

ReFresh Project

New Orleans, LA

Jeffrey Schwartz
Executive Director
Broad Community Connections



2015 RUDY BRUNER AWARD PROJECT DATA



PROJECT DATA

Please answer questions in space provided. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Project Name **ReFresh Project** Location **300 N Broad Street** City **New Orleans** State **LA**
Owner **Broad Community Connections and L+M Development Partners**
Project Use(s) **Community Economic Development**
Project Size **65,000 square feet on 3.26 acres (one city block)** Total Development Cost **\$21M (\$18.1M NMTC)**
Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate) **N/A**
Date Initiated **Spring 2010 project start; 4 February 2014 Grand Opening** Percent Completed by December 1, 2014 **95%**
Project Completion Date (if appropriate) **Complete** Project Website (if appropriate) **broadcommunityconnections.org**

Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates

Application submitted by:

Name **Jeffrey Schwartz** Title **Executive Director**
Organization **Broad Community Connections**
Address **300 N Broad Street, Suite 208** City/State/Zip **New Orleans, LA 70119**
Telephone **(504) 722-3628** Fax ()
E-mail **jeff@broadcommunityconnections.org** Website (if appropriate) **broadcommunityconnections.org**

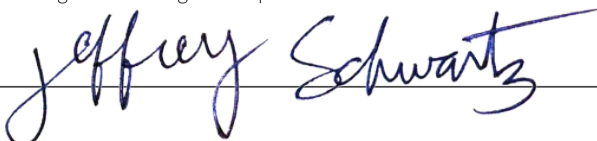
Perspective Sheets:

Organization	Name	E-mail
Public Agencies New Orleans Redevelopment Authority	Jeffrey Hebert	Jphebert@nola.gov
Architect/Designer MetroStudio	Kenneth Gowland	kgowland@metrostudio.net
Developer Broad Community Connections	Jeffrey Schwartz	jeff@broadcommunityconnections.org
Professional Consultant The Berger Group	Leah Berger	leah@berger.com
Community Group Liberty's Kitchen	Dennis Bagneris	dbagneris@libertyskitchen.org
Other Studio O	Liz Ogbu	liz@lizogbu.com

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- Direct Mailing Direct Email Previous Selection Committee member Other (please specify) **Professional Colleague**
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Date **11/28/14**

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROJECT
AT-A-GLANCE



PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

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This sheet, the Project Data sheet, and the representative photo will be sent to the Committee in advance as the *Project Overview*.

Project Name	ReRefresh Project		
Address	300 N Broad Street	City/State/ZIP	New Orleans, LA 70119

1. Give a brief overview of the project. **Approximately 500 words.**

The ReRefresh Project is a 'Community Health Hub' that delivers fresh food access, culinary and nutrition education, youth and workforce development, and community development to the underserved neighborhoods along Broad Street in New Orleans, LA. The project has adaptively reused a vacant former grocery building, converting it into a mixed-use commercial development that contains a new, affordable-format Whole Foods Market; Liberty's Kitchen, a non-profit with a dual social purpose of teaching employability and life skills to disconnected youth in a culinary setting and improving access to fresh food for over a thousand young children in the city through delivering fresh, healthy meals to several public charter schools daily; the Tulane Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine, a first-of-its-kind teaching kitchen housed in a medical school, whose mission is to teach culinary and nutrition skills to community members, medical students and practicing physicians; FirstLine Schools, a high-achieving charter school operator that incorporates Edible School Yard curriculum in each of its five schools; and Boys Town, a non-profit organization which provides housing and supportive services to at-risk youth.

The overarching mission of the ReRefresh Project is to serve as a catalytic economic anchor for the Broad Street commercial corridor and a 'Community Health Hub' that creates long-term positive health outcomes in the surrounding neighborhoods. Recognizing that simply locating a grocery store in an underserved community will not move the needle on creating positive health and community development outcomes, Broad Community Connections (BCC) has collocated a unique range of partners whose missions and activities align with this larger goal. This group of both on- and off-site partners is called the ReRefresh NOLA Coalition, and its membership ranges from large food and public health institutions like Second Harvest Food Bank and Whole Foods Market, to the Tulane Community Health Clinic and Prevention Research Center, to urban farmers and social service providers. This coalition began meeting over two years ago - before the building's completion - to begin to not only further their respective individual goals, but also to develop collaborative, holistic programming focused on improving the health and vitality of Broad Street neighborhoods.

2. Why does the project merit the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*? (You may wish to consider such factors as: effect on the urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.) **Approximately 500**

Broad Community Connections believes that the ReRefresh Project is a unique project that holistically addresses a range of issues and challenges in the Broad Street communities by collocating a singular mix of tenant partners in the same building and working with a broader mix of neighborhood partners. From the lack of fresh food access and health and wellness services, to the prevalence of blight and vacancy and a lack of investment in urban commercial corridors, to the need for more effective strategies to engage and support at-risk youth, to the dearth of social and public spaces to congregate and socialize, ReRefresh endeavors to create a template for holistic community development.

By collocating a unique combination of fresh food access in the same building as culinary and nutrition education, youth and workforce development, and wraparound programming and services, while convening a Coalition of partners to develop joint programming linking these various areas, BCC has identified a novel and effective strategy for empowering communities to address challenges around community investment and community health. This model also creates investment whose benefits accrue to the communities it is intended to serve. In particular, it does so through a dynamic community engagement process that occurred not only during the financing and development of the project, but also continues today (and will continue to do so in the future) as part of its operations and programming.

We've already received acknowledgement for this approach through recognition from national organizations such as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Commission for a Healthier America as well as the Build Healthy Places Network.

2015 RUDY BRUNER AWARD PROJECT DESCRIPTION



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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1. Describe the underlying values and goals of the project. What, if any, significant trade-offs were required to implement the project? APPROXIMATELY 300

The ReFresh Project is fundamentally a community economic development project. The overall mission of the project is to create a catalytic economic development project that anchors small business and mixed-use development in the Broad Street commercial corridor, while making the communities along Broad Street the healthiest in New Orleans. Broad Community Connections (BCC) continues to strive to ensure that the benefits of the development accrue to the communities that the ReFresh Project endeavors to serve.

The most important trade-off we had to navigate was the difficulty of sustaining community engagement through a complex, New Markets Tax Credit-funded project that involved over ten sources of financing. Because the financial closing is not assured until the day of closing, BCC had to navigate the tension between wanting to include as many community members and partners in the development process as possible, with managing expectations and the reality that keeping the project somewhat closer to the vest would help ensure that it would successfully launch. The trade-off between wanting to be as open as possible with the development process, and the need to see the project through to completion has been the most difficult to navigate.

As with many adaptive reuse projects, the overall design of the ReFresh Project was informed by both the existing building and the limited budget in which we had to work. While we successfully created spaces for community engagement to take place on-site--a large lobby that will, over time, become the central hub of the project; a multi-use rooftop space that will serve as space for events such as drive-in movies and gardening classes; and an on-site teaching farm around the perimeter of the building--we did not have the resources to fully build out these crucial spaces at the outset, which has made the process of further developing and amplifying the community development vision for the project longer and more challenging. This challenge has also created an opportunity.

The moment the doors opened was not the end of the project. . Instead, the building in operation has provided the surrounding community with access to fresh food and jobs. At the same time, the evolving nature of the public space has and is offering the opportunity for neighbors to shape these spaces to meet their needs and desires. These ideas can be tested and prototyped at scale.

2. Briefly describe the project's urban context. How has the project impacted the local community? Who does the project serve?

How many people are served by the project? APPROXIMATELY 300

The ReFresh Project is fundamentally designed to bring services to the underserved communities along Broad Street, and create long-term value and investment for the residents, business and property owners, and other stakeholders on Broad. Broad Street itself is a large, urban thoroughfare that had its heyday through the 1960s but, like many US commercial corridors, saw its fortunes wane in the second half of the 20th century as the effects of suburban flight and auto-mobility. The communities along Broad Street are some of the most culturally resonant and vibrant in New Orleans, but they are also dramatically underserved. This includes the Tremé neighborhood, which is the first free neighborhood of color in the United States and the birthplace of Jazz; Faubourg St. John and Esplanade Ridge, a Creole spine for the city; Mid-City, which is one of the most diverse, mixed-use and mixed-income neighborhoods in New Orleans; and Lower Mid-City, which is a community in transition after Katrina, home to a large influx of Latinos, as well as the urban renewal-style VA-Academic Medical Center, a \$2.2B, 72-acre hospital and life sciences development three blocks from the ReFresh Project. The project also is near two large public housing redevelopment projects--the Lafitte and the Iberville, the latter a Choice Neighborhoods Initiative grantee--that have or are in the process of creating over 2500 units of affordable housing in the neighborhoods adjacent to ReFresh. And one block from the ReFresh Project is the Lafitte Greenway, a 3.1-mile linear rails-to-trails project, that will create the first new park in New Orleans in two decades.

One of the most salient impacts of the project is that it provides fresh food access to a dramatically underserved area, which previously lacked a grocery store. In addition to direct food access, the project has also lowered barriers to healthier lifestyles and improved health outcomes by providing free culinary and nutrition classes to the community, a location for service providers such as WIC and SNAP registrations, as well as gardening and fitness classes, youth and workforce development opportunities, and community events.

In New Orleans, food is a way of life. Grocery shopping is known locally as the creative act of "making groceries." The ReFresh Project has created a social space in a previously abandoned location that now employs 175 people and serves thousands of community members per day, and a spot where people from all of the surrounding neighborhoods, and around the city, can gather and interact.

