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Tackling 'Wicked' Food Issues

Grand Valley State University

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Tackling 'Wicked' Food Issues

Lib 322: Wicked Problems of Sustainability
Community Event, Alumni House
November 22, 2013

Community Event Program

- **10:00** - Welcome attendees
- **10:05** – Introduction to Wicked problems
- **10:10** – Food Issues as a Wicked Problem
- **10:15** – Food Maverick Proposal
- **10:45** – Fresh Start Proposal
- **11:15** – C.A.R.R.O.T./G.A.R.D.E.N.S Proposal
- **11:45** -- Event Wrap-up

Food Maverick: Think about food differently

Authors: Hilary Karnatz, Alison Morsink, Christina Ober, Carlton Sumner

In our quest to get healthy food in the hands of school children and improve their life-long healthy eating habits, we have utilized a Wicked Problems framework approach. There isn't one solution that can get this done, but we can develop a number of solutions that can help alleviate the issue. One of the key aspects of this wicked problem is getting children to actually want to eat healthier.

The Food Maverick project aims to reach children where they already are...on the web. Using the power of the internet and social media, we have developed a marketing campaign geared towards making a healthy lifestyle more appealing to school age children. Our plan is to create and aggregate media from around the web to provide educational, yet entertaining information about food. Utilizing a combination of blogging, videos, recipes, and guerilla marketing stunts, we will create a website that not only actively promotes healthy eating, but also gets kids thinking about advertising in general. By using technology in this manner we are reaching out directly to children using a style and method that they are familiar with. As we expand, we plan to continue reaching out to the community for support, bringing together schools and local businesses to sponsor events. We are putting the power directly into the hands of children to make knowledgeable decisions about the food they eat.

Food Maverick: Christina Ober

Christina is a Liberal Studies degree major with an emphasis in Environmental Problems and Sustainability. She has taken extensive classes in Geology, Natural Resource Management, and Environmental Studies. Christina is currently involved in the Sustainable Agriculture Project course, where she learns through working on the school farm. She also works on Ham Family Farm, a local 40 acre farm in Allendale.



Food Maverick: Alison Morsink

- Alison has artistic/design skills; she has worked on logo projects and educational mural projects in the Grand Rapids area. Her business classes have give her a solid base of legal knowledge and a clear viewpoint from the economic pillar. Her environmental classes have given her solid experience of processes and resources which are important to understand the environmental pillar. She went to an environmental high school where healthy eating and environmental education was successfully integrated.



Food Maverick: Trey Sumner



- **Trey is passionate about his work with youth. He motivates them to live healthy lifestyles while he raises two kids of his own. In his 22 year military career he has demonstrated proficiency in hands on projects and an ability to find creative solutions to difficult problems. A Liberal Studies major, with an emphasis in Masculinity Studies and Gender Equity, Trey is committed to facilitating change and finding equitable, healthy solutions to societal problems.**

Fresh Start:

Providing our youth with knowledge, experiences, access to farming, local foods, and life skills for sustainable living.

Authors: Evan Bell, Ross Damon, Dana Eardley and Jessica Siemen

When we were initially tasked with formulating a solution to the wicked problem of getting healthy lunches into Grand Valley's magnet schools, our group decided to begin by contacting stakeholders from the community. After discussing this issue with several stakeholders our group came up with the proposal of establishing an interactive club where students from all backgrounds can get a fresh look at food, nutrition and farming. The Fresh Start Club will have kids gather at the Grand Valley State University Sustainable Agriculture Program (SAP) for them to gain awareness of the importance of local, fresh and sustainably grown produce. The club will also teach them how their eating habits affect the environment, their health and their society. Each visiting day to the SAP will have a main focus such as farming strategies, soil science, composting, the significance of local foods vs. imported food as well as their nutritional values, and how to start a patio garden. Each day will be educational yet fun and interactive for the children. At the end of each semester we will hold a culminating event where the children can demonstrate their fresh facts and skills to fellow classmates, family and community members.

Fresh Start: Evan Bell

Evan is a senior from Lathrup Village, Michigan, majoring in Legal Studies. He enjoys camping, hammocking, and venturing outdoors. He plans on studying abroad in China this coming winter and volunteering with the Peace Corps upon graduation.

