Goals & Funding Needs: We foresee the need for continued funding to extend engagement with our current store cohort and expand the program to new stores who didn't make it into the current cohort. Our goal is to operate a network of 10 healthy corner stores in East Oakland and establish a collective purchasing agreement that allows for the purchase of products in volumes and thus reap more competitive pricing for store owners and residents.

Project Trajectory for FY 2020-2021

Our current FY 2019-2020 budget of \$200,000.00 has allowed us to work with 5 stores. In the next FY 2020-2021 we plan to continue this same level of work by expanding to another 5 stores, as well as maintaining support to our current 5 stores. We will also explore opportunities to ease purchasing and delivery of produce to the 10 stores.

We foresee the follow tasks to be essential:

- Expand our work to an additional 5 stores
- Create a collective purchasing agreement among 6-8 stores directly with Northern California Farms and/or wholesalers
- Secure a central distribution site
- Support produce delivery services 3 times a week per store
- Provide coupons & recipes for customers
- Engage youth and residents through culturally relevant events and restorative justice conversation and workshops
- Leverage existing state programs, such as the EBT 50% discount program and the state CDFR refrigeration unit upgrades, to complement our efforts.
- Report concrete shifts in stores and resident consumption of produce via surveying tools.
- Utilize data to secure matching funds from philanthropic sources.

Projected Project Budget for FY 2020-2021

\$300,000.00



SABA Grocers Initiative



East Oakland Healthy Corner Store



Project Update

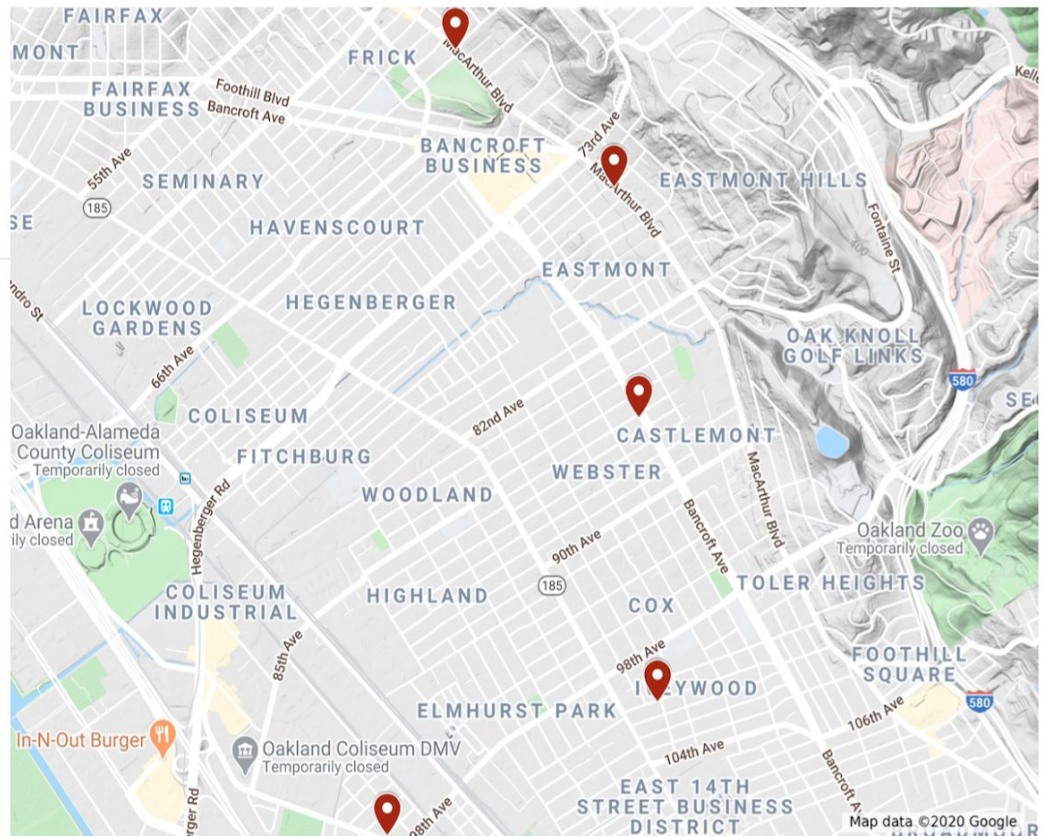
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5 Stores

Stores

-  Q & S Market
-  Royal Food Super Market
-  Arrwa market
-  4M Food
-  Jalisco Market





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\$5^{off}
coupon

JALISCO

Market

Affordable & Healthy Produce
7910 Edes Ave.





WE ACCEPT
EBT

WE ACCEPT
WIC

.99^{Cent}
EGGS

.99^{Cent}
**Onions, Cilantro,
Plantains**



SABA Grocers Initiative



ENGAGE. INVEST. TRANSFORM.

Sugar
FREEDOM!
Protein



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Jalisco Market 2
 9710 Edes Ave.
 Oakland, CA

\$5 *off*

Jalisco Market 2
 9710 Edes Ave.
 Oakland, CA

\$20 *off*

Organic Broccoli

\$ _____

Jalisco Market

Organic Cauliflower

\$ _____

Jalisco Market



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Produce **Q&S Market** **WE ACCEPT EBT**
 1524 100th Ave.

\$5 off

.50^c Plantains
2.49^{doz} Eggs

New Fridge New Produce

.50 Cent/lb Yams, Broccoli
Cabbage, Cauliflower, Potatos

Freedom!
 Project

SABA Grocers Initiative

MANDELA PARTNERS
 ENGAGE. INVEST. TRANSFORM.





SABA Grocers Initiative



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6 Q&S Market
Produce **\$5** off Grocery
Expires: 6/30/2020