3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate. APPROXIMATELY 400

BCC identified the property as early as the spring of 2007, as a large, blighted and vacant commercial property in the Broad Street commercial corridor, along which BCC focuses its work. Through an extensive community engagement process involving outreach to neighboring business and property owners, residents and neighborhood associations, and organizations and institutional stakeholders, BCC identified a number of key priorities in the corridor that we then used to pursue projects on and around Broad. In mid-2010, BCC began to pursue the abandoned former Schwegmann Bros. grocery store building and secured site control in December 2010. Throughout 2011, BCC developed the vision and mission for the project in concert with community and organizational partners, to create a first-of-its-kind Community Health Hub. By year's end, BCC had received commitments from Whole Foods Market, Liberty's Kitchen, and the Tulane Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine, all while working with various potential funders. In July 2012, we and our development partner acquired the property, after the CDBG-mandated NEPA environmental review process was complete. We finalized leases for all tenant-partners and closed on financing in the spring of 2013. After a ten-month construction process, Whole Foods Market opened the ReFresh Project in February 2014, soon followed by the other tenants. The Community Grand Opening -- celebrating all the tenants being in place -- took place in October 2014.

Throughout the development of the project, BCC helped chart what we believe is a more innovative and genuinely engaging community engagement process. Rather than creating a static community benefits agreement or community advisory board whose work largely concludes at the Grand Opening, BCC--as a community organization that jointly owns the project--began early in the project and continues the work today. The primary instrument is the ReFresh Coalition, which began 18 months prior to the opening. It is a group of all eight on-site tenant-partners and over 30 additional partners working in related fields. The purpose of the group was both to create joint programming that would support the respective goals and programs of the various members of the coalition, but also to help create a two-way conversation with the various communities that the ReFresh Coalition partners serve in order to create better programs and better serve the community. This maintains a permanent seat at the table for community involvement in the project. Early outputs of this joint work include community engagement meetings, Whole Food Market job fairs, and a town hall meeting. In 2015, efforts will scale with the hiring of two Community Health Workers and the creation of a Community Health Outreach Program.

4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable. APPROXIMATELY 400

The ReFresh Project is a \$21M project financed through a New Markets Tax Credit structure that involved a number of public, private, and philanthropic sources of funding. The project utilized \$10M in New Market Tax Credit funding, with \$10M in allocation and investment from Goldman Sachs and \$8M in allocation and investment from JPMorgan Chase. Goldman Sachs also provided the \$3M Senior loan. The Low Income Investment Fund provided \$1.5M in mezzanine debt, which was critical not only to fill a gap in the capital stack, but also to ensure that all other sources of softer money in the project--including public and philanthropic funds--were able to underwrite to meet the needs and goals of the project. Two crucial sources of local funding were utilized: the City of New Orleans' Fresh Food Retail Initiative program and New Orleans Redevelopment Authority Commercial Corridor revitalization program, which provided partially-forgivable loans of \$1M and \$900,000, respectively.

All of the public, private, and philanthropic sources outside of the senior and mezzanine loans and New Market Tax Credits were passed through a BCC Junior Leverage Lender entity, which is another novel aspect to the project. Foundations were salient partners in the development of the project. The Foundation for Louisiana played a critical role throughout the project, providing the initial \$25,000 grant to secure site control on the building, as well as \$95,000 to continue predevelopment. Once the project was ready to be financed, Foundation for Louisiana provided a \$500,000 Program-Related Investment. In addition, the Newman's Own Foundation made a \$250,000 grant to the project. In addition, Whole Foods Market was innovative in passing almost all of their \$6M buildout and development costs through the NMTC structure, which helped to generate more tax credit basis for the project, but which was only additional risk to them, and is a testament to their commitment to being a partner in the project.

The project had a \$280PSF total development cost in the New Market Tax Credit structure, \$320PSF total. This higher amount is a result of the amount of mechanical, plumbing, and electrical infrastructure, as well as fixtures and equipment, required to build not just a grocery, but also two other large commissary and teaching kitchens on-site.

5. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings? APPROXIMATELY 300

Complex urban issues from economic disinvestment to poor health outcomes are often dealt with in isolation. BCC believes that the ReFresh model of community development—focused on developing assets and convening partners in place to develop programming designed to make collective and systemic impact—is an innovative approach. The project has adopted a development framework that bridges the finance and development of a complex real estate transaction with the creation of a multifaceted, cross-sector platform for promoting community economic development and positive health outcomes.

The heart of this project is in the idea of collocation and networking of nonprofits that provide a holistic approach to improving the economic, social, and physical well-being of the surrounding community. While it is a first-of-its-kind project, BCC envisions the ReFresh Project as a replicable model. The notion that collective impact anchored in a broader understanding of community health is something that Whole Foods Market's co-CEO Walter Robb is already seeking to replicate its model of collocating fresh food access with culinary and nutrition education, youth and workforce development, and wraparound services at its other new urban format locations, including Jackson, MS; Newark, NJ; and Chicago, IL.

The ReFresh Project is not only unique in its physical and programmatic setup, but also in the process deployed to anchor it to meaningful impact and engagement. The formation of the ReFresh Coalition long before the building was complete and the ongoing activities of that coalition to leverage collective resources and deepen programmatic impact is noteworthy. And the engagement of the community in the ongoing enhancement of the project's public spaces and programs can provide insights to other communities negotiating the challenges of tight building schedules/budget and community engagement.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
COMMUNITY
REPRESENTATIVE
PERSPECTIVE



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This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name	Dennis Bagneris	Title	Program Director
Organization	Liberty's Kitchen	Telephone	(504) 822-4011
Address	300 N. Broad St.	City/State/ZIP	New Orleans/La./70119
Fax	(504) 822-4012	E-mail	dbagneris@libertyskitchen.org

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Signature	Dennis Bagneris	Date	12/4/2014
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1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play? *APPROXIMATELY 400*

I am currently the Program Director for Liberty's Kitchen, the only New Orleans food service-based organization that combines workforce development training for some of our most vulnerable youth while providing fresh and nutritious meals for low-income public schoolchildren. We are one of the tenants of the ReFresh Project. I am also the acting chair for a community collaborative known as the NEW CITY Neighborhood Partnership. NEW CITY organizes a space where people and groups who live and work in the Tremé/Lafitte, Tulane/Gravier, and Seventh Ward Neighborhoods come together to share information, discuss issues, and build partnerships. These neighborhoods are also served by the ReFresh Project and several members of New City are also active participants in the ReFresh Coalition.

My individual role as Program Director for Liberty's Kitchen requires that I develop relationships within the community at large, to perpetuate the success of my Organization's development, both as an individual organization, and as a partner in the ReFresh Coalition. As the acting Chair for the New City collaborative, it is my duty to raise awareness and gather consensus around special projects and provide opportunities to support development and growth within the community. Under both umbrellas, ReFresh has emerged as an amazing, catalytic opportunity.

As part of my role at Liberty's Kitchen, I worked alongside the organization's Executive Director to determine how best to develop our individual space and how to fit it in the context of the other on site partners. In my capacity as Program Director of Liberty's Kitchen and chair of New City, I've been active in guiding how various programs can work together and best serve our target communities. I've also been involved in discussions around how the building might best be leveraged to advance those efforts.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project? *APPROXIMATELY 400*

Perhaps the biggest issue that the community has had with the project is wrestling with the implications of its presence in the neighborhood.. New Orleans, like many cities around the country, has experienced significant gentrification in recent years. The areas surrounding this project have not been immune to those pressures and so a significant challenge here has been in showing that this is not just another gentrification project, but instead, that this community health hub has been created as a resource for the folks who live here NOW. To be frank, this is not a neighborhood where a Whole Foods would not usually exist. Its reputation has traditionally been as a high end grocery store with the "Whole Paycheck" stigma. And since there is only one other store in the country that has deliberately tweaked this model (Detroit), it is difficult to have a reference point for people.

This is where the uniqueness of this development, from the formation of the ReFresh Coalition to the willingness of partners like Whole Foods to play with their model to the continued experimentation with forms of engagement and physical transformation, have already begun to play a significant role. Whole Foods Markets conducted a variety of outreach campaigns prior to the store opening to ensure that it hired individuals who live in the community as a way to engage the community and diminish any concerns and issues that the neighborhood expressed. It also hired two healthy eating educators on-site to answer questions about products, develop local craft recipes, and give "Value Tours." Coalition partners, including several members of the NEW CITY collaborative, have formed a community engagement committee to specifically develop collaborative initiatives that can address some of these program and identity questions. And work launching in the new year around additional health educators and community engagement in the transformation of some of the public spaces are intended to also address these issues.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Has this project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how? *APPROXIMATELY 400*

I absolutely believe that the development of this project has had a positive impact on the overall Social Health & Wellness of this community, particularly around the idea that it's helped to transform the environment into a better place to work and a better place to live. Prior to the ReFresh site development, our project rested on an abandoned and dilapidated structure. For too long, it was nothing more than a broken down reminder that no economic or social development was taking place in an environment, which once served as a pathway to progress in the heart of the city. Now with the revitalization of the site, under the ReFresh project, the community is thriving once more.

ReFresh is a new movement for healthy communities. New Orleans is such a food city. Through partnerships rooted in this project, we get to connect people to resources that address all dimensions of health and well-being, from nutrition to youth development to economic opportunity. For instance, Boys Town could refer troubled youth in their program to Liberty's Kitchen. We could teach these kids how to cook as an employable skill. And Whole Foods could hire them. That is impact, and ultimately, that's what we're all here for.

