

A Bit Beyond My Halfway Point

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Hello all! As a reminder: I've been interning with an organization called GrowNYC for the past few months. They largely focus on providing fresh, local food to New Yorkers and teaching others about the importance of supporting farms and treating the planet with respect. Earlier in the summer I worked on a curriculum called "Seed to Plate," in which I helped to teach lesson plans about nutrition and food to students in the Bronx. Since then, I have explored many different aspects of the organization.

I have recently been working a lot in the GrowNYC office located near the Brooklyn Bridge in Manhattan. There I help my supervisor, Winnie, with any extra projects she needs to complete. I have put together information packets for the visiting tour groups and researched farm-fresh recipes to be displayed at the information tent at the Greenmarkets. Furthermore, I have utilized my Microsoft Excel talents (thanks Univariate Statistics!!) to analyze data collected from the Seed to Plate curriculum.

I have also been leading a lot of camp tour groups at the Greenmarkets, specifically the Union Square Greenmarket (which is the largest in NYC). I could not recommend this market more: it is hectic, crowded, and overflowing with the freshest market products! When we have a tour group we start with an informational talk about the market itself, the farms, and reasons why one should shop at a farmers' market. We then give them a tasting of something that is fresh at the market and take them on a tour. Pictured below is myself and a co-worker displaying our peach and tomato salsa (we got all of the ingredients from the market, duh!).

Besides the tours and office work, I have been fortunate enough to explore what it is like to run a market by helping out at the Lincoln Hospital Greenmarket in the Bronx. I help the market manager, Arlene, set up the information tent and then go from farmer to farmer learning about what is fresh and affordable at the moment. I then spend the majority of my time at the info tent. GrowNYC has this really amazing program that helps those who may not typically be able to afford farmers' market products. People who use EBT (food stamps) can exchange their money on their cards for market tokens. Along with the market tokens, they also receive a "\$2 health buck" for every five dollars they spend. These health bucks can only be spent on fruits or vegetables at the market, which is an awesome way to encourage healthy eating!! I love working at the Lincoln Hospital Greenmarket because I get to assist in the exchange of EBT to market tokens and interact with the customers. The majority of EBT customers are Spanish-speaking women and I regret never learning the language. It would certainly make the transactions more simple and I would love to be able to explain the benefits of the program. Pictured below is the info tent at Lincoln Hospital and some fresh blueberries from the market.

I have learned so much from my time with GrowNYC. I cannot always afford farmers' market products, but I try and buy a few things at every market. I like that I am able to provide customers with access to a healthier lifestyle, while also improving my own. I know that my time with the organization will influence my shopping behavior in the future. Yay for Greenmarkets and eating locally!