

The “Why” Behind the Design

Case #1: IndigiKitchen

Justification:

Mariah grew up in urban areas in Montana but recognized the consequences of food deserts after spending summers with her family on the Blackfeet Reservation. Diet-related health problems are prevalent in the Indigenous community. Forty miles from the nearest grocery store, she began working toward food sovereignty through hunting, harvesting, and growing. However, beyond access, she recognizes the need to create community excitement around Indigenous foods.

Case #2: Briarwood Elementary

Justification:

In the United States, 40% of all food produced is thrown out, and in Johnson County, Kansas, 23% of food in the landfill is food waste, so while the food waste at Briarwood Elementary may seem high, it is likely representative of schools and communities nationwide. Through their “Zero Food Waste Challenge” students learned that food waste is a global and local problem. Food waste impacts their community and environment. Wasted food cannot nourish food insecure families.

Case #3: Straus Family Creamery

Justification:

“What we’re trying to make here is a model showing that farms can be part of the solution for climate change,” said Straus, the farm’s owner. “The Straus Family Creamery goal is to create a sustainable organic farming model that is good for the earth, the soil, the animals, and the people working on the farms. It will also help revitalize rural communities. The methane powered farm and feed truck is not only a practical tool for the Straus family farm, but also a symbol of the resourcefulness we need to fight climate change,” explains the owner. Straus feels that without this kind of resourcefulness, the business and future of American farming will be threatened.

Case #4: Woodson High School

Justification:

One student commented on her involvement in the projects saying she felt like the slowdown in school activities during the pandemic became the perfect opportunity to hone her gardening skills and put them to use for community service.

The teachers provided additional insight into the school’s solution. “The link between improved mental health and being in nature is real,” said the teacher who oversaw the school’s garden project. Students were able to safely work on something during the pandemic and give back to the community at the same time. Students who participated agreed, commenting they learned about soil, the best time to plant things, and gardening techniques. “And then you get to watch everything grow. It is so rewarding to see things through, knowing it will eventually benefit people in our area that need help,” stated one senior.

Case #5: GrowNYC

Justification:

Greenmarkets wants to ensure that customers from all economic backgrounds are able to afford to shop at their local farmers markets. By taking advantage of federal assistance programs, more people will be able to purchase healthy fresh food.

Investing time and energy and creating increased access to farmers markets benefits customers, farmers and food vendors, and communities. Farmers markets stimulate economic growth and job opportunity, revitalize downtowns and decrease suburban sprawl, create active spaces, and help to preserve farmland. Farmers markets can also be key ingredients in our country's fight to combat diet-related illness such as diabetes and heart disease, and are increasingly being developed to reach lower-income customers, making them ideal venues to promote public health.