Examples such as the one above illustrate that ReFresh is not just a fresh food hub. It is a place where the community can take an active part in its own development. Over time, we believe this will be done not only through their participation in programs, but also through their help in creating them. In so doing, they themselves can contribute to the economic and social reinvestment in the community, not to mention the city.

4. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through? *APPROXIMATELY 400*

I can't think of anything I'd change regarding the development process for this project. I have thoroughly enjoyed being a part of this collaborative. There is just so much about it that is positive-not only the work that we're doing, both individually, and as a group, but also how we're going about it. I think, the thing that I appreciate the most, is how intentionally everything has been directed, specifically around transparency in information and specifics in design. By that, I mean there has been a very well thought out campaign about if this project is for the community, how are we going to understand and address certain needs, challenges, or issues, but more importantly how are we going to track our success.

But true to the iterative nature of this project, our work has not ended. If ReFresh is going to remain a successful venture, it will take an on-going series of self reflective exercises, community engagement, and creative energy to continue to make this place a beloved local asset and an exemplary national model.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PUBLIC AGENCY
PERSPECTIVE



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This sheet is to be filled out by staff representative(s) of public agency(ies) who were directly involved in the financing, design review, or public approvals that affected this project.

Name	Jeffrey Hebert	Title	Executive Director
Organization	New Orleans Redevelopment Authority	Telephone ()	504 658-4400
Address	1409 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd.	City/State/ZIP	New Orleans, LA 70113
Fax ()		E-mail	Jphebert@nola.gov

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Signature	Jeffery Hebert	Date	12/9/2014
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1. What role did your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g., zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements). APPROXIMATELY 400

The Broad Refresh Project is a marquee investment project for the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA), and one of our proudest accomplishments to date. The Board of Commissioners of NORA approved a \$900,000 investment for the ReFresh Project provided through NORA's Commercial Corridor Gap Financing Program. The investment included a forgivable loan of \$420,000 for the acquisition of the property and a repayable loan of \$480,000 for construction of the project. NORA agreed to provide these funds to leverage other public and private financing sources and close the remaining financing gap to ensure that this visionary and catalytic project would happen.

Because NORA's Commercial Corridor Gap Financing Program is funded by Disaster Community Development Block Grants (D-CDBG), there are numerous Federal requirements that NORA passes along to the developer and oversees compliance for as the grant recipient. The Environmental Review of the project supported the development of the project in three ways. First, it revealed that no remediation was necessary for the previous removal of Underground Storage Tanks (USTs) at the site. Second, it included design approval by the State Historic Preservation Office (since the site is located within the Mid City National Register Historic District), which expedited the regulatory approvals. Third, it ensured that the rehabilitated structure would be flood-proofed to withstand future flood events, helping to protect the public and private investors and successfully demonstrating resilient design for new commercial development in New Orleans. Local contractors on the project were required to pay locally prevailing wage rates, in compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them? APPROXIMATELY 400

A key element of NORA's holistic revitalization efforts is to make strategic investments in catalytic projects in underinvested commercial corridors that will provide needed services and amenities, attract new private investment, provide superior design standards for new development, and create jobs for local residents.

Broad ReFresh occupies an extremely high profile site – an entire city square at a prominent intersection in the Mid City neighborhood on Broad Street, a heavily traveled crosstown route (over 25,000 vehicles pass by each day). Prior to its redevelopment, it was the largest single blighted and vacant property along the entire Broad Street corridor. The building had been blighted and vacant for over 10 years and repeatedly attracted illegal dumping and vagrants. Because the parcel and building are so large, and its future in doubt, its blighted and abandoned condition was having a negative effect on investment and redevelopment in the surrounding neighborhood.

However, Broad Community Connections saw the potential to reverse the effect with a catalytic economic development project at the site that could lift the surrounding neighborhood, and partnered with NORA to assist with financing, entitlement assistance, and development team support. In addition to the immediate removal of slum and blight conditions at the site, the project has also made the site and neighborhood more resilient by providing fresh food retail and educational opportunities in an area that was once a food desert and a variety of employment opportunities with over 150 permanent jobs available at the site.

All of the primary trade-offs and compromises were made during construction – there simply was never enough money to radically transform the existing structure as hoped. Further, like most rehabilitation projects, unforeseen conditions created additional costs, but the project had to stick to its original budget as additional funds were not available. NORA participated in all construction meetings to ensure that all of the project and program goals would ultimately be met. The ultimate design was achieved on an inflexible budget but nonetheless was of very high quality and has established a precedent for future development along the corridor and for future NORA-supported commercial development projects. NORA is extremely proud of this project, featuring it prominently in our promotional materials and showcasing it as our standard of excellence in design and programming.

3. Describe the project's impact on your city. Please be as specific as possible. Approximately 400

The ReFresh Project has been open for approximately eight months and is not yet fully occupied, but it is already a beacon for the surrounding neighborhoods. Broad Street forms a border of four distinct neighborhoods with unique socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. On a daily basis, it is clear that the ReFresh Project attracts residents and workers from each of the adjacent neighborhoods as well as other neighborhoods across the city. Perhaps it is not surprising given its strategic location, but it is great to see such a diverse cross section of the city's population working and shopping in the same place.

The power of the development was evident from the very beginning. The "bread breaking" (grand opening) of the Whole Foods set a new record for the company in sales per square foot on an opening day. Pork chops, a local favorite, sold out within minutes. Today, ads for apartment rentals and homes for sale in the area frequently boast about the walking and biking distances to the project. Shortly before construction began on the ReFresh Project, the property at the opposite corner of Broad and Bienville sold for \$495,000. Since the ReFresh Project has been completed, the asking price for that same property is now \$1,000,000. There is only anecdotal evidence of its impact so far, but it is impressive nonetheless.

Most importantly, the project has served as a model for equitable development in a city that struggles with major economic challenges such as inequality, unemployment, low educational attainment, and lack of healthy food access. This single project has positively impacted all of those challenges: there is incredible diversity among the employees of Whole Foods, Liberty's Kitchen, and the other tenants at ReFresh. In addition to hundreds of construction jobs, there are over 150 permanent jobs created on site—most of which are living wage and career-path jobs. The project team was very focused on reaching out to local and/or underemployed populations to ensure that this project help address—rather than exacerbate—the inequality that faces New Orleans and other American cities. The healthy food access and educational programming provided at Broad Refresh helps ensure nutritional and economic health for local residents, especially youth. These incredible results are not circumstantial: they are the result of a deliberate and holistic approach to truly equitable development that I could not be more proud of.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities? Approximately 400

The ReFresh Project is a new model for catalytic inner city economic development projects that leverage public and private funding sources to promote community resilience. It is a model in both its financing and its programming. In addition to private equity and philanthropic sources, the financing includes funding from all levels of government: Fresh Food Retailer Initiative funds from the City of New Orleans (local), Commercial Corridor Gap Financing Funds from the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (state), and New Markets Tax Credits (federal).

All of the funders were attracted to the project by the obvious synergy between the tenants at the project. The term "tenant" really sells them short – each of them is a partner in the project and a believer in the vision as much as any of the financial partners. At ReFresh, neighborhood residents can earn wages from a wide range of job opportunities provided by the various tenants, learn what to eat and how to cook it at the Tulane Center for Culinary Medicine, and then buy fresh food (prepared or unprepared) at Liberty's Kitchen and Whole Foods. Everyone in each of the surrounding neighborhoods could truly benefit from at least one of those three activities and many could benefit from two or all three.

The synergy and partnership between all of the investors and tenants in the project is obvious, but unique. The ReFresh Project is a model that deserves to be replicated and NORA looks forward to working with government agencies in other cities to help bring their projects to fruition.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project? Approximately 400

The most successful aspect of this project so far is its delivery on nearly everything that was promised to each of the public and private sector partners in the project as well as the surrounding community. Virtually everything has come to fruition almost exactly as advertised—and that is not an easy feat to accomplish. Construction was completed in about a year and the vast majority of the space in the building is leased. Yet, even with all these accomplishments in the first year of operations, it is obvious that there is room to grow and the best years for the project are still ahead of it.

The least successful aspect of this project is probably the direct financial benefit that has accrued to the for-profit development partner. Although this is a community-minded project, it is still a business deal for L+M Development Partners. L+M recognizes that there are indirect benefits that may accrue to them through their involvement at the nearby Faubourg Lafitte mixed income public housing redevelopment, however the return on their equity investment (at least in the short term) is probably not sufficient given the inherent risk of the project and other real estate investment opportunities. Yet, the involvement of an experienced, for profit development partner was the key to the financing and development of the project. The return on the public and philanthropic investment in this community is already obvious, but the developer will have to wait to see if it was a worthwhile financial investment and that will be critical if this model is to be replicated elsewhere.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
DEVELOPER
PERSPECTIVE



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This sheet is to be filled out by the person who took primary responsibility for project financing or is a representative of the group which did.

Name	Jeffrey Schwartz	Title	Executive Director
Organization	Broad Community Connections	Telephone (504)	722-3628
Address	300 N Broad Street, Suite 208	City/State/ZIP	New Orleans, LA 70119
Fax ()		E-mail	jeff@broadcommunityconnections.org

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Signature		Date	11/29/14
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1. What role did you or your company play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement. **APPROXIMATELY 700**

Broad Community Connections (BCC) is one of two organizations that jointly developed the ReFresh Project, along with L+M Development Partners. BCC is a community development organization that created the vision for the project, secured site control, brought all of the tenants and partners to the project, secured philanthropic and public sources of funding--including funds from the City's Fresh Food Retail Incentive program and the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority's Commercial Corridor revitalization program; BCC continues to spearhead joint programming and evaluation among on- and off-site partners through the ReFresh Coalition, and regularly convenes the ReFresh Coalition, which is the ongoing joint programming development and community engagement process for the project. Broad Community Connections also plays an important role in the financing of the project as the Junior Leverage Lender in the New Market Tax Credit financing structure, through which all sources of public and philanthropic investment in the ReFresh Project flow.