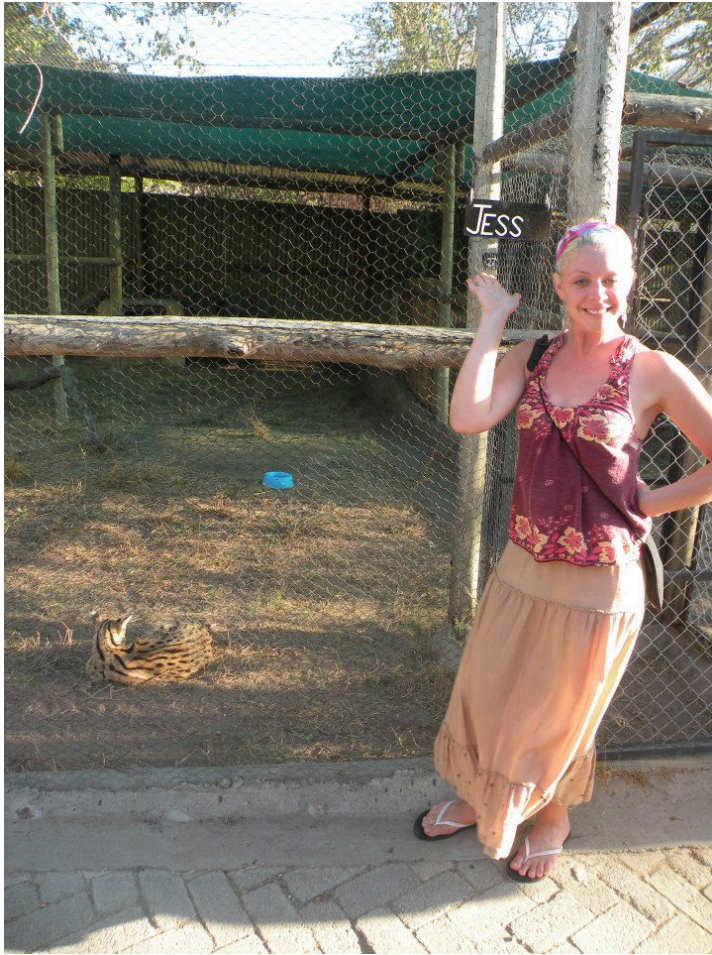


Fresh Start: Ross Damon



Ross is a senior from Grand Rapids, Michigan. Ross is majoring in Liberal Studies with an emphasis in Sustainable Environment. He works on campus for Fresh Foods, and has won several awards including achieving the Dean's List two times at the Grand Rapids Community College.

Fresh Start: Jessica Siemen



- **Jessica is a junior from Holland, Michigan and studying Natural Resource Management with an emphasis on Ecosystem Science and minors in Biology and Environmental Studies. She currently is part of the Soil and Water Conservation Society and volunteers for invasive species research. She loves to camp, hike, visit the beaches and overall spend time in the outdoors.**

Fresh Start: Dana Eardley

- Dana is a sophomore from San Antonio, Texas. She is studying Public and Nonprofit Administration as well as Liberal Studies with an emphasis on Sustainable Food Systems. Dana works at the Sustainable Agriculture Project at Grand Valley and has interned at the YMCA Farmers Market.



C.A.R.R.O.T./G.A.R.D.E.N.S.

Authors: Joel Campbell, Jessica Dake, Breanna Dubanik, Marisha Ibrahim

Tackling the issue of getting healthier food options into the hands of children presents multiple barriers. From genetically modified organism, to school lunches decreasing in nutrition, and nearly 1,400 pesticides allowed to be spread throughout our nation, 40 of which have been classified as carcinogens (Epstein, M.D., and Leibson 28-33), this task is becoming progressively more difficult. In order to slow this vicious trend, we propose to create blueprints for community event targeting the children and parents of urban communities. These blueprints are intended to enable any interested party to host their own community event focused on engaging children and parents. These events would bring knowledge and awareness of a variety of different healthy-living and sustainability topics such as the benefits of eating fresh, local food and the 'how-to's' of gardening, saving seeds and preparing from harvest. The initial test group would permit us to gather data and learn what is needed as we progress further. Targeting the population that attends the various Farmers' Markets across Grand Rapids, MI will help to involve our ultimate target audience, the children. However, to ensure that children continue forward with a more healthy and sustainable lifestyle, we must target the current and future parents. Working with stakeholders and refining the original proposal, we have come up with a select few blueprint drafts.

C.A.R.R.O.T./G.A.R.D.E.N.S Marisha Ibrahim



- Marisha is a Grand Valley State psychology major. She is from Colorado, and grew up with an early interest in small scale farming. With a father from the Egyptian countryside, and who also later managed/owned a cattle ranch in Texas, it was easy for her to see the value of living sustainably. She has gained much experience in the past several years, working as a purchaser for graphics, a wine Sales Manager, and an Executive Administrative Assistant. Her experience will aid in unraveling the wicked problems of sustainability.

C.A.R.R.O.T./G.A.R.D.E.N.S. Jessica Dake



- **Jessica Dake is a Natural Resources Management Major at Grand Valley State University. She previously worked at Blue Star Produce in Buchanan, MI, which is a certified organic and holistic farm. There she planted, tended, picked and sold the heirloom fruits and vegetables. Every aspect of the job led her towards a greater understanding of what it means to be sustainable. Jessica's involvement within the community shows her dedication towards finding viable solutions to today's wicked problems.**

C.A.R.R.O.T./G.A.R.D.E.N.S. Breanna Dubanik

- Breanna Dubanik is a senior at Grand Valley State University majoring in Sociology. This past summer she spent a month in Nicaragua working along side the community assisting in creating a more sustainable environment through education. During the summer she works at a health food store, and throughout the school year she volunteers in two kindergarten classrooms helping to teach Spanish.



C.A.R.R.O.T./G.A.R.D.E.N.S. Joel Campbell

- Joel is a senior at Grand Valley State University majoring in journalism. He is the founder of the Laker Sentinel, an alternative news magazine at Grand Valley, and the student organization Advocates for Journalism. These outlets have allowed for a closer examination in the way in which we view food, health, and environmental issues through different media lens.