2. What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project? **APPROXIMATELY 700**

A number of compromises had to be navigated by the development team in order to successfully develop the ReFresh Project. Because of the mission-driven nature of the tenant-partners in the project, with only one for-profit tenant, the ReFresh Project was financially thin which made financing the project difficult. As a result of the project's limited cash flow, the development team had a difficult time finding ways to make all of the numbers work to meet the needs of the various tenants, and both the development team and each tenant-partner had to stretch to be in the project. This also resulted in eliminating some design elements that would have facilitated community engagement more readily right from the opening of the project. Lastly, while Broad Community Connections had initially hoped that the cash flow from the ReFresh Project would be a means to doing additional strategic development in the Broad Street corridor, completing ReFresh proved paramount.

3. How was the project financed? What, if any, innovative means of financing were used? *APPROXIMATELY 400*

The ReFresh Project is a \$21M project financed through a New Markets Tax Credit structure that involved a number of public, private, and philanthropic sources of funding. The project utilized \$10M in New Market Tax Credit funding, with \$10M in allocation and investment from Goldman Sachs and \$8M in allocation and investment from JPMorgan Chase. Goldman Sachs also provided the \$3M Senior loan. The Low Income Investment Fund provided \$1.5M in mezzanine debt, which was critical not only to fill a gap in the capital stack, but also to ensure that all other sources of softer money in the project—including public and philanthropic funds—were able to underwrite to meet the needs and goals of the project. Two crucial sources of local funding were utilized: the City of New Orleans' Fresh Food Retail Initiative program and New Orleans Redevelopment Authority Commercial Corridor revitalization program, which provided partially-forgivable loans of \$1M and \$900,000, respectively.

All of the public, private, and philanthropic sources outside of the senior and mezzanine loans and New Market Tax Credits were passed through a BCC Junior Leverage Lender entity, which is another novel aspect to the project. Foundations were salient partners in the development of the project. The Foundation for Louisiana played a critical role throughout the project, providing the initial \$25,000 grant to secure site control on the building, as well as \$95,000 to continue predevelopment. Once the project was ready to be financed, Foundation for Louisiana provided a \$500,000 Program-Related Investment. In addition, the Newman's Own Foundation made a \$250,000 grant to the project. In addition, Whole Foods Market was innovative in passing almost all of their \$6M buildout and development costs through the NMTC structure, which helped to generate more tax credit basis for the project, but which was only additional risk to them, and is a testament to their commitment to being a partner in the project.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of the project? *APPROXIMATELY 400*

The project is achieving resoundingly in its ability to bring partners and tenants together to create not only opportunities for each tenant-partner to be successful in their own right, but also in creating a platform for joint programming that will promote long-term community economic development and health impact in the surrounding communities. Far and away, the most successful aspect of the project is the manner in which all of the tenant-partners were able to work together to collocate in a building, and make the joint programming and collective impact possible.

The physical limitations of the building were largely overcome, although there are aspects of the project that are not as successful as others. The mid-century monolithic facade has been reimagined as a much more open and welcoming frontage, with space for a teaching garden around the perimeter of the building, as well as the rooftop, and a central lobby that will eventually become the hub of all joint programming activities on-site. All of the partners in the project were able to develop spaces that meet both their short-term needs, and also build towards their respective long-term goals.

The least successful aspect of the ReRefresh Project was that it was not a financial windfall for either development partner; while it is achieving its other aims, Broad Community Connections had originally hoped that it would enable a greater degree of organizational sustainability and create a means for continuing to develop projects that follow the ReRefresh model, but these were trumped by the far more important consideration of having the project be successful on its own terms.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROFESSIONAL
CONSULTANT
PERSPECTIVE



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This sheet is to be filled out by a professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, legal, or other services. Copies may be given to other professionals if desired.

Name	Leah Berger Jensen	Title	Principal/Owner
Organization	The Berger Group	Telephone (504)	231-1321
Address	4035 Washington Ave.	City/State/ZIP	New Orleans 70125
Fax ()		E-mail	leah@berger.com

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Signature	Leah Berger	Date	12/9/2014
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1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project? Approximately 400

The Berger Group has been contracted with Broad Community Connections to work with the ReFresh Project since June 2013 as the primary public health consultant on the project. Activities have included 1). Program Development, 2). Coalition Building and 3). Grant Funding.

1). Program Development activities include designing and developing the Community Health Outreach Education Program (CHOP) that includes the use of Community Health Workers to implement the activities. The Berger Group ensures that the program is innovative, culturally appropriate and responsive and respective to the community's wants and needs.

2). The Berger Group facilitates the ReFresh NOLA Coalition, which is a synergistic collaboration of 40 like-minded organizations who a). Develop and manage the ReFresh Project's health and community programming; b). Use data to monitor and evaluate the project and measure its impact; and c). Share best practices and lessons learned.

3). The Berger Group is involved in researching potential opportunities for a diverse funding, including private, public and grant funding. The Berger Group applying for grant funding and managing grants, and determining potential sources for ongoing revenue, all which is important for project sustainability.

2. Describe the project's impact on its community. Please be as specific as possible. Approximately 400

The overall project goal is to build a healthier community through food and wellness programming. The Berger Group's role is to develop a monitoring and evaluation plan to determine the overall success of the project, and measure its impact in year 1, year 5 and 10 years down the road. The Berger Group is working with the ReFresh NOLA Coalition, the collaborative of 40 organizations, to work together to identify variables so that we can identify success.

The ReFresh Project and the CHOP Program are working towards long-term positive health outcomes that will make the Broad Street communities the healthiest in the city.

Expected Outputs

The Community Health Outreach and Education Program will achieve the following outputs:

ReFresh Coalition partners will teach 10 culinary, gardening, and health and wellness classes per month; Community health workers will host or attend 8 community meetings per month; Community health workers will interact with 25 community members per month; ReFresh Coalition partners will teach 3 exercise and physical fitness classes per month

Expected Outcomes

By the end of the grant period, the Community Health Outreach and Education Program will achieve the following:

Increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables by 10%; Decreased consumption of fast food, fried food, processed foods, foods high in fat and cholesterol by 10%; Increased physical activity through gardening, physical fitness classes and activities by 15%; Increased participation and engagement in neighborhood programming, classes and meetings by 20%

Identified Long-term outcomes include:

Reduced BMI; Decreased prevalence of diabetes; Decreased prevalence of hypertension; Decreased stress; Healthier children and families; Decreased dependence on medications; Decreased depression; Decreased number of unnecessary hospitalizations; Healthy workforce; Children succeeding in school; Improved quality of life; Reduced stress and reduced violence; Empowered community members

3. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession? Approximately 400

Other health professionals and public health professionals are able to learn from the ReFresh Project's monitoring and evaluation plan. Other community partners can utilize the same variables, which will only leverage the overall data pool and it is not necessary for them to recreate the wheel. Once the evaluation process is complete, we will have a rich data pool for others in the community to utilize for future research, grants, or simple knowledge about the community in which they live, work and play.

As for the Community Health Education and Outreach Program, the initial funder of that program, Whole Cities Foundation, is already talking with ReFresh Project about co-branding the educational components of the program since it is so unique and beneficial to the communities it serves, and Whole Cities Foundation wants to start replicating it in other cities. Note: Whole Cities Foundation is a brand new charitable arm of Whole Foods and is focused on Urban areas in the U.S. It was announced at the ReFresh Project groundbreaking and the ReFresh Project is the very first project that it has funded. This is a new partnership that has opportunity to flourish and bring its best-practices to other parts of the country who suffer from health inequities.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project? Approximately 400

The most successful part of the project is the partnerships, collective impact nature of the project, and co-location of services. This is very difficult to reproduce, and something that came so naturally in this community. The ReFresh NOLA Coalition has been meeting monthly for the past three years, facilitated by The Berger Group, which has been a key to the success of the project. There is true synergy amongst all of the partners, and everyone wants the other to succeed and there is no competition. There is true camaraderie, which breeds for capacity building, trust and success.

One potential negative aspect of the project, is directly related to its success, and that is only that it can be a bit confusing given the sheer number of partners and connections amongst the partners. At different times throughout the project we have attempted to draw a diagram of the partnerships, and it is not a clear linear path, but it looks more like a messy web of connections. This makes it difficult at times to describe exactly how each partner is connected with one another through referrals, MOUs, etc. However, we are grateful that each partner is making the independent connections with another partner organization through referral arrangements, etc, even though it does make it a difficult administrative task for us to explain and quantify these different layers.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
ARCHITECT
OR DESIGNER
PERSPECTIVE



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This sheet is to be filled out by a design professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, or other services. Copies may be given to other design professionals if desired.

Name	Kenneth Gowland	Title	Principal
Organization	MetroStudio	Telephone	(504) 283-3685
Address	6501 Spanish Fort Blvd	City/State/ZIP	New Orleans, La 70124
Fax ()		E-mail	kgowland@metrostudio.net

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Signature	Kennth Gowland	Date	12/9/2014
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1. Describe the design concept of this project, including urban design considerations, choice of materials, scale, etc. Approximately 400

As this was the renovation and redevelopment of an existing building, the design team was tasked with a unique set of constraints and objectives. The original building was a 1960's era grocery store that embodied the planning and design ethics of the time. This suburban style development was constructed in an urban area of New Orleans and conceived in a manner completely at odds with the more traditional adjacent urban main street fabric. Prior to redevelopment, the site was devoid of pedestrian access and circulation. Parking and vehicular access were the dominant site features. And the entire site (one city block) was capped entirely in concrete with no landscaping, storm water retention etc.

The scale and placement and materiality of the building was also at odds with the surrounding context and at odds with the typical historic development pattern of smaller, 2 and 3 story mixed use buildings with ground floor retail or service uses. The existing buildings windowless concrete and masonry shell did little to create a meaningful dialogue with the surrounding context functioning more as a bunker within the urban context of the site.

Given the existing conditions and project constraints the design team chose to utilize the renovation activities and new building programs as a vehicle to reconcile the existing structure with its surrounding context.

- In a process of strategic demolition nearly 40% of the existing hardscape was removed to create landscaping and rain garden areas.
- Large areas of the building's existing concrete and masonry walls were removed to make the building more permeable, open and accessible.
- A main entry and lobby was carved out of the existing building to provide a sense of arrival as well as a location for education and outreach activities.
- Walkways around the entire perimeter of the site were created to reconnect the block and building to the surrounding urban context.
- The buildings covered cart storage areas were reconceived and modified to function as outdoor café areas.

New materials were installed on the monolithic exterior to help communicate the ethos of the project. Wood screens and louvers helped echo the new sustainable food and education programs. Perforated metal panels were incorporated on the exterior to create spaces for dining or casual interaction. Repurposed graffiti embellished metal panels were reconceived as interior art installations. Previously obscured interior structural components were left exposed. And the existing patina of the aged flooring, masonry, and concrete were allowed to stand in contrast with adjacent modern interventions.

2. Describe the most important social and programmatic functions of the design. Approximately 400

The most important social and programmatic functions of the design relate directly to four basic components:

Blight Reduction

Prior to redevelopment, the building and surrounding site represented a block of blight along the Broad Street corridor. The size and scale of the blighted building was a major deterrent to any adjacent development and investment. The redevelopment of the existing building and site represents a major improvement to the social and economic conditions of the surrounding neighborhood. It stands as a living example as to the viability of projects within what was once considered one of the least desirable areas of the city. Since project completion numerous adjacent developments have sprouted up indicating continuing growth and investment along the Broad Street corridor.

Access to healthy food alternatives

Neighborhood resident choices were limited to small scale vendors that had little in the way of offerings for fresh produce or consumer food staples. This access was further limited as many neighborhood residents have no access to personal transportation, prohibiting access to stores outside of the immediate area. The Refresh Project brings much needed access to sustainable and affordable healthy food choices through spaces like the Whole Food Market and Liberty's Kitchen. Additionally, the project included space for an urban farm on site. That farm and related initiatives will provide access to training and education for neighborhood residents interested in learning how to grow and harvest their own sustainably grown food.

Access to Education/Training and Support

The building's program includes spaces to house and support many non-governmental agencies focused on providing education and training to the local community. Those organizations include Tulane's Goldring Center of Culinary Medicine, Liberty's Kitchen, Boys Town, and FirstLine Schools. The spaces range from teaching kitchens to classroom/meeting spaces.

Positive Public Space Formation

Most importantly, the redevelopment of this site provides the opportunity to create a positive public space within the neighborhood. The ReFresh Project represents more than a collection of tenants, community programs, and fresh food initiatives. It represents the transformation of a blighted property into new public space amenity within New Orleans. It already has become a prime location for community events and neighborhood activities.

ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the major challenges of designing this project and any design trade-offs or compromises required to complete the project. Approximately 400

Given the existing state of the building it is important to note that the vast majority of project resources were committed to bringing much needed infrastructure to the site. Prior to the redevelopment the building completely lacked any serviceable plumbing infrastructure, electrical infrastructure, data/telcom infrastructure, gas infrastructure, etc. Furthermore the original building was never intended to function with multiple tenants so it lacked the necessary plan characteristics to support this new program. As such project resources for other more visible components of the design were significantly constrained.

Given scarce resources the design team worked to reconceive the existing building and site in an efficient manner that would address the larger project goals while working within cost constraints. To that end:

- Existing bollards, guards, and cart storage areas around the perimeter of the building were converted into planters and café areas.
- Windows, Doors, and storefront glazing were inserted into the existing building envelope in a manner that required little to no modification of the existing buildings structural system.
- Where possible the building was planned in a manner that took advantage of existing egress paths, stairways or other components of Life Safety.
- Loading docks and bays were planned in a manner that utilized existing site areas and features rather than demolishing significant areas of the existing building to provide service access.
- Existing mechanical areas at the rear of the building were converted to porches/entries for new tenant areas.
- The existing roof parking deck was planned and coordinated to provide for a wide variety of community programs and events.
- Existing materials were selectively retained and incorporated into the design of new spaces.
- Cost effective low-maintenance materials such as galvanized steel panels, standard steel shapes, regionally available wood products and locally.
- Site work and site design was conceived more as a “subtractive” process than “additive” process whereby landscape areas, driveways, and walkways were created through selective and strategic demolition activities as opposed to more costly “constructed” solutions.

4. Describe the ways in which the design relates to its urban context. Approximately 400

While still an anomalous condition within the Broad Street corridor and neighborhood the redeveloped existing building makes a more meaningful contribution to the surrounding urban context through the following:

- Sustainable Redevelopment: Rather than demolishing the existing site and building the redevelopment recasts an existing blighted block as a first class community amenity.
- Improved Connections and Circulation: Through selective demolition and construction the redeveloped site is able to provide for both pedestrians and vehicular circulation in a clear and functional manner that better connects the building and site to the surrounding existing urban context.
- Green Space and Green Amenities: By reducing the overall site concrete coverage by an estimated 40% the redevelopment brings much needed green space and urban gardens to the existing urban context.
- Storm Water Relief: 40% Reductions in impermeable site surfaces created much needed areas for relief for storm drainage, thus reducing loads on the city's existing combined sewer system.
- Increased Permeability/Porosity of the existing building envelope: By strategically removing areas of existing masonry and concrete walls the building's interior was allowed to open up to the surrounding urban context. Appropriately scaled signage, storefront entries and glazing helps make the buildings more transparent and open, exposing the life and activities at the interior of the building to the surrounding urban context.
- Lighting and security: By creating a building that is occupied 12-14 hours a day, 7 days a week safety and security is brought to the surrounding urban context.
- New Programs and Uses: The fresh food and social outreach programs included in the redeveloped building fill a void for access to services and food infrastructure in the existing urban context.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
OTHER
PERSPECTIVE



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Name **Liz Ogbu** Title **Founder and Principal**
 Organization **Studio O** Telephone **(510) 295-8557**
 Address **4811 Telegraph Ave, No. 401** City/State/ZIP **Oakland/CA/94609**
 Fax () E-mail **liz@lizogbu.com**

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Signature **Liz Ogbu** Date **12/08/14**

1. What role did you play in the development of this project? **APPROXIMATELY 700**

I'm a designer and social innovation strategist that focuses on using high impact design to creatively tackle challenging socioeconomic conditions in underserved communities. One of my current initiatives is around supporting groups developing "health hubs," which is an innovative and emerging model within public health and community development.

My involvement with this project has emerged on the back end and is focused on helping Broad Community Connections (BCC) and the ReFresh Coalition figure out how to build their capacity, particularly around community engagement, guiding the ongoing development of the project's identity and public spaces, and advising on the implementation strategies that support the "total health" ambition of the "Community Health Hub" model. As part of this effort, I've been working with the team to evaluate the development process to date as well as developing and testing strategies to engage community members more directly in the process of physical and program development.

2. Describe the impact that this project has had on your community. Please be as specific as possible. **APPROXIMATELY 700**

As a consultant from outside of the community, my perspective is based on what I've seen, heard, and felt during my regular engagement with community members and partners. With the community, I have continually encountered a sense of pride that this place exist. The old grocery store that existed on this site for decades is remembered fondly, not only by people in this neighborhood but also by others throughout New Orleans. Its absence was felt profoundly by area residents and so the site return to active and community-serving use is something that was often happily referred to in my interviews with residents. The Whole Foods alone has an over 70% local hiring rate (with most of that hailing from the immediately adjacent neighborhoods), providing a much needed steady paycheck and work experience for many. And health and nutrition education programs through the store and other project partners are something that has already attracted considerable interest.

Among the coalition partners, there's tremendous passion and excitement about this project. People feel not only excited about what they've been able to accomplish thus far with the building's completion and project launch but also the potential of what their collective energy can do in the future. I've heard from several people from the co-CEO of Whole foods to the lead gardener of the ReFresh farm that they "believe something special is happening here." It's that kind of energy that can help drive change in even the most challenging context.

And perhaps the most tangible sign of impact can be seen in the cross-organization partnerships that have already begun to emerge. Liberty's Kitchen has already had some of the kids it has trained get hired at Whole Foods. Lose Dat, a weight management and nutrition partner, that is an off-site partner has taking advantage of healthy food shopping tours at Whole Foods and is planning to do some of its healthy cooking classes at the Tulane Goldring Center. And there are several conversations underway about other collaborative programs that can be easily tested and implemented within the next year.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them? Approximately 400

The constrained budget and challenging schedule meant that some of the public spaces that could best embody the ReFresh concept were underdeveloped and that some of the cross partner program development has lagged behind completing the building and launching basic operations. This has meant that there has been some frustration from the partners about the pace of movement towards the project's larger goals and an awareness gap among the community of those goals. Many associate the building Whole Foods or one of the other on-site partners.

I was not involved at the time, but have partnered with the coalition and BCC more recently to see how to creatively rectify this situation. Publicity, new signage, and events like the Community Opening Day have helped to increase awareness of the broader opportunities. And as noted in the previous answer, the partners have also begun to experiment with small cross-organization efforts.

Finally, I think that it's important to take into account one of the most unique aspects of this project. BCC and the ReFresh Project have always played the long game in the development of this project. We often think of a building/project as complete the moment the doors open. But the process -- particularly with community development projects -- is rarely that pristine. Development here is not "a period" but "a comma" that frames the ongoing evolution of this place and its programs. The coalition members are already providing services which allows us to see how the various spaces and programs perform. It also enables us to tangibly engage the community. We can leverage their voices and engagement to improve the spaces previously constrained by the larger development process.

4. What do you consider to be the the most and least successful aspects of this project? Approximately 400

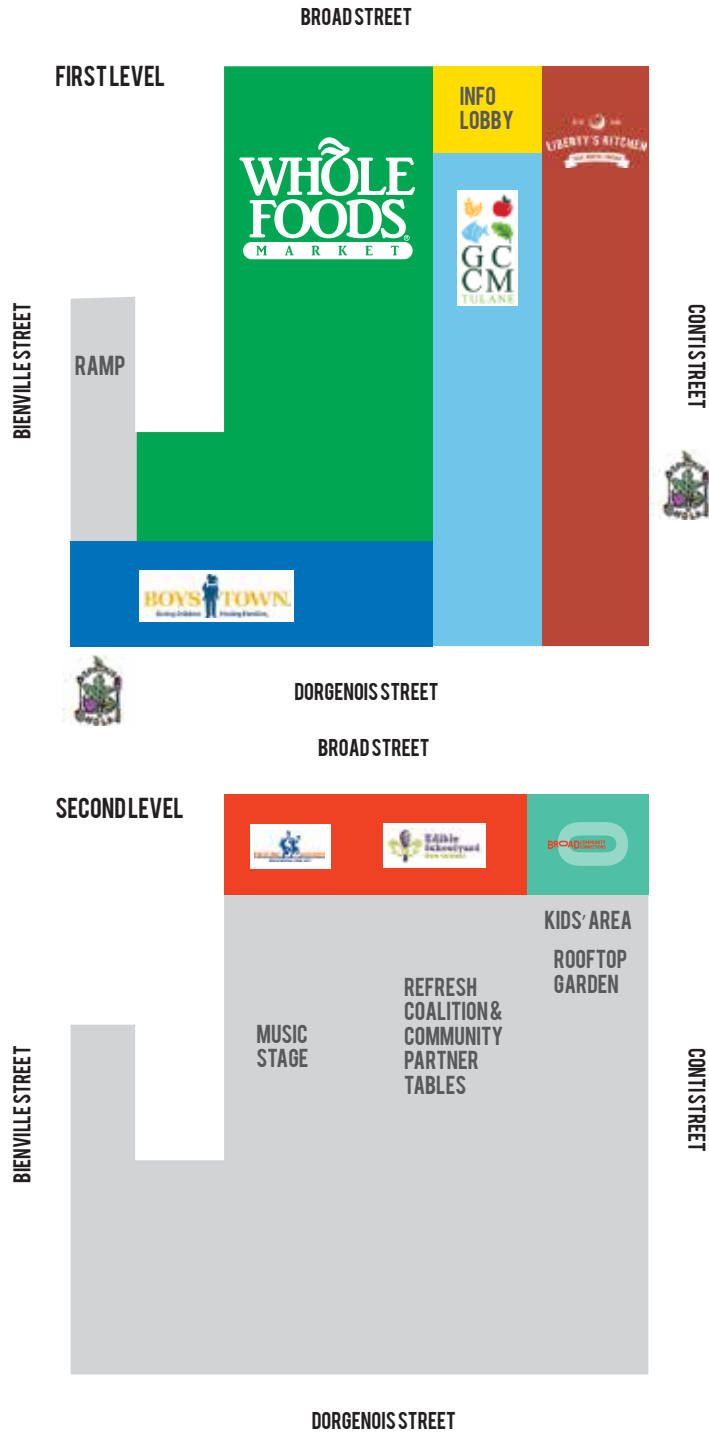
One of the most successful aspects of this project is the ReFresh Coalition. Community development projects can often focus on the physical components or policy initiatives, but by also weaving in a strong organizational structure like the ReFresh Coalition, this project has created the infrastructure needed to make this more than just a grocery store or a building filled with community serving nonprofits. The presence of on- and off-site partners also makes this a truly urban project by extending this project beyond the building.

I think the framing of the community engagement process, which is still evolving, will prove over time to be highly successful and a model to other communities. The process is a credit to not only the various partners in the project but in particular BCC, who plays an important dual role as a co-developer AND community partner.

The least successful aspects of the project are the parts that I'm now collaborating with BCC and the ReFresh Coalition to support: the underdeveloped public spaces, the branding, and certain components of the "total health" experience. But the fact that the project has already been successful in terms of user traffic and community perception in spite of these challenges is a testament to its strength as an idea and the efforts of the project development team and the coalition members. It makes me excited about the future of this project and its impact as it continues to evolve.

REFRESH

P R O J E C T



Plan Diagram of the ReFresh Project, *credit: BCC*



Above: View of vacant buildings before project, *credit: BCC*
Below: View of ReFresh project after completion, *credit: BCC*



Above: View of central lobby installation, *credit:* The Berger Group
Below: View inside the Whole Foods store, *credit:* L+M Development



Above: View of a lobby wellness graphic, *credit: Studio O*

Below: View of the central stair history graphic of coalition organizations, *credit: Studio O*



Above: "Makin' Groceries" inlay outside the building, credit: BCC

Below: One of the ReFresh Coalition partners at the ReFresh farm, credit: Studio O



Above: Martial Arts demonstration at recent community event, *credit: SPROUT NOLA*
Below: Social wellness activity available at recent community event, *credit: SPROUT NOLA*

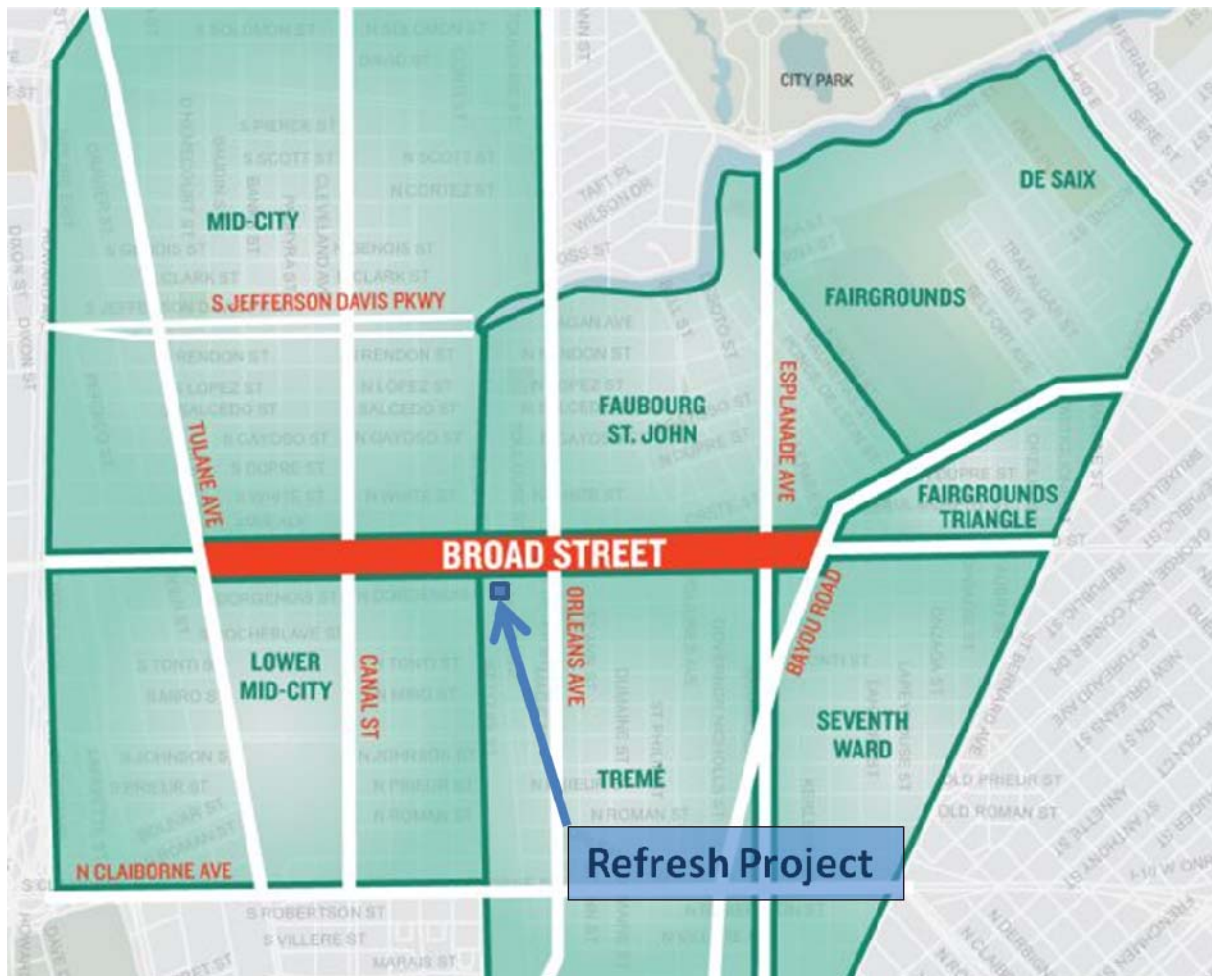
The ReFresh Project - National Trust for Historic Preservation

preservationnation.org ([http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/main-streetnews/story-of-the-week/2014-/the-refresh-project-an.html?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=like&utm_campaign=The ReFresh Project](http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/main-streetnews/story-of-the-week/2014-/the-refresh-project-an.html?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=like&utm_campaign=The+ReFresh+Project))

By Jeffrey Schwartz, Executive Director of Broad Community Connections
From *Main Street Story of the Week* | June 19, 2014 |



Founded in 2008, Broad Community Connections (BCC) is working to revitalize Broad Street in New Orleans, and address the challenges facing the commercial corridor dealing not only with the impacts of Hurricane Katrina, but decades of marginalization and disinvestment. The communities along Broad Street - including Tremé, Mid-City, Lower Mid-City, Faubourg St. John, Esplanade Ridge, and the 7th Ward - underpin all of BCC's work as the organization works to bring these neighborhoods together and promote their economic, residential, and cultural development.



Despite facing several challenges, the neighborhoods along Broad Street are known as some of the most historic, vibrant, and culturally resonant communities in the city. Tremé is one of the oldest neighborhoods in New Orleans and is the birthplace of Jazz; Mid-City and Lower Mid-City are organically mixed-use and mixed-income communities bearing witness to a resurgence since Katrina; and Faubourg St., Esplanade Ridge, and the 7th Ward are neighborhoods that loom large in the Creole history of the city. Over \$4 billion has been invested in these communities since Katrina, primarily in the redevelopment of the Lafitte and Iberville public housing developments, the \$2.2 billion rebuilding of the VA and Charity hospitals, and the construction of new infrastructure like the Lafitte Greenway. While this promises to bring a renaissance in certain parts of the greater Mid-City area, there are still significant gaps in the ability of the Broad Street commercial district to meet the daily needs of its residents and business and property owners.

In order to address these needs, BCC uses the Four-Point Approach as the basis for all of its work, but also undertakes initiatives that go outside of the typical Main Street toolkit. Some of the BCC's more successful projects include The Iconic Signage Project, an ongoing partnership with the Arts Council of New Orleans to pair local artists and businesses with business owners to create new neon signs reminiscent of the corridor's heyday as a primary route into New Orleans, and several zoning and beautification projects which have helped to revitalize the corridor, such as the 100 Trees for Broad and Bayou Road landscaping campaign.

The ReFresh Project



One of the most complex and innovative projects began a few years back when Broad Community Connections decided to redevelop Broad Street's largest vacant building, a former Schwegmann Brothers Giant Supermarket, as a grocery store—fresh food access is one of the community's most pressing needs. The site, located at the intersection of Broad and Bienville Street, had only served two uses since the Civil War, when it was developed as the House of the Good Shepherd, a home for young women. In the 1950s, the site was acquired by Schwegmann's, which constructed a mid-century modern building and operated it as a large-format supermarket until the early 2000s. After the closing of Schwegmann's, the building was purchased by Robert's grocery store, which

operated it until the eve of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

The building sat blighted and vacant until December 2010, when Broad Community Connections received a grant from the Foundation for Louisiana to place the property under contract. BCC then worked with community stakeholders and partners to develop a vision for what became known as the ReFresh Project, a food access hub. The official mission of the ReFresh Project is to improve the health of the surrounding communities through fresh food access and education, and to create a catalytic economic development project to anchor small businesses in the Broad Street commercial corridor. BCC and its partners developed a model to bring not only a high quality fresh food retailer to the Broad Street community, but also to co-locate culinary and nutrition education, health and wellness classes, social services, and youth and workforce development programs under the same roof.

BCC partnered with [L+M Development Partners](#), a mission-driven development company based in New York and with a number of other organizations in order to achieve the ReFresh Project vision. BCC brought on the project's first two tenants—Liberty's Kitchen, a culinary-based workforce and life skills youth training program, and The Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine, a teaching kitchen for medical students that provides free cooking and healthy eating classes to the community—over the summer of 2011. Soon after, BCC began conversations with Whole Foods Market, who enthusiastically became a core partner for the project in December 2011, with a deep interest in bringing the highest quality fresh and healthy foods to underserved communities. As BCC and L+M Development Partners continued to develop the New Market Tax Credit-financed project throughout 2012 and early 2013, additional partners committed to the project, including FirstLine Schools, which operates the local Edible School Yard affiliate, the Crescent City Community Land Trust, and Boys Town center for children and families.



With the ReFresh Project's mix of health-, food access-, and workforce development-focused tenants, BCC and its partners looked to maximize the potential for collaboration among the group and to connect with like-minded community partners. Starting more than a year before the project's construction, BCC worked to develop the ReFresh NOLA Coalition, a group that has worked to develop collaborative, collective impact programming for the ReFresh Project, as well as serve as a gathering space for ReFresh Project tenants and community partners. The coalition has served to connect the project with community partners including community gardening organizations that will operate an on-site teaching farm, as well as other mission driven organizations like Second Harvest Food Bank, the Tulane Prevention Research Center, Edible Schoolyard NOLA, the Ruth U. Fertel/Tulane Community Health Center, Grow Dat Youth Farm, Friends of Lafitte Corridor, and others. The group continues to grow and has developed committees to address project's goals of community health and revitalization.

The ReFresh Project opened with Whole Foods Market's grand opening in February 2014, and other partners are scheduled to open throughout the spring and summer. The ReFresh Community Farm, the project's on-site teaching farm, is in the process of fundraising and is also expected to open in the coming months, rounding out a project that hopes to continue to revitalize the people and businesses on Broad Street.



Learn more about the ReFresh Project at www.broadcommunityconnections.org.

Check out the following articles for more information and photos:

Old Schwegmann Store on Broad Street Could Become Fresh Food Hub *Rebecca Mowbray / The Times-Picayune / August 12, 2012.*

Whole Foods Market Work Begins on North Broad Street *Richard A. Webster / The Times-Picayune / May 9, 2013.*

Whole Foods Market Opens in Mid-City with Hopes of Broad Street Revitalization *Katherine Sayre / The Times-Picayune / February 4, 2014.*

Jeffrey Schwartz is the founding Executive Director of Broad Community Connections, where he has worked since January 2009. A native New Orleanian, Jeff has eight years of community economic development experience, where he has focused on community development finance, small business and real estate development, and the relationship between the health and vibrancy of a community and its built environment.

Whole Foods Market opens in Mid-City with hopes of Broad Street revitalization

nola.com

(http://www.nola.com/business/index.ssf/2014/02/whole_foods_market_opens_on_br.html) ·
by Katherine Sayre, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune · February 4, 2014

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In a chef's hat and coat, Demietriek Scott proudly stood at the end of a grocery aisle, as throngs of shoppers passed by in the newly opened Whole Foods Market on Broad Street

(http://www.nola.com/business/index.ssf/2013/04/whole_foods_calls_north_broad.html) on Tuesday.

He showed off a shelf of brightly labeled glass bottles with his own Creole BBQ sauces -- Whoo Doo, Beer Bee-Q and Fiya Water varieties -- created by NOLA Foods, the company he started in Treme after 20 years in restaurant kitchens.

"This is the first store in the city I have this much product on the shelf," Scott said.

Featuring local products is part of the business model for Whole Foods Market, an Austin, Texas-based grocery that has been expanding nationwide. The Mid-City store, which held its grand opening Tuesday, is the grocer's third location in the New Orleans area.

In speaking to a crowd gathered outside the Mid-City store, leaders of the development insisted that this location will be different: more than 330 local products, classes on healthy cooking and shopping on a budget, and partnerships with on-site community groups that will be studied for a national model on promoting healthy eating.

"What's different about this project is we are all in this together," said Whole Foods co-CEO Walter Robb.

Whole Foods is the anchor store in the \$20 million ReFresh Project development, a renovation of the 60,000-square-foot former Schweggman's building at Broad and Bienville streets. The project was developed by Broad Community Connections, a local nonprofit focused (http://www.nola.com/business/index.ssf/2012/08/old_schwegmann_store_on_broad.html) on revitalizing the area, and L+M Development Partners, a New York-based firm that specializes in low-income and market-rate housing.

Jeffrey Schwartz, Broad Community Connections executive director, said he knew there was a need and demand from the surrounding neighborhoods for this kind of new development on Broad.

"This is where the culture resides," Schwartz said. "These are the neighborhoods where it's the people that make New Orleans New Orleans. And for 50 or 60 years, Broad Street, just like Claiborne Avenue, just like a lot of these other avenues, has been completely disinvested in."

Schwartz said the goals are to promote healthy eating, get neighbors involved at the store, and stimulate small business development along Broad Street.

Whole Foods is a name often known for organic and pricier items that appeal to wealthier shoppers, a reputation that earned it the nickname "Whole Paycheck."

Schwartz said the grocer is intent on proving they can be affordable, including offering their lower priced 365 Everyday Value line of products.

The other ReFresh Project tenants on Broad Street will include Liberty's Kitchen, a nonprofit that provides culinary training to youths and meals to public schools, and Tulane University's Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine, one of the country's first teaching kitchens associated with a medical school. Goldring will teach residents, students and doctors how to use healthy cooking to avoid food-related diseases.

"Nothing is happening in New Orleans that is not a partnership," said Mayor Mitch Landrieu outside the store.

The city, through its Fresh Food Retailer Initiative, loaned \$1 million to Broad Community Connections for the project, with as much as \$500,000 forgivable. The New Orleans Redevelopment Authority added \$900,000 through its Commercial Corridor Revitalization program, with additional money coming from new market tax credits, Goldman Sachs, Chase, the Foundation for Louisiana, Newman's Own Foundation and La Raza.

The Fresh Food Retailer Initiative launched in March 2011 with the goal of expanding access to healthy food and revitalizing neighborhoods. The city and its partner, Hope Enterprise Corp., provided \$14 million in Disaster Community Development Block Grant funds to the program.

Veronica Hunter, who lives in Gentilly, was among the first shoppers making groceries on Tuesday. She grew up in the Broad Street area, she said, and she sees the Whole Foods as a new opportunity for her childhood neighborhood.

"I would like to see Broad Street flourishing like I remember it as a child," Hunter said. "There was everything you needed on Broad Street."

Whole Foods also announced Tuesday that has created a nonprofit Whole Cities Foundation focused on promoting healthy eating nationwide (http://www.nola.com/business/index.ssf/2014/02/whole_foods_launches_nationwid.html), starting by studying the ReFresh Project for to develop a national model.

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(http://www.nola.com/business/index.ssf/2014/02/whole_foods_market_opens_on_br.html) · by Katherine Sayre, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune · February 4, 2014

Tulane School of Medicine opens first-of-its-kind teaching kitchen

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(http://www.nola.com/education/index.ssf/2014/08/tulane_school_of_medicine_open.html) ·
by Jed Lipinski, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune · August 22, 2014

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As he diced a pile of green onions, London Baker kept his eye on the group of Tulane University (<http://topics.nola.com/tag/tulane-university/index.html>) medical students cooking catfish tacos beside him.

A recent graduate of Johnson & Wales University College of Culinary Arts, Baker, 23, recently joined the staff of the new teaching kitchen inside the ReFresh Project (http://www.nola.com/business/index.ssf/2013/05/whole_foods_market_work_begins.html), a fresh food hub at 300 N. Broad Street in Mid-City. Part of Tulane's Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine (http://www.nola.com/health/index.ssf/2012/07/tulane_university_medical_student.html), the kitchen has a simple but revolutionary goal: to teach doctors and medical students how to cook, enabling them to pass culinary advice onto their patients.

"Beautiful, guys, beautiful!" Baker said as the students fried the catfish in olive oil and stirred a mixture of frozen corn, tomatoes and lime juice. Over a spare burner, a second-year medical student named Danielle Day was flipping a corn tortilla with a pair of tongs.

"I think knowing how to cook healthy food can make you a better doctor," she said. "That way you're not just telling people what to do, but how to do it."

The idea for the kitchen was spearheaded by Dr. Timothy Harlan, the Goldring Center's executive director. During a press conference at the space on Friday morning, Harlan noted that physicians in the U.S. have made great strides over the last 30 years in treating diseases like diabetes and hypertension. But many of them still lack the tools to help prevent disease.

"The Institute of Medicine recommends just 25 hours [of nutritional education] over the course of four years of medical school," he said. "And only 27 percent of medical schools reach those 25 hours."

The Goldring Center has been in operation for two-and-a-half years and put around 130 medical students through the program, or around 13 percent of Tulane medical school's total enrollment, Harlan added. But the new kitchen represents a significant expansion, allowing up to 190 students to enroll each semester and broadening the program's reach in the realms of diet, nutrition and preventative medicine.

Thus far, nine other medical schools have licensed the curriculum, and dozens of others have expressed interest, Harlan said.

Running the kitchen is Leah Sarris, who Harlan described as "the first chef to work as a full-time instructor at school of medicine." With a degree in culinary nutrition from Johnson & Wales, Goldring's partner institute, Harris stresses the

importance of correcting misperceptions about healthy eating.

"People tend to think that healthy food is flavorless, expensive, hard to make," she said. "We're here to blow those ideas out the door."

While supervising the preparation of a low-fat Caesar salad, Sarris noted that the kitchen will source all of its ingredients from Whole Foods, conveniently located in the space next door. But don't expect tofu, seitan or other vegan delicacies on the menu.

"Tofu is kind of a scary ingredient," she said. "We're focusing on ingredients that are available no matter where people shop."

To that point, Alan Noll, another second-year medical student, added that if you're trying to get people to change their diet, it's hard to tell them to try food they've never eaten before.

Then again, one mission of the teaching kitchen is to change peoples' minds about food they only *think* they don't like, such as cauliflower.

One of the recipes Sarris teaches students to prepare is mashed cauliflower--an odd but healthier alternative to that classic American comfort food, mashed potatoes.

"A lot of people had bad experiences with cauliflower growing up," Noll said. "But now I actually prefer it to mashed potatoes. I just think it's a lot more interesting."

As part of the curriculum, chefs and medical student at the Goldring Center will also teach a free, six-week class to members of the community. Lessons will range from how to properly hold a cutting knife to how to shop on a budget.

The Goldring Center encourages those interested in learning more to visit the Goldring Center's website (<http://tmedweb.tulane.edu/mu/teachingkitchen/>).

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ReFresh Project to unveil new community farm » Mid-City Messenger

midcitymessenger.com (<http://midcitymessenger.com/2014/10/24/refresh-project-to-unveil-new-community-farm/>) · by Della Hasselle



(<http://midcitymessenger.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/refresh.png>)

A new community farm built by the ReFresh Project on Broad Street in Mid-City is the latest part of a revitalization effort turning blighted and vacant property into a vibrant hub focused on health and well-being.

The official debut of the ReFresh Community Farm is slated for Saturday, but organizers there have been working for months to make a healthy lifestyle just a little bit more accessible for those living in the traditionally underserved

neighborhood. The new farm, which will be celebrated during a grand opening on site, will offer gardening classes, an edible orchard, and plots available for community members.

According to Jeff Schwartz, the founding director of the Main Street organization overseeing the project, the new farm is exciting because it will break down backyard gardening basics for residents who want to eat better, but don't know much about growing fresh food.

“I think there's a lot of high-level talk about food access and what it means to bring food to the underserved community,” said Schwartz, who directs Broad Community Connections. “I think what is so great about a community farm is that it's not intended to be a production farm. It's intended to be a community farm. Fundamentally, people get to learn about growing and get resources to figure out if they'd like to grow more.”

According to Schwartz, accessibility has been the main focus of this and other projects developed by Broad Community Connections, devoted solely to revitalizing the Broad Street corridor. The ReFresh Project, a fresh food hub located on the corner of North Broad Street and Bienville Avenue, is just one of several ways that Schwartz and other members are working to make that happen.

The 60,000-square-foot ReFresh Project, which broke ground last May, is anchored by a new Whole Foods Market. It's built at the former Schweggman's site, which had been vacant since Hurricane Katrina. When the project opened, it was celebrated by city officials as part of a grand plan to bring more fresh food accessibility to underserved communities by giving grants for new grocery stores.

The lack of fresh food has long been a problem in New Orleans, and it was made worse after Hurricane Katrina, according to an article in The Washington Post. (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/hurricane-recovery->

gave-new-orleans-reason-to-band-together-to-offer-more-healthy-food/2014/06/23/3f76399a-f320-11e3-bf76-447a5df6411f_story.html) One 2008 study showed there was only one supermarket in the city for every 18,000 residents. That's far worse than the national average, which at the time was closer to 8,800 residents per grocery store.

But since it's opened, the project has developed into so much more than just another grocery store, organizers say. The development also houses Liberty Kitchen, a culinary work program for at-risk youth, and the Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine at Tulane University, the first-of-its kind kitchen that teaches residents to use healthy food to prevent diseases such as diabetes and hypertension.

Now, the on-site teaching farm will literally envelop the building, Schwartz said, providing an immediate resource for people who want to know more about how to take care of themselves by eating fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs. That's important, experts say, because poor nutrition has long been linked to serious health issues in New Orleans. A 2010 study by the New Orleans Health Department, for example, showed that 64 percent of adult New Orleanians were obese. (<http://www.nola.gov/nola/media/Health-Department/Publications/Healthy-Lifestyles-in-New-Orleans-Community-Health-Data-Profile-final.pdf>)

"It brings community health and wellness down to the ground, down to actual residents," Schwartz said about the community farm. "It's really a nice sort of front door for people to come on site and get engaged and learn about food access."

ReFresh Community Farm partners include SPROUT NOLA, an interactive urban farm that has previously put gardens in people's backyards, school communities and even in public places like Bayou St. John, across from the

American Can Company. SPROUT NOLA is joined by Harambee Gardens and Faubourg Farms, two other local organizations.

The three companies will offer an array of services, including children's programming, on-site herb gardens and mobile farming, which is done out of straw bales. Residents can also be matched with spaces in areas around the city if they're interested in creating new community gardens.

As the ReFresh farm develops, Schwartz said, organizers with the ReFresh Coalition will be working hard to even better "connect the dots" in coming months between the garden and the other projects offered on site.

"I really think that this work is just the beginning," Schwartz said. "We know that this is important to get this program into the neighborhood. But there's really so much more to be done in order to develop programming that can move the needle on health outcomes of residents in the community."

The farm will be celebrated Saturday during the ReFresh Project Grand Opening from noon to 5. The event will feature music by the Original Pinettes, Clark Prep School Band, DJ Brice Nice and Hot 8 Brass Band. Liberty's Kitchen, Whole Foods Market and food trucks will provide the nosh, and organizers have planned health and wellness activities for children and families.

For more information, visit the Broad Community Connections website.

(<http://broadcommunityconnections.org/news-events/archives/2014/refresh-project-community-grand-opening-party>)

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